



Marketplace orchestration of taste: Insights from the Bridgewater Hall

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Marketplace orchestration of taste: Insights from the Bridgewater Hall

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore how a concert hall can orchestrate and shape individuals' classical music tastes. The paper is based on an eight-month ethnography at the Bridgewater Hall concert venue in Manchester. Our emergent findings illustrate how classical music tastes are influenced via the spatial meanings of the concert hall. These meanings include various physical, historical and socio-cultural aspects that are revealed in the context of the Bridgewater Hall. Our study contributes to various streams of consumer culture theory (CCT) research and opens up avenues for future research on the interrelationships of space and place with taste.

Summary statement of contribution

Our study focuses on spatial taste orchestration, and provides valuable insights for CCT research into taste and space and place. More specifically, we provide a phenomenological approach to the study of place that moves away from conventional approaches and captures the totality of the meanings captured in the concert hall. Our study also positions the concert hall as an *emplaced* taste regime that shapes attendees' classical music tastes and their consumption practices within the classical music field. Finally, we illustrate how particular places acquire significance within individuals' everyday lives in the context of classical music consumption.

Keywords

Classical music, consumer culture theory, experiential consumption, place, taste, concert halls

Word count: 8,031 (excluding references)

Introduction

‘Identity is worked and power is wielded within the spaces of musical experience, and few who enter its rarified atmosphere exit unchanged’. (DeChaine, 2002, p. 91)

This study explores the shaping qualities of the places of musical experience, along with their ability to orchestrate musical tastes. In particular, we explore the shaping of individuals’ tastes in a concert hall setting within the field of classical music consumption. The logic of this paper broadly concerns an exploration of the interrelationships between space and place with taste. Both space and place and taste have been studied extensively across the humanities and social sciences. However, there is little empirical research that brings together these two theoretical constructs, and investigates how particular places tend to orchestrate and shape taste. Phenomenologically-oriented philosophical thought sees place as the primary basis of our experience with the world (cf. Creswell, 2004). Such philosophers have long argued for a revitalisation of the place construct in contemporary scientific thought. Consumer culture theory (CCT) research (cf. Arnould and Thompson, 2005) has illustrated the importance of space and place in a diversity of ways (e.g. Arnould, 2005; Debenedetti, Oppewal, & Arsel, 2014; Maclaran & Brown, 2005). We argue that connecting taste with place can provide novel insights for those fields of marketing theory and practice that deal with the socio-cultural aspects of consumption.

We position our paper within the field of CCT research and borrow insights from such fields and streams of thought as cultural-oriented sociology and the phenomenology of space and place. Using the field of classical music consumption (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) to establish the socio-cultural positioning of our study, we turn our attention towards the Bridgewater Hall concert venue, a classical and orchestral music oriented concert hall in Manchester, UK; and ask how the meanings of this particular place tend to influence and shape consumers’ tastes and identity investments, within this particular field of consumption.

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3 The paper is based on an eight-month ethnography conducted at the venue. During this period,
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5 the first author attended more than twenty classical music concerts in which he kept fieldnotes,
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7 gathered artefact material, participated in informal interactions and completed interviews with
8
9 concert attendees. Our emergent findings indicate how consumers' classical music tastes are
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11 shaped and transformed within the Bridgewater Hall via the physical, historical and socio-
12
13 cultural spatial meanings of the place. These findings contribute to an understanding of the
14
15 role of individuals' place-dependent musical experiences in the orchestration of their classical
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17 music tastes, and open up avenues for future research to explore the interplay between space
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19 and place with taste. The rest of the paper is organised as follows; first the theoretical
20
21 foundations of the study are expanded; the context of the study is then presented;
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23 methodological procedures are discussed; the findings are presented; and finally, conclusions
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25 and implications for CCT research are drawn.
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32 **Theoretical Background**

33 *Field, habitus, and taste*

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36 In Bourdieu's (1984) early writings, taste is understood as reflecting the employment
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38 of generalised forms of capital such as economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. These
39
40 capitals are stored within an internal system of dispositions, termed habitus, and are acquired
41
42 as part of consumers' primary socialisation processes. In his later writings, Bourdieu moved
43
44 towards the abandonment of generalised capital conceptions to replace them with field-
45
46 dependent ones, that is of capital conceptions that are linked with specific social fields
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48 (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Field-specific capital is not only acquired as part of
49
50 consumers' primary socialisation processes but also as part of their participation in various
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52 social fields throughout the course of their lives. As such, habitus is continuously developed
53
54 and re-enacted along with consumers' engagement in different fields of consumption.
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3 Bourdieuan concepts of taste, habitus, and field have inspired CCT research in a
4
5 number of different ways. A useful categorisation is provided by Coskuner-Balli and
6
7 Thompson (2013) who recognise two distinct Bourdieu-inspired analytic trajectories within
8
9 consumer culture research studies. First, research that is based upon Bourdieu's earlier
10
11 generalised capital conception attempts to show how consumers' cultural capital investments
12
13 influence their consumption choices, preferences and tastes (e.g. Allen, 2002; Holt, 1998;
14
15 McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013; Ustuner & Thompson, 2012). This stream of research
16
17 explicates how social class directs the ways in which status-oriented consumption is practiced
18
19 in a variety of consumption spaces (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013). Second, research that is
20
21 supported by Bourdieu's later field-dependent capital conception deals with consumers'
22
23 membership and involvement within a diverse array of consumption communities (e.g. Arsel
24
25 & Bean, 2013; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; O'Sullivan, 2009; Thornton, 1996). This stream of
26
27 research focuses on consumers' creation of field-dependent capital through identity
28
29 investments in particular consumption communities (Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013).
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31 Such studies highlight the move towards more contextualised forms of capital (e.g. Thornton,
32
33 1996), yet these efforts largely focus on the structural aspects of taste, quite often deal with
34
35 class-based and status practices within the consumption fields and/or communities
36
37 investigated, and ultimately provide a macro-social interpretation of the phenomenon at hand.
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43 A reliance on field and habitus risks failing to take into consideration the reproductive
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45 role of human agency, which is grounded in individuals' actions and interactions and
46
47 ultimately shapes their habitus. Crossley (2001) points towards the embodied potential of
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49 phenomenological interpretations of Bourdieu's work. As such, we add a third analytic
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51 trajectory of Bourdieu-inspired CCT research which is informed by Crossley (2001) and takes
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53 into consideration the most embodied aspects of habitus and taste. There exist only a handful
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55 of prior studies that incorporate elements of these considerations. For example, Kerrigan,
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3 Larsen, Hanratty and Korta (2014) describe how consumers utilise music while running with
4 the aid of mobile music technologies in order to improve their running experience. From a
5 Bourdieuan point of view, the musicalisation of running in their study is achieved through
6 the development of existential capital that unfolds from consumers' running practices
7 (Nettleton, 2013). Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) conducted an ethnographic study in the
8 micro-cultural context of trailer parks to uncover the micropolitics of moral-driven
9 consumption and status negotiation. In the context of their study, 'habitus becomes a locally
10 enacted phenomenon that activates multiple dispositions, a set of beliefs, and particular skills,
11 which in turn reflects in the ways consumers navigate the marketplace and larger societal
12 structure' (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013, p. 708). These studies highlight the most embodied
13 potential of the Bourdieuan concepts of field and habitus which occurs via individuals'
14 actions and interactions and is ultimately grounded in the spatial context within which these
15 (inter)actions take place.

