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Second Life ® and classical music education:
Developing iconography that encourages human interaction

By David T. Schwartz, Music Academy Online

Abstract

Since January 2007, Music Academy Online[1], a web-based business dedicated to generating interest in classical music, has been developing a 'Disney World for Classical Music' in the virtual world of Second Life®. The virtual world provides a unique opportunity to teach classical music in an interdisciplinary fashion, the ability to reach out to a population that is hesitant to explore classical music, and a way for reaching out to those who have been disenfranchised by traditional educational paths. This has led to the development of iconography in Second Life that exploits the virtual world's inherent ability to put seemingly disparate information together in a way that encourages questioning and discussion. But above all, this has led to the conclusion that the importance of human interaction and the Socratic method are the key elements in virtual world education[2].

Keywords: classical music education.

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[1] www.musicacademyonline.com

[2] The focus of Music Academy Online® is not scientific inquiry but classical music education through stimulating interest in the art form. The success of the pedagogical methods that are currently being applied are measured through increased traffic, paid sponsorship, and capital investment as a result of the effectiveness of our ability to stimulate interest in classical music.

Second Life ® and classical music education:
Developing iconography that encourages human interaction

By David T. Schwartz, Music Academy Online

Background

In my time spent teaching courses about Western Art Music (classical music) including music appreciation, music composition, music history, and music theory, it is almost a given that most students bring with them a great deal of trepidation about the subject. Regardless of their educational background, it is often the case that people feel intimidated by classical music and generally doubt their ability to properly 'understand' and therefore, enjoy the music. Ironically, people growing up immersed in Western culture often have fewer misgivings about encounters with music that is not rooted in Western culture.

For example, a highly educated lawyer may be intimidated and frustrated by an experience with a Haydn symphony performance and yet be completely enraptured by a concert of *Hawai'ian mele hula*, a music that includes a language he or she does not understand in the slightest. Part of the explanation for this lies in the fact that classical music is generally viewed as elitist music while non-Western music is seen as 'folk' music and therefore, a more readily accessible aesthetic experience. Both are misconceptions. And yet, perceived distance between the music and the listener is often a key factor in an encouraging or a discouraging new and enjoyable musical experience.

Estelle Ruth Jorgensen (2003) has explored and discussed this issue and observed that classical music "seems now to have acquired (in some quarters at least) a negative connotation as a bastion of elitism and privilege. Instead, popular musics (with a nod to musics of other cultures) have pride of place in much elementary and secondary music education and in many university and college offerings designed for students whose principal fields of study lie outside music" (p. 130).

I myself did not learn to appreciate Western Art Music until I was in my early 20s. This is not an unusual story. In the United States, more often than not, popular music such as rock is the gateway to other genres of organized sound such as classical music. My journey toward the appreciation of classical music followed this path. As I went from self-taught drummer to college-trained composer, it turned out that my non-classical background became an advantage for me as a teacher. I remember full well what it is like to be unable to follow and be bored with Beethoven's music. I also know what it is like to be unable to imagine a world in which Beethoven's music does not exist. I understand the steps that it took for me to get from one musical world to another. I also recall some of the issues that confused me along the way. This has allowed me, in many instances, to identify with students and the intimidation they feel. Furthermore, I am able to understand and convey to my students the similarities between a Richard Strauss tone poem and an extended rock composition by a band such as Rush or Yes, and therefore help to remove some of the artificial barriers that exist between the listener and the music.

It was during graduate school that I began to develop a teaching style that is interdisciplinary[3]. I began to realize how an interdisciplinary approach to teaching music appreciation and music history especially, is particularly effective with respect to non-music majors. An interdisciplinary approach allows people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse interests to help participate in the learning process. Including the social and cultural context as part of the discussion of a particular musical style invites students from a broad range of disciplines including anthropology, art history, history, literature, and science to contribute their understanding and knowledge of that particular age. It gives them a frame of reference for understanding the music as part of the larger picture of human endeavors. Most importantly it tends to instill a sense of curiosity and openness to explore the music on their own as it relates to their own particular field of study. In the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1758), "To illustrate one thing by its resemblance to another, has been always the most popular and efficacious art of instruction. There is indeed no other method of teaching that of which any one is ignorant, but by means of something already known; and a mind so enlarged by contemplation and inquiry that it has always many objects within its view, will seldom be long without some near and familiar image through which an easy transition may be made to truths more distant and obscure."

