

Preface: Repeat performances and their audiences

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These two papers are a linked pair, submitted and accepted together. They are by an interdisciplinary research team, whose membership comprised one composer/musicologist (Anderson), and four experimental psychologists (Halpern, Sloboda, Müllensiefen, and Chan). Two members of the team are permanent faculty members of a conservatoire (the Guildhall School of Music & Drama), and a third (Halpern) is Visiting Research Fellow there (while permanently based at Bucknell University, USA). Chan was a student on the MSc in Music & Science at Goldsmith's University London, and Müllensiefen was her primary supervisor, with Halpern and Sloboda as external supervisors. The research arose from a joint wish to better understand the phenomenon of repeat performances within classical concerts, from a number of perspectives.

The first question was a historico-musicological one. Where and when did this practice of repeat performances originate, how prevalent has it been at different historical periods, what is known about the reasons for its adoption, and its impact on audiences? This is the focus of Anderson's paper which is, as far as the authors are aware, the first attempt to gather disparate historical accounts in one place, to provide a contextual overview.

The second question was a psychological one. What can we discover about the reactions of contemporary audience members to repeat performances, when data is systematically gathered during live concerts? This is the focus of the paper by Halpern et al., which again is the first such study designed to examine the actual effect of this kind of programming. The co-location of the research team in London allowed data to be gathered from public concerts organised by senior Guildhall School staff (Richard Benjafield and James Weeks) as well as the New Music Biennial, based at the South Bank Centre.

The two resulting papers, while formally independent from each other, grew out of and reflect a productive ongoing dialogue between researchers and practicing musicians, and hopefully demonstrate how different, but complementary, disciplinary lenses can be brought to bear on a single topic. The authors hope that readers who choose to engage with both papers in the set will gain a broader understanding of this phenomenon than either paper alone could offer. Other disciplinary approaches can, of course, further enrich understanding, but this pair of papers draws on the specific disciplinary backgrounds and orientations of the contributing authors.