

“The entrepreneurship in music” – a new approach in specialized higher education

Oana BĂLAN-BUDOIU¹

Abstract: *In a broad sense, “educational entrepreneurship” is seen as a concept that prioritizes the “relevance” and “productivity” of scientific domains. Since its appearance at the beginning of the 20th century, it has been often associated to economy, sociology, business, and, in the past few years, increasingly to cultural products, while particular attention has been paid to the relationship of “professional art” to a wider audience, by designing efficient ways to communicate and educate the taste for superior, elite music productions.*

In association with music, the specialized literature proposes the “holistic” approach, a perspective which implies the analysis of a variety of factors that determine the musicians’ career success. Seen from this side, the entrepreneurship is a method of managing music education accordingly to a so-called “market need”, targeting as main objective the “public behaviour” and focusing not only on musical training but also on preparing the audience for receiving, understanding and enjoying the artistic products.

This paper presents the profile of a “transversal education” which can be applied in the training stage of young musicians, in order to develop new and very important abilities: self-promotion, marketing and mediation of their artistic career. This endeavour comes as a response to the effect of a new emerging reality in which professional musicians must be taught to create for themselves new jobs, to make themselves necessary in the community where they choose to remain, to look for the liberty to be flexible, adaptable, and capable to thrive in a demanding economic system, beside many other top sectors.

Keywords: *transversal music education; entrepreneurship; art management; holistic concept; musicians’ careers; adaptability;*

● Introduction

Recent approaches to “music management” are frequently accompanied by the idea of cultural entrepreneurship, as a solution to increase the efficiency and relevance of the cultural field for the mass, uninformed audience. If we explain this phenomenon only in terms of its general definition, we can understand that an “entrepreneur” is in fact an enterpriser (from the French word *entreprendre*) interested in initiating and experimenting new techniques of advertising and marketing. The idea of scientific entrepreneurship was first associated to the field of economics, finances, and business (Druker, 1985², Schumpeter, 1934³), and it is only during the past few years that it has come closer to the area of sociology and culture (Cherwitz, 2005⁴, Bornstein, 2004⁵). As these theories explain, the primary mission of entrepreneurship is to

¹ The National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima” in Cluj-Napoca, oana.balan@amgd.ro.

² Drucker, Paul. 1985. *Innovation and entrepreneurship*. London: William Heinmann p. 141-188.

³ Schumpeter, Joseph. 1934. *The Theory of economic development*. Oxford University Press. p. 181-199.

⁴ Cherwitz Richard. 2005. *Intellectual Entrepreneurship: The New Social Compact*. Inside Higher Ed.com. pp. 22-27, 89-112.

⁵ Bornstein, David. 2004. *How to change the world: social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas*. Oxford University Press. p 35-92.

exploit the opportunities of the external environment, to understand the needs of the consumers (of the audience, in the case of art) and the market dynamics (the number and quality of cultural products), to generate and adequately place the results of a field on a relevant market, that should also be as profitable as possible.

Even though we could believe this to be a new practice, the roots of artistic entrepreneurship go back a long way. There are records that prove that the Greek lyrical poet Pindar (518-438 B.C.) organized marketing campaigns in the 5th century B.C., in order to sell 470 lyrical poems (Tschmuck, 2017⁶). Thus, it is thought that, as long as art, at any time in history, was presented in a form relevant to the consumption society, it inevitably integrated the entrepreneurial profile as well, due to the emergence and development of advertising and marketing techniques.

If we were to synthesize the definitions offered by today's literature, contemporary entrepreneurship (relying on knowledge and information and theoretical background) is characterized by "flexibility" and "adaptation". The explanations of entrepreneurship, as they are presented historically, converge to describe a system characterized as: competitive, relevant, productive, dynamic, practical, organized, intelligent, independent, dominant, speculative, adaptable, and open to risk-taking (Kirby, 2006⁷, Sternal, 2014⁸). Beside these attributes, an essential component of entrepreneurship is the *realistic view* which Sternal (2014) regards as indispensable and which is directly connected to the position of the consumers, namely to their behaviour in relation to the products that are to be analysed. In the case of art, we refer to the audience's receptiveness to the conventional classical concerts, to their level of education and the degree to which they relate to the elite, art music product.

