

The iPad and Classical Music:

a Consideration of a Unique Example of IT and Music

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Abstract

This paper examines the Apple Inc. application (app) “The Orchestra,” for the iPad. In “The Orchestra” app, which focuses on the Philharmonia Orchestra (1945–) and Esa-Pekka Salonen (1958–), its principal conductor and music adviser, many phases of the orchestra are digitized in order to show their characteristics, meaning, and problems, and to submit proposals.

In this paper, “1. Introduction” discusses our subject. “2. Introduction of the videos” shows two videos about the iPad and the app “The Orchestra”: a commercial and an explanation of how to use the app. “3. Classification and giving meaning” contains the classification and discusses the meaning of the two videos. “4. The features of ‘The Orchestra’” considers the app’s features and significance. “5. Problems and suggestions” indicates problems related to the app and offers suggestions for making it more useful and sustainable. “6. Conclusion” summarizes the features of the app and suggests their solutions.

Keywords: iPad, IT, Digitization, YouTube, Orchestra, classical music, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Philharmonia Orchestra

1. Introduction

The digitization of music began in the mid-1990s and has continued since then, and this phenomenon also includes classical music¹⁾. Concerning orchestral music, not a few orchestras expect to participate this type, but their actual situations are not necessarily the same²⁾.

Under these circumstances, Apple Inc. produced in 2012 the fee-based app “The Orchestra” with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen, its principal conductor and music adviser. Their intention is to change the status of classical music, which has lost popularity even in Western societies, and their method and content for doing so are convenient, substantial, and enjoyable. However the approach has, at the same time, some problems.

We introduce Apple Inc.’s unique project and point out its characteristics, problems, and make some suggestions for improvement.

2. Introduction of the videos

We show two videos about the iPad and its app “The Orchestra”: a commercial and an explanation of how to use the app²⁾.

2.1 The commercial video

We first do a breakdown of the video. The video lasts for one minute.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIhVkHzTb2m0>

- 1) The practice room of the Philharmonia Orchestra and the name and title of Salonen appear on the screen with his Violin Concerto played in the background, which continues throughout the video.
- 2) Salonen appears, shaving in front of a mirror, and then whistles a melody that occurs to him.
- 3) He plays the notes and the notation appears (both on the iPad).
- 4) He continues composing in his workroom, and a score is made. Each instrument realizes it behind the scene. A green line appears to indicate the section played and moves with it.
- 5) Four scenes of different places are introduced where Salonen continues composing with the iPad.
- 6) In a workroom, Salonen composes some more and changes the parts that he has created by using colorful sticky notes on the wall.
- 7) He continues to compose in a moving car, which goes to three places. He goes on working out a detailed plan while walking outside and inputs it into the iPad, and then again is shown moving in the car. He listens to the completed parts with earphones.
- 8) His composing in the workroom and his inputting it into the iPad are shown. His inputting while outside is repeated once, and it appears as the score on the iPad.
- 9) He plays the same simple phrase that appeared at the beginning of the video. Then he stands as a conductor in front of an orchestra, which plays the parts of the piece with a solo violinist. The scene with a green line and the score appear again in an instant, and then the scene of the performance comes back again. These two scenes are repeated once.
- 10) At last, only Salonen is the focus, with the phrase “What is your story?”⁴⁾.

2.2 The explanation video

Here we introduce the explanation video about the fee-based app “The Orchestra” for the iPad. The video lasts for two minutes, thirty-nine seconds. The explanation is presented mainly by Salonen, but a principal horn player of the Philharmonia Orchestra also takes part.

The URL

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Jh2J1fHJQM&list=PLg4Jyik4hZmDQePIRxHQm6MwFx3lf2b_Q&index=2⁵⁾.

- 1) Salonen appears, sits down on a chair, and introduces himself. He explains and demonstrates the fundamentals and the outline of the application. He first relates the history of the orchestra and eight works ranging from Haydn to himself so that viewers can understand the history and know about some of the main composers and their works that appear on the app. He clicks the *Symphonie Fantastique* of Hector Berlioz to demonstrate its score, the icons (not letters) for the instruments, and a red line showing the performing part (the orchestra is playing during his ex-

planation of this piece). Graphic notations are also shown for those who cannot read the score.

