

SPEA UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS

# Bach vs. Beck

---

Marketing Classical and Popular Music Festivals

**McKenzie McCarthy**  
**December 2014**

**Dr. Michael Rushton**  
**Associate Professor and Director of Arts Administration Programs**

## ***Bach vs. Beck: Marketing Classical and Popular Music Festivals***

McKenzie McCarthy

*Arts Management*

*Senior*

*Abstract submitted for SPEA Honors Thesis Presentation*

Dr. Michael Rushton

*Professor and Director of Arts Administration Programs*

*School of Public and Environmental Affairs*

*Faculty Mentor*

Music festivals first found their place in the cultural marketplace during the Pythian Games in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and since then their form and purpose has changed drastically. Taking into account the decline of classical music audiences and consumer barriers to access, music festivals across the United States are now finding marketing to be a vital component of success.

After gaining knowledge and insights into the world of arts marketing, arts audiences, and music festivals, one can see how the times of newspaper advertisements and mailing lists are gone. Now, music festivals of many different genres must go above and beyond to reach any potential audiences in their communities, regions, and the country as a whole. This may include guerilla marketing, social media efforts, and artist-driven promotion.

By comparing two major genres of the music festival, classical and popular, important distinctions can be made about the efforts of marketing organizers in both fields. Classical music audiences are declining, so the solution to their audience problem will be very different from the solution to an audience problem of popular music festivals. Popular music festivals are currently abundant in the United States, so the solution to the problem of marketplace overcrowding will be equally important, but vastly different.

When looking at two large classical music festivals (Aspen Music Festival and Grant Park Music Festival) and one large popular music festival (Forecastle Festival), one can determine how classical and popular marketing tactics are different, how they are similar, and what festivals may be able to learn from each other in order to maintain a thriving audience.

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Background.....	5
The Festivals.....	5
The Literature.....	12
Findings.....	19
Conclusion.....	32
References.....	34
Interview Transcripts.....	36

## **Introduction**

What is the appeal of a music festival? Music festivals of many different genres exist all over the world, but what are the differences between them besides the music being performed? Do ticket buyers attend because of the atmosphere, the setting, or the amenities available on-site? How do popular and classical music festivals differ in what they offer and how they market those differences to their respective audiences?

Specifically, classical music festivals and popular music festivals in the United States have very different programming aspects and annual schedules. The only way to make these vastly different cultural events successful and profitable is to properly market them. I have investigated the background and current marketing operations of two classical music festivals (Aspen Music Festival and School and Grant Park Music Festival) and one popular music festival (Forecastle Festival) in order to better understand these distinctions. In addition, I have completed a literature survey on marketing tactics in the arts and in the field of music festivals specifically.

First, I will provide a background on the music festivals studied in this case. Then, I will explain the highlights of the existing literature in this field. Finally, I will discuss what similarities and differences already exist between the two. This study concerns the understanding and the analysis of the marketing tactics and objectives of classical and popular music festivals in the United States and how the two may learn from each other in the future.

## **Background**

### **The Festivals**

The first version of a music festival appeared during the Pythian Games in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Music festivals in the United States began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Music festivals commemorate anniversaries, celebrate religious or ethnic traditions, or offer music of a composer, period, or type; they can range from a single event to many events encompassing days or even a season” (Kutler, 2002). The first forms in the United States were religious events held for singing psalms. Later, folk festivals came about including competition of fiddle players. “In 1856 the Boston Handel and Haydn Society presented three major choral works—Haydn's *The Seasons*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*” (Kutler, 2002). This could very possibly be considered America’s first music festival. Many of these festivals were, in fact, centered on the works of one or two classical composers in particular. Folk festivals became increasingly popular in the early 1900s and jazz festivals eventually began to join the ranks in the 1950s. Some of these jazz festivals formed in the 1950s are still taking place each year, like the Newport Jazz Festival in Newport, Rhode Island. In the 1960s, rock music and pop music began to flood the festival scene and the dynamic became very similar to popular music festivals today. Among these are the Monterey International Pop Festival in California (1967) and Woodstock Music Festival in New York (1969). “Festivals have become so plentiful and diverse at the end of the twentieth century that publishers issue music festival guide books, which offer a listing of events around the country” (Kutler, 2002). As it

happens, Rolling Stone Magazine issued a special report about how music festivals have revamped the music industry. More than sixty large music festivals took place in the United States in 2014. "Festivals have changed the way music is experienced – and released. A fan with a Spotify account and a Bonnaroo ticket can sample hundreds of bands, live or on record, in one weekend" (Knopper, 2014). The manager of indie band, Spoon, says, "It's a good time to be a fan, if you just want a piece of everything...[Spoon] is going to play to tens of thousands of people at each festival – that's a pretty huge promotional platform for new songs" (Knopper, 2014). It may seem that the recent surge in popular music festivals' popularity has brought the idea of the event to its climax. However, many band managers and promoters of music believe that growth is still possible and even probable (Knopper, 2014). I'd like to give some general background on the two specific types of festivals I've chosen to study and then understand the details of marketing strategy. I will then discuss the specific festivals I have investigated.