An example I am particularly proud to share and one that reflects the success of an interdisciplinary approach to music education comes from personal experience with a college level music survey course. During one class, I had the privilege of discussing the life and music of American composer Aaron Copland. Most people are familiar with Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man." Its use in popular culture has even made this tune banal in the ears of many. When I discussed that this work premiered in 1942 during a time when the fate of the 'common man' was not altogether certain, namely during World War II, this helped a retired couple who had been auditing the course to identify with the social and cultural context of Copland's piece. After class they confided in me that they had never thought much about Aaron Copland or his music, as it had always seemed trite. But after that lecture, they intended to seek out and purchase his entire catalog. I can think of no better compliment for a music teacher.

There is one other factor motivating my interest in working with non-musicians. Namely, if a guy like me can go from Led Zeppelin to Igor Stravinsky, then it must be possible for any music lover to find something in the classical world, given the right approach and the right environment. The problem I perceived lies with the custodians of classical music, namely academic and other institutions of music. How often has a young music lover been told that the music he adores and means something to him is 'garbage' and that he should be listening to Felix Mendelssohn? How often has a college music survey course been conducted by a TA or pre-occupied professor who is 'too busy' to genuinely care about a 100-level survey course? How often has that course resulted in frustrating and turning away from classical music a class full of

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[3] Interdisciplinary education refers to the blending and incorporation of several disciplines in order to teach a single subject. An interdisciplinary music educator might incorporate art, literature, science, history, and philosophy as a way of elucidating the music of a particular era. An application of interdisciplinary education in a music appreciation course during a discussion of the rock music of the 1960s would definitely incorporate a review of the politics, the war in Viet Nam, the development of technology, electronics, and the space program, drug culture, and the literature of the day. Giving this music a social, cultural, and historical context helps students new to the music of the 1960s understand why the Beatles or the Who or Jimi Hendrix composed the music that they composed and the target audience to whom they were speaking through their lyrics and the musical processes they employed.

pre-medicine, pre-law, art history, biology, chemistry, and computer science students? These are opportunities to reach out and inspire the professionals of tomorrow, the future ticket and CD buyers, and the future music program donors. Instead of perpetuating the 'cultural divide' between classical music and potential audiences we should be reaching out to them. We should be generating new audiences[4].

Music Academy Online

In 2004, I founded Music Academy Online, a web-based business with the goal of becoming a unique resource for those interested in classical music. But just as importantly, I wanted to create a resource for those who want to be interested in classical music but do not know where to start exploring. The internet is arguably the most significant technological advance in education since John Dewey started moving desks around a classroom. Vast amounts of information are available at the click of a button. The problem is, most classical music web resources are either dedicated to the initiated listener or they are resources designed specifically for kids. Our goal was to design a website that packaged information in a way that appealed to an intelligent and curious population of serious music lovers. We also wanted to balance our approach with resources that a novice would find helpful and friendly.

When I am introducing a new piece of music to a class, I always begin with a biography about the composer. The biography allows me to introduce elements of the social and cultural context for that person's life and in many cases, the social and cultural context for the composition in question. Relating the life of a composer also helps to break down the barrier between the composer as one who possesses some 'mystical' ability to create music and allows students to relate to a human being who, more often than not, has had to work very hard to develop their skill. Life experiences also allow students to relate more easily. A composer biography, in short, is a tried and true way of organizing material.