- 2) When Salonen taps the screen at random, viewers can listen to his thoughts or commentary about the tapped part while he is conducting. They can also understand the work of a conductor through his explanation of willpower and physical situation. Such explanation is rarely open like this, and it is easy to understand with the iPad. This function thus contributes to help viewers understand the hidden part of a conductor and feel a kind of intimacy with the conductor (and of course with Salonen).
- 3) Katy Woolley, principal horn player, appears here to demonstrate the woodwinds section⁶⁾. She comments that she has been looking at the app for half an hour, but she does not want to stop watching because it is so fun. She taps a bassoon (fagotto), and then her colleague Amy begins explaining and demonstrating the reed instruments. Through these scenes viewers can see that nearly all instruments of the orchestra are shown and explained in the same way.
- 4) Willy opens her section and introduces her own instrument. It is shown on the screen, and in this scene she says that with the app she can see things she did not even know about her own instrument.
- 5) She opens next the scene with Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, where the instruments and players are symbolized by small circles of different colors. They blink on and off according to the expression. Viewers may feel as if they are watching the orchestra from the ceiling and that it is easy to understand what goes on during a performance. Two functions are also introduced that allow viewers to choose and listen to any instrument or part at random, and to commentary by the players.
- 6) Salonen appears again to tell about the value of the app. He says that the most worthwhile aspect is that the app can be enjoyed by anyone at any level, ranging from those who are interested in the orchestra without any real experience, to the professional. He adds, "even without the didactic aspect, it's just plain fun." The video ends with him smiling⁷⁾.

3. Classification and Signification

In this section the features and the signification of the two videos are pulled together.

3.1 Video of Salonen's creation: possibility of composing with the iPad

- 1) Demonstration and proof of composing with the iPad, not with a bigger computer with a more complicated system. This means that the iPad has enough functions when it is compared with it, and that is approachable and portable because this machine has a lower price and is cordless.
- 2) Disclosure of the process of the creation. Here only Salonen's views are presented, but this kind of disclosure itself is quite rare, and therefore many viewers might have a great interest in what he has to say.
- 3) Visualization and audibility between creation and performance. We can see and understand the metamorphosis of a piece from an isolated and restrained process to its performance by the orchestra with greater power and expression. The difference is very quick and easy to understand.

3.2 Video of how to use (official site of the Philharmonia Orchestra): new customer acquisition and deepening

In this video, the conductor and the players themselves explain mainly for beginners the characteristics of the orchestra and the charm of classical music. This may have four effects: 1) making classical musicians seem familiar and relatable; 2) deepening and broadening viewers' interest in the digital mobile device (iPad), classical music, and the orchestra, especially by listening to the commentary, the thoughts and feelings of the musicians during the performance, and by indicating the performing parts through the graphic notation; 3) communicating the charm, novelty, and originality of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Salonen to the world.; 4) possibly increasing people's intention to buy the app "The Orchestra."

4. The features of "The Orchestra"

We do not introduce the entire content of the features but present them in order because it is a fee-paid app (available for purchase in the Apple App Store). An outline of the features was presented above.

4.1 Features of the application

4.1.1 Explication of/by the orchestra and the players

Viewers can easily understand the fundamentals of the orchestra and classical music through the explanations from the players. They can also learn some part of the characters of the players, and this may be of great interest for viewers. This may increase their interest in classical music, which sometimes gives an impression of being unapproachable. Salonen himself talks about this situation and makes a suggestion regarding the app in the official video by Apple Inc. He explains as follows: "It is necessary to wipe away of any stereotype and preconception about classical music, and this application can greatly help."⁸⁾

4.1.2 Visualizing the performance through several approaches

Viewers can experience the process of the performance and its construction by means of graphic notations and signs, even if they do not know how to read classical notation. At the same time, the visualization feature helps those who are already familiar with classical music to see more clearly the performance situation of the orchestra, which consists of about one hundred members. This may be one of the reasons why Salonen says, "If you are a classical fan or even a pro, you might still find some interesting new bits information."⁹⁾

4.1.3 Listening to parts of the performance

The app offers performances of some parts of the pieces below:

F. J. Haydn: Symphony No. 6

L. v. Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

H. Berlioz: *Symphony Fantastique*

C. Debussy: *Prélude à l'Après midi d'un faune*

G. Mahler: Symphony No. 6

I. Stravinsky: *The Firebird*

W. Lutosławski: *Concerto for Orchestra*

E.-P. Salonen: Violin Concerto

Although the length of each performance is almost five minutes (except that of Debussy), viewers can deepen their interest and understanding of the orchestra, the pieces and their composers, Salonen, and the iPad after gaining knowledge about the orchestra. They can also enjoy it more deeply.