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32 The influence of spatiality on individuals' habitus and tastes remains largely
33 underexplored in CCT research. However, it has not been entirely untouched within the field
34 of cultural-oriented sociology (Benzecry & Collins, 2014; Lopez-Sintas, Garcia-Alvarez, &
35 Perez-Rubiales, 2012; Nettleton, 2013). In their microsociological study of 'opera fanatics',
36 Benzecry and Collins (2014) explain how these consumers transcend the structural aspects of
37 taste in favour of a number of in-concert interaction rituals that provide them with authentic
38 opera experiences. Moreover, Lopez-Sintas et al. (2012) found that museum viewers who
39 reported having lived an intense unforgettable aesthetic experience shared two common
40 conditions in their experiences with artworks; the awareness that the artwork viewed was
41 original and that they personally had the necessary contextual cultural capital to interpret its
42 social value. We argue that these two conditions indicate the potentially transformative
43 aspects of taste enacted in arts spaces and the field-specific norms with which these spaces
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3 abide. Finally, in her ethnographic account of fell running in the English Lake District,
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5 Nettleton (2013) develops the concept of existential capital to highlight the gains acquired
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7 from the embodied activity of fell running, thus, incorporating the runners' bodily awareness
8
9 of the various challenging elements (e.g. ground and weather conditions) and their spatial
10
11 awareness (e.g. spectacular landscapes).
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14 Our study aims to contribute to these lines of work by explicitly investigating the
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16 spatial aspects of consumers' tastes. We aim to delve deeper into the spatiality of individuals'
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18 field-specific experiences to address the question of how particular consumption places
19
20 inform habitus and taste. In other words, this paper aims to uncover how the spatial meanings
21
22 of the Bridgewater Hall orchestrate and shape the habitus and taste of the consumers that
23
24 participate in the field of classical music consumption. In the next section, we outline the
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26 spatial approach adopted in this paper and review previous CCT research that has dealt with
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28 issues of space and place.
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31 32 33 34 *Theories of space and place*