I'd like to make an important distinction between classical and popular music festivals. Popular music festivals feature a range of different bands visiting a certain site over the course of one to five days. These are usually centered on a theme or genre of music. For example, Telluride Bluegrass Festival is centered around the genre of Bluegrass music only and attracts visitors from all over the nation (Huizenga, 2014). Classical music festivals are structured slightly differently. These are mostly centered around one orchestra or group of musicians and can last anywhere from two weeks, like the Moab Music Festival in Utah, to eight weeks, like the Tanglewood festival in Massachusetts (Huizenga, 2014). Since these festivals are

much more lengthy, they require a dedicated audience to attend their numerous concerts throughout the festival's season.

Next, I will make an important distinction between the two major categories of marketing that I will discuss and analyze in relation to these music festivals. The first is traditional marketing. For this case, I will include the following under traditional marketing: newspaper marketing, radio advertisements, television advertisements, magazine advertising, paper mail, and posters, flyers, and billboards. During what some call the "Golden Age of Marketing," companies simply created one print ad and one commercial. According to the "most influential business blogger in the world," Seth Godin, "This was the age of the mass market, when all consumers were equal and you could sell anything to everyone. The best brands told stories, but all products with decent ads made money" (Godin, n.d., p. 25). Comparatively, traditional marketing methods are much more expensive than social media marketing. Generally, traditional marketing costs a certain amount that is determined by the size of the advertisement and the medium on which it is printed. The next category of marketing is social media marketing. I will characterize social media marketing as any of the following: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and E-mail marketing. While social media marketing is still in its infancy in comparison to traditional marketing methods, it has grown rapidly in recent years. Philip Kotler, an American marketing author, says that, "The meaning of marketing in this new age is the marketing of meaning. Marketing should no longer be considered as only selling and using tools to generate demand. Marketing should now be considered as the major hope of a company to build and

restore consumer trust” (Bernstein, et al., 2014, p. 33). This is why popular music festivals spend most of their time on social media marketing; their audiences are much younger than that of classical music festivals. While a business can pay to promote their social media content to larger audiences, almost all social media marketing is free to a certain extent and audience level. Social media is much more cost-efficient than traditional marketing mediums, but what if your audience isn’t social-media or technology-savvy? One of my goals in this case is to answer this question. How can the two types of festivals who each prefer different marketing styles learn from each other, or solidify the choices they have been making all along?

I studied one popular music festival for this particular case. Forecastle Festival takes place every July in Louisville, Kentucky. The festival began in 2002 and “has grown from a neighborhood event to one of the country’s most anticipated summer festivals, drawing tens of thousands of fans from across the world” (“Forecastle Festival”). Louisville’s 85-acre Waterfront Park sets the scene for the festival that features more than twenty bands each of the three days. I chose to study Forecastle Festival for a few key reasons. The first is that I am part of their core target audience and have not only heard of the festival, but know people my age who have attended many times. This festival is also very representative of hundreds of festivals across the nation. A select few mammoth festivals exist in the United States, but those carry so much clout that I fear their marketing strategy would not be a great representative for the comparisons I wish to make. Last year, Forecastle Festival drew in around 65,000 attendees over the three-day event (Lord). In comparison, the incredibly popular festivals like Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza



(Chicago), and Coachella draw in audiences of over 90,000, 300,000, and 675,000, respectively (Coplan, 2014; Borelli, 2014; Knopper, 2014). These are the extremes, and I think it best to analyze something that many other festivals can use in their marketing strategies. It is important to note that a company called AC Entertainment is responsible for all the marketing for Forecastle Festival, among other music festivals, concerts, and events. Hannah Houser is a Communications Coordinator for AC Entertainment and spearheads all social media efforts for Forecastle Festival. Many popular music festivals of Forecastle's size have a person in a position of social media content creation or digital media management. However, Forecastle Festival, like other festivals of its size, does not do nearly as much newspaper or traditional marketing as they do social media marketing. Forecastle's target markets are mostly in the ranges of 18-25 years and 26-35 years old, both male and female (Houser interview).

While popular music festivals have very similar programming, structural, and marketing qualities, classical music festivals can be vastly different in all of these aspects. For this reason, it is important to get the perspectives of two very different classical music festivals. Aspen Music Festival takes place in scenic Aspen, Colorado and also serves as a school for young classical musicians. The Grant Park Music Festival takes place in the middle of Chicago and is free to the public. The structures and goals of these festivals are obviously very different, which means that their marketing strategies differ greatly.

The Aspen Music Festival runs from the beginning of July to the end of August every year. "The Aspen Music Festival and School has two concert venues

and a campus for teaching, rehearsing, and some performances. In addition, operas take place in Aspen's historic Wheeler Opera House" ("About/FAQs"). The Aspen Music Festival and School is incredibly unique in the fact that it hosts more than three hundred events in its eleven-week season, averaging around twenty-seven events per week. These events range from master classes, panel discussions, orchestra concerts, chamber concerts, and solo recitals. The festival's audience is around 70,000 for the entire season and the largest venue holds 2,000 people. During orchestra concerts at the Aspen Music Festival, students make up the orchestra, but the first chair of each section features a professional musician who acts as a mentor for the week and gives the students a real-world connection to the professional musician world. As a guest, the professional musician teaches the students tricks of the trade, and vice versa. Aspen's target audience is mostly made up of older (58+), wealthy residents of Aspen and neighboring communities (Szabo interview). Females tend to buy the tickets to the festival's events, but in recent years it has become much more of a last-minute decision; the festival has less knowledge about how the event is going to sell until the day-of. Unlike popular music festivals, many classical music festivals (including Aspen) make efforts to use traditional marketing outlets like newspapers, magazines, and radio advertisements. On a related note, they use social media marketing much less frequently and much less aggressively than popular music festivals. The task of marketing the Aspen Music Festival's hundreds of events is no small feat and takes careful consideration. Is it beneficial to market each and every one? What works? I will answer these questions later.