As we developed the material for our website, we began to produce original composer biographies that, inspired by the great rock biographies that I had grown up reading about groups like The Who and The Beatles, would discuss the composer's music in the context of their life and not the other way around. Furthermore, following my belief that interaction is a key element for attracting new listeners and breaking down common barriers, we developed databases of information that we could use within the context of a biography and also took advantage of then current web technologies. Essentially, what we created was a biography that included 'rollovers' that tried to anticipate questions a typical student might have. The databases at the heart of our rollovers included definitions of musical terms and historical dates. In the course of reading about Beethoven, one could learn that in the year 1792 when he moved to Vienna, George Washington was the President of the United States and a sentence later learn the definition of

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[4] There is supporting evidence. On October 1, 2002 the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation published "Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study: How Americans Relate to Classical Music and Their Local Orchestras." Authored by Alan S. Brown, this study was commissioned by 15 American Orchestras and the Knight Foundation in order to "…assist the orchestras in understanding prospects and in capturing additional market potential." Their findings support that there is a large population of underserved classical music lovers in the United States. Furthermore, the report "offers a sweeping view of an art form in transition and an orchestra field increasingly detached from its potential customers." The study also suggested that new media could play a tremendous role in not only retaining but also growing audiences.

counterpoint, as that is what the young composer began studying in Vienna[5]. For a web resource that is primarily on a two-dimensional plane of existence, cross-referencing is a main function for allowing browsers to explore information in-depth. While this is empowering for the consumer of information, it does require patience and the desire to approach the subject. As much as I had tried to anticipate a *Minority Report* type web experience in which consumers could sift through vast amounts of appropriate and relevant information in real time, the limits of a web browser are too great at this time. To truly interact with potential students require a stronger tool.

Second Life

On January 28, 2007, I discovered Second Life (SL) and immediately realized that the kind of immersive, interactive, three-dimensional environment it provides has dramatic implications for those of us dedicated to generating interest in classical music at all levels, including music appreciation, music education, and especially for the promotion of new music. A brief overview of the first year of developing Music Academy Online's presence in Second Life is important to an understanding of the conclusions I have made about the most effective ways of using this virtual world for music education.

After several weeks of investigating Second Life, we rented land, having decided that a single building/museum approach would be the most cost effective. Throughout our first year, we developed a single tower that would house Music Academy Online-SL. Each floor was to be dedicated to a particular function or time period of music history. By the end of 2007, we were regularly holding recitals, lectures, and other events designed toward creating a community interested in classical music. We had filled the tower with installations that included animated musical instruments, time period appropriate artifacts, slide presentations with text and images that helped to elucidate the time periods of music history and the composers that defined them, and we had created a special exhibit dedicated to the life and music of Gustav Mahler. We also had portals that allowed visitors to take advantage of the original content we have on our website including composer biographies, images, and music samples.

What became clear by the end of our first year in Second Life was that a museum approach was too rooted in the 'real world.' With a museum tower, displays and exhibits are confined within the space allotted them on each floor. Even with the implementation of unique Second Life technology, such as a 'rezzer' that allows users to alter a single space into different scenarios (think only of the 'holodeck' as used by the crew of the starship Enterprise in the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), we were confined by the 'walls' of the tower. It became apparently clear that what we had done was confined our use of virtual space in a place where space is not traditionally defined. One does not need walls or a roof or a floor to be protected from the elements. Tables and chairs do not need legs, as there is no gravity.

Despite the fact that our group was growing and our presence was becoming larger in the classical music community[6] of Second Life, I was noticing several significant visitor trends.

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[5] www.musicacademyonline.com/composer/biographies.php?bid=22

[6] There are several groups dedicated to the presentation of classical music in Second Life including, most notably, *Classical Music* and *Classical Music Aficionados.* Combined membership of groups dedicated to classical music in

Typically, visitors would stop by and explore each floor of the tower. Occasionally they would do this over several visits. But, once they had seen everything there was to see, they would only return for a visit if they were showing our facilities to a friend of theirs who was new to Second Life. Or, they might return for an event.

I also noticed that those who were inclined to return regularly were eager to talk with me in real time about music. They usually had been through our museum of music history and had gone through all of the information that we had provided, but what they were seeking was human interaction. They wanted to share their thoughts and they wanted feedback. In other words, when I engaged in what might be construed as virtual 'office hours,' not only did guests return more frequently, but they also tended to spend more minutes visiting and they became more loyal supporters of Music Academy Online. By December 2007, our average daily visitors were roughly eight unique avatars that spent roughly three total hours in our facilities.