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36 Place has traditionally been subject to a wide range of definitions and interpretations
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38 and the term is often used interchangeably with space. According to Creswell (2004), there
39
40 are several ways that place has been approached and researched so far. He identifies three
41
42 distinct approaches namely descriptive, social constructionist and phenomenological. In this
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44 paper, we adopt the phenomenological approach which conceptualises place as a way of
45
46 looking and knowing the world, as the experiential marker of our existence (Bachelard, 1964;
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48 Casey, 1998; Tuan, 1977) A phenomenological conception positions place as a platform of
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50 action that is physical and historical, social and cultural (Casey, 2001) and argues that we
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52 understand the world through our experiences in particular places (Tuan, 1977); such
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54 experiences convert space into lived place and mark the distinction between the two concepts.
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3 The phenomenological approach, therefore, involves us perceiving the world by being
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5 *emplaced* and goes beyond descriptive and social constructionist approaches of place ‘to
6
7 define the essence of human existence as one that is necessarily and importantly in-place’
8
9 (Creswell, 2004, p. 51). For example, Gaston Bachelard, in his classic piece *The Poetics of*
10
11 *Space*, provides a rich and detailed account of the ways in which a person’s house is topo-
12
13 analytically related with their self and identity (Bachelard, 1964). In short, for Bachelard,
14
15 houses consist of a set of places (rooms) each one of which invoke memory and imagination
16
17 (Casey, 1998). In CCT research, a number of scholars have highlighted the need for empirical
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19 studies that take into consideration the emplaced aspects of consumer behaviour (e.g. Sherry,
20
21 2000) rather than conceptualising place as a static entity which is incorporated into existing
22
23 social categories, or as a dynamic entity which is socially constructed by its inhabitants. Such
24
25 conceptualisations are influenced by a social constructionist approach to place and fail to
26
27 account for the orchestrative qualities of place. We feel that the phenomenological approach
28
29 to place allows us to fully capture the dynamic and complex nature of place and take into
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31 consideration the variety of ways in which it shapes identity and taste.
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37 Prior CCT research has adopted either the descriptive or the social constructionist
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39 approach to place generally at the expense of phenomenological considerations, an omission
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41 which we now discuss in more detail. Some studies deal with the spatial dimensions of the
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43 contemporary marketplace. There are several strands to this stream of CCT research. Firstly, a
44
45 handful of studies are concerned with broader experiential consumption practices as
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47 evidenced in various consumption spaces (e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh,
48
49 1993; Kozinets, 2002) and are aligned with experiential marketing approaches that emphasise
50
51 the importance of creating extraordinary consumption experiences which often possess
52
53 transformative qualities (Arnould & Price, 1993). We note that the transformative character of
54
55 these consumption experiences is mainly the result of the extraordinary nature of the context
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3 in which they occur; be it a high-risk leisure activity (Celsi et al., 1993) or a festival
4 celebration (Kozinets, 2002). The multi-faceted role of place in creating and shaping such
5 experiences remains somehow underexplored. Secondly, an emerging area of consumer
6 culture research deals with the interplay between aesthetics and experiential forms of
7 consumption (e.g. Goulding, 2001; Houston & Meamber, 2011; Joy & Sherry, 2003). In
8 particular, Houston and Meamber (2011) discuss the increasing importance of aesthetics in
9 consumer research and their neglected role in the experiential consumption literature. The
10 authors propose that the aesthetic elements of Disney World's EPCOT Center such as the
11 architecture, costumed employees, and live cultural performances contribute to the
12 construction of an 'authentic' world of the past, via individuals' consumption experiences
13 there. Moreover, Goulding (2001) investigates how the museum marketplace enacts a series
14 of consumption experiences that revolve around existential and aesthetic types of nostalgic
15 behaviour, while Joy and Sherry (2003) examine the variety of ways in which the body
16 experiences artworks so as to inform and shape the aesthetic appreciation of consumers and
17 their overall aesthetic experiences in museums. However, in these studies, the aesthetic
18 experience is the primary unit of analysis and any spatial considerations are mostly
19 conceptualised as supportive elements of the aesthetic process. A third strand of research
20 deals with the processes by which consumers develop attachments to particular consumption
21 places (e.g. Debenedetti et al., 2014; Maclaran & Brown, 2005). Such studies broadly
22 investigate how consumers develop emotional and symbolic bonds with particular places. For
23 example, Debenedetti et al. (2014) consider how place attachment occurs via perceptions of
24 familiarity, authenticity and security and is eventually translated into experiences of feeling-
25 at-home. In doing so, they adopt a gift economy perspective to describe how individuals
26 develop attachments with a series of commercial places in France such as bars, restaurants
27 and concert halls. However, these places are treated as elements of the circuit of the gift

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3 economy process, rather than as key events by themselves Another stream of research deals
4
5 with the spatial dimensions of contemporary consumer culture in the context of services and
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7 retail marketing to construct interpretations of consumption places that transcend existing
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9 conceptualisations of place as a marketing mix element (e.g. Arnould, et al., 2009; Kozinets et
10
11 al., 2002). From a CCT perspective, Arnould (2005) suggests a set of economic, utopian,
12
13 ludic, and temporal resources that retailers and service providers might employ to transform
14
15 commercial places so as to reflect consumers' tastes. By adopting a social constructionist
16
17 approach to place, this stream of research does not fully capture the actual meanings of place
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19 as they emerge vis-à-vis individuals' consumption experiences.
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23 In sum, previous CCT research has not yet fully acknowledged the variety of ways in
24
25 which habitus and taste are interrelated with space and place. In particular, most prior work
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27 does not explain how the spatial meanings of particular places orchestrate and shape
28
29 individuals' tastes and no theoretical framework exists that attempts to address such
30
31 disparities. The aim of this paper is to redress this literature gap by exploring how the
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33 Bridgewater Hall concert venue shapes individuals' classical music tastes. Next, we offer a
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35 contextual overview of the classical music field and outline our methodological approach
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37 before we move on to discuss our findings.
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43 **The field of classical music consumption**

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45 The musical field is by nature highly fragmented and consists of a wide range of
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47 music genres, taste communities and regimes (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Southerton, 2001). A
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49 music genre might be defined as 'a system of orientations, expectations, and conventions that
50
51 bind together an industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a
52
53 distinctive sort of music' (Lena & Peterson, 2008, p. 254). In this paper, we understand the
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55 field of classical music as a field that encompasses such music styles and genres as classical,
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3 chamber, opera, and symphony; that stand in diametrical opposition to popular music, and
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5 traditionally appeal to an older audience. In addition to this, as Larsen, Lawson and Todd
6
7 (2010) point out, most studies on the socio-cultural aspects of other genres of music
8
9 consumption focus solely on adolescents or younger adults and further underline the need to
10
11 investigate the situational aspects that are linked with consumers' music tastes and
12
13 preferences. A strand of cultural-oriented sociological research has investigated the
14
15 interrelationships of music with space and place (e.g. Connell & Gibson, 2003; DeChaine,
16
17 2002). DeChaine (2002) argues that in order to be able to understand how music might be
18
19 shaped by place, it is important to explore the ways in which 'musical space meshes with the
20
21 specificities of place, in its particular physical, socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts'
22
23 (DeChaine, 2002, p. 92). Accordingly, Connell and Gibson (2003) discuss the importance of
24
25 aural architecture and the variety of ways through which music shapes space and vice versa.
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30 In the CCT field, the significance of the concert hall for the classical music field has
31
32 been highlighted by a number of researchers (e.g. Carú & Cova, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2009). In
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34 the context of classical music concert halls, Carú and Cova (2005) explore the role of service
35
36 elements in the creation of artistic experiences, including how consumers appropriate various
37
38 aspects of the concert hall servicescape. Their findings show that service elements facilitate
39
40 immersion with the artistic experience via a threefold appropriation process which includes
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42 activities of nesting (developing familiarity), investigating (gaining knowledge) and stamping
43
44 (ascribing meaning) and are supported by service providers (Carú & Cova, 2005). Also,
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46 O'Sullivan (2009), in his study of classical music orchestra audiences, positions these
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48 orchestras as co-consuming communities that share typical brand community characteristics
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50 along with the presence of service performers and a set of temporal characteristics. In doing
51
52 so, O'Sullivan (2009) explicitly focuses on investigation of the social dimensions of the
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54 classical music experience of orchestra attendees. Although these studies account for the
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3 aesthetic appreciation that results from consumers' immersion with aesthetic or artistic
4 experiences, place mainly unfolds as just one of a number of elements within the immersion
5 process rather than a key event in itself upon which other elements emerge (Carú & Cova,
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10 2005).

