

# CLASSICAL MUSIC ON UK RADIO 1945-1995

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### **Author's declaration**

A small amount of material referred to or included in this thesis was published previously in Stoller, T., 2010 *Sounds of Your Life, the history of Independent Radio in the UK*. Eastleigh: John Libbey Publishing.

That is cited as a reference where appropriate and included in the bibliography.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Tony Stoller**

### **Classical music on UK radio, 1945-1995**

This thesis comprises the first comprehensive narrative account of the history of classical music radio in the UK between 1945 and 1995, from before the launch of the Third Programme until after the launch of Classic FM. It describes and analyses the rich range of output across all relevant radio stations in this period, rebutting the conventional assumption that this aspect of British radio was simply about the Third Programme and Radio 3. At almost all times during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, those stations were not the majority providers of classical music radio.

Classical music radio over these years was marked by a series of high points, when the provision of elite and popular output combined to open the genre to a wide range of listeners; and then by a series of retreats from those summits. During three spells – the late Forties, the late Sixties and the early Nineties – a multi-channel offering of both highbrow and middlebrow music, linked and presented in an accessible way, achieved broad appeal and wide audiences, and realised the potential for this public good. The classical music programming of Independent Local Radio between 1973 and 1990 did the same in individual localities, to a previously unappreciated extent.

This new narrative history of classical music radio in the UK highlights and is dominated by the dialectic between highbrow and popular culture, between elite and demotic taste, and between a class-based and a classless approach to radio broadcasting. Original audience data demonstrate a consistent potential audience for classical music radio of some five to six million throughout these years, provided listeners felt they were allowed to listen in.

Original content analysis demonstrates a canonic repertoire of classical music radio, arrived at and maintained on a reflexive basis between the producers and the consumers of this genre, centred on the works of 19<sup>th</sup> Century European composers. That canon has remained largely unchallenged except at the popular margins, in contrast to modern approaches to the literary canon, and distinguishes classical music from other art forms.

This account illustrates a particular aspect of listening, whereby classical music radio can validly be both foreground and background. The influence of individuals, and therefore the relevance of biography within this history, is shown to be significant, but overall less important than the social, political, cultural and economic context in which the radio services operated, and which shaped their output.

Classical music radio is an archetypal element of public service radio broadcasting. This narrative shows that it has been provided during this period by stations outside the main cultural cohort, even from 1973 outside the BBC. As such, it challenges institutional definitions of public service broadcasting, and demonstrates how relationships between the producers of radio and its consumers can operate at many levels, testifying to the multi-threaded tapestry of UK cultural life as a whole in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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## **Preface**

This preface has two purposes: first, to outline my involvement in the events which are covered in the narrative history; and second, to adumbrate the effects of subjectivity on my research methodology and epistemology.

My working career involved me in a few parts of this history. I was Senior Officer, Radio and then Head of Radio Programming at the Independent Broadcasting Authority between 1974 and 1979. I was Director of the trade association for the Independent Local Radio companies, the Association of Independent Radio Contractors (AIRC), between 1979 and 1981 and then Managing Director of Thames Valley Broadcasting Ltd (which operated Radio 210) between 1981 and 1984. During that period, I played a small part in the developing classical music activities of the ILR companies, and absorbed a set of regulatory attitudes which unquestionably condition to a degree my approach to this research. I deal with this latter point below.

After some dozen years outside media, I returned in 1995 as Chief Executive of the Radio Authority – the regulatory body for all non-BBC radio – a post I held until the Radio Authority was subsumed into Ofcom in 2003. During that time I was the direct regulator of Classic FM; subsequently, at Ofcom, I had no direct responsibility radio regulation. My decision to end this narrative history in 1995 was partly conditioned by the senior role I played in the industry after that date, where I felt my subjectivity could not be set aside satisfactorily. I discuss this point further in section 4.2 on page 37.

I refer also on in section 8.5 on page 133 to the *a priori* assumptions of those who were involved in the regulation of Independent Radio in the earlier part of this period, that radio as a whole is a public good which is enhanced when it is made available in an accessible form to the largest number of people, without compromising the integrity of the broadcasts of the art form which they include; and that specialist material such as classical music output is a telling example of that good. Where I identify in this thesis what I describe variously as “high points” or “high water marks” in the provision of classical music radio in the UK, such approbation follows from those inherited assumptions. As I examine in section 9.5.1, I believe that this approach is in line with Arnold’s concept of “transcendent culture”, and with Hendy’s approval of content not “restricted to the lucky few”, but “spread around, so that all can share in its benefits” (Hendy 2013, p. 46)

This preface is an explanation, not an apology. Since I first began to study history at university in 1965, I have been influenced by E H Carr’s observation that

every human being at every stage of history or pre-history is born into a society and from his earliest years is moulded by that society... The lasting fascination of the Robinson Crusoe myth is due to its attempt to imagine an individual independent of society. That attempt breaks down. Robinson is not an abstract individual, but an Englishman from York; he carries his Bible with him and praises his tribal God (Carr 1965 pps. 31-2).

For my part, I am an English grammar school boy, university educated in the late Sixties, who has spent much his working career in the commercial, content and regulatory aspects of media, especially radio. I share the approach of those in radio with whom I worked for many years, that to deploy radio both to entertain and to enlighten a large number of people who may not naturally seek such enlightenment is an activity to be approved of; and that to restrict access only to those who meet some

set of self-referential elite qualifications is to be disapproved of. My judgements in this thesis follow from that epistemological approach.

### **Acknowledgements**

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I have been bowled over by the generous support and encouragement I have received in undertaking my research to produce this thesis. First and foremost, those in the Media School in Bournemouth University have made possible that which I would have found impossible alone. Professor Hugh Chignell and Dr Kristin Skoog have not only been perceptive supervisors but have encouraged me throughout, especially when I needed it most. Fellow students and faculty members have given me good examples to follow, and gently steered me away from error. Dr Joanna Carpenter has read my manuscript for typographic and formatting errors, and friends and colleagues have seen and commented on individual Chapters, but any errors which remain are my own fault.

So many other media historians and academics have been forthcoming with help and advice. I am particularly indebted to Professor Jean Seaton when I completed my thesis for sight of her then unpublished work. Many of those who feature as *dramatis personae* in this history have also been open and accessible to my enquiries, and I am especially grateful to those who agreed to be interviewed (as listed in Chapter 4), those who answered my frequent questions, and those who opened their personal archives to me. It is a sadness that two key players – Michael Bukht and Ian McIntyre – died before I could do more than speak to them informally over the telephone, and their loss is keenly felt.

As a neophyte, who has been very much learning ‘on the job’, I had not realised how much support I would receive also from archivists and librarians. The staff at the BBC Written Archives Centre (BBC WAC) have been helpfulness personified; I am grateful to them all, and especially to Trish Hayes. Those in the Bournemouth University Library and at the British Library have readily guided me to the information I needed. My former colleagues at Ofcom have been gracious in letting me have data from their archives. Friends and former colleagues at the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), among the radio companies and at the Radio Authority, have managed to overcome their bemusement at why I should have set myself this task and have – as always – been immensely helpful.

For my wife Andy, who has tolerated, encouraged, cajoled and when necessary ignored me, my total thanks are simply not enough. But they are all that I have, so I offer them unstintingly.

## **CLASSICAL MUSIC RADIO IN THE UK 1945 TO 1995**

### **Chapter 1**

#### **Introduction**

What we are nowadays accustomed to call 'classical music' has been a significant part of UK radio from the start. Opera diva Dame Nellie Melba famously broadcast a recital on Marconi's Chelmsford station on 15 June 1920 (Street 2005, p. 11), before performing it for the King two weeks later. (*The Times* 1920). The first outside opera broadcast was a relay of the *Magic Flute* from Covent Garden in January 1923 (Briggs 1995, p. 251), and classical music comprised between a fifth and a quarter of all BBC radio programmes between 1927 and 1930 (Briggs 1965, p. 35). Classical music has been ever-present in the BBC's radio output, and in the years since 1946 has occupied at the very least a substantial part of a dedicated channel. When the BBC's radio monopoly was broken in 1973, all the Independent Local Radio (ILR) stations included classical music in their output. The first national commercial radio station, and the one consistently most listened to, was the *soi disant* Classic FM.

This genre of radio broadcasting has often been an indicator of the prevalent cultural assumptions in British society at any given time. Classical music was particularly significant in UK radio in the early years, because the British adopted a statist monopoly designed to reflect conservative cultural values.<sup>1</sup> With the nation seeking to reaffirm its cultural identity after the existential threat of the Second World War, the BBC offered an innovative cultural radio channel including ambitious classical music. The multi-channel settlement, which included this Third Programme, exemplified the coming together of social, political and cultural aspirations in a paradigm of late Forties Britain. In the second half of the Sixties, the little-acknowledged Music Programme was a bold experiment in offering generic radio, foreshadowing the rearrangement of BBC services in the late Sixties and Classic FM in the Nineties. The expectation that ILR would offer classical music illustrated the persistence of liberal paternalism in the UK in the Seventies, while its sweeping away by 1990 is an illustration of what was lost with the arrival of market liberalisation in the Eighties. And nothing better illustrates the bright hopes of the Nineties than the recasting of Radio 3 to combine both erudition and popular access, running alongside a commercial Classic FM which in those years linked its commercial imperatives with cultural and educational aspirations.

Previous academic discourse on this topic has concerned itself largely with the institutional arrangements surrounding the Third Programme and later Radio 3. This is a valuable perspective, which also offers insight into how the British state worked over this period. However, this focus has served to distract attention from the breadth and importance of classical music radio across a multiplicity of outlets. The Third Programme was almost never the majority provider of this genre of radio output, nor was serious music usually the major component of the Third Programme. The BBC's Home Service and the Light Programme both included substantial classical music output, with the Home Service demonstrably the most significant at least until 1965, when the Music Programme became the hinge on which the entire history turned. A

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<sup>1</sup> Although classical music was notably present on pre-war radio in the USA: see Goodman (2011) below p. 16

wider overview is essential to do justice to the compelling broad sweep of the historical narrative of classical music radio across 50 years, from before the launch of the Third Programme in September 1946 until after the launch of Classic FM in September 1992.

This thesis provides the first comprehensive narrative history of post-war UK classical music radio. It will

- establish a working definition and taxonomy for ‘classical music’;
- set the context for the specific research, both in terms of the history of broadcasting, and of the social, political and economic history of the UK as a whole during this period;
- feature a narrative of all the radio services which carried such broadcasts and their pattern of broadcasting;
- establish on the basis of a comprehensive sample what was actually broadcast on those platforms;
- quantify who listened to those broadcasts, and how the pattern of listening did or did not change over time;
- question how the provision of classical music radio was driven by the shifting interplay of culture and society in the post-war UK;
- illustrate the dialectic between highbrow and popular culture, between elite and demotic taste, and between a class-based and a classless approach to the provision of radio broadcasting;
- establish what all that indicates about the relationships between class, taste and society as mediated through classical music broadcasting on UK radio in these years;
- and consider what light it throws upon the nature of listening, the relevance of individual biography in media history and the nature of public service broadcasting.

The evolution of popular culture, and its relationship with high art, is a recurring theme in general histories of this period. In literature, Rose (2010), Carey (1992), Williams (1965, 1967) and Hoggart (1967, 1972) developed a valid appreciation of mass culture, which had previously seemed to be restricted only to those who were socially, educationally and economically privileged. In the visual arts also, there was a strong “democratic motivation” rejecting elitism and the notion of permanence (Marwick 1991, p. 104). The many historical treatments of the three major periods of social and political change in the second half of the century – the post-war revival; the “cultural revolution” (Marwick 1998, pp. 16-20) of the Sixties; and the libertarianism of the Eighties – deploy the emergence of popular music, pop art, *The Movement* in literature, new-wave film and aspirational television as signifiers of national changes and also agents of those changes.

This thesis argues that classical music radio is an equally important signifier of, and agent for, changes in culture and society in the UK between 1945 and 1995. The provision and the consumption of classical music radio are redolent of class assumptions, and this thesis examines how far those assumptions are accurate, and what that says about British society at this time.

To prepare the ground for the narrative, Section I begins by considering a definition and taxonomy for ‘classical music’, and posits a new and reflexive definition of ‘classical music radio’. Starting with the established classical repertoire – what has been called the “Central European golden age” (Ross 2010, loc. 4759) – there has been *de facto* complicity between producers and consumers of the genre that what the

broadcasters assert as classical music and the listeners then endorse by their behaviour, becomes the acknowledged classical music canonic repertoire for radio. The review of existing literature in Chapter 3 demonstrates how much has been written about broadcasting and classical music, and how little about classical music radio. Chapter 4 considers the methodology, sources and approach taken in filling that gap, and describes the process of producing original datasets of content and audience, the archival analysis, and material available from original interviews, as well as secondary sources.

The narrative itself, which comprises Section II of the thesis, is grouped within the six calendar decades. Given the constraints on the length of this thesis, for all that it is grounded in extensive granular data, this history must be primarily an overview, with some detailed digging down into relevant examples, incidents and issues.

The narrative is characterised by a series of attempts to widen the franchise of classical music beyond the educated elite, followed by determined efforts to draw back from that to 'protect' the integrity of the cultural form. Between each such action and reaction are periods when highbrow and middlebrow in classical music radio have been held in balance. I argue that those represent the high-points of this genre. Broadcasters and listeners enjoyed the best of both worlds in the late Forties in a pyramid of cultural aspiration, in the late Sixties with the radical innovation of the Music Programme, and then again in the mid-Nineties with the public and private sectors linked in positive symbiosis. Each high water mark offered the opportunity to explore the high culture of classical music, while widening the franchise to include millions of potential listeners, as happened also in a more limited way in the late Seventies through commercially funded public service radio. These periods characterised classical music radio at its most effective in terms of enriching society – promoting the highest forms of the genre while opening it to a broad audience 'listening out' for cultural opportunity while 'listening in' for entertainment (Lacey 2011, 2013).

Section III draws conclusions from the narrative about the development of classical music radio, its place within wider broadcasting history, and its relevance to relationships between culture, class, taste and society in the UK over those 50 years. It considers also what is revealed about the nature of listening, the role of biography in media history and the characteristics of public service radio, as well as noting avenues for further study.

A list of references and a bibliography follow at the end of the main thesis. Further data are included in four Appendices: content database; audience database; timeline; and a list of key senior personnel.