Music Academy Online-Second Life

Academy (n.) - A society or institution dedicated to fostering art, literature or science; a place of study. The word comes from the Greek name of a garden near Athens where philosophers, most notably Plato, regularly held discussions.

In January 2008 we moved to an entire sim, Utwig, we purchased thanks to the generous donation of an investor who we met in Second Life and who became a strong supporter of our mission. Since then, Music Academy Online has been developing a "Classical Music Disney World." We regularly present recitals, lectures, and individual lessons. In fact, this new technology enables us to function just as a 'real' physical world campus. Our facilities in Second Life include museum displays, interactive exhibits, classrooms with audio/video capabilities, a lecture and recital hall, screening rooms, open-air concert space, and an in-world staff.

Our virtual island Utwig includes areas (parcels) dedicated to each of the time periods of music history. Each parcel functions as a time capsule for a particular time period. Along with time appropriate music streams, exhibits include both written and visual information and web links that reflect the social and cultural context allowing visitors to glimpse the bigger picture for the music of a particular time period. For example, the Medieval Period is housed in Rosslyn Chapel; the Renaissance Period, Palazzo Strozzi; Baroque Period, J.S. Bach's birth house; Classical Period, Independence Hall; Romantic Period, Lizzy Borden's house; and the 20th Century in John Lautner's Chemosphere. Each building's content, including images of the art and links to salient political documents, is constantly growing.

Our attractions include an 'immersive environment' cave, "From Monkey to Mannheim: The Origins of Music," that presents an overview of early hominids and the first evidence of music making. One of our latest builds is the Philips Pavilion from the 1958 World's Expo in Brussels, the setting for Edgard Varèse's *Poème Électronique,* a building that no longer exists in the physical world. We also have a theme park inspired ride, "Virtuality: A Journey Inside Your Computer," developed in conjunction with composer Amin Bhatia and based on his 2008 album

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Second Life is in the thousands and they hold regular events. Generally they present either live performances or listening sessions of recorded music.

Virtuality. This is very much a 'living' music video. The successes of the events we have held in Second Life reflect the power of this virtual world to reach new audiences and generate beneficial results that reach beyond the virtual world.

With the development of a dedicated sim, not only has our traffic increased to more than forty unique avatars per day, but individuals are spending more time (more than 14 hours per day per avatar) exploring and quite honestly, with the immersive environment and dedicated time periods we have created, they are spending more time interacting with others and just 'hanging out.'

In May 2008, we held a festival, "Exploring Mahler." Of the nearly 1,000 attendees, many gained renewed interest in Mahler while others enthusiastically discovered his music for the first time.

In August, we held our second annual "Festival in Two Worlds." This nine day event included lecturers, performers, composers, and artists from around the world. This year's theme was "Virtuality" and our featured guest was award-winning composer Amin Bhatia. Again we welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors.

In December, we hosted a "Toys for Tots" Benefit Music Festival that raised $3,000.00 for the children of New Orleans, Louisiana and several hundred dollars for the children of Santa Ana, California. When one considers the exchange rate between Second Life currency and U.S. dollars – at the time of this writing, $4.15 USD for every $1,000 Linden dollars – it is easy to see that this was also a well-attended event.

Along with lectures and live performances, we also host a weekly live show in conjunction with the web-based virtual television network, SLCN.tv. "Music Academy OnLIVE" reaches an audience of nearly 10,000 viewers a week and presents our audience with prominent guests from the world of serious music. Past guests include composers William Kraft, David Cope, and Stefania de Kenessey, as well as recording artists Alessandro Marangoni and Petronel Malan, to name just a few.

Music Academy Online will continue to develop and generate new and unique content with the goal of reaching beyond Second Life audiences. The ability to create a ride that would be educationally oriented, for example a journey through the history of music notation that would include audio, video, and historical reconstructions, could be filmed and used to teach outside of Second Life.

We also will continue to develop real-time animations for more realistic performances of live music that allows audiences from around the world, and particularly those who do not have access to live performances, to experience serious music. In September 2008, we collaborated with the Analog Arts Ensemble and streamed a live performance of the U.S. premiere of "Cosmic Pulses," the last piece of electronic music written by the man known as the 'father of electronic music,' Karlheinz Stockhausen.