11 12 13 14 **Methodology**

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16 The paper is based on an eight-month ethnography at the Bridgewater Hall concert venue.
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18 Access was granted by the hall's management team to the first author, who made his presence
19 and role clear to concert attendees through a researcher identification badge and signage
20 which clearly outlined the scope of the research. During the eight-month period, the first
21 author attended more than 20 classical music concerts, where fieldnotes were compiled and
22 artefact material (leaflets, concert programmes and classical music magazines) were gathered.
23
24 He also participated in informal interactions and completed twenty unstructured on-site and
25 off-site interviews with concert attendees (McCracken, 1988).
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34 A complex approach to ethnographic inquiry was followed. First, we aimed to explore
35 the emplaced aspects of the classical music concert experience. This required a focus on the
36 place aspects of the Bridgewater Hall along with attendees' lived experiences within it (Casey,
37 1998). The first author spent a considerable amount of time familiarising himself with the
38 concert hall and its various places, in particular the auditorium, the lounge areas, and other
39 seating areas. Particular attention was paid to the diversity of ways in which concert attendees
40 moved in space and interacted with the place, the service providers and the artists before,
41 during, and after each classical music performance. As part of this process, fieldnotes were
42 completed and artefact material was gathered on a systematic basis. This ethnographic
43 approach was supplemented with informal interactions and interviews with the attendees at
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3 the concert hall, which further helped to identify the embodied aspects of their concert hall
4 experiences as those were realised at the phenomenological level (Joy & Sherry, 2003).
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7 The informal interactions were not recorded, yet subsequent notes were made as part
8 of the ethnographic process. However, the unstructured interviews were recorded, transcribed
9 and anonymised. These unstructured interviews were conducted both on and off site,
10 something that we will elaborate on shortly. All interview participants were within the 30-70
11 year-old age range, supporting observations from previous studies conducted within the
12 classical music field (Larsen et al., 2010). Our analysis did not focus specifically on socio-
13 economic characteristics, which we argue are beyond the scope and objectives of our study.
14 We followed a combination of purposeful and snowballing sampling techniques, and
15 interviews varied in duration depending on the circumstances under which they were
16 conducted (Kozinets, 2002). More specifically, on-site interviews were conducted based on
17 concert attendees' degree of engagement with classical music and their familiarity with
18 concert hall venues and the Bridgewater Hall. We recruited further participants to be
19 interviewed off-site. Key informants were initially identified during our informal interactions
20 based on their degree of engagement with classical music and degree of familiarity with
21 concert halls, along with their interest in the study. These informants introduced us to further
22 informants who possessed similar characteristics. While brief information about the study was
23 available to all participants (via signage and the researcher), interview participants received
24 specific written information about the purpose of the study and were asked to sign a consent
25 form to confirm their understanding and voluntary participation. Off-site interviews were an
26 average of one hour long, and typically included a more detailed discussion about participants'
27 musical tastes and their relationship with the classical music field which often transcended
28 their lived experiences at the Bridgewater Hall (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). These
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3 interviews also helped us to further position our observations within the classical music field
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5 in our attempt to ground our experiential themes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).
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8 In terms of data analysis and interpretation, a constant comparative process was
9
10 followed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and we also adopted Spiggle's (1994) steps of coding,
11
12 categorising, and abstracting in order to be able to be continuously informed by emergent
13
14 findings and theory in a systematic manner. Fieldnotes, transcribed interview data and artefact
15
16 material were coded and read in depth several times (Kozinets, 2002). After the initial
17
18 thematic categories were identified, a revision of the analysis was conducted according to
19
20 those categories, leading to a process where emergent themes informed previous themes as we
21
22 went back and forth between data and extant literature (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989).
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24 The multiple sources of data collection helped us to ensure trustworthiness and confirm and
25
26 further develop emergent themes.
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29 30 31 32 **Findings**

33
34 The Bridgewater Hall is Manchester's biggest and most internationally-renowned
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36 concert venue and was constructed in 1996 to replace the Free Trade Hall. While the majority
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38 of its 250 yearly concerts revolve around classical music, it also puts on performances in other
39
40 musical genres including rock, pop, jazz and world music (Bridgewater Hall, 2015). In
41
42 addition, the hall is home to three orchestras, namely the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic, and
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44 the Manchester Camerata. These orchestras are regarded as taste communities within the field
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46 of classical music in general, and the Bridgewater Hall in particular. Our emergent findings
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48 illustrate how consumers' classical music tastes are orchestrated and shaped within the
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50 Bridgewater Hall through the physical, historical and socio-cultural meanings of the concert
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52 hall. We present our findings in four thematic categories, namely the spatial politics of
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3 appreciation, the past and present of the Bridgewater Hall, the aural-driven architecture of the
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5 concert hall, and the poetics of the Bridgewater Hall space.
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10 *The spatial politics of appreciation*