## **SECTION I: CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Chapter 2**

#### **What is classical music radio?**

*the canonic repertoire of 'classical music'*

*defining 'classical music'*

*taxonomy*

*a working definition of 'classical music radio'*

There is no commonly accepted definition of 'classical music' in scholarship, even though it is in common usage and is therefore widely if imprecisely understood. Obviously, a working definition is needed for this thesis. Less obviously perhaps, dialogue about what 'classical music' comprises illustrates the significant interaction between the development of the canonic repertoire and broadcasting.

Without a clear definition and reliable taxonomy, discourse can become distorted. Bourdieu (1984, p. 9) experiences this problem when trying to use a taxonomy of music to differentiate between class by taste, and demonstrate how the definition of music genres correlates with "class Fractions". He posits a three-fold class division, and associates specific musical works to each: Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* for the top class; Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for the middle ranks; and Johann Strauss (son)'s *Blue Danube* for the lower classes. Yet nowadays we are accustomed to think of all three as forming part of the comprehensive canon of what we usually term 'classical music', and would be unsurprised to hear all of them on BBC Radio 3, or on Classic FM. McKibbin (2000, pp. 416-7), distinguishing the public for "middlebrow music" from "serious music", commits the solecism of describing Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* as "middlebrow", even if he does concede that this cornerstone of European culture is "also popular with the serious musical public".

In the hope of avoiding falling into those or similar pitfalls, I set out in this Chapter to investigate appropriate definitions of 'classical music', and from those and a review of history and current discourse to derive a working definition for 'classical music radio'. I consider first how classical music came, then outline the process towards defining 'classical music' and 'classical music radio', consider taxonomic issues, and from that derive a working definition of 'classical music radio'.

#### **2.1 The canonic repertoire of 'classical music'**

There is general agreement that a distinct body of largely but not exclusively orchestral music came into being early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Western Europe, distinct from 'concert music'. Scholes (1955, p. 193) makes clear that public concerts, "organized as such and *open to the general public for a payment at the door*" (emphasis original), date back at least to John Bannister in London's Whitefriars in 1672. Owen Norris dates the invention of "public opera" to Venice in 1635.<sup>2</sup> As Lebrecht (1997) notes, JS Bach first took 'serious' music out of the church and into the Leipzig coffee houses at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in doing so began to build a commercial audience for concerts. However in these and similar instances, virtually all the repertoire for music performance had been contemporary.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012

By around 1830, that repertoire had “extended from some point in the past up to and including the present” (Kerman 1983, p. 116), and for the concerts newly patronised by the emerging middle classes in Western Europe it included works by “revered usually deceased composers, and music being thought to elevate taste”. (Weber 2012, p. 57).

The symphonic chamber works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven became the focus of a new set of concerts devoted primarily to the new pantheon of great composers. Essayists began calling this music “classical”, conservatories made it into a curriculum and critics defined it as a highest musical authority. By the 1870s most public concerts offered works primarily by these deceased masters, and the basis of modern classical-music taste was born. (Weber 1984, p. 175)

Zon (in Weber 2004, p. ix) suggests that the term has a wider significance. He takes the centrality of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony as indicating the continued role of classical music in contemporary culture, just as

the very tradition of calling old or ageing music ‘classical’ was beginning in this very period (1830-1848) and was heralded by ideologies claiming that it would right the precipitous moral decline of musical culture generally.

Heartz (1980, p. 450) traces the first use of the term applied to music as that by Forkel who “recommended J. S. Bach’s main keyboard works as ‘klassisch’ (1802, rendered in the English translation of 1808 as ‘classical’).” He goes on to talk about

the Viennese ‘classical’ idiom. When encountered without further qualification in recent writings on music, the term-complex usually refers to the ‘Viennese Classics’ composed by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The notion that these constituted a ‘classical period’ arose among German writers in the nineteenth century by analogy with the *Weimarer Klassik* created by Goethe, and, to a lesser extent, Schiller.

Once again, a comparison with literature is significant, as it shows music to be part of broader cultural trends in the classical period, just as it was to be in the romantic, modernist and post-modern eras; but it does not bring a useful working definition any closer, especially as all these aspects of music are fully present within what is accepted today as ‘classical music’.

Owen Norris argues that “classical music is German music; and it’s the sort of German music that was established during the classical period...what we’re talking about really is Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.”<sup>3</sup> Said (2008, p. 278) is equally forthright:

The core repertory of Western classical music is dominated by a small number of composers, mostly German and Austrian, mostly of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In their work, perfection – of form, melody, harmony and rhythm – is common; in fact it occurs in their music with a frequency unimaginable in painting...or literature.

The concept of ‘classical music’ was also centrally affected by the emergence of a distinction between ‘serious’ and ‘light’ music in the 1850s, reflecting the influence of a new Europe-wide bourgeoisie for whom “the old framework of concert life could not maintain order” so that “musical life began to break apart into separate regions of repertory and taste” in which “a dichotomy between music deemed more serious and that deemed less serious became established” (Weber 2008, p. 2). This division was heightened by what Weber (1984, p. 57) has called “a dichotomy between commercial and idealistic notions of musical activity”.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012



This 19<sup>th</sup> century value-judgement illustrates how definition intertwines with sociological evaluation. Thus, as Eisenberg (2005, p. 22) demonstrates, the rise of concert-going among the middle-classes also changed listeners' attitudes to the performance of music. That included rituals which are commonplace today: when to applaud, what to wear, maintaining silence during performances. He argues that music became "like a religious service, and the religion it served was music". Such ritualisation extended also to private recitals, as the celebrity musician became sought after, and "soirées and their etiquette revolved around the piano".

The separation of the world of music from that of everyday life came to be emphasised by what Small (1977, p. 25) calls "the small rituals of the concert hall and Opera house – the purchase of tickets, the reserving of seats, the conventions of dress and behaviour for both performers and audience". Together, these make a special occasion of a concert or opera performance, something apart from the everyday.

The BBC adopted this approach for its classical music broadcasts between the wars, instructing listeners to:

listen as carefully at home as you do in the theatre or concert hall. You can't get the best out of a programme if your mind is wandering, or if you are playing bridge or reading. Give it your full attention. Try turning out the lights so that your eye is not caught by familiar objects in the room. Your imagination will be twice as vivid. (*BBC Handbook* 1930, p. 61)

All of this carried social and sociological overtones. The Frankfurt School regarded the emergence of concert music of this genre as a result of the social dialectic. Sachs (2010) identifies a much cruder monetary reason for the change; composers were seeking to be paid for the works they produced rather than for the posts they held in the court of varied patrons. Composers such as Bach, Haydn or Mozart had composed for specific patrons – individuals or organisation – and usually for specific occasions. The publication of music for wider performance was relatively rare before and during Bach's time, becoming more common during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, it was considered an 'add-on', allowing wider circulation of compositions and generating a little extra income, but not raising thoughts of artistic longevity. Until the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, composers wrote for their contemporaries and did not expect their music to endure for hundreds of years.

Queenie Leavis (1932, p. 158) makes much the same observation about the change in the consumption of literature in the nineteenth century:

because of new commercial conditions the beginnings of a split between popular and cultivated taste infection is apparent. [In *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.]...the production of cheap editions...drove a wedge between the educated and the general public.

Goodman (2011, p. 127), similarly, writes of the remarkable amount of classical music on pre-Second World War commercial radio in the USA. Recent work has generally acknowledged what he calls the "sacralisation" of art music in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereby concert audiences were brought "to sit in reverential silence before great performers of great works". However, as he observes:

the subsequent complexities of maintaining sacralization in the era of broadcasting and mechanical reproduction, when classical music was available to all for the first time in history, and hence when audiences became able to listen to canonical classical music in the mundane surroundings of their homes, have been surprisingly little explored.

In Britain, a similar distinction between classical and popular music began to emerge alongside the efforts of Prince Albert from 1840, who was “consciously on a mission to civilise the British”, although his influence, along with that of Handel and Mendelssohn (completing the German trio) was probably “merely the concrete manifestation of something that was happening anyway.”<sup>4</sup> In Britain as in Germany, the impact of municipal and amateur music-making was significant in the evolution and acceptance of a canonic repertoire (Pieper 2008). However, this process was by no means definitive. The boundaries between ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ music remained highly porous until the arrival of broadcasting. Before the BBC ‘took over’ the Henry Wood Proms in 1927, each concert had been in two parts: the first “more serious, often focusing on the work of a featured composer” while the second comprised ballads and light material: “‘platitudes’ about June and little cottages” (*The Times* 1927).

A more contemporary reading from Ross (2008, pp. xvi-xvii) argues that it is wide of the mark to stereotype “classical music...as an art of the dead, a repertory that begins with Bach and terminates with Mahler and Puccini”:

In the classical field it has long been fashionable to fence music off from society, to declare it a self-sufficient language. In the hyper-political 20th century, that barrier crumbles time and again: Bela Bartók writes string quartets inspired by field recordings of Transylvanian folk songs, Shostakovich works on his *Leningrad* symphony while German guns are firing on the city, John Adams creates an opera starring Richard Nixon and Mao Ze-dong.

The concept of a ‘canon’ is well known from the field of literature, where FR Leavis wrote about “The Great Tradition” (1948, title), promoting the notion that only selected works and authors had the necessary “total significance of a profoundly serious kind” (1948, p. 19). Although for music the existence of such a canon has generally been undisputed, in the field of literature this approach has been substantially revised. Williams (1967), Rose (2010) and Carey (1992) have all challenged the concept for written culture; but it has remained throughout this period at the heart of a proper understanding of ‘classical music’.

The most notable exception to this view is that of Hobsbawm (1983, pp. 263-308), who asserts that present interests construct a cohesive past to establish or legitimize present-day institutions or social relations, and that classical music is such an ‘invented tradition’. The classical canon – in his view aristocratic and bourgeois music; academic, sacred and secular; music for public concerts, private soirees and dancing – achieves its coherence through its function as the most prestigious musical culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Walser (2000, cited in Taruskin 2010e, p. x) challenges the fundamental coherence of the term, arguing that it is merely a “hodge-podge” which has been post-rationalised into coherence.

That is surely an incorrect reading. Taruskin’s contrary claim is much more credible, that

the literate tradition of western music is coherent at least insofar as it has a completed shape. Its beginnings are known and explicable, and its end is now foreseeable (and also explicable). (Taruskin 2010e, p. xi)

More than that, even to write simply of a ‘canon’ is potentially misleading. It is more appropriate to talk about the ‘canonic repertoire’ of classical music, which distinguishes it from the literary canon where the element of performance is largely absent. The situation for music changed only with the arrival of the gramophone record, by which

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012

time the canonic repertoire was well-established and formed the basis for the subsequent reification of classical music for individual listening.

## 2.2 Defining 'classical music'

Understanding how the term 'classical music' was used leads directly into the history; and the history creates and then defines the term. Such reflexivity applied when the canonic repertoire of classical music was first emerging, and is a major element in any contemporary definition too. Cultural preoccupations both within the genre and its definition – contrasting enduring with ephemeral, worthwhile with meretricious, highbrow with middle/lowbrow – run through the emergence of a concept of classical music, and attempts to define the genre, just as they do through the historical narrative in this thesis as a whole.

That body of musical works comprising essentially the compositions of dead German masters in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were later to be designated as 'classical' to distinguish them from the 'romantic' compositions which came later in that century; and then as a term of art within a three-way taxonomy of 'classical', 'romantic' and 'modern' into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although accurate, this use of 'classical' is largely redundant for the purposes of defining the canonic repertoire of the concert hall, the broadcasting studio or the record catalogue.

Scholes (1955, pp. 192-3)<sup>5</sup> reflects the uncertainty by offering three usages for the term 'classical music':

(1) the large class of music (roughly from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century) in which a more or less consciously accepted formalistic scheme of design is evident, with an emphasis on elements of proportion and of beauty as such... The antithesis here is Romantic...(2) a label to distinguish what is obviously or more or less established and of permanent value from what is ephemeral...The antithesis here is Modern...(3) Among less educated people 'Classical' is used in antithesis to 'Popular' ('Do you like classical music?' 'No, I like something with a *tune* to it!'.)

The phrase "less educated" is revealing of the attitude of the music establishment to wider dissemination of classical music. Similarly, Bourdieu (1984, p. xx) chose to write about "legitimate culture", in which he intends to include the canon of serious music for which we seek a working definition. More neutral – and therefore more helpful – is Adorno (1933/2002, p. xiii) who was content to use the term as shorthand: "the music that we are accustomed to call classical".<sup>6</sup>

When broadcasting arrived in the UK, the BBC did not use the term 'classical music'. Even as late as 1955, successive *BBC Handbooks* offer output statistics separated into 'serious music' and 'light music',<sup>7</sup> but never 'classical music'. The text of that year's report speaks of "the Classics and Romantics" in the BBC's music output,<sup>8</sup> a terminology which continues to be used thereafter. The Home Service is said to broadcast "the great standard works of music".<sup>9</sup> When the Music Programme arrived in 1964, it was talked about as offering "a continuous sequence of serious music".<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> Scholes from the autumn of 1923 was the BBC's music critic (Doctor 1999, p. 22)

<sup>6</sup> in *Gesammelte Schriften* (collected writings) 1933 vol 17 pp 303-06

<sup>7</sup> *BBC Handbook* 1955 p. 163

<sup>8</sup> *BBC Handbook* 1955 p. 75

<sup>9</sup> *BBC Handbooks* 1962 p. 58, 1963 p 31

<sup>10</sup> Frank Gillard, Director of Sound Broadcasting in *BBC Handbook* 1967 p. 21. Note the use of the word 'sequence' which was later to become a term of art (see Section II introduction p. 43). Carpenter (1996, p. 223) deploys as a Chapter title the related phrase "an almost continuous

term 'classical music' does not even gain much currency with the arrival of the fully-fledged Radio 3 in 1970. *BBC Handbooks* still avoid the term, preferring 'serious music' or, as the decade progresses, no genre-specific term at all. The final presentation of the Policy Study Group in 1969 still identifies the "music programme mix" for the new Radio 3 as "serious music" (BBC WAC R34/1583, 1969). In a rather archly stage-managed 'conversation' in the *Radio Times* in 1970, to launch the completed Radio 3, Peter Maxwell Davies, Edward Greenfield, Howard Newby and William Glock talk of 'serious' 'mainstream' and 'contemporary' music, but never once of 'classical' music (*Radio Times* 1970).