Grant Park Music Festival, while vastly different in many aspects from the Aspen Music Festival, seeks the same goal: to bring classical music to its community. Grant Park Music Festival (GPMF) concerts are held at the Jay Pritzker Pavillion, designed by Frank Gehry, in Millennium Park. The venue features some covered seating, but mostly lawn seats that give beautiful views of both the city of Chicago and Lake Michigan. The GPMF season is ten weeks long, beginning in mid-June and lasting through mid-August, producing three concerts per week. Last summer, over 300,000 people attended at least one concert at the GPMF (Hurwitz interview). The most unique part of the GPMF besides the incredible venue is the fact that all the concerts are free to the public. They host contemporary composers, world-premiers, and guest artists throughout the eight weeks and don't charge anything to sit in the lawn and bring a picnic with the family. Grant Park Music Festival has been running for eighty years and has focused on classical music from the very beginning (Huizenga, 2014). They have a very active and generous membership program. The members pay for a seat in the covered pavilion for the season and this monetarily helps the festival greatly. The free festival is also made possible with the help of its partners, the Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago. The venue has a realistic capacity of 15,000 people. Trying to get that many people to experience classical music, even at no cost, is a great challenge. Marketing a free classical music festival seems easy at the surface, but declining classical audiences pose a great challenge to festival organizers.

## **The Literature**

As mentioned before, social media marketing is in its infancy. Therefore, literature concerning the subject is rare and, in turn, that much more important. After reading many articles from scholarly journals and arts marketing texts, I have discovered interesting trends, patterns, and points of contention in the literature on the fields of music festival marketing and social media marketing. First, I will discuss what type of audience attends music festivals. Then, I will analyze the different motivations for attending a music festival. Finally, I will consider the various methods of marketing that literature discusses in this field.

The social classes of a population can be categorized into seven levels according to their economic capital, status of contacts, and cultural capital. These include the elite, established middle class, technical middle class, new affluent workers, traditional working class, emergent service workers, and precariat (Savage, 2013, p. 12). For classical music festivals it is vital to know that the mean age of the elite is 57 (Savage, 2013, p. 13). This is incredibly close to the average age of highbrow arts audiences, 54 (Peterson, 2014, p. 10). What exactly are highbrows? Richard A. Peterson best explains a principal distinction between arts audiences, “We see a shift in elite status group politics from those highbrows who snobbishly disdain all base, vulgar, or mass popular culture, (here called snobs or univores) to those highbrows who omnivorously consume a wide range of popular as well as highbrow art forms (here called omnivores)” (Peterson, 2014, p. 3). Currently, much of the audiences who attend classical music festivals are made up of highbrows and

those in the generation born before World War Two (Peterson, 2014, p. 2). It is no surprise to note that classical music audiences are becoming older and older and eventually ceasing participation altogether. “Classical music and opera are arguably having the greatest problems with declining participation” (Peterson, 2014, p. 6). In order to secure future patrons of the arts, it is critical for organizations to educate and encourage future generations to participate in the arts. “Many people not exposed to fine arts in their youth bring their tastes for popular culture with them as they enter the elite” (Peterson, 2014, p. 5). The saying goes, ‘children are the future’ and if music festivals can learn anything, it’s that marketing to a youth audience is viable insurance for future fans and donors. The omnivores of the world are the audience that every music festival should be targeting because they are the most open-minded segment of the audience. Omnivorous taste “does not signify that the omnivore likes everything *indiscriminately*. Rather, it means being *open* to appreciating everything” (Peterson, 2014, p. 4). This distinction is key to music festival marketers because they must determine what it is about their festival that will draw these open-minded people to their box office. To reach omnivores, music festival marketers of all genres “must center not on *what* one consumes but on the *way* consumption items are appreciated” (Peterson, 2014, p. 4). The critical take-away from learning about these audience distinctions is that both kinds of people are out there. Even 23% of the lowbrows like classical music to some degree (Peterson, 2014, p. 6). The key is to find these people and give them what they expect and what they think they want. What motivates these potential ticket-buyers?

Interestingly enough, “socio-demographic variables (have) a limited influence on motivations” (Pegg and Patterson, 2010, p. 88). Music festival audiences have four main motivations and satisfaction levels in attending a festival (Bourdeau, De Coster, and Paradis, 2001, p. 46). The first is the basic service the festival provides, which is the music or content of the programming. The second motivation is the availability of peripheral services on-site such as festival information services. This can also include the general atmosphere of the festival. The third and fourth motivations for consumers to attend a music festival are the price of admission and the site itself, whether that means the site’s infrastructure, cleanliness, or aesthetic. The task of satisfying all of these motivations is made even more complicated because the festival organizers and marketers must appeal to both tourists and residents of the area (Bourdeau, De Coster, and Paradis, 2001, p. 41). In a study of consumer satisfaction, the levels of satisfaction for the site itself showed no observable difference between residents and tourists. However, residents had much higher levels of satisfaction for festival content than tourists (Bourdeau, De Coster, and Paradis, 2001, p. 47). This makes marketers’ responsibilities of the utmost importance. Consumer expectations reflect consumer satisfaction in an incredibly direct way (Bourdeau, De Coster, and Paradis, 2001, p. 46). Marketers are the ones who set those expectations for the consumer in what they are told will be available and what will not. While music festival attendees are additionally motivated by their love of the music and a casual, relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere, atmosphere is considered “the most important overall aspect of the festival” (Pegg and Patterson, 2010, p. 94-95). This atmosphere includes any