4.1.4 Freedom from time and place

Viewers can, through the iPad, enjoy this music almost without any restrictions. Composers and performers can also use the app as Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra do. Anyone can access the world of “The Orchestra” anytime, anywhere, when an IT environment is available. The start and end of access are free, and the choice of the content depends on the user.

5. Problems and suggestions

We identify problems and make suggestions about this app for improving it so that it is more useful and convenient.

5.1 Problems

There are three: First, the app has not been updated since 2012. That has meant the content and duration is limited for viewers who want to continue to listen to it with interest: Second, the app has not responded to requests for these problems to be addressed: Thus, it has not fulfilled its aim and content sufficiently. However, it deserves to be distributed and its value and possibility deepened.

5.2 Suggestions

This app is an unique project that we have examined, so its renewal and continuation are expected: this project can contribute to conveying and communicating the charm of classical music. The app has a great advantage because such a project has been undertaken only by Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and Apple Inc.

We make four suggestions as follows:

- 1) establish an exclusive staff
- 2) create a registration system (free or monthly fee-paid)
- 3) send an e-mail notification to members at every renewal of contents or the system with its URL and pictures
- 4) make short and free videos regularly and put them on the official site and YouTube to attract new members

6. Conclusion

The content of this app meets the needs of people, from beginners to professionals, and lets

them enjoy the world of the orchestra and classical music without any effort or stress or pain. The urge of joyful and independent study of viewers can make classical music more popular for people throughout the world, which is one of the traditional arts and performances and of the property of the mankind. The app may contribute to the continuation of classical music's legacy in the future. Digitization makes it possible for classical music to be a part of daily life without any restrictions of time and place.

This is the significance of this app. That is the reason why its continuous renewal is required.

Notes

1. This term is neither correct nor suitable, but we use it for its breadth.
2. The Berliner Philharmoniker has managed their site, "Digital Concert Hall," for paying members with the technical support of the Panasonic Corporation and offers a variety of activities for mobile devices, mainly through Apple Inc., or TV (<https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home>). There is also another paid site: <https://www.medici.tv/fit/#>, sponsored by Rolex, which treats classical music, operas, ballets, and music documentaries. Their paying members can enjoy these performances with mobile devices from Apple Inc. or TV. Riccardo Muti (1941–), music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, hopes this kind of diffusion of classical music will bring it closer to the people beyond the countries (Classica Japan, Japanese broadcasting cooperation of the classical music, diffusion in January 2019 "Muti talks in Chicago").
3. Another commercial message by Apple Inc. was also produced. It is half as long. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3FLu0Ti3cY>.
4. A video explaining the musical works and performances by Salonen and the Philharmonia Orchestra has been circulated on YouTube, which the Philharmonia Orchestra has officially put on. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Jh2J1fHJQM&list=PLg4Jyik4hZmDQePIRxBHQm6MwFx3lf2b_Q&index=2. There are also two videos produced by Apple Inc. that have been uploaded on YouTube. Their URLs are
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xL86rVNIXhU> ("Salonen and Composition")
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2K5QfQTs-M> ("Salonen's Inspiration")
5. This is uploaded by the Philharmonia Orchestra. Another official video is http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/shop/114/the_orchestra_app.
6. In this app, instruments are classified by the taxonomy long used since the Ancient Roman era: winds, strings, percussions. The more modern and scientific classification, MHS taxonomy, is not used, but the advantage of the old one is that it is well known and thus more appropriate for this app as long as it treats musical works before World War II, except Salonen's.
7. Salonen's smile is not only part of a commercial strategy but also shows his joy in using the app and his great interest in new technology. He has run several social networking services: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and his own site for work.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Jh2J1fHJQM&list=PLg4Jyik4hZmDQePIRxBHQm6MwFx3lf2b_Q&index=2 (Official site of the Philharmonia Orchestra uploaded on YouTube).
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y69tgoFP8QM>. ("Salonen and classical music").
9. Ibid.

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