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12 The spatial politics of appreciation refers to the spatial orchestration of taste in the
13 concert hall. The Bridgewater Hall's resident orchestras act as locality-based taste
14 communities (Southerton, 2001) that nurture institutionalised cultural capital from the
15 classical music field to the Bridgewater Hall and coordinate the aesthetics of classical music
16 practices at the venue (Arsel & Bean, 2013). Attendees associate themselves with these taste
17 communities by mostly attending concerts only when these orchestras perform. Other
18 attendees voluntarily participate in the various choirs of these orchestras by undertaking vocal
19 coaching, attending regular rehearsals and social events, and even by performing in 'choral
20 recitals'. Long-term engagement with such orchestras contributes to the creation of a sense of
21 belonging and familiarity (Debenedetti et al., 2014). During our interview session, Dan
22 explained his association with the BBC Philharmonic orchestra.
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37 "I remember an early concert at the Bridgewater which might not be long after it opened and
38 my girlfriend at the time and I, went down to see [...] and that was when we first became
39 aware of what a great sound you get in there but also the way that it was a bit extra because of
40 the additional aspects of the performance, the orchestra performance [...] We are very lucky
41 to have quality performances, you know, such a great standard of performance for various
42 reasons. It's interesting that the BBC Phil has always been in Manchester and it's just that
43 we've got that around". (Dan, 40s, interview)
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53 For Dan, the presence of the BBC Philharmonic orchestra, one of the most renowned
54 classical music orchestras in the United Kingdom, at the Bridgewater Hall complements the
55 physical aspects of the concert hall, i.e. the quality of the sound. By citing their existence in
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3 Manchester as ‘interesting’, Dan emphasises the importance of the orchestra’s location in
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5 Manchester along with its status within the classical music field. For him as well as for other
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7 informants, their association with these orchestras is at once spatial and temporal and seems
8
9 to act as a confirmation of their shared classical music tastes. Such a confirmation is
10
11 ultimately shaped by the aesthetic nature and positioning of these orchestras, not only within
12
13 the classical music field but also within the context of the Bridgewater Hall. Here, Jenny
14
15 elaborates upon her ten-year engagement with the Hallé orchestra choir and the various
16
17 rehearsals of which she has been part.
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21 “It does make you explore avenues that you might not have explored just on your own
22
23 because, you know, you are forced to learn this piece [...] through studying it you may
24
25 actually get to really love it and then you’ve got a whole new bit of a repertoire opened to
26
27 you”.
28
29 (Jenny, 50s, interview)
30

31 For her, the Hallé choir represents a platform upon which she not only performs but
32
33 also shapes her taste through the exploration of classical music pieces with which she is not
34
35 familiar. As Jenny points out, this shaping process is essentially created via her participation
36
37 in the choir’s rehearsals. In the context of kitchen consumption practices, Southerton (2001)
38
39 argues that the informants in his study relate to generic social categorisations mainly through
40
41 their association with locally-based taste communities. Accordingly, we propose that the
42
43 presence of these resident orchestras in the concert hall provides a direct connection between
44
45 the attendees and the classical music field, and also leads to the development of a *spatial*
46
47 *politics of appreciation* which further nurture and shape the classical music tastes of our
48
49 participants.
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53 We further illustrate the variety of consumption practices through which such spatial
54
55 politics unfold and aesthetic appreciation occurs. For example, the understanding regarding
56
57 when one is able to enter the auditorium once the performance has started is imposed on the
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3 audience. The ushers only allow latecomers to enter the hall during gaps between pieces, in
4
5 order to avoid interruptions to the performance – for the benefit of both the performers and
6
7 the audience. Other examples of similar consumption practices include considerations such as:
8
9 the importance of silence in the auditorium during the concert performances; and knowing
10
11 when to applaud and when to cough.
12

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14
15 “It is strange to see how silence is interrupted from clapping after each part of the
16
17 performance is over, and especially at the end of the performance. Clapping is the ultimate
18
19 form of appreciation, clapping with passion, clapping loudly, clapping to show one’s
20
21 emotional involvement with the performance” (fieldnote extract, Hallé Extravaganza
22
23 concert, 4/10/2014)
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25
26
27 “Silence is appreciation here and coughing a sign of disrespect, sometimes, a sign of
28
29 dissatisfaction as well” (fieldnote extract, BBC Philharmonic concert, 7/10/2014)
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31

32
33 As evidenced by the above extracts, silence, clapping, and coughing represent
34
35 contextualised cultural capital practices at the Bridgewater Hall (Allen, 2002; Lopez-Sintas et
36
37 al., 2012; Saatcioglu and Ozanne, 2013). Our ethnography revealed that each one of these
38
39 practices refer to various modes of ‘in-concert’ aesthetic appreciation. Silence and clapping
40
41 are common positive reactions to the classical music experience, whereas coughing can be
42
43 perceived as ‘a sign of disrespect’ towards the audience and the performers - which is often
44
45 attributed to low cultural capital - or ‘a sign of dissatisfaction’ towards the classical music
46
47 performance. However, in delving deeper into the practice of clapping, Jenny further
48
49 demonstrates inconsistencies in the practice and audience interpretation of the etiquette
50
51 surrounding it.
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56 “They really don’t like it if you clap in-between movements. And I can see the point [...] But it
57
58 seems to me that some movements, particularly some first movements and some symphonies,
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3 you just want to applaud after! And, for goodness sake, the conductor has put his arms down
4
5 and I think it's a shame that people are frowned upon if they burst into spontaneous applause.
6
7 And if you think if you were at a jazz concert, you'd be applauding that champion soloist
8
9 even if the other instruments were still playing! I quite like to see a bit of that. But...I think I
10
11 am a heretic!" (Jenny, 50s,
12
13 interview)
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16
17 Jenny's quote highlights the field-dependent nature of the practice of clapping, which,
18
19 for her, becomes constraining in terms of her classical music experience. She positions herself
20
21 as a partial outsider referring to the committed Bridgewater attendees as 'they' and herself as
22
23 'heretic' for defending 'spontaneous applause'. Jenny acknowledges the spatial politics of
24
25 appreciation from which the contextualised practice of clapping unfolds and makes
26
27 comparisons between two distinct musical fields – classical and jazz – based on their differing
28
29 appreciation conventions. Such contextualised practices are, in some cases, facilitated by the
30
31 service providers (Carú & Cova, 2005). Such practices also boost a sense of community
32
33 within the context of the Bridgewater Hall and might be theorised as quasi-ritualistic
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35 behaviours within the collectivised classical music experience at the concert hall (O'Sullivan,
36
37 2009).
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43 *The past and present of the Bridgewater Hall*