aspect of the festival pertaining to appearance, aesthetic, peripheral activities, cleanliness, crowd control, and available amenities. If all festivals are doing their best to cater to all of these atmospheric consumer needs, what makes each festival different from the next? For example, Beck, an American musician, played Austin City Limits Festival, iTunes Festival, Forecastle Festival, First City Festival, Pitchfork Festival, Bestival, and Coachella in 2014 alone (“Homepage: Beck”). What draws a consumer in Indianapolis to Pitchfork Festival in Chicago rather than Forecastle Festival in Louisville? The distance is the same. What is the deciding factor? Atmosphere, of course. In addition to the festival’s atmosphere, a consumer needs to know that their ticket price comes with an *engaging experience*. “To realize the full benefit of staging experiences, businesses must attempt to deliberately design “engaging experiences” that command a fee” (Pegg and Patterson, 2010, p. 90). These engaging experiences tie well into the notion that a festival can have the exact same programming and lineup as a festival 100 miles away yet one will draw in a significantly larger crowd. Festivals owe this notion to the fact that they each need “to differentiate itself from its competition through its services” (Pegg and Patterson, 2010, p. 86). As long as a festival has these services, experiences, and atmosphere in place, it is up to the marketer to portray that to the consumer and get that consumer to feel like they are part of that festival’s loyal group of followers.

One of the more recent methods of achieving these goals is through social media participation. “The basis of social media is user-generated content and two-way interaction between users on the one hand, and users and companies on the other” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 25). A consumer who participates

in social media is driven by four main motivations. These are not to be confused with the motivations to attend a festival, as these pertain only to social media participation. The motivations are categorized as follows: (1) reinforcement of social identity, (2) a sense of affinity, (3) participation, and (4) two-way interaction (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 23). Social identity can be defined as “the psychological state conferring a shared or collective representation of one being part of some virtual community” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 25). It involves a consumer’s need to be reinforced time and time again that they are part of a group through social media and, if a marketer does his or her job efficiently, therefore must attend that group’s festival. A sense of affinity is an emotional bond within the group that drives loyalty to other members. A sense of affinity in a group “fulfills important needs and membership is seen to bring clear benefits as it reinforces not only the identity of an individual but also that of the group” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 25). Participation and two-way interaction may seem interchangeable, but they are very different for music festival marketers. “Participation refers to expressing opinions, while interaction refers to more clear interaction between two users; both may have an effect upon each other” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 25). In order to achieve consumer satisfaction of these motives, a marketer can use various tactics to increase awareness, education, and attendance. The first tactic that is heavily effective and widely attempted is artist marketing. Through artist marketing on websites, Facebook, Twitter, and even blogs, “artists can share information with followers, engage in two-way communication, and encourage real-time conversation in artist-related topics and



events” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 27). Another successful marketing strategy is to use Facebook events in promoting a festival. Festival marketers can create a Facebook page or Facebook event and either invite certain people, or leave it open for users to RSVP of their own accord. “Arguably the number of people attending events through Facebook seems to be in line with people actually coming...This gives insight to how implications of marketing may be measured on Facebook by combining online and offline measures” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 31). This marketing tactic is not only cheap (or even free), but is also an excellent way to gauge attendance before the festival and analyze attendance patterns in relation after the festival’s end. The final marketing tactic that has very recently become increasingly important is that of YouTube marketing. Social media is an extremely media-driven field (hence its name). Words don’t always draw audiences in and when a festival’s content is music, audiences expect to get a taste of what they will experience if they buy a ticket. “YouTube is used for entertainment purposes and viewed content often relates to music, sports, or humor. Music content can be music videos, live performances, artists’ backstage material, or even plain songs whereupon video footage is secondary” (Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki, 2013, p. 36). It is through YouTube marketing that music festivals can both intrigue newcomers to their scene and keep audiences coming back. If a festival hires a professional videographer, a promotional video can get past attendees to reminisce, return, and encourage others to attend in the future. It’s a beautiful cycle that is comparatively inexpensive and holds endless possibilities.

In analyzing the marketing of classical and popular music festivals, it is key to understand and discuss what little literature exists on the subject. After reading many scholarly pieces on audiences, motivations, marketing music festivals, and social media in the music industry, I have gained a working knowledge of the subject. However, that alone is not enough to make conclusions. After interviewing marketing professionals from the three music festivals I studied extensively, the academic and practical evidence suggests that certain conclusions can be made concerning the similarities and differences between classical and popular music festivals and between actual music festivals and the literature written about them.

