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# SCHOOLS OF ACTIVITY AND INNOVATION

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Explanations of artistic innovation have generally focused on political or psychological factors influencing individual socialization. This article suggests an alternative approach focusing on the organizational processes in an art world, specifically the production of concert music. Concerts are produced through the collective activity of musical specialists. Compatible collaborators identify each other by constructing "schools of activity" that group conventional concert practices and practitioners. Different schools, however, do not simply represent alternative conventions, rather they represent degrees of convention that correspond to varying aesthetic interests in innovation and virtuosity. The first part of this article examines the organization of artistic activity and the formation of schools. The second part presents data from the concert world illustrating the organization of alternative types of artistic practice.

## INTRODUCTION

Art is used to describe a variety of types of aesthetic expression. Various types can be classified along dimensions of greater or lesser emphasis on artistic innovation (i.e., focus on creativity), and greater or lesser emphasis on artistic virtuosity (i.e., focus on skill). Some innovation and virtuosity appear in all artistic activity, but in many artistic communities there emerges an overriding emphasis toward one aesthetic dimension or the other. The preeminence of innovation or virtuosity in artistic practices identifies types of artistic communities. For example, at one extreme, predominantly innovative activity characterizes the "avant-garde", while at the other extreme, predominantly virtuosic activity characterizes a "repertory" type of art world. In between, lie a number of mixed types combining varying degrees of innovative and virtuosic aesthetic expression.

While it is technically possible for a strong emphasis on both innovative and virtuosic interests to coexist within a single art world, the practical process of coordinating these interests make the social arrangement difficult to maintain. The

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INNOVATION:	Strong -----	Weak
	Avant-garde	Repertory
	activity	activity
VIRTUOSITY:	Weak -----	Strong

**Figure 1. Aesthetic Interests and Types of Artistic Activity**

rapidity of innovative change in the conception of artistic form is at cross purposes with the time it takes practitioners to develop the compatible virtuosic skills needed to realize new artistic forms. Thus there tends to be a reciprocal relationship in collective artistic activity between innovative and virtuosic interests with an increasing emphasis on one leading to a deemphasis of the other. Artistic innovation need not directly determine the degree of virtuosity in any given event or individual, but a community of aesthetic interest develops a socially distinct collective practice. Types of artistic activity can be located simultaneously along both aesthetic dimensions as shown in Figure 1.

Traditional studies of artistic activity tend to focus on political, economic, or cognitive factors to explain aesthetic interests. On a macro level, innovative artistic work is often associated with political upheaval and revolution (Schorske 1981; Gay 1968; Hauser 1951). This "reflection model" (Peterson 1976) uses a theory of shared cultural context to link societal and artistic interests. On a micro level, there are numerous investigations of artistic creativity that focus on specific individual experiences or the structure of cognition to explain innovative activity (Gardner 1973; Ghiselin 1959). While there is merit in these attempts to model the psychosocial environment by which artistic activity is influenced, often too little attention has been paid to the concrete social processes through which artists produce, distribute and support their work. I will argue that innovation and virtuosity in artistic activity is strongly influenced by these social factors in the organization of artistic social worlds.

Several previous studies of the arts are relevant to this argument. A growing literature identified as the "production-of-culture" perspective (Peterson 1976) has produced excellent examples in both the popular and fine arts to support the significance of formal organizational processes on types of artistic expression. Efforts in the popular arts focus on the problems of "mass culture" production conducted in bureaucracies and culture industry systems (Hirsch 1972; DiMaggio and Hirsch 1976; Peterson and Berger 1975; Faulkner 1983). Following a core research tradition in organization, these studies show how rational administration can buffer decision making from uncertainties in creative artistic activity without breaking down the bureaucracy. The emphasis is on how to maintain a semblance of efficiency in cultural organizations. Similarly in the fine arts, some recent studies of collective artistic production demonstrate the effect formal decision making and coordination processes in large organizations have on rationalizing innovation (Adler 1979; Coser, Kadushin and Powell 1982). This article attempts to further elaborate the organizational influence on the arts by analyzing artistic activity outside formal organization, in open interactional systems.