Media historians tend to follow suit. Briggs (1970, p. 538) usually (but not invariably) writes of 'serious music', for instance when analysing the BBC's wartime music output. Doctor (1999, p. 14) uses the term 'art music' when discussing "the unique contributions of the early music programme builders". It seems to be a particularly British approach to terminology, betraying cultural preconceptions which are absent for example across the Atlantic. Writing about the USA in the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Goodman (2011) can readily refer to 'classical music' throughout his study of American commercial radio.

So this thesis returns to Adorno's formulation – "the music we are accustomed to call classical" – with the important qualification that what that embraces will change over time, at least at the margins. Those changes are essentially reflexive. On that basis, 'classical music' may be defined as being

*the corpus of works which at any given time comprises the acknowledged classical canonic orchestral, vocal<sup>11</sup> and chamber repertoire.*

That is sustained on a reflexive basis, as works enter and remain in that repertoire only with the acquiescence over time of both producer/performer and audience.

### 2.3 Taxonomy of classical music

There are however neighbouring genres and sub-genres, so the taxonomy of classical music is a fertile field for reflexive additions. What can fairly be included within 'classical music'? As Taruskin (2010e, p. x) observes:

The sheer abundance and the genetic heterogeneity of the music so disseminated in 'the West' is a truly distinguishing feature – perhaps the West's signal musical distinction.

There are many terms in use in academic histories to denote the genres of music which some radio programmers are comfortable about including in programmes with the 'classical' label: classical music, light classics, light music, western music, art music, literate music, serious music. There are equally very many nominal component sub-genres: orchestral music, chamber music, choral music, vocal music, film music, baroque music, modern music, avant-garde, contemporary, serial music, and so on.

For output between 1939 and 1944, Briggs (1970, p. 35) lists the BBC's sub-genres within 'classical music' [*sic*] as:

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service of good music" which was used in the 1959 Area and Local Broadcasting final report (BBC WAC R34/1585/1).

<sup>11</sup> where 'vocal' is taken to include operatic and choral works, as well as song.

Opera (whole or part, not excerpts); Orchestral (with soloists); Chamber music; Instrumental recitals; Song recitals; Cantatas, oratorios, church music.

Light music comprised:

Orchestral, band, small combination (with soloists); Operetta, comic opera, musical comedy; Ballad or chorus; Café, restaurant, cinema organs.

Briggs also identifies a separate main genre of “Gramophone records”, and a sub-genre within “Light Entertainment” of “Music hall” and “Revue”.

The problems at the margins are pretty obvious. Is Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro* – one of the finest of all classic operas, but strongly comedic – to be classified only as ‘comic opera’ and treated therefore as light music? Of course not. What about Britten’s *Albert Herring*? That is less immediately obvious by any objective measure, though absolutely clear by a reflexive judgment to be mainstream opera.

The BBC’s administrative approach right up until the establishment of generic radio services from 1967 onwards, which also reveals the approach and perhaps prejudice of its programmers, was for the Music Department to handle all ‘serious music’, while the Gramophone Department was mostly responsible for what was initially described as ‘dance music’ but later ‘popular music’, with ‘light music’ involving also the Variety Department (*BBC Handbook* 1955, pp. 163, onwards).

However, the BBC’s taxonomy is suspect as an objective means of classification, as LeMahieu (1988, p. 184) demonstrates:

It was in its policy towards music that the BBC most self-consciously constructed a flattering image of bourgeois cultural traditions and social identity. Music occupied a large share of BBC programming and best exemplified the Corporation’s sense of its own mission. Although programmers recognised their obligation to satisfy the diverse tastes of all segments of British society, the BBC defined “music” in a way which marginalised and sometimes excluded matter which the majority, including many within the middle classes, considered acceptable forms of entertainment.

Once again, it emerges that a definition – taxonomic in these instances – says much about the attitudes and prejudices of those deploying it. Scannell (1981, p. 243) is ironically dismissive of the BBC’s approach:

Dance bands, the cinema organ, operetta and musical reviews were never officially classified as music... Symphonies, chamber music, opera and contemporary avant-garde compositions – these are the forms of true music.

Yet this also rather misses the point. Sub-genres are granted a place within the *genus* ‘classical music’ according to the current cultural attitudes of the programme makers *provided that* these are shared also by their listeners – a further example of the reflexive process, and the entwining of definition, practice and social theory.

All classical music radio stations are self-serving in their definition of what falls within their acceptable playlists. Classic FM came on air in 1992 with an audience-based approach, with consultant Robin Ray listing all the tracks likely to be played as either “essential repertoire”, “standard repertoire”, “widely popular” or “universally popular” with each item placed in only one category. Thus, Bruch’s *G Minor Violin Concerto* was programmed by the station as ‘widely popular’, but not ‘essential’ or ‘standard repertoire’; with the second movement ‘universally popular’.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, although reticence over use of the term ‘classical music’ seems to have been peculiarly British,

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<sup>12</sup> Ray 31 January 1992 in Bernard, private papers

what to include or exclude within it is by no means only a domestic issue. Lüthje's study of Klassik Radio in Germany (2008) and Goggin's of Lyric FM in Ireland (2006) both address similar issues.<sup>13</sup>

There is no need to agonize over the margins of any such taxonomy. It has been common for the canonic repertoire to come in time to encompass works which might previously have been frowned upon, and also to embrace what at the time had been uncomfortably modern works into the mainstream. Musicologist David Owen Norris observes that serious composers can produce popular works which still fit centrally into the canon for definitional purposes:

Poulenc writes one of his piano improvisations as a homage to Édith Piaf. Debussy is writing cakewalks, Ravel a piece called *Boléro*. These guys were across the whole board.<sup>14</sup>

A reflexive approach can also be used for individual sub-genres. That involves fairly straightforwardly rejecting the notion of 'concert music' as a sub-genre of classical music, as it is not a term which offers any real distinction for the 20th century.<sup>15</sup> Equally, both jazz and world/cross-over music are by definition almost entirely outside the Western tradition of classical music. Four potential sub-genres of classical music pose greater challenges for a working taxonomy: film music, church music, light music and modern music.

A number of 20<sup>th</sup> century composers whose work falls firmly within the classical canon have composed music for films. American exiles such as Korngold – who won an Oscar for his score for *The Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1938 – and Soviet era composers such as Shostakovich – whose music for the film *Meeting on the Elbe* won a Stalin State Prize in 1952 for the politically anguished composer (Lesser 2011) – relied on it to make a living. Classical music is often used as film music: for example the second movement of Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 21* in the film *Elvira Madigan*.

However, even where it is clearly orchestral, and meets other of the nominal criteria for classical music, film music as such is distinguished from classical music by being composed for a specific purpose which sidelines the altruistic creative impulse. It is in effect a pastiche of classical music, using the stylistic mannerisms of that genre. Owen Norris argues that

film music...isn't classical music. [Many film composers are] trying to be classical musicians, but actually what they are actually doing is...choosing the bit of classical music that makes the right noise for that, so that's a cynical process, and one that we regard as being artistically less worthy.<sup>16</sup>

On that basis, this thesis will treat film music as a separate genre, and not a sub-genre of classical music, except for compositions for films which have subsequently entered the classical canonic repertoire as orchestral suites or similar in their own right. An

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<sup>13</sup> Lüthje (2008, p. 281) deploys a tripartite taxonomy for that station of "Klassik, New Classics and Filmmusik". Her examples for orchestral music classify John Williams' *Give Me Your Name* as Film; the *adagio* from Haydn's *Symphony no. 26* as Klassik; and the *Elizabethan Serenade* by Ronald Binge as New Classic. All are part of Klassik Radio's standard repertoire, rather as they would be for Classic FM in the UK. However, Lyric FM in Eire – avoiding a specific 'classic' label – ranges far more widely. Goggin shows how that station includes substantial amounts of folk music and jazz in addition to "medieval, renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, twentieth century and film music" (2006, p. 25).

<sup>14</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012

<sup>15</sup> Apart from Richard Rodney Bennett, who reportedly approaches his compositions according to their end use rather than their genre. Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris 24 July 2012

obvious example is Walton's music for Olivier's film of *Henry V*. Adopting a reflexive taxonomy allows such marginal works to enter the main sub-genre without negating the broader conclusion.

Church music is a further substantial challenge. Much classical music is either directly composed for liturgical or related purposes – Bach's motets, the oratorios so characteristic of English composers, and much more – or inspired by (mostly Christian) religiosity, yet can be central to the classical canon. The distinction here is the context in which it is being performed (and broadcast), rather than the purpose of the composition. Direct broadcasts of church services, notably *Choral Evensong*, have been a staple part of the output of the Third Programme, the Home Service and Radio 3. This thesis will treat those broadcasts as liturgical rather than classical music output, unless specific instances require otherwise. Broadcasts of 'sacred' works in concert circumstance will be classified as choral or orchestral sub-genres within classical music. Organ recitals will not.

The 'early music' movement had been stimulated by Third Programme broadcasts in the Fifties, and given a whole new lease of life by the work of David Munrow<sup>17</sup> in the Seventies. However, it has almost always consciously stood outside the main classical canonic repertoire, regarding itself as a separate genre rather than as part of the classical continuum. This thesis will respect that approach.

Light music was seen by the BBC from the outset as wholly separate from serious music; indeed, as described above, that was the fundamental taxonomic distinction. At the outset, 'light' and 'popular' were effectively synonyms for the purposes of classification. The Performing Right Society separated classical music from all other compositions until 1987, for example paying the composer of *Prolation*, Peter Maxwell Davies, double the rate of the writer of *Nicola*, Steve Race, on the grounds that classical music reflected extra work per minute of score (Towse 1997, pp. 147-151).

So-called 'light classical' works are less problematic. There is no adequate reason why, for example, Gustav Holst's *Brook Green Suite* should be considered mainstream classical music while the contemporaneous *London Suite* by Eric Coates is 'merely' light music. Light classical works so readily enter the mainstream classical canonic repertoire that it seems self-defeating to exclude them. This thesis will therefore regard 'light classical' as a sub-genre of 'classical' music.

What is variously described as modern, contemporary and/or avant-garde music has been and remains in many ways the touchstone for the BBC's seriousness in classical music. These terms are not strictly interchangeable, but they may fairly be treated as such for this taxonomy. Haley, the begetter of the Third Programme, was unsympathetic to some of this new music:

there was a natural tendency to find things which nobody had ever heard of and, quite frankly, once they'd been broadcast nobody wanted to hear again. (BBC WAC R143/60/1 1976)

Timing is crucial. A work initially categorised as stridently 'modern' or unapproachably 'avant-garde' when composed may easily enter the mainstream repertoire if it stands the test of (quite a short period of) time. It is obvious that a reflexive approach is required for the taxonomy also. For example, radio output such as *In Our Time* on the Third Programme and Classic FM's championing of Gorecki, occupy a distinct sub-genre of contemporary works not initially part of the mainstream canonic repertoire but now properly included as 'classical music'.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 8 page 122n

<sup>18</sup> See for example, Chapter 7 p. 121 and Chapter 10 p. 169

For the purpose of this thesis, therefore, the taxonomy of classical music's sub-genres will follow from that adopted for the main genre. On a reflexive basis at the margins, it will exclude film music, church music performed and broadcast in an entirely liturgical context, and light music. It will include light classical and contemporary music. That leads to an expansion of the definition of classical music to be

*the corpus of works which at any given time comprise the acknowledged classical, light classical and contemporary canonic orchestral, vocal and chamber repertoire, including works entering from other genres, sustained on a reflexive basis.*

## 2.4 A working definition of 'classical music radio'

Such a definition transfers straight-forwardly to radio. As the historical narrative will demonstrate, the readiness of producers to accept an inclusive rather than an exclusive canonic repertoire varied during this period, but was always central in shifting degrees to the programmers' approach. From the start of broadcasting, they initiated a reflexive process whereby broadcasting adopted the concert canonic repertoire, and added to it or subtracted from it as the needs and opportunities of radio dictated (and the concert programmes adapted accordingly). Although the works broadcast on the Third Programme in, say, 1954 would differ a little from those offered by Radio 3 in 1974 and more markedly from the playlist of Classic FM in 1994, almost all would be generally accepted by consumers/listeners as being 'classical music radio'.

Might the 'nature' of listening modify this approach? Hendy (2010) writes about perceptions of a hierarchy of listening in the context of late-night radio. Lacey (2013) treats listening as a *cultural practice*" (her emphasis) which can change over time. For classical music, there are ever-present contradictory and value judgements about the respective worth of 'foreground' or 'background' listening. Chapters 6, 7 and 10 consider related controversies over the rearrangement of radio services in 1957, the Music Programme in 1964 and Classic FM in 1992.

Black identified and was content with the notion that one person might deploy different modes of listening at different times:

If you're really listening, participating in the music...then you're probably listening in a high brow way. If you've got it on in the background, you're definitely listening in a middle brow way. Anything in between, well you'd have to know the circumstances, but I suspect that highbrow listening is much rarer than people imagine.<sup>19</sup>

This practical approach is persuasive. It resembles Hendy's hierarchy of listening, referenced to individuals – or groups enjoying "collective listening and intersubjective experience" (Lacey 2011, p. 19) – rather than to a *class* of listener.

There remains one other necessary element. What other terminologies try to encapsulate – 'art', 'serious', 'educated' music, etc – is that this genre offers to involve more than just the emotions, thus providing Benjamin's (2008) "auratic" quality. It *may* be merely sensual, but at all times it offers the *prospect* of engaging the intellect with the music itself. That concept was at the heart of the BBC's initial experiment with the Third Programme and characterises debates which run on to this day. Why may it be

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Leo Black interview 14 September 2013



wrong to play just one movement of a symphony? Why might it be necessary to introduce listeners to 'hard' as well as 'easy' music?

This is music radio's counterpart to Lacey's (2013) consideration of the evolving discourse over 'passive audiences' and 'active audiences', where the spoken word is deployed in broadcasting to open up political understanding and experience among the listening publics. In her view there has been an "ongoing association...of radio as the paradigmatic medium of the age of 'mass' communications" (2013, p. 116). She asserts that "listening is not just an acoustic, embodied experience, it is also a cognitive activity." Such "listening out" requires *some* classical music radio to have *some* intellectual content, and consequently any definition must provide for that possibility.