## **Findings**

How do the festivals and the literature parallel and how do they differ? To begin, the various festivals have different ideas of what their best marketing outlet is. Hannah Houser at Forecastle believes that social media is her best outlet, which corresponds with every piece of literature on social media in the popular festival realm. Jill Hurwitz, Director of Marketing and Media Relations at GPMF, believes direct e-mail blasts and their website are her best marketing outlets. This proves interesting because these outlets aren't exactly traditional marketing methods, like most classical music festivals use, but it's also not as technology-forward as Forecastle with Houser's answer of social media. GPMF is very progressive in believing these to be the best outlets for their market. Aspen Music Festival's Public Relations Manager, Janice Szabo, answered more along the lines with the assumptions about classical music festivals and traditional marketing. She believes newspaper advertisements and e-blasts work best for their audience.

While discussing the ways these festivals fit the mold of the industry's assumptions, I think it wise to analyze how they each dive into the pool of one another. It is true that the classical music festivals align more with traditional marketing methods and that the popular music festival uses social media more frequently. However, Forecastle does market using radio advertisements, a very traditional method. They mostly market on Louisville's local indie rock radio stations. While they do not market in newspapers or television, they create radio advertisements for the festival and also hold ticket giveaways on the air, which not only attract the attention of radio listeners, but the winners of the giveaway are very

likely to encourage their friends to buy tickets and attend the festival with them. On the other hand, GPMF and Aspen are not oblivious to the next steps of marketing. Szabo stated, "I've been doing marketing in the arts for 25 years and there have been a lot of changes but I think digital media is the new frontier. Everybody thinks they need to have it but not a lot of people know how to use it well. And so that's definitely something that we have to explore." In fact, they have taken a step in that direction with the recent addition of a Digital Media Manager position. While Szabo is admittedly not social media-savvy, she says, "We're going to need to wait for our older audience to catch up. As the boomers become older, they will eventually use Twitter." She hopes this new Digital Media Manager will present the festival in a new and exciting way. The idea of "waiting" for the audience is never the most proactive solution to a problem, but the fact that they have hired a full-time position for such an effort is promising. GPMF uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but the Twitter and Facebook are most active. Hurwitz admits, "There's not as much to say in the off-season but in the summer (during the festival) we'll do photo contests."

Many music festivals are able to market their program, atmosphere, and amenities to a consumer well enough to get them to attend for the first time. This is an excellent start to building a relationship with a customer, but often consumers don't return due to barriers of access. It is noteworthy that both Aspen and Forecastle listed ticket price as their biggest barriers to access, even though they are for very different reasons. This is common in the arts, as arts marketers and organizers are passionate about their work and would love to give it away for free (but can't). Forecastle has a generally young audience. Many of these young adults

and even teens simply aren't economically established enough to be able to afford a ticket to the weekend-long festival and also find somewhere to stay. Aspen Music Festival listed ticket price as a barrier to access for their audience simply because a season's subscription is around \$1,300 and even some of the wealthier audience members worry about whether they will attend enough concerts that season to justify such a high price. Since admission to GPMF concerts is free, ticket price is not one of their barriers to access. However, parking is expensive in downtown Chicago. Hurwitz offsets this fear by marketing the fact that Chicago's public transportation will bring an audience member directly to Millennium Park. These barriers to access don't seem to have easy solutions, especially when ticket price for music festivals is used to cover the hefty expenses of hosting such an event. The fact that these festivals recognize their barriers to access and have discussed them within the organization is admirable.

As stated earlier, marketing to a youth audience is critical to building future fans of a genre of music or a festival of that genre. It shocked me to find that the three festivals I chose to hone in on do little in terms of marketing to a youth audience. While they host programmatic events for youth audiences, they are rarely marketed with equal vigor to the rest of the programming of the festival. Forecastle festival already has a fairly young audience. They don't market to children and the parents of children, but certainly welcome families to the festival. GPMF does a program called "Classical Campers" with the Chicago Park District. Hurwitz says, "It might be their first experience with a classical music. They'll learn about members of an orchestra, they'll meet members of the orchestra, they'll watch a rehearsal."

GPMF even gives the children a pass to come back with their parents to an evening concert. Other than these passes, the educational side of the Grant Park Music Festival is not marketed. Aspen Music Festival tells a whole different story. The entire festival is part of a school for young classical musicians. The school has a marketing/recruitment department. However, the marketing department of the festival, an entirely different body, makes only an adequate effort to market to a youth audience. The orchestras and ensembles host family concerts, but those lose attention due to the fact that the festival hosts more than three hundred events. Marketing programs geared toward a youth audience is an incredible long-term investment for not only the future of the Grant Park Music Festival and Aspen Music Festival, but also for the future of classical music as a whole. I find this lack of youth-centered marketing on both the popular and classical ends of the spectrum to be a sorely untapped market.

Another untapped market, for one of the festivals I've studied is that of the entertainment tourist. Tourists are vital to the continuing success of a festival of any kind. Forecastle seems to have a great understanding of this concept. Forecastle's organizers work closely with the City of Louisville Tourism Department and the visitors' bureau in Louisville. With the help of those organizations, Forecastle markets strongly in markets of neighboring cities like St. Louis and Chicago. In every aspect of Forecastle's marketing, the city of Louisville and Kentucky culture is highlighted extensively. Attendees of the festival can even find an attraction completely dedicated to the state's signature beverage. The Bourbon Lodge is full of Kentucky bourbon tastings and even features celebrity bartenders during different