In open artistic activity systems, variation in aesthetic interests is related to the

coordination and cooperation of participants in collective artistic events. The social arrangements through which artists and support personnel collaborate place constraints on the aesthetic nature of their work. These arrangements are referred to as “artistic conventions” (see Becker 1982; Lewis 1969). Variation in the use of conventions is related to variation in the organizational characteristics of artistic collaboration. The organization of this kind of artistic collaboration is elaborated in the following discussion of social worlds.

### ORGANIZING COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

The social arena in which collaborative artistic activity takes place has been called an “art world”; that is, a production system comprised of producers, distributors, and consumers “whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the art works that art world is noted for” (Becker 1982, pp. x). An art world organizes and identifies artistic activity.

As Becker points out, participants’ definitions of artistic activity are not haphazard individual claims to particular artistic statuses, but mutually interdependent claims produced through the coordinated and interdependent organization of artistic activity. Individuals evaluate the claims of artistic status by potential collaborators and acknowledge them through their willingness to interact. Group recognition of these individual claims is a shared definition of collective activity.

Analytically, art worlds are part of a more general approach to organizational categories called “social worlds” (Park 1927; Shibutani 1955; Strauss 1978). A social world consists of “common or joint activities or concerns bound together by a network of communication” (Kling and Gerson 1978, pp. 26). Potentially, this definition covers a wide ranging number of collective activities located everywhere from ideological (e.g., environmental politics) to recreational arenas (e.g., stamp collecting) (see Strauss 1978). While some social world researchers use the category to indicate the boundaries of shared experience (e.g., regulars at a bar) (Unruh 1979), more relevant here are social world approaches acting as “production systems” (Becker 1976), organizing the collaborative processes of work. The organization of work is usually considered the province of formal organization researchers.

Like a formal organization (i.e., the firm), a social world coordinates the interdependent activities of production, but it does so through an “open system” (Thompson 1967) in which potential collaborators are not specifically identified or linked before collaboration takes place. Instead, participants in a social world develop skills and even prepare individual contributions to collaboration independently, with only a generalized collaborator in mind. Participants coordinate related activities by orienting themselves to practices to which others have also oriented themselves. Thus social worlds coordinate production by organizing activities, not by organizing people per se. This is the major difference in the coordination processes of social worlds in comparison with the administrative apparatus of the firm (see Gilmore 1987).

Actual collaboration in a social world takes place through a free-lance system

that channels individuals performing related activities into temporary coalitions. Participants establish membership in these production systems jointly, through their willingness to cooperate with each other. The coordination of their activities, however, is generally not simply a dyadic issue. Since a large population of participants is engaged in a variety of dyadic and repeated transactions, collaborators seek to establish commonly agreed upon practices that coordinate interdependent activities among all potential coalitions, during both present and future transactions. This type of interaction represents a collective "coordination problem" (Schelling 1960), and is exemplified by a social world production system.

The coordination literature identifies two basic processes of collective agreement: explicit and tacit agreement (Schelling 1960; Lewis 1969; Ullmann-Margalit 1977). A common practice defined through an explicit agreement is produced either by direct interaction among collaborating participants at the time transactions take place or by fiat. But the dyadic process is inefficient and the effectiveness of fiats, like administration, depends on the recognition of the authority of the fiat makers by other participants. Instead, a common practice may be produced through tacit agreement by participants conforming to past agreements because they expect others to do the same. This type of collective agreement, called convention (Lewis 1969), is effective when collaborators seek to maintain successful solutions to managing collaboration in an ongoing production system. Such a conventional coordination mechanism may be used by participants in art worlds.

### Art Worlds and Schools of Activity

Art worlds act as social and cultural referents to guide the interaction of participants who are seeking like-minded collaborators. The referents identify artistic individuals and conventional practices used in artistic activity. On a larger scale, designated individuals and practices delineate an artistic medium. On a smaller scale, individuals and artistic practices define collectivities called "schools", which denote more specific artistic identities. Schools are a category in cultural analysis that have been constructed in several ways. Collaborative schools, which I call "schools of activity", can be differentiated from "schools of thought", which analysts produce to classify artists in historical or critical research.

Formally, a "school" connects a population of art world participants (i.e., the social referent), and the artistic practices this population uses in artistic expression (i.e., the cultural referent). In a frequently used example, such painters as Monet, Renoir, Degas, etc., are associated with such techniques as "plein-air" locations and subject matter, fuller-bodied paints and broad brush strokes, etc., which when joined form the school of impressionism (Merrill 1970; Rogers 1970; White and White 1965). Art historians and musicologists use these cultural collectivities to study aesthetic change and establish artistic movements within an artistic tradition (Kubler 1962). Taken together and aligned as a series, schools designate the concerns of an artistic medium and its historical development.