Add this element, and the working definition for 'classical music radio' becomes

*a radio service which broadcasts the corpus of works which at any given time comprise the acknowledged classical, light classical and contemporary canonic orchestral, vocal and chamber repertoire, including works entering from other genres, sustained on a reflexive basis, offering the opportunity for intellectual engagement with the music as well as sensory enjoyment.*

This thesis proceeds from that definition.

## **Chapter 3**

### **UK society, classical music and broadcasting, 1945 to 1995**

#### **Historical literature review**

*selective literature review*  
*post-war historical literature*  
*classical music in the 20th century*  
*social and cultural theory*  
*conclusions*

#### **3.1 selective literature review**

Three separate strands of history are interwoven to support the historical narrative of this thesis: summary accounts of political, economic and social forces and events; the nature of classical music at the end of the Second World War and over the following decades; and the history of broadcasting, most saliently radio. That each of these impacted upon the other is central to the approach of this thesis. This Chapter therefore first considers current accounts of the entire half-century. The historiography for each decade is examined in the individual narrative Chapters.

The ensuing history of classical music radio, set out in Chapters 5 to 10, will be arranged by decades, although media historians have more usually divided their accounts by key institutional dates. The story of classical music on UK radio was often asynchronous with that of broadcasting in general: for example, the Music Programme launched in 1964/5, when the only other broadcasting events related to offshore pirate radio; Independent local Radio (ILR) started broadcasting classical music in the Seventies, when scholarship ignores radio almost completely. Nor is the chronology of cause consistent. The gestation of the Third Programme can be clearly linked with wartime aspirations for the post-war nation, its birth in autumn 1946 located amid the UK's cultural renaissance. In contrast, the near-accidental revolution of Classic FM was effectively completed in a couple of years in the early Nineties, when other historical indicators were largely inert.

Any contextual narrative needs to consider at least briefly the years immediately before 1945, while the historiography of classical music starts much earlier still. Consideration of established discourse about the relationship between culture, class and society must also address pre-war – often ideological – concerns about the democratisation of culture, as well as how those and other scholarships played out in the post-war years. To inform the full narrative, therefore, this thesis acknowledges events before 1945, moves from overview in this Chapter to closer analysis of individual decades, and then to a brief coda covering the years after 1995.

An issue arises where to set out the historical literature review which is specific to the individual decades. For this Chapter to be comprehensive, that ought to appear here, but the logic of the narrative has already meant that literature relevant to the definition of classical music has been set out in Chapter 2. That relating to historical methodology belongs more appropriately in Chapter 4. A review of the historical literature about the internet and digital broadcasting is in Chapter 11, while that relating to audience research appears in Appendix B. To ensure that the narrative Chapters – which are at the heart of this thesis – are sufficiently comprehensive, the general and broadcasting

history literature for each decade will be reviewed as appropriate in Chapters 5-10. This Chapter therefore will review the relevant literature in three sections only: first, the literature of general and broadcasting history across the whole period between 1945 and 1995; second, that concerning 20<sup>th</sup> century classical music; and third, an overview of relevant social and cultural theory.

### 3.2 Post-war historical literature

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the UK change utterly. The nation had entered the war apparently one of the great imperial powers. It ended it bankrupt and diminished, merely one nation on the edge of a ruined continent, but with a democratic, demotic impulse which drove the creation of a new society from the physical and economic rubble of the preceding years (Taylor 1965, Hennessy 1992, Kynaston 2007). The country then passed through cycles of austerity and unprecedented affluence (Hennessy 2006, Kynaston 2009, Sandbrook 2006a, 2006b, 2010, Turner 2008, 2010, 2013); endured and inflicted agonies of de-colonisation from Suez to Derry (Coogan 1987, Foster 1988, Kyle 2011); fought with itself in successive labour disputes (Morgan 1999); shed an empire; failed to find a role in the new Europe; glistened in the Sixties (Donnelly 2005, De Groot 2009); lost its way in the Seventies (Beckett 2009, De Groot 2010); and arrived in the mid-Eighties and Nineties as a post-imperial market state seeking to be the financial capital of the world (McSmith 2011, Stewart 2013). It began this period in cultural renaissance (Marwick, 1980, 1990, 1991, 1998, Pirie 1979); embraced pastoralism, pop-art and pop music (Harris 2010, Spalding 1986); vaunted its angry young men, debunked the Establishment, and became successively 'swinging' and then 'cool'. It housed world-renowned centres of serious music and rock music; shook off the description of being a *Land ohne Musik* (Schmitz 1914/1926); and re-invented the popular musical. In broadcasting it embraced the public/private duopoly in television (Briggs 1995) and – belatedly – in radio (Stoller 2010); believed it produced “the best television in the world”,<sup>20</sup> when what it probably had was the best radio in the world; and then abandoned much of that heritage amid the lures of commercialism and convergence (Brown 2007, Horsman 1997).

A remarkable half-century, but one which has attracted very few up-to-date histories covering the whole period, and those appear partial. Morgan's contribution to the *Oxford History of Britain* series (1999) is dominated by industrial decline and labour relations turmoil. Hobsbawm's approach and interests are useful if ideological (1995), distinguishing the years up to 1945 as “the age of catastrophe” and those afterwards as “the golden age”. Blake (1997) presents a problem. He covers both classical and popular music in a societal context across the period, but an unstated political viewpoint tends to weaken what ought to be valuable.<sup>21</sup> Marwick (1990) delivers the most persuasive comprehensive social history in *British society since 1945*. Marr (2009) is perhaps the most convincing of various popular histories-cum-TV series.

Broadcasting history for this overall period has since 1961 been dominated by Briggs' series *The history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (Briggs 1961 onwards) which covers the years up to 1974. This thesis, like all broadcasting history of this period, will

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<sup>20</sup> “For years, the British have openly prided themselves upon having the best television in the world” (Spark 1996, p. 85).

<sup>21</sup> To take one example, Blake's assertion that “the (Corelli) Barnet Conservatives demanded the dismemberment of Radio 3” (1997, p. 64) is simply incorrect. See Chapter 10 pp. 178ff

draw on Briggs' work extensively. However, his great sequence is substantially concerned with how the BBC organised itself, less with the wider political, economic and social context, little with the actual musical output and hardly at all with the consumers of the BBC's classical music output. Briggs himself "would have preferred the volumes to be called *A History of Broadcasting* rather than *The History*" (1980, p. 8). Street's *Historical Dictionary of British Radio* (2005) should be at the elbow of every researcher. Seaton's continuation of Briggs' set of histories is expected to be published in February 2015, and provides much more detail and thought about classical music radio than any of her predecessor's volumes.

Carpenter's (1996) book, *The Envy of the World*, covers the history of the Third Programme and Radio 3. It is an 'official' history, commissioned by the BBC. Perhaps as a consequence, it pays primary attention to an exhaustive examination of internal politics and personalities over the years and the BBC's administrative history. Carpenter makes scant reference to classical music output on other BBC services. Kenyon's (1981) study of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (BBCSO) from 1930 to 1980 is asynchronous with this thesis, but is a valuable source. The story of the Promenade Concerts (Proms) is relevant in part and at certain times to the history of broadcast classical music. Hall (1981) offers an anecdotal history of the Proms up to 1980. Kenyon, Doctor, Wright, Kildea and Garnham all provide insightful reviews of individual Prom eras, in *The Proms: A New History* (Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007).

Hendy's history of Radio 4 (2007) begins in the mid-Sixties and has little to say about music. However, Hendy is especially strong and detailed on the internal (and to a degree the external) politics of the BBC. Lacey's *Listening Publics* (2013) is primarily concerned with speech, but gives some attention also to music – including classical music – and there and elsewhere (2011 and 2014) offers important new concepts of the nature of listening. Chignell (2011) traces the history of talks, news and current affairs on radio from the Twenties to the Nineties, providing insights into the effect of institutional change. Whitehead (1989) is also concerned with the spoken word rather than music.

Private radio has received scant academic attention. Street (2006) covers the pre-war situation and its post-war legacy. Stoller (2010) is the only general source for the classical music output of the ILR stations between 1973 and 1990, and then for the arrival of Classic FM, but also mostly covers structures and politics. Starkey (2011, p. xiv) is chiefly concerned with "the influence of developments in a range of spheres on the local radio sector in a number of countries", for which purpose his UK focus is the death of localism in commercial radio. Crisell's useful textbook (2002) covers the broader outlines of ILR.

There is ample scope therefore for a comprehensive examination of the history of classical music radio, and its wider social and cultural significance.

### 3.3 Classical music in the 20th century

The historiography of post-war classical music is rather different. Unlike general UK history or broadcasting history, many of the historical studies cover the whole period. There is a further major difference. The classical music which is relevant to 20<sup>th</sup> century broadcasting was mostly composed before 1945. There is also a mismatch between the areas of music receiving most current academic attention and the bulk of either concert or broadcast content, which more closely reflected the long-established

canonic repertoire. This section will review the literature most relevant to the thesis, noting that the bibliography of the history of classical music is too vast even to be summarised here.

Recent historical literature of what he terms “Western music” is dominated by Taruskin (2010). The five substantial volumes of his monumental *Oxford History of Western Music* cover the history of literate music-making in Europe and North America from its inception. These dense works provide a comprehensive narrative history of the development, emergence and contemporary manifestation of the ‘serious’ half of Western music. Ross’s popular *The Rest is Noise: listening to the 20th century* (2008) spawned a festival of music on London’s South Bank through 2013, and a television series. It addresses the challenge to the German roots of the classical canon by French and Russian innovation, and from the Second World War onwards by the increasing dominance of composers working in the USA. Ross has followed this up with a collection of essays and articles (2010).

Much established scholarship of the history of music finds an outlet in the 29 volumes of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* which make up the 2001 edition (Grove and Sadie 1980). Along with the German-language *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Blume 1986), these are the largest single reference works on Western music. Two Cambridge Histories offer significant compendiums of relevant current scholarship: the *Cambridge History of 20th Century Music* (Cook and Pople, eds., 2004) and the *Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (Lawson and Stowell, eds., 2012). The *Oxford Companion to Music* (1938 onwards) is a slighter run over the ground, but is interesting for the explanations it offers to the general reader. There is a vast corpus of works about and by the composers and musicians who have major or minor parts within this history. All the major composers are the subjects of both personal and critical biographies, far too numerous to list here.

### 3.4 Social and cultural theory

The historical narrative which lies at the heart of this thesis illustrates relationships between class, taste and society in the UK from a practical perspective, shunning both the neo-Marxist and neo-Hegelian discourse – and the opposition to it – which dominated the sociology of the period. Reflecting the literary revisionism pioneered by Williams (1965, 1967) and Hoggart (1967, 1972, 2004), the sociology of culture has been mostly concerned with speech, but there are elements in that theoretical discourse which are relevant to this genre.

Pierre Bourdieu’s work, closely coincident in time with the research period for this thesis, is central to an understanding of the cultural theories which can be deployed to go beyond the basic narrative. Although addressed primarily to sociology rather than history, Bourdieu’s concept of ‘cultural capital’ in particular helps to explain the importance accorded it to classical music, and an understanding of it, by the intelligentsia in the UK. Crossley describes it as “a successful “attempt to move away from a narrowly materialistic conception of power and inequality, by introducing the concepts of cultural, social and symbolic capital” (Crossley in Grenfell 2012 p. 86). The idea that familiarity and comfort with high culture is as important a legacy as economic benefit would have seemed almost a commonplace to many of those involved in the origination and production of British classical music radio. Such fundamental beliefs are identified by Bourdieu as ‘doxa’, a group of inherited thought patterns which both

dominate and justify the attitudes and actions of those privileged in any particular 'field' of social activity, and which "contributes to its reproduction in social institutions, structures and links as well as in mind and bodies, expectations and behaviour" (Deer in Grenfell 2012 p. 115).

Among the concepts working within Bourdieu's objective 'field' is the subjective 'habitus':

people who belong to the same social group and...thus occupy the same position in social space tend to share the same tastes across all forms of symbolic practice.... Those who have particular kinds of taste for art would have similar kinds of taste not just for food but for all kinds of cultural or symbolic goods and practices: for particular kinds of music, film, television....the habitus, for Bourdieu, consists in the set of unifying principles which underlie such tastes and give them a particular social logic which derives from, while also organising and articulating, the position which a particular group occupies in social space (Bennett in Bourdieu 1984 p. xix).

Of particular relevance to this thesis are the frequent instances where Bourdieu illustrates with examples drawn from classical music his concept of cultural capital as the basis for his understanding of how social class is transferred between generations. Thus, in his seminal work *Distinction* (1979/1984), he argues that the taste of those growing up in upper-class households is acquired by their upbringing, and specifically that classical music becomes above all a way of maintaining class difference.

the flaunting of 'musical culture' is not a cultural display like others: as regards its social definition, 'musical culture' is something other than a quantity of knowledge and experiences combined with the capacity to talk about them. Music is the most 'spiritual' of the arts of the spirit and a love of music is a guarantee of 'spirituality'.... But this is not all. Music is the 'pure' art par excellence it says nothing and *has nothing to say*." (Bourdieu 1984 p.10) [Original emphasis]

Again, Bourdieu asserts that

when the child grows up in a household in which music is not only listened to...but also performed...and a fortiori when the child is introduced at an early age to a 'noble' instrument – especially the piano – the effect is at least to produce a more familiar relationship to music, which differs from the always somewhat distant, contemplative and often verbose relation of those who have come to music through concerts or even only through records (1984 pps. 67-8).

This thesis has already considered the challenges in trying to apply Bourdieu's concept of *class fractions* to the classical music radio audience, since his posited threefold class division identifies works which nowadays would all be considered to fall within the broad definition of classical music (1984 p. 9),<sup>22</sup> but the significance of taste both within and outside conventional class distinction is important to an understanding of the history of classical music radio.

At the opening of the 1945-1995 period, scholarly discourse concerning the nature of class in society was strongly directed on the one hand by the work of the German-American Frankfurt School, Horkheimer (1972), Lazarsfeld (1940) and Adorno; and the

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<sup>22</sup> See above, Chapter 2 p. 15

thinkers opposed to it, typified by Leavis (1948) and Eliot (1962). Just as the Second World War marked a watershed in the development of classical music, so in terms of philosophy it marked the end of the unquestioned primacy of Enlightenment thinking. Scannell (2007, p. 47) argues persuasively that:

it was a final outcome of what began as the European Enlightenment centuries earlier. It was also the end of hope in the promise of reason to which the Enlightenment thinkers were committed. Thus the *dialectic* [original emphasis] of Enlightenment was the inner contradiction of the very idea of Enlightenment and the historical working out of that contradiction in the slow inexorable progress towards the apocalyptic moment of a global war.