time slots of the festival. This is obviously celebratory for those who live in or are from the Louisville area, but tourists can easily view Forecastle as a one-stop shop to understand all things music and all things Louisville. GPMF also does a fine job of marketing to tourists by utilizing the connections and clout of other organizations. They partner with Choose Chicago, the city's official visitor's bureau. They also recognize the fact that Millennium Park is a major tourist destination in the city on its own. Therefore, they place brochures in kiosks around the park. They also hold open rehearsals during the day so these passerby tourists can learn about the festival and potentially make plans to attend. While GPMF organizers do not market to tourists for their membership program, they tap into the already existing market that their festival's location has set in place. Aspen Music Festival is not quite that advanced yet. The city of Aspen is a tourist destination for many, even during the summer months. However, marketers of the festival do not believe the festival would draw these tourists in. Szabo says, "Aspen is a destination for the most part and people who come here know...what they want. Even Denver...they're not going to come here just to hear one of our concerts, they're going to come here because there are 10 things they want to do while they're in Aspen." While I can appreciate the realism, I believe the Aspen Music Festival could be marketed strongly in Aspen's tourism strategies, but also in Denver's. Aspen is only a three-hour drive from Denver and is definitely a more scenic view of Colorado. The festival's engaging experiences (that will be covered later) are enough to bring in a population of tourists who don't know what they want until they see the Aspen Music Festival and School. As I found in literature, studies have shown that tourists

and residents have very similar music festival satisfaction levels when it comes to a festival's atmosphere, but tourists have a lower satisfaction level when it comes to musical programming. A gap in marketing may be the cause of this dissatisfaction. If a tourist has adequate expectations about a festival's content, those marketers have done their preparation for whatever customer satisfaction fallout will come later.

Grant Park Music Festival makes a thorough effort to gauge customer satisfaction by providing a customer survey at nearly all times. Each program book available at the concerts has a paper survey inside, while the festival's e-mail list and members receive an electronic version. Hurwitz believes these help greatly with programming and marketing choices for the festival's next season. Aspen Music Festival conducted an economic impact survey a couple of years ago, but no marketing implications could be drawn from it. Forecastle Festival hosts an online survey for all ticket-buyers via e-mail. Each department submits a number of questions they'd like to see consumer answers to. The festival's various departments each get something useful out of this survey, whether it be future programming choices, marketing tactics, or changes in amenities available on-site. In a service industry, it is critical for consumers to be fully aware of what they are buying into. These expectations that a music festival attendee walks through the doors with will determine their satisfaction afterwards and, in turn, returning to the festival.

With atmosphere being the most important aspect of a music festival for consumers, marketers must absolutely integrate its promotion into the mix. Forecastle Festival, as I stated before, really attempts to highlight Louisville in their



marketing strategy. When asked about balancing the festival's content and atmosphere in marketing, Houser said, "I think the festival atmosphere is most important for us, marketing-wise. We have not seen a real difference in festival attendance when lineups have been vastly different. I think people come for the waterfront area and the general vibe of the festival, no matter who is playing." In the case of Forecastle, the fans come for the music and return for Louisville. The atmosphere of the Grant Park Music Festival is highlighted in its sheer location. The middle of the city right by the river makes for an incredible backdrop. Hurwitz does her best to market the fact that you may hear noises from nearby restaurants, the lake, or even helicopters flying above while trying to listen to the music, but that's what being downtown Chicago is all about. I think this is a brilliant way to tie in the location with the music on both of these festival's marketing strategies. Aspen Music Festival's marketing is much more content-based. Since they mostly use newspaper advertisements, they market the programs, which are impressive and hold their own weight for many attendees. Szabo states, "In our newspaper ads, it's definitely more content. We don't have the space to sell what an amazing experience it's going to be, or we haven't figured that out." It is critical that they do just that in the future, as evidenced by scholars in marketing music festivals.

Both classical and popular music festivals, in order to turn any kind of profit, must attempt to host those 'engaging experiences' that command a fee" (Pegg and Patterson, 2010, p. 90). Not surprisingly, and most reassuringly, each festival's marketing representative believes that their festival is an engaging experience. In the case of GPMF, this is not exactly true since they do not have to command a fee.

However, the downtown location and atmosphere provide that engaging experience. Hurwitz also notes that the sound system is incredible for such a large, outdoor venue. According to her, "It's not like you have this state-of-the-art sound system and you're hearing sixteen year-olds in their high school bands play. It's top, world-renowned music making by a very well known conductor as well as guest conductors and guest artists from all over the world and that combined makes it a very special place." Aspen Music Festival is an engaging experience because audience members have the chance to see students on the "launching pads of their careers." World-class conductors and musicians join these students and audience members get the chance to watch these students grow in their musicianship over the festival's season. However, Aspen Music Festival only markets this in their program books once a patron has already purchased a ticket. Imagine how that aspect of the festival alone would ultimately intrigue potential audience members and cause them to buy a ticket. Forecastle Festival, as stated before, really attempts to include the city of Louisville into their marketing, but the actual waterfront park is paramount to the engaging experience the festival offers. USA Today recently named the Louisville waterfront #3 in a list of the best waterfronts in America. Marketers of Forecastle encouraged followers of the festival on social media to vote daily for the Louisville waterfront. This makes even future potential attendees interested in what makes this location so special and that kind of word-of-mouth that's not even related to the content of the festival is what will continually introduce new audience members.