Raymond Williams (1981) points out, however, that many historically recognized schools do not clearly exist as forms of association. Schools created by scholars and critics as categories of cultural historiography often do not represent categories

*Table 1*  
Comparing Types of Schools

<i>Schools of Thought</i>	<i>Schools of Activity</i>
1. Constructed through a labeling process.	1. Constructed through a work process.
2. Category is formed through attribution by nonparticipant evaluators (e.g., critics and historians).	2. Category is formed through interaction of participants who are members of the school.
3. Category formation takes place through focus on artistic products.	3. Group formation takes place through focus on artistic processes.
4. Derives elements of artistic practice relevant to legitimating artistic activity. Produces a “legitimation mechanism” in the form of an artistic style.	4. Derives elements of artistic practice relevant to coordinating artistic activity. Produces a “coordination mechanism” in the form of an artistic convention.
5. Establishes within role linkages (i.e., composer to composer ties).	5. Establishes between role linkages (i.e., composer to performer ties).
6. Category is based on similarity of members.	6. Category is based on collaboration between members.

of social interaction and exchange. We can compare the former, schools of thought, to the latter, schools of activity, by examining the construction of these artistic categories. Both processes designate artistic identities, but the participants, processes and purposes behind the construction of each type of school are quite different.

Schools of thought are constructs used to organize meaning in critical aesthetic analysis and art history, which cluster aesthetic elements attributed to artistic products by evaluators. Art critics use these groupings of aesthetic characteristics to analyze artistic expression. Each grouping represents an artistic style. Evaluators use styles to denote significant expressive elements in artistic work, to fit individual works into larger categories, and to analyze the relationship between these categories in an artistic tradition. Thus style is a legitimation mechanism for artistic analysis and integration.

Schools of activity are constructs participants use to coordinate collaborative work. These schools identify the common practices used by interdependent specialists in an artistic division of labor. Collaborators identify these practices through interaction and exchange, and maintain them in the form of a convention. Thus convention is a coordination mechanism for an artistic work group. Table I summarizes the comparison between different types of schools.

Critics, art historians, and other nonparticipant evaluators construct schools of thought through the examination and comparison of artistic products. As such, schools of thought are categories based on similarity, produced through a labelling process, and are used for analytic purposes. In contrast, schools of activity are constructed through the interaction and exchange of artistic work by artistic col-

laborators. Therefore schools of activity are actual social groups based on interdependent differences (i.e., collaboration), produced through a work process, and are used to help organize collaborative activity. The latter type of school is a more relevant category for the sociological analysis of artistic activity. It produces more meaningful artistic identities for the participants and identifies the conventional practices that coordinate artistic collaboration.

### Using Schools in Concert Collaboration

To explore the use of schools in concert collaboration, I examined the processes and channels through which classical music concerts are produced. Classical concerts are collective events organized through the cooperation of independently situated participants in the concert world. Composers and performers form temporary coalitions when producing a concert and then dissolve and form new coalitions to produce future concerts. Collaborators find partners in concert activity by using identities associated with schools of activity to indicate compatible musical practices. I documented this production and distribution network by asking composers to describe how they get their music played, and asking performers how they make programming decisions and arrange performances. I collected data through open, unstructured interviews between one and four hours in length with these artists, and where relevant to my focus, I also interviewed concert and arts management, music critics, musical patrons, and others in "support roles" (Becker 1982). All together, I conducted 97 interviews, thirty in a preliminary stage of research in Chicago and 67 additional interviews during 9 months of field work in New York.

These interviews make it clear that artistic identities formed through schools of activity play an essential role in organizing concert collaboration. While stylistic identifications formed through schools of thought might be used in publicity campaigns to attract an audience (e.g., "serialist" or "minimalist"), the musicians engaged in collaborative concert activity orient themselves by using conventional identifications formed through schools of activity (e.g., repertory or avant-garde). Many composers remarked that schools of thought did not exist in contemporary concert worlds as real social groups. Several composers referred to such schools as "fabrications" and one said simply, "People make them up." This composer also suggested that schools of thought were "put ons" by critics and historians, and did not believe that most composers are interested in affiliating themselves with aesthetic groups. Another said,

I don't think one can really talk about schools of thought. I think it's largely a fictitious construct. I feel no more close to a lot of people with whom I'm normally associated in public terms than I do to people with whom I'm not associated. In general I would say my closest collaborators are certainly not the people with whom I'm usually lumped.