In a world where funding for classical music is increasingly being cut, new, efficient, and cost effective solutions are necessary. Music Academy Online has the ability to generate interest and grow the audience for serious music. Furthermore, we will continue to develop Music Academy Online as a resource for audiences and students in and out of Second Life and help generate interest in classical music.

Second Life as a Way for Reaching Those Disenfranchised by Traditional Educational Paths

Over the past two years I have had the pleasure of meeting, teaching, and working with a number of people whose life paths have been adversely impacted by traditional educational institutions. Through conversation I have learned that often times these are people who loved music growing up and even showed the initiative of registering for junior high or high school elective music classes. Instead of coming away with positive experiences the teachers tended to turn these 'fringe' students away from pursuing a systematic study of music by inflicting their own aesthetic judgments on the music that the students enjoyed at the time. Ironically and tragically, by ridiculing the music that the students liked and that had inspired them to register for the course in the first place, teachers had helped create that artificial elitist barrier. Time and time again, the reason for these frustrations was the antagonism that the instructors displayed toward the music that interested their students. Unfortunately, antagonism breeds antagonism and so this was the attitude that they carried with them about classical music.

In Second Life, these individuals have the opportunity to meet with and talk freely and openly about music with me and other music scholars who work with Music Academy Online. The virtual world empowers its residents to a certain degree. A friend of mine once described it as if 'everyone is at the same party and have all had a couple of drinks already, [so] their tongues are loose.' In other words, as a result of the anonymity that is provided behind the mask of an avatar, people are inclined to share their true thoughts on a subject or at least talk about a subject freely. More often than not, there is never an instance in Second Life where the teacher who opens the floor to discussion is met with complete silence.

Dr. Judith A. Eckelmeyer, a professor emerita with more than 38 years of experience in teaching at the college level and to discussion groups, who regularly works with Music Academy Online and teaches for us in Second Life, relates her experiences with Second Life classes:

> "But what I'm really enjoying is the degree of enthusiasm I'm finding for the music in the presentations, and the very intelligent interactions I'm having with the "audience." They ask great questions, and they keep asking till they get an answer that satisfies their curiosity. These SL audiences seem much less intimidated about asking questions than people in RL; I don't know if that because there's no academic onus to "perform," or their identity is protected by their SL name, or if they are just that much more mature in life-experience. And clearly they are there out of interest in the classical music. Many of them come with a surprising amount of musical experience, and in one session I invited one gentleman to participate in explaining some of the musical features we were discussing. He did a great job and seemed to enjoy sharing his knowledge. Others

are novices but jump right in with questions when they don't understand a term. There's a huge amount of teaching that goes on but in very pleasant and interactive ways"(Personal Correspondence, 2009).

One thing that is certain, the barriers that separate classical music from those who are apprehensive about the music and their abilities to appreciate the music come down quickly when they are able to talk with someone who they might not otherwise have the opportunity to talk with. Second Life can provide the instance for real time interaction with scholars who have spent years studying a subject. There is no waiting for email responses. In fact, there is none of the writing emails, seeking out addresses, urls, and the like. In Second Life, people are able to attend lectures and other events and ask questions as they occur. Perhaps the one thing that comforts and encourages the hesitant when it comes to classical music is simply giving them permission to *not like* a particular work. Society has this habit of classifying all classical music as masterpieces. This is simply not true. Being able to interact with hesitant audiences allows musicians the opportunity to reach out in a non-threatening environment in order to cultivate interest.

At this point I would like to relate a marvelous and inspiring story about a Second Life colleague of mine. Doddi is a 32-year-old mother of two. She has been involved in online gaming communities and other web based social networking applications for more than a decade. Doddi has been in Second Life for nearly three years and in that time has taught herself the craft of building. She is an in-world architect and has turned her skills into a viable real world revenue-generating job that significantly augments her family's income. Doddi is also a high school drop out.