Eliot's (1962, p. 31) tone catches the uniqueness of the British musical canon:

The term [British] culture...includes all the characteristic activities and interests of the people: Derby day, Henley regatta, Cowes, 12 August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dartboard, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar.

These two themes – Englishness<sup>23</sup> and the end of the Enlightenment – regularly recur in the examination of British classical music radio.

The work of the Frankfurt School provided insights into the nature of culture – including classical music – which now form much of the vernacular of academic discourse in this field. The concept of a 'culture industry', resulting from the penetration of art and culture by the techniques and methods of industrial mass production, and the resulting 'commodification' of art forms, is now widely accepted. However, Horkheimer's *Critical Theory* (1972) and Lazarsfeld (1940 onwards) focus on those parts of the popular music radio industry in the USA where there were research grants available.<sup>24</sup> Scannell (2007, p. 27) summarises as their collective conclusion that "people of low income, educational and cultural attainment did not, it was found, listen to serious radio broadcasts, although the lower down the social scale you went, the more people listen to radio and the higher you went, the less". That is challenged by Goodman's (2011) findings about US commercial radio pre-1939 and is certainly far too simplistic for UK radio, as this thesis will demonstrate.

Less significant than Bourdieu in overall terms, but of considerable importance for classical music cultural theory are Theodor Adorno (1928 onwards) at the start of the period, and Edward Said (1994 onwards) at its end. Unlike their philosophical, culture and sociological contemporaries, Adorno, Said and Bourdieu wrote extensively about serious music, the first two as accomplished performers/practitioners.

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<sup>23</sup> "Englishness" is more accurate than "Britishness" here. Although there were composers during this period originating from – and at times working in – all parts of Britain, it is the particularly English character which was most often remarked upon. For example, although Pirie's book (1979) is sub-titled "Twentieth century British composers & their works" it carries the main title: *The English Musical Renaissance*; and of the home-born composers listed in the Appendix to *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Music* (Cook ed., 2004, p. 615), 17 are specified as English, and only two as British.

<sup>24</sup> The work of Habermas, such a major figure in this debate, is concerned exclusively with the written word, his notion of the 'public sphere' being what Lacey (2011, p. 15) describes as "an auditorium where the freedom of speech [*sic*] is exercised".

Adorno's work stands out in the classical music field at the beginning of this period, possibly because, in Scannell's telling phrase, "Lazarsfeld quickly became 'American' while Adorno refused to adjust" (2007, p. 20). A composer of repute, he combined understanding of the nature of serious music with a challenging self-reflexive sociological approach to music in the social sphere. Adorno takes Horkheimer's concept of Critical Theory and examines through that the nature of mass culture. In his early essay *The Schema of Mass Culture* and in the early Forties writing with Horkheimer of the Culture Industry in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we get Adorno's conception of the 'reified' nature of culture, rendered thing-like, itself a commodity (1932, and Adorno and Leppert 2002, p. 422). Adorno persuasively presents technology as a principal determinant in music consumption, just as the impact of technology on consumption in turn affected musical production. However, to see the advent of sound recording, and, later, radio broadcasting, as the first realisation of music as a consumer product is to ignore the commercialisation of music and musicians from a much earlier date amid the early nineteenth century's commercial exploitation of music, talent and fame (Weber 2004, Lebrecht 1997).

For example, Adorno's dismissal in his essay *the Radio Symphony* (Adorno 1941 and Adorno and Leppert 2002) of any argument that there was an educative effect in radio broadcasting of serious music, especially symphonies, does not stand up to an objective analysis of UK classical music radio. On the other hand, what he described as the "fetish character of music-objects" (Adorno 1932/ Adorno and Leppert 2002, p. 422) is a convincing concept, evident in the notion of 'authentic performance', which in turn is an aspect of the standardisation which derives from the technology of music encoding and reproduction, and which is accordingly challenged by unavoidably inauthentic reproduction through radio broadcasts. There is considerable force in this argument, evidenced for example by the consequent conformity of behaviour required of concert-goers (Eisenberg 2005), or American radio's "sacralization of Toscanini and the music he conducted" (Goodman 2011, p. 127).<sup>25</sup>

To place this in context, it is helpful to return to the light Bourdieu throws on the nature of taste among those who consume classical music (and mostly by implication classical music radio), and the specific place he avers for classical music in the discourse about class, culture and taste:

Nothing more clearly affirms one's 'class', nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music... there is no more 'classificatory' practice than concert-going or playing a 'noble' instrument. (1984 p. 10)

In a European context, Bourdieu is writing about the Continental bourgeoisie. Marwick (1991, p. 7) is uncomfortable with the concept of a bourgeoisie in the UK. He takes the view that the British middle class is the most variegated in composition, background, education and outlook, so that the term 'bourgeois' lacks relevant analytical meaning in a UK context.

This approach cannot fully hold for music. Although since the origins of the classical canonic repertoire lie unequivocally in the correctly-named 'bourgeoisie' of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, it is, as Marwick asserts, an unhelpful term when applied to 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. It is probably more accurate to say with McKibbin (1998, p. 418) that:

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<sup>25</sup> The BBC's enthusiasm to recruit Toscanini to conduct the BBCSO (Kenyon 1981) suggests this was not a solely American phenomenon.



there were three musical publics, though the relationship between them was always fluid. There was a very small public for 'serious' music; a considerably larger one for 'middlebrow' music, and a much larger one for 'popular' music.

an approach close to that of Bourdieu, although carefully avoiding too much precision. Noting again the difficulty in applying Bourdieu's notion of class fractions too precisely in British classical music radio,<sup>26</sup> this thesis will be pragmatic about the relevance of class, following Marwick (1990, p. 48):

The social effects of post-war Britain cannot be *explained* solely by reference to class. But they certainly cannot be fully *understood* without reference to class.

The approach dictated by the Frankfurt School at one end of the spectrum, and Eliot and Leavis at the other, has been effectively challenged in the field of literature. In Britain in particular, there was a fundamental shift in thinking about culture and society since the mid-Sixties, and a re-conception of the 'social' from elite to ordinary (Hoggart 1972).

LeMahieu (1988, p.185) is concerned with events in Britain between the two World Wars, but offers some useful approaches to the relationship between culture, class and taste in the specific context of radio broadcasting. Writing of the BBC's "respectable risks", he asserts that "both contemporary observers during the interwar period and recent scholars have often acknowledged the Corporation's preoccupation with social class", and that "in the implementation of Reith's ideal of public service, BBC programmers constructed a schedule which reflected the biases and most treasured cultural aspirations of their class".

It was in its policy towards music that the BBC most self-consciously constructed a flattering image of bourgeois cultural traditions and social identity. Music occupied a large share of BBC programming and best exemplified the Corporation's sense of its own mission. Although programmers recognised their obligation to satisfy the diverse tastes of all segments of British society, the BBC defined 'music' in a way which marginalised and sometimes excluded much of what the majority, including many within the middle classes, considered acceptable forms of entertainment (1988, p. 184).

The historical narrative of this thesis indicates that LeMahieu's assertion holds good at some times between 1945 and 1995 but not at others; and crucially – as this thesis will demonstrate – not at the recurring moments of highest achievement.

Among the theorists of the Eighties, Hall's encoding/decoding model (1980a) is useful in understanding by analogy the processes by which music is uploaded for broadcasting and then downloaded for listening; both actions having a different significance for the producer and listener respectively, but where a basic concordance between the two is essential.<sup>27</sup> However, such processes are not determinative for classical music radio, as Hall argues they are for television. The music itself can stand on its own, unmediated by the encoding/decoding process, even if – as Adorno with justification asserts – it is of a somewhat different character than music heard live in a concert hall or other performance space (1941/Adorno and Leppert 2002). Indeed, it

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<sup>26</sup> Chapter 2, p. 15

<sup>27</sup> It is common to speak of the two aspects of this transaction as 'production' and 'reception'. However, the word 'reception' has technical implications for radio, so this thesis uses 'consumer' or 'listener'.

can be argued that this is a further characteristic of classical music, that it can retain such independent identity even in an encoding/decoding transaction.

There are questions also surrounding the place of music in history. Taruskin (2010c, p. 221) contends that “the essential question of modern art, as it was understood by modern artists during the first two thirds of the 20th century, and the essential debate, was whether artists lived in history or in society”. For classical music producers, it may be posited that the former applied; whereas for its consumers, especially radio listeners, the latter was the case. Ross (2008, p. xvii) observes that “in the classical field, it has long been fashionable to fence music off from society, to declare it a self-sufficient language”, but this also seems too simplistic. Classical music is essentially historical because the canonic repertoire always contains far more works that are historic than contemporary, and such music can also have its own historical significance too. Consequently, the theoretical underpinning of this narrative history must always be more historical than sociological.

There is a further central consideration about cultural boundaries. Do listeners conceive of classical music as high art, popular culture, something in between, or an amalgam of all? Greenberg (1939, p. 15) argues that there could be no middle ground because “a superior consciousness of history” has led those who created “art and literature of a high order” to form a united faction that “succeeded in ‘detaching’ itself from society” and, in doing so, managed “to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture moving”. This approach informed much of the post-totalitarian thought in post-war Europe, but the analysis of the taxonomy of the canonic repertoire in Chapter 2 goes a long way to disproving it, and the historical narrative will complete that process.

Said (1994 onwards) notes that discourse about music has been kept separate from the revisionism which has revived study of literature and the visual arts:

I think the isolation of musical culture from what is called literary culture is almost total. What used to be assumed to be a kind of passing knowledge of literacy on the part of literary people with regard to music is now non-existent... the world that I'm interested in, the music of classical performance and opera and the so-called high culture dramas that have persisted largely from the nineteenth-century, is almost totally mysterious to literary people. (Said and Barsamian 2003, p. 94)

Said's post-imperialist view, which is closer to the authentic British experience than is the *Mitteleuropa* perspective of Keller (1994) and Glock (1991) – and perhaps even Bourdieu – vaunts classical music as something universal:

Beethoven belongs as much to West Indians as he does to Germans, since his music is now part of the human heritage. (Said 1994, p. 28)

In writing the history of classical music radio – as considered in the next Chapter – pre-existing literature mostly comprises the doughnut without filling the hole. General histories cover the ground around the topic but rarely offer any direct observations about it. Media histories similarly almost all examine the general context and look at areas of specificity other than classical music radio. Social and cultural theories of broadcasting very rarely touch upon classical music, and where they do, only Bourdieu, Adorno and Said seem to be wholly sure-footed. The challenge for this thesis is to fill that gap with credible, evidence-based analysis which still relates coherently to the more general scholarship.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Writing the history of classical music radio**

#### **Methodology, sources, datasets and ethical issues**

*narrative history*

*the period under review*

*datasets*

*programme content database*

*audience databases*

*timeline and key personnel*

*other primary sources:*

*written archives*

*sound archive*

*interviews secondary sources*

*ethical issues*

The varied and changing provision and consumption of classical music radio in the half-century after the Second World War is at the heart of this thesis. This Chapter reviews the methodologies adopted, sources used and databases compiled, and reports on two relevant ethical issues. It is in four sections: first, a discussion of the appropriateness of a narrative historical approach and the nature of that approach; second, the rationale for selecting the period in question; third, data sets, primary and secondary sources, written archives and interviews; and fourth, ethical issues affecting this research.

#### **4.1 Narrative history**

Adopting a narrative approach is the most appropriate way of examining the evolving set of structures and radio services and their approach to serving a changing audience across five decades. These structures were conditioned by sequential developments in society and its institutions which are well dealt with by a narrative history. Despite Curran's (2002, p. 135) strictures, the specific narrative of this thesis is necessarily medium-centric. However it is not overly media-centric, so that it may serve "to illuminate the links between media development and wider trends in society", not least those affecting classical music in general and in the UK in particular.

A straightforward narrative is also least freighted with prior assumptions. It allows the tale to be told most clearly and its wider implications to emerge with the least ideological bias. As discussed above,<sup>28</sup> Critical Theory has to be reshaped with some roughness to make it appropriate as a UK paradigm, while the work of the Frankfurt School is an important analytical tool, but not sufficient in itself to tell the whole story. Cultural Analysis contextualised within the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the UK assists understanding of what the narrative reveals. However, like Cultural Studies as it emerged in Birmingham, it is not determinative for classical music radio, which it did not address.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Chapter 3 p. 30

<sup>29</sup> Chapter 3 pp. 31-2

This thesis therefore sets out the simple story (though not simplistically) from which conclusions can emerge, whether they support or contradict pre-existing theory. In doing that, it will be in good company. In his seminal George Macaulay Trevelyan lectures in 1961, Carr (1964, p. 29) commended this approach:

The historian starts with a provisional selection of facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which that selection has been made – by others, as well as himself. As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and ordering of facts undergoes subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through the reciprocal action of one or the other.

John Elliott (2012, p. xi) observed recently:

I believe that theory is of less importance for the writing of good history than the ability to enter imaginatively into the life of a society remote in time or place, and produce a plausible explanation of why its inhabitants thought and behaved as they did.

For Said (2008, p. 421), the wide, untrammelled perspective needed to predominate:

Even in writing about modernism in music, I think of myself as a historian, where what you're trying to do is to put the work of art to the larger perspective and connected to things that are not normally connected to it.

Historical narrative of this sort involves what Gaddis (2002, p. 46) has called a “reiteration loop”, deducing from the overall structures the supposed logic which they embody; examining by induction what material is available and finding ways to represent it; and then deducing from the accumulated evidence the actual pattern and rationale for how these radio services evolved. As methodological principles, this thesis adopts Gaddis’ five procedures (2002, pp.105-7) for reproducing and thus explaining the past: a preference for parsimony in consequences but not causes, so that multiple causes do not – as in the social sciences – imply an inadequately explained event; the subordination of generalisation to narration, avoiding the need for over-detailed deployment of evidence; a distinction between timeless and time-bound logic, giving proper weight to the notably different considerations applying at different stages in the period; an integration of induction and deduction, as discussed above; and replicability, in the sense that this historical approach must be able to intersect with and be benchmarked against that of media historians generally.