Other composers said similar things, e.g., that normally most composers do not exchange scores with their peers, nor solicit evaluation, even from like-minded practitioners. Instead composers who are identified as members of the same school

of thought usually do not interact and are wary of commenting critically on each others work. In one case, two fairly well known composers closely associated with a unique contemporary style are reliably reported not to have spoken to each other for fifteen years. Although composers are aware of the different aesthetic factions represented by schools of thought, the members of these groups do not act collectively to develop stylistic orientations.

This does not mean that composers do not interact with other musicians. Most have a musical “reference group” (Merton and Rossi 1957), or sometimes several, through which they orient themselves and arrange their professional activities. One composer described his associations as follows.

There are just a few people with whom I collaborate artistically and most of those are not composers, they're performers. They're part of the group (his performance group). . . . As a matter of fact, there's a real difference between professional and artistic associations. I would imagine that most artists have relatively few colleagues to whom they feel really close, with whom they can exchange ideas on a groundwork of near unanimity about what's significant musically or in any other area. The people I talk to are performers.

Most composers describe a similar organization of artistic associations. When asked to indicate the most significant musical relationships in their artistic activities, they invariably mention performers with whom they have collaborated to produce a concert. While these composers often have a number of professional contacts with other composers, they do not work with them artistically. As such, composers do not treat their association with other composers in schools of thought as reference groups. Instead, the reference groups they use to guide musical collaboration are schools of activity.

### SCHOOLS OF ACTIVITY IN THE CONCERT WORLD

Schools of activity show up in the concert world in two hierarchically related levels: subworlds, and smaller units of organization I call cliques. Each level identifies musicians and the practices they use in concert collaboration, but they differ in the scope and detail of these practices. Subworlds are relatively large in population and differentiate the general practices shared by participants in alternative concert organization. These general practices include compositional theories (e.g., orientation towards harmony), musical notation, instrumentation and performance techniques. Cliques are far smaller in population than subworlds and are more detailed in identifying concert practices used by members. These practices include techniques associated with the talents of particular performers and with specific pieces. Both levels of practice act as guides for musicians interested in collaboration, but subworlds represent the most fundamental differences in musical practices and thereby play a far greater role in organizing concert activity.

New York is the central and largest location of concert activity in the world. Its size and resources enable it to support three subworlds representing alternative schools of activity. Each subworld is identifiable through linked social and cultural referents. The social referent identifies the individuals who use a particular pro-



duction and distributional network and the accompanying financial and critical support systems through which concerts are organized. The cultural referent identifies the musical practices used to produce these concerts. The referents correspond to each other as follows:

<u>Social Referent</u>	<u>Cultural Referent</u>
Midtown organization	Repertory practices
Uptown organization	Academic practices
Downtown organization	Avant-garde practices

“Midtown” refers to the major symphony orchestras, touring soloists, and chamber groups booked into the big performance halls like Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and to the arts management and concert marketing organizations on 57th street. The participants in this subworld are the best known in the concert world and are generally recognized to be the premiere performer virtuosi in the concert world. “Uptown” refers to the composers and performers affiliated with universities, who use on campus rehearsal and performance sites. Uptown musicians are fairly well known by other musicians, but are not familiar to the average concert goer. Concerts take place primarily on campus, but are also organized off campus at smaller halls like Symphony Space and the 92nd street YMCA. “Downtown” refers to the nonspecialists, the composer/performers living in small performance lofts in Soho or near available performance spaces in Greenwich Village. Concerts are organized by participants at performance spaces like The Kitchen and Experimental Intermedia Foundation. Some composers in this subworld have become quite popular, but most work in relative anonymity and are better known by fellow travelers in the avant-garde than by mainstream members of the concert world. Table 2 lists typical concert participants, sites and programming styles in the three subworlds.

Each subworld is a wholly encompassed organization of musical activities with a relatively distinct identity. This does not mean that these subworlds are completely separate and autonomous. Rather, they resemble Campbell’s “fish scale model” (1969) of interdisciplinary knowledge production in the sciences, with a pattern of overlapping peripheries and only partially distinct cores. The cores of musical production in each subworld can be analyzed separately in order to explore the significance of conventional musical identities.