When I began to develop our sim I hired Doddi to be our full-time builder. Many of our projects were historical reproductions of buildings and other artifacts. While I provided Doddi with the information, images, and other web resources that helped her complete each project, there was still research required on her part. Doddi had often related to me how much she had hated school. In fact, what she hated was the poor inner city public school system of which she had been enrolled. Doddi is extremely bright and has a natural inclination for learning and pulling together information in order to use that information as an informed human being. She began to go above and beyond the call of the tasks that I had assigned her and was researching and absorbing great amounts of information about the buildings she was developing for me. One day she bashfully admitted that it wasn't learning that she didn't like, it was school. She was beginning to absorb new information with each project and that fueled her desire to learn more. I noticed that her questions became more frequent and often had more to do with larger historical and cultural issues rather than practical work related questions. I was watching Doddi develop a love for knowledge.

One such building was the aforementioned Philips Pavilion, the building designed as the installation for Edgard Varèse's *Poème Électronique.* This project had been a vision of mine since first entering Second Life. When the time came, Doddi dove into the project with both feet. She researched the building, the composer, and his music, the architect Le Corbusier, and the assistant to both men on the project, Iannis Xenakis. She also found that the Pavilion was built in

such a way in the physical world, that replicating it in Second Life would create new issues. One such issue was the use of overlapping pieces for the walls of the building. In the physical world, this is not a problem for design. In the computer world where things line up on a number grid, this can create the optical illusion that the walls are 'wiggling.' This 'flashing' effect is basically two objects fighting for resolution in the same space. Good Second Life builders avoid this effect with precise placement of each object, thus lining them up. Doddi had to find a way to faithfully replicate the physical building and at the same time in effect, break the laws of Second Life building.

After her research and pre-compositional planning was concluded, Doddi spent five very long days creating the scale replica of the Philips Pavilion. She was determined to finish the building on the fiftieth anniversary of its official opening in May1958, a date she had discovered during her research. Thus, on May 23, 2008, she officially finished the project after eighty-four total hours of work.

Shortly after it was completed, I invited a real world architect I had met in the virtual world for a sneak preview of the Philips Pavilion. It was during this time that the true nature of just how powerful a teaching tool Second Life can be for people whose educational experiences had been lacking became self-evident. After introducing Doddi to this architect of thirty years and a professor at a university who teaches the subject, I stood back and marveled as this high school dropout proceeded to discuss not only the process for creating the replica of the Philips Pavilion in the virtual world, but also the design, history, materials, and construction of the actual physical world building.

The Socratic Method and the Creation of Iconography that Encourages Questioning

Throughout Second Life one can find tremendously detailed historical buildings, replicas of cities, and exhibits that cover everything from marine biology to astronomy. For the virtual tourist, the possibilities are seemingly endless. And yet, the more that one journeys the more one notices a peculiar phenomena. Beautiful architecture, detailed and informative content, and spectacular scenery are almost never the main reason for thriving Second Life attendance. It is often destinations where human interaction regularly takes place that tend to have the most traffic.

One of the problems that physical world businesses encounter after building wonderful Second Life facilities is attracting visitors. I spoke with the head of a large music corporation that had developed a vast sim with the intention of promoting their artists and products. They had spent thousands of dollars building and developing the area and had launched their Second Life facility with a grand opening weekend featuring live music performances. Since that successful promotional weekend though, their sim remains essentially empty. Average traffic is fewer than five visits a day. The main reason for this, in my estimation, is that there is essentially nothing to do there. What this company developed is a three-dimensional web site. The architecture, the landscaping, the images and content, every visual element is done quite well. The problem is, the interaction for generating interest in their products is in the way of either written text on signs or through the use of note cards. People are not inclined to spend time in a vast and wonderful computer generated environment simply to read lots of text. Furthermore, most text can be

presented in a much more interesting fashion on a traditional web site. What they should have done is focused on human interaction and the creation of a community. This is the strength that a virtual world offers businesses and educators alike.

Deriving its name from the Athenian philosopher Socrates, the Socratic method is, at its core, teaching through questioning. It is this concept that has led me to some conclusions about the best way for developing educational content in Second Life. Along with displays and exhibits that allow visitors to explore various aspects of classical music in their own time, I discovered that the ability to prompt questions through the use of iconography is a wonderful way of stimulating questions, visitor traffic, and most importantly human interaction.