That relationship on social media, whether relevant to the festival's content or not, is critical to creating lasting relationships with audience members and building a future audience base for both classical and popular music festivals. While Aspen Music Festival's two-way interactions on social media mainly consist of student-to-student interaction, GPMF and Forecastle take a different approach. Aspen Music Festival's main output is information, which isn't always the best way to engage in two-way communication with an audience. Therefore, they do not receive much feedback. GPMF tries to re-tweet fans who mention the festival on social media and even host trivia contests on their Facebook and Twitter. Hurwitz also asks fans to send in photos of the festival and the park because she believes "Photos are a more exciting way to get information to them. The more photos, the more engagement you get." Since Forecastle's marketing is so social media-centric, they make a strong effort to respond on Twitter and Facebook to comments both negative and positive, even during the off-season. "I think that's something a lot of festivals don't do well. They seem like this monolith that no one can ever get anything out of and we try to break that," Houser says. Currently, Forecastle is in what Houser calls the off-season, since the festival is still many months away. An actual forecastle is a part of a ship, so the social media campaign that she currently keeps up with is the hash-tag #StayOnBoard. This genius campaign goes along with the festival's theme of water (waterfront park location) and ships (forecastle as the title). Houser says it's a good way to "make them feel like they're in the club." This is, in fact, critical to satisfying consumer motivations to engage in social media interaction with a music festival.

Again, the four motivations for attending a music festival are (1) reinforcement of social identity, (2) a sense of affinity, (3) participation, and (4) two-way interaction. When asked which of these each festival thought was focal to their marketing strategy, the answers were not surprising based on all the evidence presented thus far. While Grant Park Music Festival and Forecastle Festival have had an impressively similar take on marketing their very different music festivals, Aspen Music Festival has been the one whose marketing strategy seems much different. The story is the same in this case. However, instead of seeming a little more delayed in their marketing progression, Aspen Music Festival aligns with all the literature on the subject of social media motivations. The most important motivation for consumers is access to content. This is exactly the motivation that Szabo believes is the focus of her marketing strategy. GPMF and Forecastle named social identity as their top motivation to cater to. While this is certainly not wrong, it is interesting to note that the two who seem to be so immersed in creating a social identity and providing somewhat of a “club” for their fans may need to concentrate on festival content in their social media endeavors in the future. A happy medium between the top four motivations is nearly impossible to find, but these festivals must make an effort to appropriately cater to them all.

Determining *how* to reach the audience members who feel like they are part of the club and those who don’t even know about the festival calls for the three distinct tactics that I have identified. Artist marketing, the use of Facebook events, and YouTube marketing are all rapidly growing marketing strategies in the

marketplace and must be carefully considered by music festivals across the United States.

Forecastle Festival estimates that 10% of their marketing is made up of artist marketing, which is incredibly impressive in the industry. Houser says it's low, but not for lack of trying. She sends two images with festival graphics and that artist's graphics to their agents and managers well in advance. She also sends reminders via e-mail to these professionals so that they may promote the tickets going on sale or the lineup being announced. Hurwitz at GPMF tries to re-tweet artists who tweet about coming to the festival. She also hosts some Q&A sessions on Twitter with special guest artists, but admittedly does not have an artist marketing budget line. Aspen Music Festival takes a more laid-back approach to artist marketing and relies on the marketers of a particular guest artist to participate. Szabo says, "The higher up they are, the more on-top their people are. They control the heat on that and call the local newspaper arts editor or ask me to do it and I handle it on my end." Artist marketing is another untapped market in the world of classical music festivals more so than popular, and classical music fans are not shy to these artists.

None of the festivals I have studied take great advantage of Facebook events. Even though scholars have concluded that they help to indicate actual attendance numbers, many festivals have not found the most engaging way to use this medium. Aspen Music Festival creates events on Facebook from time-to-time for their winter series events that don't sell well, but they believe Facebook is not where their audience is for the summer festival, so their marketers do not participate. Forecastle Festival creates one event per year for the festival. This way, Houser believes "it's a

good way to give people reminders. I use it sparingly, but I'll be sure to post that tickets have gone up or lineup has been announced and everyone who has liked the page or responded to the event will get a notification. I don't want to bombard them but it is useful." Grant Park Music Festival simply believes there is no value in creating Facebook events for their festival's concerts. It is fairly obvious that scholars' believing in the value of these events is not enough for festivals to participate...yet.

YouTube marketing is yet another untapped market that can intensify audience participation in a music festival's social media presence and actual attendance as well. Forecastle Festival and Aspen Music Festival do a great job of incorporating video into their marketing mix. Forecastle hires a local Louisville videography company to handle capture every aspect of the weekend-long festival. Houser then uses this footage in year-round social media campaigns to keep the festival on board. Aspen Music Festival has a YouTube channel where they post many videos. One of their biggest initiatives is to record their master classes with the students and promote that to not only their other students, but music students all over the nation. Szabo hopes that the festival's new Digital Media Manager will expand on the possibilities of this YouTube channel's success. Grant Park Music Festival puts out a short video in February of each year to build suspense for that year's coming festival. However, many of the festival's musicians are union members. This means that the amount of exposure the musicians and the video itself receive can mean higher pay for those musicians. Hurwitz states, "It's an

expense so we've not done a lot and there are certainly some things we can expand and do."