Although elements of social theory are relevant to both the description and the conclusions of the thesis, in any “disciplinary tensions...between the social sciences, in particular social theory and history” (O'Malley 2002, p. 157) this thesis comes down firmly on the side of history. In considering Curran's (2002a) division of media historiography into six generic approaches – liberal, feminist, populist, libertarian, anthropological and radical – this thesis follows Hendy in endorsing the approach of O'Malley (2002), Seaton (in Cannadine 2004) and Curran himself “that in the face of such choice the most useful approach is generally to synthesise” (Hendy 2010, p. 218). That cannot yet though include gender studies. Skoog (2010) and Murphy (2010) have considered aspects of speech broadcasting during this period, in what Curran would identify as a “feminist” narrative, but separate research is needed into gender aspects

of classical music, for instance exploring Baade's (2012, p. 20) observation that during wartime dance music was feminised while serious music was masculinised.<sup>30</sup>

Hendy (2012, p. 14) has argued for a "holistic view of historical change by focus on the life-stories of *individuals*" (his emphasis), but the place of personalities in this history needs to be approached with care. Some of the existing institutional histories about this period are dominated – even at times unduly – by the interplay between powerful contemporary figures. Carpenter's (1996) account of the Third Programme and Radio 3 is a notable example. That is not a sufficient substitute for a broad, multi-sourced narrative. People such as Haley and Marriott, Glock and Keller, Kenyon, Drummond and Bernard all have their place in the history, but they were working within the broader historical, cultural and social context. This thesis demonstrates that these and many other individuals made their mark in most instances as agents of that historical dialectic, just as much as at their own unique initiative.

#### 4.2 The period under review

1945 to 1995 is a telling historical period. The review of existing literature has revealed Britain as a nation forged in the wars of Empire, eventually coming to terms with a post-imperial existence; working through a complete change of economic status, from being the world's manufacturer to becoming eventually merely its banker; and by way of a post-war renaissance and then the cultural ferment of the Sixties, achieving a position of considerable cultural eminence. For UK broadcasting, this is when television became dominant, when radio reinvented itself in both the public and private sectors, and when old and new electronic media pointed towards the obsolescence of the printed page. In music, successive technological innovation through the LP, audio cassette and CD, expanded geometrically the opportunities for listeners to hear in their own time and place what had once been available only by public performance, or latterly the broadcasting of that performance. For classical music radio, revealed by the ensuing narrative, these years travel from the arrival of the Third Programme in September 1946, follow on almost an allegorical Progress through successive plains of popularism and citadels of elitism, and arrive in September 1992 at the launch of Classic FM and its aftermath.

No historical period, of course, is entire to itself. The historical account therefore begins with a prologue considering what was available by way of classical music radio in the years before 1945, and in particular the impact of changes and ideas surfacing during the Second World War on what came afterwards. Equally, the years after 1995 have seen huge change, effectively a re-engineering of musical availability. The story of these last 20 years are so recent as to be effectively journalism (admittedly 'the first draft of history'<sup>31</sup>), but this thesis offers a brief consideration of how the central story is now playing out.

#### 4.3 Data sets

Current published scholarship in this subject area is largely qualitative. In the over 1,000 pages of his volume covering the immediate post-war years, Briggs has just two

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 11 p. 211

<sup>31</sup> A phrase possibly coined by Alan Barth in 1943 and used by him in a book review in *The New Republic* 1943 Vol. 108, p. 677.

tables covering domestic output as a whole, never getting more granular than “classical music” or “light music”, plus one on “variety output” (1979, pp. 80, 560, 709). Carpenter (1996) offers no content – or listening – data sets at all. There is great value in qualitative data; this thesis uses them extensively but it sets out also to be firmly based in quantitative data where that can be derived, particularly in two systematic hard data sets – programme content, and audience research.

#### 4.3.1 programme content database

The prime challenge for any radio historian is that posed by Seaton:

Of course writing broadcasting history is ultimately about programmes...But how should one deal with the programmes? (Seaton in Cannadine 2004, p.141)

For this research, I have developed an original database of programme content, on a sample week basis derived from *Radio Times* listings.<sup>32</sup> That provides a snapshot of the daily output across each week of the 50 years covered by this narrative. While illustrative rather than definitive, given that neither the hours of output nor the audience level chopped and changed with any rapidity, this enables qualitative assertions to be tested against objective data. As the narrative Chapters demonstrate, some received assertions in existing scholarship are shown to be valid, others less so. This narrative history has the advantage of being able to base its own qualitative value judgements on quantitative material. There are however obvious caveats to be entered: a sample week cannot guarantee to be entirely representative of an entire year; programme highlights in the other 51 weeks of the year need to be identified separately, as they are in the narrative Chapters; and the research must be careful not to assign undue significance to small fluctuations which are not in themselves statistically significant in a technical sense. Nevertheless, the consistency of longitudinal data summarised in Appendix A is remarkable, and that series shows very clearly the key points of inflection in the changing narrative.

*Radio Times* is less useful for non-BBC radio broadcasts. It prints listings for Classic FM from 1992 onwards – and these are analysed in the database in the same way as the BBC national channels – but gives no indication of the works actually broadcast in sequence programmes<sup>33</sup> (unlike much of Radio 3 listing). However, there are analyses into Classic FM’s content produced by BBC research,<sup>34</sup> and I had unique access to the two major studies prepared by Robin Ray for Classic FM, which go into exhaustive detail about the music tracks broadcast (Ray 1992). In addition, there are two published catalogues of classical music played on Radio 3 and Radio 4 for 1974 (Grimley *et al* 1977) and 1975 (Wiegold *et al* 1976). Successive *BBC Handbooks* (1955-1973) provide some very limited output statistics.

For ILR station output between 1975 and 1990, the main source is descriptive: the programmes identified in the IBA’s *Television and Radio Handbook*, and in its *Annual Reports*. This means that ILR content data are less detailed and robust than for the BBC or even Classic FM, and that no quantitative check can be done. This gap is partly filled by interviews with those involved in making the programmes, contemporary

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<sup>32</sup> The research for this thesis was completed just before the BBC released its online archive of *Radio Times* listings ([genome.ch.bbc.co.uk](http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk)), and has therefore been compiled from archive copies of the magazine itself, except where indicated in the text.

<sup>33</sup> Programmes featuring as a series of works without any conscious link between them and not within a concert setting.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 10 pp. 191-4

descriptive written material, and the programme sharing tapes held in the at Bournemouth University archive. Even so, I have avoided attempting any unsupported quantitative assertions about ILR output, so any reporting on programme content in the independent sector is predominantly qualitative.

Full details of the programme content database are set out in Appendix A.

#### 4.3.2 audience databases

Alongside the programme content database, I have compiled two original databases of audience figures for this thesis: a year-by-year analysis of maximum and median audiences<sup>35</sup> for the sample weeks; and annual patronage/reach data showing the trends in audience support for each of the stations, reconciling conflicting data sources. These provide, for the first time, comprehensive longitudinal data on audience levels for classical music radio. Actual audience levels – like actual programme content – should underpin qualitative observations wherever available. The process for compiling the audience database and the audience figures, and the results and their significance, are set out in Appendix B.

To assess the significance of classical music radio in the discourse about mass culture, there must be some quantitative understanding of what a ‘mass audience’ comprises, especially given that much of that debate elides ‘mass’ with ‘popular’ culture. Television was the obvious post-war ‘mass’ medium, with audiences for individual programmes routinely approaching or exceeding 10 million viewers.<sup>36</sup> It was received wisdom within BBC senior management in 1969 that there was a constituency of “serious music lovers” numbering “5 million people” (BBC WAC R34/1583). Arguably that would justify the ‘mass’ epithet, as it does for Classic FM reaching a weekly audience of 4.7 million adults in 1995.<sup>37</sup> ILR services probably attracted some 1 million listeners each week to their classical music programmes.

It is not necessary to have a quantitative cut-off for a ‘mass’ patronage, although a million or more is a handy rule of thumb.<sup>38</sup> The point is that without quantitative underpinning, any qualitative assertions must necessarily be suspect. For example, the capacity of the Royal Albert Hall for a Prom is around 6,000.<sup>39</sup> The history of the Proms has – correctly – been a matter of significant interest for radio historians, and plays a prominent part in existing literature; but in the context of a general narrative and evaluative history of classical music radio, such a small patronage figure means that the Proms themselves – as distinct from broadcast relays of the concerts – are significant more as indicators of producer thinking than of mass listener response.

The audience databases involves two separate, sequential cohorts of data. From 1946 until around 1977, it comprises chiefly audience averages for individual programmes. From 1977 onwards, and in particular from 1992, there are broader quantitative data

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<sup>35</sup> The median figure for the individual programme average audiences during the period under review.

<sup>36</sup> Between 1962 and 1972, *Coronation Street* on ITV achieved top ratings of between 8,300,000 and 9,710,000 (Source: Joint Industry Committee for Television Advertising Research (JICTAR))

<sup>37</sup> RAJAR/RSL Q4 1995

<sup>38</sup> The CD recording of Gorecki’s *Symphony of Sorrows*, promoted by Classic FM in 1993, sold over 1 million copies. “The symphony...latterly won widespread success, fuelled by a single recording which during the nineties sold more than a million copies”. Nicholas Williams, BBC Proms programme notes 4 September 2013

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/features/royal-albert-hall> (accessed 1 October 2013)

sets. For the earlier period there is a further difficulty, in that BBC audience research analysis and special reports are very largely concerned with the Third Programme, which was rarely the majority provider of classical music. Thus many of the reports start from an assumption that the classical music audience is somehow 'higher brow' than the radio audience as a whole, examine those who are attracted to the Third Programme with its highbrow target, and then demonstrate that classical music – as defined by what is provided by the Third Programme – is essentially a highbrow matter. Yet the size of audiences for classical music programmes on the Home Service and the Light Programme suggest that it is inconceivable these could be as predominantly upper-class as those for the Third Programme, and that is borne out *inter alia* in a 1963 study (BBC WAC R9/9/27).

Audience composition information is included along with listening numbers in Appendix B, and where available in individual narrative Chapters. References to 'height of brow' or 'class' abound in the literature of this period and in this thesis. 'Highbrow', 'middlebrow', 'mass' and 'popular' are used here in their casual, everyday, meanings.<sup>40</sup> Class terms – 'upper class', 'middle class', 'working class' – are also simply colloquial, except where specific demographic segmentation data are being quoted.

#### 4.3.3 timeline and key personnel

The timeline in Appendix C provides a structure for the thesis, and also has value in its own right as a 'tale of the years'. A few individual timelines exist within current scholarship – in Street's summary history (2005), Kenyon (1981) on the BBCSO before the Eighties, Hendy (2007) on Radio 4, and Hall (1981) on the Proms. For this thesis, a comprehensive timeline has been created which includes also key political, economic and social events in and affecting the UK during these years. Similar to the quantitative databases, this helps to ground qualitative observations about radio, music, culture and society firmly in objective data wherever possible.

Appendix D lists key senior personnel involved in classical music radio.

### 4.4 Other primary sources

#### 4.4.1 written archives

The extensive paper and microfilm files held at the BBC Written Archives Centre (BBC WAC) at Caversham are the essential source for broadcasting history research in Britain. These contain contemporary reports, memoranda and related material covering most aspects of the BBC's classical music output, and are a major source for this thesis. Although BBC WAC routinely makes available to researchers material only up to 1979, files containing material about the BBC's response to the launch of Classic FM – including important content analyses discussed above – and other post-1979 material have been cleared specially for this thesis. Some further information has been obtained through Freedom of Information requests. Nevertheless in the absence of routine archive material for 1980 to 1995, this thesis draws also upon contemporary journalism and original interviews for this period.

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<sup>40</sup> Gardner (2001, pp. 224-5) observes that the famous quote from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* – "When I use a word" said Humpty Dumpty scornfully, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less" – is a light-hearted exposition of semantic nominalism. In the context of this thesis, that supports the view that words – in this case definitions – mean neither more than less than they are intended to mean.



The full paper archives of the IBA are held at Bournemouth University and are a valuable original source. The files of the Radio Authority, which was the regulator from 1991 until 2003, are still kept by Ofcom, the new regulator, but they are available for inspection and are used in this thesis. These contain formal reports and related correspondence about the classical music programmes broadcast by ILR stations, and about the system for sharing exceptional programmes across the network. In addition, this research has enjoyed access to the private papers of the Chairman of Classic FM, Ralph Bernard, and to other personal archives.

There are challenges for any document-based historical approach, to get the right balance between the written words that have survived and 'reality'. Although written material is essential in compiling this history, there is a peculiar paradox between the relative permanence of what is kept on paper on the one hand, and the ephemera of radio programmes and the evanescence of listening on the other. Steedman (2002, p. xi) suggests that the historian needs to enter and use the Archive as a ragpicker, "a figure solemnly hunched over the list of names, compiled a long time ago for a purpose quite different from the historian's...in determined pursuit of one of the lost ones", which comes close to but does not quite catch the required methodology. For the media historian of the 20th century, the approach to the Archive needs to be closer to that outlined by Mandelbaum (1980, p. 53), whereby the writings of historians

refer to past occurrences whose existence is...known through inferences drawn from surviving documents; but it is not to those documents themselves, but to what they indicate concerning the past, that the historian's statements actually refer.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.4.2 sound archives

Seaton has praised the importance of a multi-faceted approach to writing broadcasting history, while still stressing that "it's the programmes, stupid" (Seaton in Canndine 2004, p. 155). Thus the radio historian needs to be a listener in a time machine, an eavesdropper of the past. There is though a limit to what can be achieved by listening to such programmes as have survived into the British Library Sound Archive or others such as Bournemouth's Programme Sharing Archive. The British Library collection is extensive, but it is largely concerned with special rather than routine output; the Programme Sharing archive wholly so. More than that, the radio time traveller cannot listen with the perception of the audience at the time the programme was broadcast. The BBC's Audience Appreciation Indices (AIs) only patchily address classical music programmes, and suffer from undue subjectivity and the self-selection of respondents.. Of greater value are the observations of those who were involved in the broadcasting process at the time as either producer or consumer, and those of critics and others in the secondary sources of published journalism. Dolan (2003) has observed that recovering radio's 'voice' is not a task for a sound archive alone, but rather is achieved through a relationship between the researcher, their methodology, and various written and aural archives. That is convincing so far as it goes, but it misses the need for contemporary observation, which this thesis derives from both its databases and from secondary, mostly journalistic sources.