The three subworlds in this concert world are produced through two segmentation processes. The first differentiates the musical practices organized around repertory programming (i.e., music written before the twentieth century) from the practices used in contemporary music (i.e., music written by living composers). This segmentation distinguishes Midtown from the compositional subworlds and primarily guides performers. In the second, the compositional subworlds are differentiated by variation in approaches to innovation. Uptown, the academic subworld, supports gradual aesthetic change and emphasizes monolithic forms of cultural activity (i.e., dominant paradigms). Downtown, the avant-garde subworld, supports radical aesthetic change and emphasizes pluralistic forms of cultural activity. Each subworld represents an alternative for integrating individual musical practices into a collective framework.

*Table 2*  
Subworlds in Concert Music

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MIDTOWN REPERTORY CONCERTS	
<i>Participants</i>	<i>Sites</i>
New York Philharmonic Zubin Mehta Itzhak Perlman Isaac Stern Vladimir Horowitz Yo-Yo Ma Mstislav Rostropovich Juilliard String Quartet	Avery Fischer Hall at Lincoln Center Carnegie Hall  <i>Styles</i>  Repertory programming, such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky.
UPTOWN ACADEMIC CONCERTS	
<i>Participants</i>	<i>Sites</i>
Milton Babbitt Elliott Carter Jacob Druckman Charles Wuorinen Mario Davidovsky George Crumb Joan Tower Group for Contemporary Music Speculum Musicae Ursulla Oppens Harvey Sollberger Gilbert Kalish	McMillan Theatre at Columbia University Borden Auditorium at Manhattan Conservatory Symphony Space 92nd Street YMCA  <i>Styles</i>  Serialism, Neo-tonalism
DOWNTOWN AVANT GARDE CONCERTS	
<i>Participants</i>	<i>Sites</i>
John Cage Philip Glass Steve Reich Robert Ashley Pauline Oliveros La Monte Young Phil Niblock	The Kitchen Experimental Intermedia Foundation  <i>Styles</i>  Minimalism, Process, Drone, Aleatoric

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### Performers' Subworlds

The decision to work as a Midtown musician or in the composer concert subworlds primarily concerns performers, because contemporary composers have very few opportunities in Midtown concert organization. Midtown is the largest and most visible subworld in concert music and, unless performers look elsewhere for alternatives, it represents the institutionalized, default referent for most socialization activities.

Generally, the socialization of professional concert performers follows a fairly predictable path in concert music (e.g., Graffman 1982). Since years of rigorous training are required to produce the skills necessary to compete as a professional, nearly all performers use formal channels of social integration. Potential performers usually start practicing at an early age and enter a conservatory by their teens. Here, performers enter an extremely competitive arena that identifies the most promising and through well established connections between teaching faculty at the conservatory and arts management personnel, channels the select few into professional careers.

Alternative concert subworlds act as referents for performers trying to establish careers outside the Lincoln Center-Carnegie Hall bound elite. Performers who are not successful as soloists on the touring circuit or as members of major orchestras generally turn to free-lance work. The free-lance performers' labor market is segmented into smaller subworlds, because as a rule, free-lance performers feel they can not compete successfully for jobs across the concert world as a whole. In order to establish a professional reputation among orchestral contractors, free-lance performers develop and market skills that other performers do not have by locating themselves in a musical "niche." Accordingly, free-lance performers differentiate themselves by competing as repertory specialists in Midtown or by becoming contemporary specialists in compositional subworlds.

Midtown concerts consist predominantly of repertory with an aesthetic emphasis on interpretation. Performance practices are developed in the conservatory (i.e., reading standard notation and playing standard orchestral instruments in the standard way). Free-lance performers who identify themselves as repertory specialists, often develop a more limited professional focus, for example, as specialists in "early music" baroque concerts or opera. In so doing, they can offer highly specialized and polished skills to a distinct performance market and develop a solid reputation among contractors. The ability to play a baroque or operatic style is not exceedingly difficult, but it can involve detailed nuances in rhythmic or tonal interpretation. The most highly skilled performers are the most efficient in rehearsal time. Not surprisingly, Midtown concerts are organized through the most competitive and lucrative labor market in the concert world.