1. Entrepreneurial theories in the literature.

The specialized literature at the end of the 18th century put forward a new theory in which entrepreneurship relied on a set of "transversal" attitudes and abilities, such as creativity, initiative, vision, orientation towards change (Meyer, 2011⁹), which focus on skills capable to encourage productivity, thus coming closer to a system of "modern management" with economic tendencies.

The classical sociology school brought into discussion the image of the enterpriser, adding the skills that an entrepreneur of our times should necessarily possess: to acquire legal and financial information, to be able to attract funds and coordinate their career in an optimal manner, to initiate and develop their own events and businesses, to be open towards a competitive environment.

The most important representative of the neoclassical school, Alfred Marshall, insisted in his definitions on the technological innovations and the adaptability that can outline and coagulate a distinctive profile of an entrepreneur, with multiple competitive advantages. Marshall believed that an entrepreneur can be recognized by the courage to engage in new, profitable actions, to identify opportunities on the market, to foresee and act in accordance with the flow and speed of consumers' demands.

From an educational perspective, entrepreneurship is an instrument of innovation, of making teaching processes more efficient and of developing educational services according to the needs expressed by the labour market. This market is, in its turn, influenced by the public

⁶ Tschmuck, Peter. 2017. *The Economics of Music*. Agenda Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne – UK Music Industries, pp. 6-77.

⁷ Kirby David. 2006. „Creating entrepreneurial universities in the UK – applying entrepreneurship theory on practice”. *Journal of Technology Transfer* (31): 599-603.

⁸ Sternal Malgorzata. 2014. „Artists entrepreneurship in education and professional life – is there a room for creative approaches?”. *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis*: 72-88.

⁹ Meyer, Dale. 2011. „The reinvention of academic entrepreneurship”. *Journal of Small Business Management*: 25-34.

consumption attitudes. Academically speaking, the entrepreneurial concept is linked to providing that type of modern educational climate that goes beyond the conventional, traditional practices and knowledge, focussing on the needs and developments of the individuals as declared by them, as well as on the real demands of the labour market.

In fact, the mutation in reasoning that entrepreneurship resorts to is linked to the interaction between producers (active artists, education institutions) and consumers (audience, pupils, students), as well as to raising the awareness of and listening to the reaction of the so-called “customers” before developing the offer, be it artistic or educational; in short, entrepreneurship means that “demand” dictate and coordinate the “offer”.

2. Current entrepreneurial trends in the creative sector – *elite culture and mass culture*

Frederick Winslow Taylor, considered by historians as the father of modern scientific management, stated in 1912 that the environment in which we develop our professional activities is very volatile. Even then he highlighted the fact that, due to the rapid rhythm of the changes, to the new and complex challenges, many entities seen as modern soon realize they are on the opposite side (Hamel, 2010¹⁰). This is also the case of one piece of literature fundamental for the history of arts entrepreneurship, associated to the cultural consumption market, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written in the middle of the 20th century by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. What this study brings as a novelty is the approach of the creative act based on the necessity expressed by the large markets of cultural consumption, bringing into discussion new terminologies that place elite classical music in the sphere of commodities with „*artistic use value*”¹¹. Engaging culture into a commercial system, declared to be in fact a social manipulation, an artistic degradation performed with the purpose to level communities, triggered through the existence of this essay a reserved attitude towards the intentions to sell elite art. The field of musicology perceived this process as an attack to cultural value. Thus, in time, an atmosphere of quasi-opposition emerged regarding the intentions to introduce entrepreneurship in the education of professional musicians. They believed that the phenomenon, which attracted a dialogue with the wider public, with the culturally uninformed society, appealed to devaluation, to accepting the (facile) entertainment industries and the new media, a phenomenon that they interpreted as an attack on the value of elite culture. It is important to mention here that the history of music has proven that there have always been two different communities of cultural consumers (Chailley, 2001¹²): on the one hand, the *expert audience* familiar with elite, superior culture and the *uninformed audience* familiar with facile, mass culture. The idea of selling art was associated more frequently with the second category, considered to be inferior and to have poor or no scientific training, thus regarding art almost exclusively as a factor of entertainment. For the first category (elite art) the economic concept was placed on a secondary, unimportant level almost neglected by the professional musicologists. As we have mentioned, the tendency to sell professional classical music in order to make it more profitable was interpreted, after the publication of Adorno’s essay, as a wilful act of placing professionals on the same level as the unknowledgeable, uninformed social masses, as an action that wanted to turn the elitist-superior audience member into a common customer, endowed with little power of artistic discernment.