44
45 The Bridgewater Hall is located in Manchester city centre, with the square in front of the
46
47 venue being named after Sir John Barbiroli, one of the Hallé's most famous conductors. His
48
49 statue also stands outside the main entrance. Our informants revealed that the history of the
50
51 place and its surrounding urban landscape play an important role in their classical music
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53 experiences and the attachment they have created with the hall (Debenedetti et al., 2014). In
54
55 particular, informants' classical music experiences relate to knowledge and involvement in
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2
3 the local history of Manchester's classical music spaces, such as the Free Trade Hall. This
4 building still exists in its past architectural form, in close proximity to the newer venue, and is
5 now home to the Radisson Hotel (Figure 1). Gina illustrates how the attachment that she
6 developed with the Free Trade Hall informs her engagement with classical music and the
7 Bridgewater Hall.
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15 “...And then we were always invited even in junior school which was quite exciting really
16 because we were taken to the Free Trade Hall, because actually this building and where it is at
17 the moment, it wasn't here. Every school used to go to the Free Trade Hall, sometimes it was
18 once a year, sometimes it was twice a year. And I remember being so excited! And that's
19 when I started hearing [classical music]” (Gina, 60s, interview)
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27 When asked to describe her relationship with classical music and her experiences at
28 the Bridgewater Hall, Gina immediately recalled how she developed her initial interest in
29 classical music through its predecessor. For many informants, the Bridgewater Hall provides a
30 nostalgic connection with the history of the Free Trade Hall, which was the place in which
31 they were first introduced to the classical music field. Gina's quote reveals a nostalgic tone
32 (Goulding, 2001; Houston & Meamber, 2011). Her present emotional attachment
33 (Debenedetti et al., 2014) with the Bridgewater Hall is shaped by the historical continuity that
34 it provides with its predecessor (DeChaine, 2002).
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46 “I used to attend concerts when the Hallé performed in Belle Vue. Are you aware of the
47 history of the Hallé? Well, during the war, when there was no hall in the town, they used to
48 perform, and for a few years afterwards until the Free Trade Hall was rebuilt, they performed
49 at Belle Vue Circus [...] And as a teenager I used to go to concerts there. Then of course we
50 graduated to the Free Trade Hall and since [then] we got in here”. (Robert, 70s, interview)
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3 Robert reveals an historical continuity which is firmly positioned within attendees'
4
5 desire to create romantic links with their past classical music experiences which are spatially
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7 informed (Goulding, 2001). For him, Belle Vue 'Circus' (a former zoo and amusement park
8
9 in Manchester) which was the first place in which the Hallé Orchestra performed, and then the
10
11 Free Trade Hall, effectively narrate, in spatial terms, the history of his relationship with
12
13 classical music. For Robert, such an historical continuity is associated with the history of the
14
15 Hallé orchestra in these places and then becomes incorporated into his Bridgewater Hall
16
17 experience.
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21 In sum, the Bridgewater Hall is perceived as being a key aspect of the history of the
22
23 classical music landscape in Manchester. We argue that the surrounding historical landscape
24
25 contributes to the maintenance of this historical continuity. Such continuity helps informants
26
27 such as Gina and Robert to avoid sensing displacement (Maclaran & Brown, 2005) whereby
28
29 the Bridgewater Hall continues the classical music history tradition of Manchester from such
30
31 places as the Free Trade Hall. As such, our informants develop a spatial form of habitus
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33 which is locally enacted from the historical antecedents of the Bridgewater Hall (Saatcioglu
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35 and Ozanne, 2013) and informs their classical music experiences.
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Figure 1. The Free Trade Hall

The aural-driven architecture of the concert hall

In light of the experiential consumption era, previous CCT literature has illustrated that brands tend to draw meaning from the architectural forms of contemporary consumption places (Kozinets et al., 2002). The Bridgewater Hall was built in such a way as to maximise the acoustics. The auditorium features an organ boasting 5,500 pipes, which speak the same sound at each rank, cover the rear wall and further contribute to sound enhancement (Manchester History Net, 2014). The Bridgewater Hall has also been described as one of the quietest musical spaces in the world, with engineering efforts directed towards minimising external sounds; external noise is reduced due to the rubber springs on which the hall is built (BBC News, 2009). The official website of the Bridgewater Hall describes in detail the aural-driven construction process of the concert hall.