An example of the kind of iconography and its implementation on our sim is the building I selected to house the Romantic Period. The Romantic Period of music history is generally considered to span most of the nineteenth century. This time period includes the music of the Schumanns, Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Mahler, and Verdi, to name a few. An ornate concert hall, Wagner's own Bayreuth Festspielhaus, or a reconstruction of Brahms' music room are all obvious possibilities for housing information about the music and the social and cultural context of the Romantic Period. I decided to use something quite unexpected. For our Romantic Period, we used a replica of the Fall River, Massachusetts house where in 1892, Andrew and Abby Borden were murdered. Andrew's daughter, Lizzy, was the prime suspect whose trial and acquittal gained national attention.

While the Borden house reflects my own interest in the macabre, it also serves as a terrific conversation piece for visitors. During tours, I am commonly asked about this building and the question is usually posed in two parts "Why the Lizzy Borden house? It doesn't seem very romantic." Those questions are precisely why I selected this building. I want the question to be asked. I usually begin my response by admitting that I wanted them to ask that very question, why? The house is an example of mid-nineteenth century American architecture. But it is also the scene of a ghastly murder and so the house, a bed and breakfast today, is considered to be a haunted house. This allows me to begin to discuss the fascination with the macabre that inspired so much Romantic Period art. Think only of Edgar Allen Poe or Browning's narrative "My Last Duchess." Think of the macabre that composers explored in such works as Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz,* Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman,* and Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain.* In these situations there are countless opportunities for me to teach through questioning. And the discussion is always lively regardless of the national heritage, age, or education level and interests.

A concrete example of the Socratic method at work involves Doddi, whom I discussed earlier. I had asked Doddi to build a number of artifacts from the nineteenth century that I would use to populate the Lizzy Borden house. These artifacts included scale models of the U.S.S. Monitor, the first iron clad ship; an Abraham Lincoln stove pipe hat; a light bulb; the train that was there for the golden spike; a cannon; the Nautilus from Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea;* and a number of other objects that reflected the culture and history of the nineteenth century. When Doddi had finished creating these objects, she and I reviewed them in her workshop. She commented that it was an odd collection of objects. I admitted that that is certainly the case. Seeing them there on a table did seem odd. I asked her what they told her

about the nineteenth century. She remarked that the people of that time "didn't think much about kids." I asked her why she came to that conclusion and her response was that with all the neat stuff they had created during that time, all the technology that they had developed, the best they could come up with for a kid was a 'cup and ball' game. Throughout the course of this discussion I continued to ask Doddi questions, and in a very short period of time she had come to the conclusion that between the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century the role of children had dramatically changed and that a good part of that change was the result of technology. She concluded that technology had given people more free time and had allowed parents to spend more time with their children and nurture them. While my questioning had guided the conversation, her answers allowed her to come to her very correct generalizations. None of this would have been possible without the 'conversation pieces' that we had developed and assembled in one place.

Conclusion

The use of virtual worlds as a teaching tool has many possibilities. The landscape is still being defined and the future for this environment is vast. In my work developing Music Academy Online, I view our role as a combination of business and education. In order for my business to thrive, I recognize that we must work very hard to increase and stimulate the audience for classical music. Just as Campbell's often promotes canned soup with commercials that 'teach' customers what some of the 'possibilities' for using their products in different ways are, so must we teach and build the customer base for classical music. Classical music is our product, and in order for that product to be desired by the public, many of the preconceived notions about that product must be overcome.

Second Life is an amazing tool for reaching out and engaging folks who would otherwise never give classical music a second thought. The main element for this engagement is human interaction. We have developed icons throughout our Second Life island that promote questioning, that generate curiosity, and that help the visitor formulate questions that arise from their own interests and participate in his/her own exploration of classical music. The interdisciplinary approach to classical music education, especially music history and music appreciation, is a sure fire way for creating a friendly and non-judgmental environment for reaching out to new audiences. And reaching out to new audiences is something that the classical music world desperately needs to do, particularly in a world where so many entertainment options are competing for a place in everyone's daily life. My recommendation to educators is that they truly immerse themselves in Second Life during their initial foray into the virtual world. The hours spent as a virtual tourist are invaluable as it allows one to quietly explore and derive inspiration from what others from any number of fields are doing, including educators, artists, musicians, vendors, businesses large and small, media concerns, and casual Second Life residents. Do not limit yourself to exploring educational sims.