¹⁰ Hamel, Gary. 2019. *Viitorul managementului. Noul ghid pentru managerii secolului XX*. Financial Times, Harvard Business School. p. 67.

¹¹ Adorno, Theodor, Horkheimer, Max, 2012. *Dialectica luminilor*. București: Editura Plural.

¹² Chailley, Jacques. 1967. *40.000 ani de muzică*. București: Editura Muzicală.

Closer to our times, the idea of increasing cultural profitability brought up the elimination of differences between elite and mass art, suggesting that superior professional music should fuse with facile entertainment to produce the outcomes expected by the wider audience. Thus, to a large extent, the idea of social emancipation by means of uninformed, mass music consumption was accepted and adopted by professional music and developed in venues that became increasingly unconventional (factories, squares, etc.), which are nowadays intensely used to promote and sell cultural productions. Many professional orchestras and artists were determined to abandon the traditional, elegant stages and perform in utterly unconventional venues in order to educate a large number of people and adapt their productions to accessible, simple contexts easy to understand and accept.

Going from the artistic practice to the specialized arts education, we notice that this tendency is maintained, as entrepreneurial cultural education is poorly represented in Romanian universities of the arts. Inside universities the differences between the arts meant for uninformed consumers that are accessible to the mass public and the scientific art that is structurally superior and complex in terms of scientific appreciation are all the more obvious.

However, seen from the outside, the lack of entrepreneurial attitude associated to the contemporary professional classical art causes a blockage of communication with the consumers. Artists have always been dependent on a social-commercial context, while music seen as an entertainment service was a very natural element for many centuries. The contemporary dynamics of cultural consumption and the current challenges that this field has to overcome have precedents in history that are not at all negligible (Balan-Budoiu, 2022)¹³.

3. The educational entrepreneurial model for the cultural-artistic sector

The spread of entrepreneurial education for the development of the cultural-musical sector in Romania can have a positive influence on the relevance of the field for the needs of the community and the wider audience. Such an educational model should be approached holistically, generally, starting from a redefinition of the educational management system, which would accept and reorientate institutions' visions so as to improve the relationship to the consumption market and the labour sector.

The role of an entrepreneurial education is to ensure lifelong learning so as in the long term to prepare "leaders of change" (Gibb, 2005¹⁴), represented in the cultural sector by "adapted and flexible artists", who manage to become relevant not only from a professional-artistic and educational perspective, but also from an economic and social one. The key elements that can be monitored and developed to achieve entrepreneurial purposes, including through the establishment of guidelines in the field of teaching, are:

- Introducing disciplines for the mediation of symphonic music events, in which the protagonists explain to the audience the elements of musical and choreographic structure, offering information that is potentially attractive for consumers without a musical education;
- Redesigning the musical productions for unconventional spaces (for example: in the open air, in commercial spaces, airports, parks, touristic areas, etc.) in order to minimize social barriers and deliver the musical service directly to the consumer;

¹³ Bălan-Budoiu, Oana. 2022. „A historical view of the relevance of music for society in an entrepreneurial approach”. Review of Artistic Education: 87-95.