After consulting the existing literature available on music festival marketing and relative subjects, it is clear that no music festival in the United States has a perfect marketing strategy. That is not the point. Each festival, whether classical or popular, has a very different programmatic and atmospheric dynamic. The best marketing strategy for each will inevitably be different, but what similarities can these festivals draw from each other? What can they learn to do? What can they learn not to do?

## **Conclusion**

In a general sense, classical music festivals most densely utilize traditional marketing strategies, while popular music festivals most densely utilize social media. Forecastle has its traditional mediums like radio, and Aspen and Grant Park Music Festivals both use social media to a certain extent. Forecastle Festivals strongest suits, as a popular music festival, include their social media campaigns, integration of Louisville as an atmospheric magnet, efforts to market toward tourists, YouTube marketing, and consumer satisfaction research. Their place of weakness lies in their lack of marketing to a youth audience to build future fans of the festival and ticket price as a deterrent to young adult audiences. Grant Park Music Festival as a classical music festival is very progressive in their marketing strategy. The festival's low (no) ticket price, customer satisfaction research, tourist marketing strategy, and atmosphere-centric marketing make it a very successful cultural event in Chicago. However, the festival does not participate heavily in social media, YouTube marketing, Facebook marketing, television, or print. They also do not market their impressive children's programs or engage in adequate two-way communication on social media. Aspen Music Festival and School is an incredibly dense festival in its programming. The festival does an excellent job of traditional marketing for their older audiences, YouTube marketing, and educational outreach. However, the educational side could absolutely be marketed more heavily. In addition, Aspen Music Festival could improve their social media presence, tourist marketing, and customer satisfaction research.



As marketers of music festivals both classical and popular, wouldn't it be interesting to see some of these lines blur? What if Aspen Music Festival attempted to market to neighboring cities and other tourist destinations like Forecastle currently does? What if Forecastle Festival hosted some sort of children's camp at the festival for those fans who wish to bring their children like Grant Park Music Festival? It is critical for the future success of classical and popular music festivals to broaden their current audience, go outside of their current boundaries, build a future audience, and maintain progress in the rapidly morphing world of marketing. In order to keep up, these festivals must learn from both the impeccably current literature and the marketing techniques of different kinds of festivals in order to survive now, and thrive in the future.

## References

- "About/FAQs." *Aspen Music Festival and School*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.aspenmusicfestival.com/about/about-the-aspen-music-festival-and-school/faqs/>.
- Bernstein, Joanne Scheff, and Philip Kotler. *Standing Room Only: Marketing Insights for Engaging Performing Arts Audiences*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- Borelli, Christopher. "Lollapalooza 2014: Who's There to Actually Focus on the Music?" *Chicago Tribune*. Chicago Tribune, 31 July 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- Bourdeau, Laurent. De Coster, Louis. Paradis, Sylvie. Measuring Satisfaction Among Festivalgoers: Differences Between Tourists and Residents as Visitors to a Music Festival in an Urban Environment. *International Journal of Arts Management*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (WINTER 2001), pp. 40-50
- Coplan, Chris. "What We Learned from Bonnaroo's Official Census." *Consequence of Sound*. Consequence of Sound, 04 June 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- Fessier, Bruce. "Coachella: A Collection of Moments." *The Desert Sun*. The Desert Sun, 15 Apr. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- "Forecastle Festival." *Forecastlefest*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. Retrieved from <http://forecastlefest.com/>.
- Godin, Seth. *All Marketers Are Liars: The Underground Classic That Explains How Marketing Really Works--and Why Authenticity Is the Best Marketing of All*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- Grant Park Music Festival*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.grantparkmusicfestival.com/>.
- "Homepage: Beck." *Beck*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.beck.com/>.
- Houser, Hannah. Personal interview. 6 Nov. 2014.
- Huizenga, Tom. "10 Can't-Miss Classical Music Festivals." *NPR*. NPR, 01 May 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- Hurwitz, Jill. Personal interview. 31 Oct. 2014.
- Knopper, Steve. "How Coachella, Bonnaroo, and More Festivals Revamped the Music Industry." *Rolling Stone*. Rolling Stone Magazine, 13 May 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

Kutler, Stanley I. "Music Festivals." *Dictionary of American History*. New York: Scribner, 2002. Print.

Lord, Joseph. "Forecastle Festival Met Attendance Expectations." *89.3 WFPL*. WFPL 89.3, 15 July 2013. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

"Newport Jazz Festival | July 31 - August 2, 2015." *Newport Jazz Festival | July 31 - August 2, 2015*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

Pegg, Shane. Patterson, Ian. (2010) Rethinking Music Festivals as a Staged Event: Gaining Insights from Understanding Visitor Motivations and the Experiences They Seek, *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 11:2, 85-99

Peterson, Richard A. (2014) 'Changing Arts Audiences: Capitalizing on Omnivorousness' Working Paper, Cultural Policy Center.

Salo, Jari. Lankinen, Mikko. Mäntymäki, Matti. (2013) The Use of Social Media for Artist Marketing: Music Industry Perspectives and Consumer Motivations, *International Journal on Media Management*, 15:1, 23-41, DOI: [10.1080/14241277.2012.755682](https://doi.org/10.1080/14241277.2012.755682)

Salzman, Jason. *Making the News: A Guide for Nonprofits and Activists*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998. Print.

Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., . . . Miles, A. (2013). A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC's Great British class survey experiment. *Sociology*, 47, 219-250.

Szabo, Janice. Personal interview. 11 Nov. 2014.