Alternative options for performers are located through compositional subworlds. Programs in Uptown and Downtown concerts consist primarily of newly composed pieces with occasional contemporary repertory. The aesthetic emphasis is on compositional ideas and techniques. Performers who define themselves as contemporary specialists must develop skills in contemporary performance practice. These skills, such as reading "open" notations and new instrumental techniques, do not replace conservatory techniques, but are learned in addition to traditional techniques. The key characteristic of contemporary specialists is flexibility (i.e., the ability to adapt to different types of concert activity). Newcomers develop new skills by emulating established contemporary performers and by playing as frequently as they can. For example, one contemporary performer explained,

I learned how to do this work by following my ears. I started in some student concerts at Columbia and I now feel I can do almost anything I'm asked to do. It was on the job training. You don't learn to play buzz tones at Juilliard.

Compositional subworlds guide both newcomers and the established performer in this socialization and work process. The organization of contemporary concerts takes place through the identification and channeling of compatible musical collaborators.

### Composers' Subworlds

The segmentation between academic and avant-garde concert activity primarily concerns composers. As with performers, the social referents consist of an institutionalized subworld, Uptown, and a less formally organized alternative, Downtown. New York's compositional music world is large enough (i.e., has the critical mass of resources and population) to separate into subworlds. Composers in these schools of activity have some relations with each other, but tend to maintain fairly distinct musical identities. One Uptown composer said,

I suppose you can consider Pxxxxx (an avant garde composer) to be a composer, but I don't think anybody around here pays any attention to what he does. I think of his work as music that painters like.

Similarly, a Downtown composer said,

I don't see much room for compromise. If you don't follow serialist techniques, they just aren't interested in your music. I've been trying for years to get Dxxxxx (an Uptown composer) to come to my concerts. Fat chance!.

While composers share some recognition of common social status for all contemporary composers when faced with the dominance of Midtown repertory concert organization, there are clear distinctions in aesthetic ideology that act to produce differences in social support organization.

Like the referents for performers, Uptown and Downtown compositional subworlds act as alternative possibilities for composers' socialization and work organization. Uptown offers more concert resources than Downtown, but to avail themselves of this financial and performance support, composers must become academics, since it is through the university that Uptown composers gain access to jobs, concert halls, performers and other concert resources. Downtown composers, on the other hand, primarily generate resources through nonmusical sinescures, performance space in their own lofts, and interpersonal performance arrangements. As such, the Uptown musical world is more exclusionary than Downtown.

The choice of participation in alternative subworlds has direct consequences for concert practices. Uptown composers use compositional practices that constrain instrumentation, notation, and compositional theories, while Downtown practices allow innovation in all these areas. For example, Uptown instrumentation is usually acoustic and consists primarily of standard nineteenth-century orchestral instruments, although some composers use electronics and computers. Instruments are played with new techniques, but performance practices respect the original acoustical design of the instrument (i.e., violins are not used as drums). In Downtown, instruments are frequently amplified and there is considerably more variation in

the kinds of instruments and the performance techniques used. Thus, Downtown composers may borrow instruments from other cultures or invent new ones, and performance practices are changed to consistently produce the most unique sounds possible.

Similarly, Uptown notation and compositional theories incorporate less radical change than Downtown and seek to maintain a musical tradition. Uptown notation combines both conventional and new symbols to represent changes in performance techniques, but there is only one interpretation of the notes and the performer can read the notes without the composer's assistance. The organization of notes in Uptown (i.e., compositional theory) is elaborately constructed and is primarily legitimated through peer evaluation, as evidenced by Uptown composers' concern over the theoretical justification of their work. In comparison, Downtown notation is graphic and open to interpretation, when it is used at all. Frequently, Downtown compositions are communicated orally or described in written language. Compositional organization may be as elaborate as Uptown in some cases, but participants seem less concerned about the theoretical justification of their music than about the way it "sounds." Consequently, Downtown composers are not constrained to provide a priori legitimation of their compositional practice.

The Uptown academic subworld is the predominant choice by student composers because the institutionally structured training process makes available musical resources (e.g., university buildings, equipment and student performers), and some financial support, either in the form of a stipend or a job. One composer explained that he stayed in school to get access to compositional resources he could not afford otherwise.