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2
3 “The Bridgewater Hall is neither concrete nor steel-framed, but is mostly formed from solid,
4 reinforced concrete, moulded and cast like a vast sculpture. This gives it the acoustic ideal of
5 enormous density and mass. The remarkable roof appears to hover, weightless, above the
6 building. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Hall’s construction is that the entire
7 structure floats free of the ground on almost three hundred, earthquake-proof isolation
8 bearings or giant springs, so there is no rigid connection between the 22,500 ton building and
9 its foundations. This ensures the Hall’s carefully designed acoustic is protected from all
10 outside noise and vibration”. (The Bridgewater Hall website, 5/8/2014)
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21 In order to initiate the attendees into this complex *aural architecture*, a series of
22 guided tours are frequently organised by the management team, which serve to boost a sense
23 of appreciation of the concert hall acoustics. These guided tours might be considered as
24 spatial resources which are employed to guide attendees towards an acoustic-oriented
25 perception of place (Arnould, 2005). As a result, we argue that the aural architecture of the
26 hall becomes part of the physical aspects of the concert hall servicescape that shapes
27 consumers’ classical music experiences there (Carú & Cova, 2005; Kozinets et al., 2002). It
28 provides a unique sound experience, which has frequently been acknowledged as one of the
29 main factors that provide a satisfying classical music experience (Connell & Gibson, 2003).
30 One of our informants, Nelly, highlights the importance of the acoustics.
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45 “I’ve been to loads and loads of concert halls all over the country. I remember going to the
46 Royal Festival Hall when it first opened and the acoustics were absolutely poor in there and
47 they had to do all sorts of alterations in order to make it sound good. So, after a moment this
48 hall started to surprise me really and I’ve never really been disappointed with any kind of
49 piece that I’ve listened to”. (Nelly, 50s,
50 interview)
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4 Nelly communicates her love of the sound of the Bridgewater Hall and compares it
5
6 with her poor acoustic experiences in previous concert halls such as the Royal Festival Hall.
7
8 By using terms such as ‘surprise’ and ‘never really disappointed’, Nelly aims to highlight the
9
10 consistent high quality of the acoustics at the Bridgewater Hall. As a result, the quality of the
11
12 sound does not only constitute a defining factor of attendees’ music experiences but is also
13
14 considered as one of the unique attributes of the spatial character of the Bridgewater Hall.
15
16 Arthur further demonstrates the significance of this aural-driven architecture of the Hall.
17
18

19
20 “You see, it’s the volume balance that ruins concerts for me and that’s the main thing that
21
22 concerns me [...] I would listen to any type of music in any place, even heavy metal in a
23
24 cathedral, as long as the acoustic instruments in the metal band were treated the same as the
25
26 acoustic instruments in a classical group would be treated in that cathedral” (Arthur, 60s,
27
28 interview)
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34 For Arthur as well as for other individuals with high levels of cultural capital in the
35
36 classical music field, the ‘volume balance’ is considered to be a significant aspect of their
37
38 concert experience, as poor attention to this balance could ruin the natural acoustics of the
39
40 music instruments and, subsequently, lead to poor sound quality. This need for natural
41
42 acoustic experiences links with issues of authenticity, which are evidenced in prior research
43
44 (e.g. Houston & Meamber, 2011; Lopez-Sintas et al., 2012). In particular, the aural-driven
45
46 architecture unfolds vis-à-vis attendees’ experiences at the Bridgewater Hall which, similar to
47
48 Houston and Meamber’s (2011) museum study, contributes to the delivery of authentic
49
50 classical music experiences.
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56 *The poetics of the Bridgewater hall space*
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3 The poetics of the concert space refer to the fact that each space within the
4 Bridgewater Hall seems to possess its own meaning and function (Bachelard, 1964). The
5 multi-level architecture of the hall gives access to different areas both inside and outside the
6 auditorium such as the gallery, the circle, the choir, and the Barbirolli Room (Figure 2). In
7 their ethnographic study of retail environments, Borghini et al. (2009) explain how different
8 areas within the American Girl Place store give rise to various modes of ideological
9 expression related to the brand at hand. Our ethnography revealed how the different areas of
10 the Bridgewater Hall attract different types of audiences based on their engagement with
11 classical music, their personal preferences and their overall status within the classical music
12 field, along with their familiarity with the concert hall.
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26 “I always have tickets inside gallery so we sit right by the orchestra, so we look right by the
27 orchestra to see what’s happening” (Mary, 60s, interview)
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31 “The sound is particularly important but also being able to see for me it’s important as well, to
32 see the soloist coming on and being part of the whole interaction really”. (Helen, 60s,
33 interview)
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39 As exemplified above, Helen and Mary describe a preference for sitting in the upper
40 section of the auditorium, the ‘gallery’, which is located above the stage, in order to be able to
41 have a better view of the orchestra and feel as if they are a part of the performance. Benzecry
42 and Collins (2014) have revealed that a series of microcharacteristics of the opera experience
43 shape individuals’ cultural consumption and taste patterns. In the Bridgewater Hall, such
44 microcharacteristics acquire a spatial significance which emerges both from their classical
45 music tastes and their degree of familiarity with the concert hall. For example, for attendees
46 with high cultural capital in classical music and with a high degree of familiarity with the
47 concert hall, watching the orchestra perform from ‘their own point of view’ is a crucial
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3 element of their concert experience, as in the cases of Helen and Mary. Consequently, this
4
5 finding also confirms previous CCT research highlighting consumers' locations in concert
6
7 halls as crucial aspects of their classical music experiences (Carú & Cova, 2005).
8

9
10 We further illustrate how the location of consumers inside the concert place is shaped
11
12 by their degree of familiarity with the place and their degree of involvement with classical
13
14 music. As part of the ethnographic process, we were able to identify several types of attendees
15
16 that demonstrate how familiarity with the place is intermingled with classical music tastes at
17
18 the concert hall. The fieldnote extracts below further elaborate on this observation.
19

20
21
22 “Most of them [the attendees] today seem to have been here before many times. They move
23
24 into space with confidence and show familiarity as if it [the Bridgewater Hall] is a third space
25
26 for them where they exercise their musical tastes” (fieldnote extract, London Sinfonietta
27
28 concert, 3/07/2014)
29

30
31
32 “And they don't look like they have a particular relationship with classical music. Most of
33
34 them [the attendees] seem to be outsiders. And you can say both from the clothes they wear,
35
36 their behaviour at the hall, even by the way they move around the space” (fieldnote extract,
37
38 Cheshire Choir concert, 18/06/2014)
39