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<sup>41</sup> Cited in Steedman (2002, p. 15). She omits Mandelbaum's additional observation (1980, p. 53) that where historians rest their statements "upon what has been written in earlier accounts...the object of the historian's reference is not these accounts themselves, but...the very same entities...as those to which the earlier accounts had themselves referred".

#### 4.4.3 interviews

This thesis draws upon material from three sets of interviews: original interviews conducted for this thesis; interviews which I conducted for a previous book; and BBC Oral History interviews. In addition, Seaton has generously made available confidential notes of five interviews for her forthcoming history of the BBC, which are valuable background.

The BBC has a continuing Oral History Research Project, comprising a series of interviews with major BBC figures. The transcripts of some of these interviews are available (Table 4.1). However the BBC will not release any Oral History interviews with living people, and that with John Manduell – the overseer of the Music Programme – has been withheld.<sup>42</sup> I interviewed Gerard Mansell and Michael Bukht before they died, for a previous publication (Stoller 2010), covering ground relevant to this thesis, and spoke all-too-briefly with Ian McIntyre.

Table 4.1 List of interview material

Interviewee	Status	Source	Date	Format
				Transcript
Kevin Appleby	General Manager Wren Orchestra	Original interview	24.4.13	Jpeg and transcript
Ralph Bernard	Chair Classic FM	Original interview	13.6.13	Jpeg and transcript
Leo Black	BBC producer	Original interview	13.9.13	Jpeg and transcript
Tim Blackmore	Capital Programme Controller	Original interview	25.5.12	Jpeg and transcript
Michael Bukht	Classic FM Programme Director	Previous interview *	2009	Interview notes
Michael Checkland	BBC DG	Original interview	20.9.13	Jpeg and transcript
Frank Gillard	BBC Director of Radio	BBC Oral History	18.6.81	Transcript
William Glock	BBC Director of Music	BBC Oral History	March 83	Transcript
Harman Grisewood	Controller Third Programme	BBC Oral History	1977	Transcript
William Haley	BBC DG	BBC Oral History	6.7.76	Transcript
Ian Jacob	BBC DG	BBC Oral History	6.7.76	Transcript
Peter James	Capital presenter	Original interview	29.5.13	Jpeg and transcript
Nicholas Kenyon	Controller Radio 3	Original interview	15.7.13	Jpeg and transcript
Nicholas Kenyon	Controller Radio 3	Original interview	24.4.14	Jpeg and transcript
Rodney Livingstone	Academic	Original interview	18.10.12	Jpeg and transcript
Gerard Mansell	Controller Home Service	BBC Oral History	18.6.81	Transcript
Gerard Mansell	BBC MD radio	Previous interview *	2009	Interview notes

<sup>42</sup> After prolonged correspondence, Manduell declined to be interviewed or to release for this research the interview he had given as part of the BBC's Oral History project.

Howard Newby	MD BBC radio	BBC Oral History	6.3.90	Transcript
David Owen Norris	Academic	Original interview	24.7.12	Jpeg and transcript
Gillian Reynolds	Radio critic	Original interview	15.10.14	Jpeg and transcript
Susannah Simons	BBC presenter	Original interview	19.8.13	Jpeg and transcript
Aubrey Singer	MD BBC radio	BBC Oral History	5.6.86	Transcript
Aubrey Singer	MD BBC radio	BBC Oral History	16.7.86	Transcript
Fiona Talkington	BBC presenter	Original interview	2.11.12	Jpeg and transcript
Fiona Talkington	BBC presenter	Original interview	6.10.14	Jpeg and transcript
John Thompson	IBA Director of Radio	Original interview	24.10.13	Jpeg and transcript
John Whitney	MD Capital Radio	Previous interview *	2009	Interview notes
Roger Wright	Controller Radio 3	Original interview	3.10.14	Jpeg and transcript

\* Notes of interviews by Tony Stoller for a previous book, *Sounds of your life* (Stoller 2010)

The nineteen original interviews, three of which were conducted previously, are valuable in understanding the genesis and production of output in the areas where those interviewees were directly responsible for it, and the subjects have been notably generous with their time and open recollection. Even so, what they say has to be approached with caution. In most instances, they are speaking about events many years in the past, sometimes from notes but often just from memory. That may well introduce inaccuracies, and their own part in events recalled so many years later will inevitably be coloured at the very least by the subjective remembrance of things past.

#### 4.5 Secondary sources

There are two main sets of secondary sources. The first, published books, articles and reports, are reviewed in Chapter 3 above, in thematic Chapters, and within the subsequent narrative Chapters. A full bibliography follows the list of references.

The second, newspapers, magazines and other journalism and commentary, provide some valuable factual reportage and contemporary opinion, and can be particularly important in the absence of primary source material (such as post-1979). *The Times* Digital Archive is a useful source, as are *The Listener* and feature material in *Radio Times*. The on-line archives of the *Gramophone* and *Spectator* magazines are useful, as is *Musical Times*, available in hard copy. However, such journalism is not a wholly reliable source. For instance, the polarised reportage of the prospect of national commercial radio discussed in Chapter 10 – arguably tainted by the political stance of newspaper proprietors – shows how difficult it can be to take it all at face value. Nevertheless, this narrative would be poorer without it.

#### 4.6 Ethical issues

Historical research of this sort raises few questions which “involve the investigator in complex moral or ethical dilemmas”. (Homan in Becker and Bryman 2004, p. 152). However, two ethical matters need particular care in this thesis.

The first concerns the treatment of interviewees and their interviews. The issues for narrative history are different from those which confront the social policy researcher. Interviews can rarely be reported anonymously, “identified only by research authority IDs” (Ward in Becker and Bryman 2004, p. 350). Participant names need to be recorded and acknowledged: the audio material is specifically gathered for use and attribution, and in that sense cannot remain confidential if it is to be written into the thesis rather than merely used as background. ‘Informed consent’ is a *sine qua non*: without it, the interview cannot be conducted. All interviewees were informed in advance in writing the purpose of their interviews, that a transcript was to be made and that no quotes would be used or views attributed until those had been checked back with the subjects. Interviewees were sent a list of questions in advance, although these questions were framed in reasonably general terms, so that they might use also serve as cues to talk more generally about the subjects. The audio data files, which were compiled in a way which is useful only for these research purposes, are only retained where interviewees granted their permission and will not be made available to third parties without specific permission.

Second, I have discussed in the preface my own position in a few of the events which this narrative history relates, and the extent to which my involvement may have shaped the basis of which I have arrived at value judgements. As an official at the IBA, Director of the commercial radio companies’ trade association and then Managing Director of Radio 210, I was present as a regulator, broadcaster and promoter between 1974 and 1984, dealing directly with a few of the issues covered by this thesis; and latterly, as Chief Executive of the Radio Authority from mid-1995. I have tried hard to avoid any overly subjective interpretation of written or other material concerning events in which I played a part. For interviews, my having been involved in the industry may have introduced some extra subjectivity into the questioning and possibly also into some responses – though it has also opened many doors. I am confident that my choice of interviewees has been an objective one, not least because most of the events described in this thesis happened at times when I had no direct involvement with the radio industry, and at no stage have I taken advantage of my previous roles to put pressure on interviewees.

The thesis covers fully 50 years of a broad topic. Even leaving aside institutional issues which have already been addressed by other authorities, there are a number of other lenses through which the narrative history could be examined, including styles of presentation, the voice of listeners and the role of broadcaster as patron. Each of these are valid, but this particular thesis has chosen to focus upon the actual output and audience numbers in order to provide as far as possible a quantitative basis for judgements arrived at.

Presentation is an important aspect of making the output accessible. There are several instances through the narrative where its role is identified, notably in the changes made by Kenyon when re-casting Radio Three in the early Nineties. However, it would be a substantial and different exercise – and potentially a worthwhile separate research

study – to identify this across the entire period and to trace its influence. Hearing the voice of listeners would be a challenging task. Anecdotal evidence apart, the BBC's audience appreciation indices (AIs) would be the only consistent source. They suffer from considerable subjectivity in the selection of the programmes to be reported upon, by members of panels who are themselves self-selecting, and in any event cover only very few classical music programmes on a limited number of channels. On that basis, this thesis prefers the evidence provided by actual listening behaviour as shown in audience research numbers. Nevertheless, there is a potential for further work to flesh out anecdotal evidence, although it is beyond the scope of this study.

The role of broadcaster as patron is shown through the commissioning of new works, support for performers and particularly in the role of the BBC house orchestras. Kenyon has written extensively about the role of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and Carpenter about the efforts made by the Third Programme to introduce new music to the airwaves. Once again, to go further would be an extensive and separate piece of research.

## **SECTION II: NARRATIVE HISTORY OF CLASSICAL MUSIC**

This section comprises the historical narrative of UK classical music radio between 1945 and 1995, with notes also about the years before this research period and on recent developments. As discussed above,<sup>43</sup> the narrative is grouped within calendar decades.

The narrative proceeds chronologically, year by year, and is based upon the detailed content and audience databases. Fuller summaries of those databases are set out in Appendix A and B respectively, with explanations of how they were compiled and their limitations. Individual issues or major developments are described and analysed in their appropriate place within these tales of the years. Examples are given of specific programmes in that sample week and at other times during the year, to provide both a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of radio output, and the context which enabled/dictated it. The number of examples and the amount of detail is determined by their illustrative relevance.

For each year, a summary table sets out statistically the output for each station within a sample week: the total hours and minutes of classical music programmes broadcast; the amount of those which were gramophone-record based; the amount which were predominantly speech-based programmes (features); and – from 1970 – the amount of ‘sequence programming’ whether of specified or unspecified content, where ‘sequence programming’ is understood as a series of works without any obvious link between them and not within a concert setting. Each summary table also includes audience data where available, and a list of those composers whose works were most often featured in programme across the week, as well as a note of the composer(s) chosen as *This Week’s Composer* or *Composer of the Week*.

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<sup>43</sup> Chapter 3, pp. 26-7

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Forties**

#### **Overture and Allegro**

*general history and literature review; the Forties and before*

*pre-war and wartime classical music radio*

*legacy of the war and post-war reorganisation*

*classical music on the Home Service and the Light Programme 1945-1946*

*arrival of the Third Programme 29 September 1946*

*classical music radio 1947-49*

*assessing the output*

This Chapter, the first of six considering the individual decades, begins at what may fairly be described as the beginning of modern classical music radio. Classical music had been ever-present since the start of the medium in Britain following the First World War, but its identity as a distinct genre of radio begins in the aftermath of the Second World War. After a review of the relevant literature in its historical context, this Chapter will therefore establish the position before and during the war and the legacy of those times, describe the immediate post-war re-organisation of BBC radio into a Home Service and a Light Programme, and consider the actual output during 1945 and 1946. It then narrates and analyses the arrival of the Third Programme in September 1946, and the resulting pattern of this genre of broadcasting for the remainder of the decade, closing with contemporary and current assessments of classical music radio at the end of the decade.

#### **5.1 General history and literature review: the Forties and before**

Britain in the Thirties had been a troubled place. Just as across the rest of Europe, the bleak twins of communism and fascism threatened the democratic state (Taylor 1965). Economic dislocation had joined with political uncertainty to produce a bifurcated culture, where the elite were diverted by the avant-garde while mass culture became suffocatingly ordinary (Hobsbawm 1995). In broadcasting, John Reith's BBC had been characterised by the exclusion from services of all output which went against the grain, especially ultra-modern music at one end of the spectrum (Doctor 1999) and much popular music at the other (Baade 2012). The monopoly had been a deliberate creation (Briggs 1965), and the BBC had become obsessed by the challenge from stations broadcasting popular programming into Britain from the near continent (Street 2006). Wartime in Britain required two separate radio services, one 'Home' and one variously termed 'Overseas', 'Forces', 'General Forces' (*Radio Times* 1939-1945).

The Second World War marked the end of Britain as a major imperial power. After the existential struggle of the early wartime years, the nation, its broadcasters and its musicians began the process of rebuilding which was to produce a post-war state substantially different from that before 1939. This was surely deliberate. Hennessy (1992, p. 2) has entitled his study of the Forties *Never Again* because

the phrase captures the motivating impulse of the first half-dozen years after the war – never again would there be war; never again would the British people be housed in slums, living off a meagre diet thanks to low wages or no wages at all; never again would mass unemployment blight the lives of millions; never again would natural abilities remain dormant in the absence of educational stimulus.

There are three distinct relevant sets of general histories about the immediate post-war years: those published in the mid-Sixties, characterised by studies which could offer some early perspective such as Sissons (1963), Taylor (1965); from the Nineties, epitomised by the first of Hennessy's (1992) series of histories about post-war Britain; and contemporary, including Kynaston (2007). These historians agree that the UK emerged from Hitler, Stalin and Hirohito's wars impoverished, but most argue that it was still infused by a consciousness of what had been its finest hour. "We were, in short, morally magnificent but economically bankrupt". (Hennessy 1992, p. 95)

Logue recalls Britain in the mid-Forties as "sad...a place of war-damaged, unpainted houses".<sup>44</sup> Taylor (1965, p. 600), who was 33 and an established historian when war broke out, strikes a more resilient and aspirational note:

In the Second World War the British people came of age...The British were the only people who went through both world wars from beginning to end. Yet they remained a peaceful and civilised people, tolerant, patient and generous. Traditional values lost much of their force. Other values took their place. Imperial greatness was on the way out; the welfare state was on the way in. The British Empire declined; the condition of the people improved. Few now sang 'Land of Hope and Glory'. Few even sang 'England Arise'. England had risen all the same.

This dichotomy informs any assessment of the cultural response to those years, despite growing austerity which saw the nation far worse off in the years immediately after the war than it had been even in 1945. Addison (1985, p. 114) notes that "leisure has to compensate for many other things".<sup>45</sup> Central among those 'other things' was encouragement for the arts as a whole. Secretary of State Sir John Anderson told the House of Commons on 12 June 1945 that the wartime Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts was to be succeeded by the Arts Council in 1946, because wartime experience had demonstrated that "there will be a lasting need after the war for a body of this kind to encourage knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts in the broad sense of that term" (Hansard 1945).