I was at Columbia in the mid-sixties. I got my masters in '66 and my doctorate much later on, but I hung in there because of the Electronic Music Center. I wanted to get in the Electronic Music Center, so I kept taking these courses. That was the only way to do it. It wasn't the degree.

For novices, socialization in Uptown is highly visible through institutional referents. Programs at Columbia and Juilliard are widely known and accessible through application even to those who may know very little about the organization of Uptown compositional activity. Downtown socialization is considerably more informal and ad hoc. There are no degree-granting institutions and, for the most part, novices must find their own way, organizing their own student-teacher relationships and creating their own financial support, generally through nonmusical sinecures (e.g., driving a cab). To be successful in Downtown, student composers require some preliminary knowledge of the concert world. Thus, most student composers enter the concert world by way of Uptown.

The alternative concert identities represented by different subworlds need not be mutually exclusive, but in practice they are. Composers are clearly differentiated in the New York concert world by Uptown and Downtown designations and performers are differentiated by Repertory and Contemporary designations. The significance of these associations is clear when performers and composers try to change subworlds or to integrate activities in two subworlds simultaneously. Such "cross-over" participants experience problems in recognition and acceptance with estab-

lished participants. For instance, one composer who studied at Columbia and then moved Downtown said,

I had a terrible time when I first came Downtown. I would go up to a concert at Columbia and sit in the lobby of McMillan Hall and my old friends would walk right by me. Then I would come down to Phil Niblock's place and they didn't know what to make of me there either. The Uptown people thought I was Downtown and the Downtown people thought I was Uptown. It took several years before I became comfortable down here and started to get invitations to do performances.

Similarly, performers who establish reputations among concert managements and audiences in the contemporary subworld can find it difficult to program repertory and arrange concert dates on the Midtown concert circuit. One well-known pianist said,

I would like to be able to mix contemporary and repertory programming, but management tells you it's not possible. They claim once you are established as a contemporary performer people come to your concerts to hear contemporary programming. Management says they don't know how to sell a "mixed" program. I wish this wasn't the case, but that's the way it is for now.

A few crossover musicians maintain a viable identity in more than one subworld, but they are exceptions to the typical situation. Most concert world participants belong to one subworld at a time.

### Concert Activity and Cliques

At a more micro level than subworlds, cliques provide more specific evidence of the way schools of activity organize concert activity. Cliques are established by relatively stable clusters of concert collaborators through repeated interaction. Compatible musicians form these cliques to facilitate future concert activity. The link between musicians and concert practices is unambiguous because the correspondence is made directly through collaboration. Participants in each clique, however, are also constrained by the general conventions of the subworld to which the clique belongs.

Both composers and performers become members of concert producing cliques, but they are linked differently. Clique affiliations are initially constructed between composers and performers through the exchange of a score, but this interaction between activity related actors (i.e., composers and performers) forms associations between clique members who do the same thing (i.e., composer to composer links). In network analysis, these two clustering processes are distinguished as structural cohesion and structural equivalence respectively (Burt 1978). Composers and performers are linked directly through cohesion (i.e., relational association through interaction), while composers and other composers are linked indirectly through equivalence (i.e., positional association through common ties to performers and other concert resources). The point is that while composers and performers choose each other in constructing cliques, composers in the same clique do not. The concert

practices that clique interaction identifies as relevant stem from specific transactions between composers and performers. These practices form the elements of a musical convention.

Concert producing cliques appear in two social forms. Many cliques are identified as performing groups, but others simply identify social focal points to which individuals converge to arrange concerts. These focal cliques operate by acquiring financial and other concert resources, and by providing organization and experience in arranging concerts. An example of the performing group clique in Uptown is *Speculum Musicae*. A long-term member of the group described concert organization this way:

Well we used to have a favorite set of composers and I'd like to see that type of programming reinstated. We kind of played your basic Uptown. We always did a piece of Charles Wuorinen. We associated ourselves with him. Milton Babbitt. Played some Davidovsky. People from this area. Elliott Carter. Played everything that he wrote that we could play. We all have a very nice relationship with him. And so we'll continue to play his music.

We tend to play composers we've played before, those we've been associated with. We're more apt to play a piece of Elliott Carters say, than we are of Mr. X. We also play their students. We've played a number of Charles' (Wourinen) students. Tobias Picker and Eric Lundborg.