¹⁴ Gibb, Antony. 2006. „Towards the entrepreneurial university: entrepreneurship education as a lever for change”. International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education, (4): 73-110.

- Providing multimedia services that can exist beside the conventional venues (halls dedicated to professional music shows), with the help of which the audience can learn and test in real time (using interesting high-tech IT devices);
- Reorientation to composition of fusion-type pieces, in which the classical musical materials are combined with widely consumed music genres;
- Directing music shows that use elements familiar to uninformed audiences, such as concerts that feature soundtracks of famous films;
- Shortening the exposure time by reducing the music events from an average 3 hours per production to maximally 1.5 hours, while simplifying the musical content as much as possible;
- Exploiting the interactivity component, allowing the audience to become the virtual protagonists of the show, by means of a reality supported by artificial intelligence;
- Using internet platforms to educate consumers in the online environment, in real time (during the development of the shows) and selling the musical productions on up to date musical platforms.

A large part of these guidelines have already been tested, particularly by prestigious cultural institutions interested in the community involvement. The alternative of using unconventional products is applied in the classical-traditional context dedicated especially to uninformed audiences (non connoisseurs). This category includes the syncretic events which enrich the atmosphere of the classical concert by means of:

- Movement and dance;
- Projections of images and text during concerts;
- Discussions before/during and after the art events between the audience and the artists;
- Presenting the backstage life as a part of the show;
- Access to rehearsals with public;

All these elements have the role to “enrich” the event’s atmosphere, so as to make it sufficiently attractive to the unknowledgeable audience.

4. Entrepreneurial cultural innovations

No form of art can survive without consumers, without the audience. And the relationship created between the wide audience and the elevated level of artistic expression is often compromised by compatibility issues (Barrette, 2015¹⁵). If a solution were to be found, the first step we could think of would probably be to eliminate the blockage by simplifying the content, an aspect which is almost always treated with caution by professional artists (artistic devaluation). However, we must understand that uninformed people generally feel unable to appreciate a superior work of art, a reason for which they will tend to avoid entering into contact with this field, all the more so if the field proves to be unnecessary for them. For a cultural entrepreneur, the main object in their work is precisely to eliminate the distance created between the professional art and the wide audience, by identifying ways and methods of bringing the two pillars – elite culture and the mass community – closer together.

¹⁵ Barrette, Janet. 2015. „Planning for Understanding: a reconceptualized view of the Music Curriculum”. Special issue, Reconceptualizing Curriculum Journal, Conference. Tennessee University: 11-32.

As we stated above, the scission between the superior art forms and the culture of the masses has existed ever since ancient times. What history teaches us is precisely the necessity to educate people so that they will become capable to understand culture and associate themselves with it. *The new type artist* is one who finds the connection between their music and the audience, due to the openness they display in their creations or towards other syncretic domains. It is therefore their choice to activate their potential also in an area that advocates communication to the wider audience.

5. Conclusions

The cultural entrepreneurship, this new trend adopted from transversal domains, outlines new perspectives, asking it to be more competitive and productive in order to be able to protect its future and secure a place in peoples' lives.

Knowing the techniques of educational and cultural entrepreneurship we can exploit certain advantages in order to enrich the image and relevance of the artistic events, in a manner that the consumers enjoy, we can learn to present, market, sell and attract the audience on our side, bringing them closer to the traditional concert venues.

Entrepreneurship teaches us that the current market of cultural services is very busy and volatile, which makes it difficult to identify the adequate methods to fully satisfy the need of the contemporary consumer, in a global manner. We refer to an audience whom we find to be lacking in sensitivity and saturated, having but a small desire to make a significant effort to increase their discernment as consumers.

In this context, the current artists' endeavour becomes all the more complex and, sometimes, estranged, due to the fact that it imposes activities that they are unaccustomed to: to find sponsors and financiers, partners and supporters, to organize their own events, to study the cultural life of the region where they carry on their activity, etc.

The role of this material was to offer a basis for those who confront these challenges, a starting point that should be sufficient to master a medium level of administration of one's fresh artistic career.

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