As ironic as it seems, the key element I have discovered in the success of the virtual world is good old-fashioned human interaction. While the technology for creating the unimaginable, the historical, and the beautiful in Second Life is just beginning to scratch the surface of what is potential, it is my analysis that only those institutions and commercial enterprises will succeed in the virtual world if they spend the time focusing on human

interaction. A major enterprise can, in a virtual world, have a 'mom and pop store' where it connects with its customer base and actually expands that customer base with virtual human contact. Those that realize this will find their businesses in both the virtual and physical world begin to see results. In my case, Music Academy Online, very nearly bankrupt before our entrance into Second Life, has continued to develop and its future, while not certain, is optimistic.

And now I wish to conclude this discussion with comments I received from several of our visitors after our 'Exploring Mahler' festival in May 2008. These comments go directly to the heart of how Second Life can provide the ideal resource for music education, outreach, and the ability to inspire the thirst for knowledge that so many have lost as a result of traditional educational paths:

> *The Music Academy Online with in Second Life Has stirred and inspired feelings within me I had No idea I even had. Having never been exposed to classical music, MAO opened my eyes so to speak, that Classical Music was something I may very well have a deep love for. Aside from the classical music and my constant yearning to learn, aspect, CEO Benton Wunderlich was able to pinpoint my hidden interests and inspired me to check out a book called Arts and Ideas, By William Fleming, which I am currently reading, awakening my interest in historical and architectural art…Without Music Academy Online within Second Life, I may never have been exposed to all of these things, for that I'm [i]ndebted and grateful. Thank you!*

> *As a musician and a teacher, MAO has proved to be a most valuable resource. Because of MAO (inworld and on the website) I have been inspired to make quite a few important additions to my library. I have acquired several marvelous books including "Arts and Ideas" by William Fleming which my students have loved browsing through and which I am sure many of them will want to own some day soon. I have also added a few new and interesting recordings to my library including the Shostakovich Symphony No. 11 and several art rock albums that I loved when I was exposed to them in the Monday night Art Rock class. MAO is a cutting edge educational experience offering a wealth of information and activities. I find myself turning to it more and more often each day.*

> *I am especially excited about the Leonard Bernstein DVD box set "The Unanswered Question," a product I was unaware of before encountering it at the Academy . . . I had to buy it!*

> *Visiting the Music Academy Online in Second Life has been a real treat. The programming has exposed me to styles of music and artists that I never would have discovered on my own. The Music Academy Online has broadened my musical palate and provided connections between musical genres and time periods that to me never existed. After attending events at the MAO in Second Life I have purchased music ranging from Ives to Zappa. The MAO has taught me how to listen to music in a new way.*

The Mahler series of lectures, concerts and live discussions were a wonderful, wonderful? . . . [N]o, were a superb experience . . . on so many levels. I was as transfixed to your commentaries and exhibits as I was to the music. This is an excellent use of SL . . . the best I have seen so far. You have created an atmosphere that has it all for any level of musical knowledge or appreciation . . . That this is also an SL extension of the real life Music Academy Onlive/line makes it all the more noteworthy. He mea maika'i nunui! I grand thing, indeed :-)

[I] put "conducting mahler" into [N]etflix search [I]i have lost touch with the world" is there with lots of mahler dvds. [I] use[N]etflix as a try before buy service.

It is not enough to simply build it and expect that they will come. In order to exploit the human interaction aspect of the virtual world, iconography can play a major factor. The development of iconography that inspires questions and discussion will go much farther and instill deeper and longer lasting lessons than text on a note card or images on a slide projector can ever hope to achieve. Second Life, unlike the traditional web site, has the capacity to make the world a better place, one friendship at a time.

Acknowledgements

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