An association with this clique facilitates programming and creates a specific musical identity for these composers and performers. This identity provides clique members with both internal and external recognition that helps coordinate musical interaction and reinforces conventional practices within the clique.

An example of a Downtown concert producing clique is La Monte Young's Dia Arts organization. This is not a performance group per se, but rather a locus of performance resources and musical personnel who help arrange and participate in concerts at the Dia Arts site. La Monte Young is an avant-garde composer who has been around the Downtown scene for over twenty years and claims to have organized the first concert series in Yoko Ono's loft in 1960. Additionally, he is one of the central members of "Fluxus," an organization that lies between an artistic movement and a performance group, which revolutionized the avant-garde in the 1960s (Nyman 1974). As a very visible participant in Downtown concert music, he attracts students and participants to his clique through his reputation and by the concert producing activities of the Dia Arts organization. One young composer/performer described his integration into Downtown and Young's group as follows.

When I got to New York I started at Juilliard, but it was obvious almost immediately that they weren't interested in what I was doing. So I went downtown to talk to John Cage and to La Monte. I auditioned and La Monte was interested, so I studied with him and did a number of concerts with him for two years.

The attraction of La Monte Young's clique for new composer/performers is his access to performance resources and a place to play. Performances are organized by clique members who share a similar orientation to concert activity. However in Downtown, this does not mean that participants seek to produce a more conventionalized set of concert practices. Rather Downtown cliques are committed to exploring innovative approaches to concert activity and are encouraged to develop new techniques in compositional and performance practices. Membership in these cliques identifies those who are flexible in their concert practices. One composer/performer said,

I hire people who want to play my music and are interested in doing new things. It's too difficult to convince most Uptown players so I don't try. I hire my own players, people who know contemporary (i.e., avant-garde) music.

### CONCLUSION: SCHOOLS OF ACTIVITY AND INNOVATION

Schools of activity facilitate collaboration among participants in an organized musical division of labor. They identify conventional practices to which members of a subworld or clique adhere in order to coordinate concert producing activities. These schools are not formed on the basis of similarity, as is the case for stylistic "groups" (i.e., schools of thought), but rather are based on interdependent differences in artistic collaboration. Schools of activity thus act as work reference groups circumscribing conventional orientations in the concert world. They are socially real, associational categories that concert world participants use for socialization and to locate compatible partners in collective concert activity.

It should not be surprising that artistic activity, like most other collective processes, produces organization to integrate and socialize potential participants. Specific schools of activity, either subworlds or cliques, are the framework of the organizational differentiation process in the concert world. Identity and recognition in a school of activity is gained by adhering to specific conventions. If musicians are not recognized as legitimate participants in a given school, they must procure their own concert resources, generally with considerably more effort. Clearly association with different schools has real pragmatic and aesthetic consequences.

It is also the case that alternative schools in the concert world do not simply represent alternative conventions. Each concert subworld organizes collaborative activity around different degrees of conventional practice. Midtown, the repertory subworld, attracts participants who adhere to the most conventionalized practices in the concert world. Downtown, the avant-garde subworld, attracts participants who are the least conventionalized in the concert world. Uptown, the academic subworld, attracts participants who wish to maintain moderately conventionalized practices, but with some flexibility. As such, different types of artistic expression is organized through alternative support systems.

The degree of convention in each subworld influences the extent of emphasis on virtuosity and innovation. When concert activity is highly conventionalized, as in Midtown, participants are constrained to fit their musical ideas within a very circumscribed form. Because musical ideas are restricted, the aesthetic emphasis is



on virtuosity or “doing things well.” In contrast, when concert activity is not conventionalized, as in Downtown, there are fewer constraints on musical ideas. Concert participants have more leeway to create new musical ideas and the aesthetic emphasis is on innovation or “doing things differently.” Uptown lies in the middle, seeking to maintain a balance between limited innovation and virtuosic skills. Each of these subworlds represents a different type of aesthetic interest.

Thus, the terms of cooperation (i.e., convention) used by musicians in each school of activity constrain the nature of aesthetic expression in concert activity. Different types of artistic activity are organized by different degrees of convention. Schools of activity are the interactional social orders that emerge through this differentiation. While previous explanations of artistic creativity and practice have focused almost exclusively on the individual, the approach used here focuses on the relationship of the individual artist and the collective production system in which he or she operates. The findings would appear to have relevance for other types of cultural activity.

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