40
41 In the first extract, the type of attendee portrayed encompasses a high degree of
42
43 familiarity with the concert hall. While individuals who are familiar with the Bridgewater
44
45 Hall do not necessarily possess high levels of cultural capital in classical music, low
46
47 familiarity with the concert hall appeared to be most commonly associated with low levels of
48
49 cultural capital in classical music. As the second extract illustrates, individuals who attend
50
51 concerts which do not involve purely classical music oriented orchestras, such as the Cheshire
52
53 Choir, tended to be less familiar both with the Bridgewater Hall and classical music in general.
54
55 Our discussion of various types of attendees suggests that that the multi-level architecture of
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3 the concert hall, along with individuals' movement into space, illustrate how aesthetic
4 appreciation becomes embodied in the context of the Bridgewater Hall. In alignment with Joy
5 and Sherry's (2003) study of the ways in which corporeal movements inform consumers'
6 aesthetic experiences, we also indicate that the spatial arrangement of the concert hall further
7 shapes our attendees' classical music experiences.
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41 Figure 2. The multi-level architecture of the Bridgewater Hall
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The aim of this paper has been to explore how the meanings of the Bridgewater Hall concert venue orchestrate and shape individuals' tastes within the field of classical music consumption. Our findings illustrate how classical music tastes are influenced and moulded by the spatial meanings of the Bridgewater Hall. These meanings include the historical

1
2
3 antecedents of the concert hall, its aural architecture, the manner in which the concert space is
4
5 experienced, and the presence of various orchestras within the concert venue that act as local
6
7 taste communities. More specifically, our findings suggest that the Bridgewater Hall plays an
8
9 important role in shaping consumers' classical music tastes via the physical, historical and
10
11 socio-cultural meanings of the place.
12

13
14 This study comes with several theoretical implications for CCT research (Arnould &
15
16 Thompson, 2005). To begin with, it provides a somewhat alternative understanding of the
17
18 concept of place that moves away from conventional understandings and is inspired by a
19
20 phenomenological approach to place (Creswell, 2004). We argue that this approach enabled
21
22 us to develop a holistic interpretation of the concert hall which transcends descriptive and
23
24 social constructionist approaches and captures the totality of the physical, socio-cultural, and
25
26 historical meanings of the place (Casey, 1998; 2001). Thus, we contribute to previous studies
27
28 that have considered issues of space and place in the CCT field by showing how the concert
29
30 hall turns into a platform of action upon which consumers not only perform but also shape
31
32 their classical music tastes. Specifically, we extend previous CCT research, which focused on
33
34 habitus and taste and arguably did not account for the spatial dimensions of taste (e.g. Allen,
35
36 2002; Arsel & Bean, 2013; Arsel & Thompson, 2011). Our study sheds light on the situational
37
38 and contextual aspects of consumers' tastes (Larsen et al., 2010; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).
39
40 The concert hall can be parallelised with an *emplaced* taste regime that shapes attendees'
41
42 classical music tastes and their consumption practices within the classical music field (Arsel
43
44 & Bean, 2013). In this respect, although the field-specific cultural capital of our informants is
45
46 primarily acquired by their overall participation in the classical music field (Allen, 2002), it is
47
48 also further developed by their specific engagement with, and attachment to, the Bridgewater
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50 Hall (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).
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3 In line with alternative conceptualisations of the embodied qualities of habitus and
4 taste (Crossley, 2001), we further propose that our informants developed a spatial form of
5 habitus that possesses ‘placial’ qualities (Bachelard, 1964; Casey, 1998). The concert hall
6 attendees are not solely influenced by the *local* context of their consumption behaviour
7 (Benzecry & Collins, 2014; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013) and the *embodied* aspects of their
8 consumption practices (Kerrigan et al., 2014; Nettleton, 2013); rather, the Bridgewater Hall
9 becomes a central pillar of their classical music tastes via the gamut of spatial meanings of the
10 concert hall. These spatial meanings range from the existence of local taste communities to
11 the ways individuals consume the sound architecture of the concert hall, and how they move
12 into space and perceive its historical background. In this sense, our findings also suggest that
13 the Bridgewater Hall consumption experience possesses ‘shaping’ qualities which remain
14 firmly positioned within the realm of the everyday and the structural terrain of the classical
15 music field. Such a consumption experience cannot be regarded as extraordinary in the sense
16 that it has been defined and studied so far in CCT research (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi et
17 al., 1993; Kozinets, 2002). We argue that this is mainly due to the nature of the Bridgewater
18 Hall itself and its ability to invoke a series of spatial meanings which are inextricably linked
19 with the field of classical music (Borghini et al., 2009). Thus, we also extend prior work on
20 aesthetics and consumption experiences (Goulding, 2001; Houston & Meamber, 2011; Joy &
21 Sherry, 2003) by illustrating how these spatial meanings inform attendees’ classical music
22 experiences in the concert hall.
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49 **Conclusions**

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51 In sum, this study represents an initial effort to portray the interrelationships of space
52 and place with taste. We believe this is a promising area of research which remains
53 underexplored in the CCT literature. We have aimed to highlight how a given place can
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3 orchestrate and shape individuals' tastes. In doing so, we revealed how the spatial meanings
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5 of the Bridgewater Hall influence the classical music tastes of its participants. Our study
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7 contributes to existing understandings of place by following a phenomenological approach to
8
9 the study of place that moves away from conventional approaches predominantly used in
10
11 CCT research. Our study also contributes to existing theories of taste by illustrating how
12
13 classical music tastes are spatially orchestrated in the context of the Bridgewater Hall. Finally,
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15 our findings can also be considered as useful guidelines that might contribute to the
16
17 development of experiential design strategies. Future research might aim to further elaborate
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19 on the variety of ways in which particular places are connected with, shape, and transform
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21 individuals' tastes.
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