It was in the same spirit, and against this background of aspirational austerity, that the Third Programme was authorised by the Cabinet in January 1946 and began broadcasting at 6pm on Sunday 26 September of the same year (Briggs 1965, Carpenter 1996). It was "almost notorious" as an icon of high culture (Kynaston 2008, p. 176). But it is important to note – and most existing studies do not – that the Third Programme was just one part of the post-war broadcasting settlement, and not necessarily the most important one even for classical music radio broadcasting. Not least, the resumption of television services in June 1946, contemporaneous with the

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Leese (2006, p. 114)

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Hennessy (1992, p. 309)



establishment of the BBC's new radio structure, soon began to have a significant impact on the resources and audiences available for sound broadcasting.<sup>46</sup>

Classical music had provided a soundtrack for the Second World War and its immediate aftermath (Ross 2008, Fox 2007b, Taruskin 2010c). The philosophy of the German Reich was built on the traditions of Wagner, including his intense anti-semitism (Bullock 1991). Soviet Leningrad defied its besiegers by relaying Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony* via loudspeakers onto the battlefield (Wilson 2006, Lesser 2011). Ross proposes convincingly that the second avant-garde for classical music may be said to have begun when Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* was performed in the Stalag VIIIA prisoner-of-war camp (Ross 2008, p. 390).

Classical music radio acquired particular significance in wartime Britain. The BBC orchestras played concerts in cities around the nation (Kenyon 1981). And not only the BBC: Malcolm Sargent, who was to take over as the Chief Conductor of the Proms in 1947, made his popular reputation with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, when

his blitz tour with the LPO, bringing orchestral music to the music halls and variety theatres of major provincial cities, then suffering heavily under the bombings, had been a tremendously popular contribution to the war effort. (Garnham in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 149).

These events, and the BBC's rescuing of the Proms from the ashes of the Queen's Hall in 1941 (Doctor in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007),<sup>47</sup> were among other symbols of the British 'wartime spirit' expressed through classical music:

Wars quicken the pulse...Myra Hess, the distinguished concert pianist, put on her favourite lunch-time recitals in the National Gallery in London; the Sadlers Wells Opera company, driven out of that same London by the bombing of its theatre, carried opera around the provinces. (Marwick 1991, p. 14)

Post-war, the United States "unquestionably inherited musical leadership during this period from Europe" (Taruskin 2010c, pp. xix-xx). It was American sponsorship of the annual modernist *festschrift* at Darmstadt which set the tone for classical music composition in Europe and America, with the partial exception of the Soviet Union, where serial and open-form music "have a direct correlation with contemporary political events" (Fox 2007b, p. 5).

Although the war had a huge effect on attitudes to culture in Britain, it was curiously different from much of the rest of the West, not least in classical music. The two works by British composers who rank with Shostakovich as great signifiers of that war – Britten's *War Requiem* and Tippett's *A Child of our Time* – are unmistakably British works, in a style and idiom which is different from that dominating the rest of the musical world. Despite the harshness of the wartime years and afterwards, British cultural identity in painting, sculpture, architecture and music took a different route from the European continent, embracing modernism – even pastoralism – but mostly rejecting brutalism (Spalding 1986, Harris 2010).

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<sup>46</sup> Lacey (2013) points out the paradox in using the term 'audience' indiscriminately for radio *listening* and for television *viewing*. For classical music, however, it is appropriate since television has rarely managed to find a satisfactory way of matching the sound with pictures which add to the auditory experience.

<sup>47</sup> See below p. 51

Beginning in the middle years of the war, Britain enjoyed a remarkable resurgence of cultural activity. The prevailing ambition is reflected in the Dartington Arts Enquiries conducted between 1941 and 1947, which looked at the literary and performing arts and then music in post-war England (Dartington 1949). Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, who willingly returned to Britain in the spring of 1942 after having followed Auden to America in 1939, were not alone in feeling that Britain in wartime was undergoing a cultural renaissance (Kennedy 1991, pp. 37, 43). That renaissance was especially marked for classical music, where both the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (in 1942) and the Hallé (in 1943) became full-time orchestras during the war (Kenyon 1981). The later war years, during which both radio and classical music had played significant parts in sustaining the Home Front, saw the confirmation in popular taste of the English pastoral composers, helped by their championing by Arthur Bliss as Director of Music at the BBC from 1942. That elitist critics dubbed this the ‘cow-pat’ school of music<sup>48</sup> mattered not a whit to concert audiences or listeners.

For consumers of classical music, whether on gramophone record, in concerts or on the radio, there was a distinction between British culture as it was asserted by critics and academics, and what the British consumed. As this thesis will demonstrate, what was true from the mid-Forties in this respect continued right through the rest of the century, and is a key to understanding what classical music radio has to say about the relationship between elite and popular culture in the UK during these years. The Forties provided the canvas on which radio began to picture its post-war output. The arrival of the Third Programme in September 1946 in the form which it took owed much to the democratisation of taste in these brief years before the musical elite re-asserted itself in the Fifties.

## 5.2 Pre-war and wartime classical music radio

Pre-war radio was broadcast by the BBC on one National Service, supplemented by separate regional output, and the Overseas Service. Classical music, largely concerts or recitals, was woven into the general programming. From its earliest years the BBC was the dominant provider of UK classical music radio. European state broadcasts could be heard in parts of the UK at times, and there was some light classical music on commercial radio stations broadcasting to Britain from the near Continent (Street 2003),<sup>49</sup> but it was the BBC which defined the acknowledged canon by what it broadcast.

Sample week analysis demonstrates the extent to which BBC programme content, both before and after the outbreak of war, relied upon works by 19<sup>th</sup> century Austro-German composers.<sup>50</sup> In 1938 and 1939, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn are the most often featured composers, with the only

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<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Lutyens in a lecture at the Dartington Summer School in the Fifties, where she spoke also of “folky-wolky melodies on the cor anglais”. Oxford Dictionary of Music (Rutherford-Johnson and Kennedy, eds., 2013, p. 202)

<sup>49</sup> Schedules published in *Radio Pictorial* and *World Radio*, for example, list some light classical works from these commercial stations, and more formal concerts from other European state broadcasters (Street, personal communication, 18 August 2014). The *Radio Times* continued to list major music broadcasts by European state broadcasters right up until 1970.

<sup>50</sup> The sample week analyses deployed in this section, in line with this thesis as a whole, are of week 19 in each year. Full summaries have not been included as this period predates the main consideration of this thesis.

music feature programme of the sampled week in 1939 concentrating on the lives and work of Robert and Clara Schumann. Those who compiled BBC radio programmes in May 1939 seemed to have shared the view that at root “classical music was German music”.<sup>51</sup> Few works by contemporary composers were broadcast, the most notable exception being one act of Ralph Vaughan Williams’ opera, *Hugh the Drover*, alongside a sprinkling of other works by 20<sup>th</sup> Century British composers. Such was the nature of British radio output at that time; cautious, conservative and dominated by the established classical music canon.

The BBC had briefly ceased to run the Proms for the 1940 season (Doctor in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p.116), and the concerts were then dealt a shattering blow when their traditional home, the Queen’s Hall in Langham Place, was destroyed by firebombing during the night of 10-11 May 1941. The photograph of Henry Wood standing amid the ruins of the hall became “a powerful symbol of defiance and survival in Britain during the Blitz” (Doctor in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, pp. 121-2).<sup>52</sup>

The BBC regained its effective radio monopoly when the Panzer divisions rolled across Belgium and Northern France (Street 2006), and was the dominant voice of Britain and in Britain throughout the Second World War.<sup>53</sup> The pre-1940 pattern was soon changed into a Home Service and a second Overseas/Forces/General Forces network. In all of those, classical music – or ‘serious’ music as the BBC preferred to call it – played an important part. The percentage of classical music within BBC radio output 1936-1944 was notably high (Table 5.1).<sup>54</sup>

Table 5.1 Classical music as a percentage of total BBC radio output before 1945

Classical music as % of total programme output	National Programme	Regional Programmes	Home Service	Forces/Overseas /General Forces Programme
1936	19.96	15.03		
1938	17.83	16.84		
1939	15.97			
1940			17.80	2.54
1941			13.51	1.28
1942			12.27	6.00
1943			15.88	4.75
1944			9.62	5.31

Those who had programmed classical music radio before September 1939 largely stayed with their pre-war approach. The Austro-German based canon remained at the heart of BBC classical music broadcasting. Even when the BBCSO had been

<sup>51</sup> Interview with David Owen Norris, 24 July 2012

<sup>52</sup> The Proms were relocated to the Royal Albert Hall. The BBC resumed running them in 1942, giving London some cultural continuity in a time of change and horror. The Proms had to be suspended late in June 1944, after a near miss with a V1 flying bomb, but resumed in time for Henry Wood to complete his final performance of Beethoven’s *Seventh Symphony*, broadcast on 28 July, 21 days before his death (Doctor in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Both Street (2006) and Briggs (1965, 1970) stress the growing pre-war significance of the English-language stations on the near Continent, broadcasting into Britain. All except Radio Luxembourg were swept away by the German advance of May 1940. Luxembourg remained to provide the platform for the propaganda broadcasts of among others William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw). The BBC’s dominance of domestic audiences were therefore no longer challenged by popular programming from outside the UK jurisdiction, and that monopoly remained until the arrival of offshore pirate radio in 1964. See Chapter 7, p. 99

<sup>54</sup> Data compiled for Briggs (1970) based upon a single sample week in October each year.

evacuated from London to Bristol to avoid the bombing of the capital city, the first concert in its 1940 series had a second part – which was broadcast – entirely devoted to extracts from Wagner's operas (Kenyon 1961, p. 163). Wartime music selection did not differ much from pre-war. Mozart was the most frequently included composer in 1941, with Beethoven, Elgar and Wagner all prominent. The output in the sample week of 1942 offers a remarkable similarity to that of the equivalent sample week in 1938. Beethoven, Bach and Mozart dominate, albeit with a slightly higher representation of works by English composers.

Classical music had a relevance and appeal during wartime which was very much broader than for the majority of the period covered by this thesis. That in itself suggests a potential appetite for the genre which – as this thesis will demonstrate – was only met spasmodically thereafter. Garnham (in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 132) writes how, in the Forties,

orchestral concerts, like cinemas and theatres, were packed, often with people who were eager for more than simple entertainment and whose tastes had been expanded by the wartime work of CEMA and ENSA. Cheaper gramophone recordings of the BBC's own broadcasts gradually increased the musical experience of these new audiences, whose appetite for 'good' music was further fuelled by the seriousness that the war had brought to all levels of society.<sup>55</sup>

As discussed above, the significance of classical music on UK radio was enhanced by the role which such music played within a society at war, symbolised by Myra Hess's lunchtime concerts at the National Gallery in London. Despite its nickname of 'Every Night Something Awful', ENSA was not just about comedians and variety, but brought a good range of concerts and live music to the troops at home and overseas. That 'cultural renaissance' during the later years of the war carried forward into peacetime (Piries 1979, Kennedy 1991).

Despite debates about the playing of 'enemy music',<sup>56</sup> Beethoven's music was everywhere, notably in the audio symbol of wartime resistance, the opening notes from his *Fifth Symphony*. The composers for the sampled week in 1942 were overwhelmingly the masters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century classical canon, with the march from Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in the Forces Programme striking a curious note. One major impact of the war was felt on 'new' music (although that represented, then, before and since, only a small proportion of radio broadcasts). Bliss held the view "that in wartime, the BBC ought to give special support and encouragement to British Empire composers" (BBC WAC R27/3/3 21 October). As a result, new music heard on radio originated almost exclusively from Britain itself or from unoccupied countries allied to, or sympathetic with, the British war effort.

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<sup>55</sup> CEMA was the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, founded in 1940; and ENSA the Entertainment National Service Association, which organised live entertainment for the troops.

<sup>56</sup> It has been suggested that the BBC operated a jingoistic process of exclusion of the works of alien composers from enemy nations, especially of German composers, dubbed "being beastly to the Germans" (Mackay 2000). Although there is some documentary evidence in BBC WAC for such a policy being advanced, the actual output largely refutes such a view. I have covered this subject in a paper "BBC Radio and Alien Composers, 1939-1945" read at Bournemouth University *Ethical Dimensions of Media History Conference*, May 2013.

### 5.3 Legacy of the war and post-war reorganisation

In 1945, Britain – to modify Hennessy’s observation (1992, p. 93)<sup>57</sup> – was economically bankrupt but culturally revitalised. Music in particular “was basking in the warmth which the work of CEMA and ENSA and thousands of wartime concerts had kindled” (Kenyon 1981, p. 198). That does not mean the quality of British music was all that good. The years of isolation from continental European music meant that “musical chauvinism had by now reached a pitch of unreality in England” (Pirie 1979, p. 181). The younger progressive composers in Britain saw themselves as opposed and hamstrung by the older conservative musicians including Barbirolli, whom the BBC was so keen to recruit as its director of music (Carpenter 1996). Only by the end of the decade was the standard of playing much improved, and the number of composers active in the country began to increase: Rawsthorne, Berkeley and Maxwell Davies, and women composers such as Elisabeth Lutyens, Thea Musgrave, Prialux Rainier and Elizabeth Maconchy.<sup>58</sup>

Three particular considerations affected classical music radio broadcasting in the UK after the war. The first was a keen awareness, especially among BBC staff either returning from war service or through involvement with the BBC German Service, of the significance of classical music in the reconstruction of post-war Germany and Austria.<sup>59</sup> Second, the war itself changed classical music. In both West and East, the end of the war and its aftermath released a second wave of modernism which was to last as a dominant feature in self-regarding musical circles until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Ross 2007) and challenge radio programmers accordingly.

The third issue was the treatment of those composers who were considered to have collaborated in the enemy war effort, or whose music was integral to the Nazi project. While it was straightforward to exclude certain works,<sup>60</sup> what about Beethoven, Brucker, Wagner and above all Richard Strauss?<sup>61</sup> Wagner remained a staple part of the BBC’s musical output, with the BBC going out of its way to broadcast his operas in 1946.<sup>62</sup> Otherwise, the BBC’s post-war response was equivocal, especially about Richard Strauss.<sup>63</sup> In 1947 a BBC producer was warned that

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<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 48

<sup>58</sup> Even to use the phrase ‘women composers’ is potentially contentious, but it reflects the context of the UK classical music scene in these years.

<sup>59</sup> It was deliberate Allied policy to use classical music, including in radio broadcasts, as part of the process of re-establishing civil society. Thacker (2007, p. 3) notes that “many German people turned to elements of their cultural past in an effort to salvage something from the ruins of their national inheritance. Nothing was better suited to this than the music of the ‘great composers’. As a consequence of this, In the Federal Republic, these were the ‘golden years’ when the great German orchestras and performers resumed their former position of supremacy.”

<sup>60</sup> Music with militarist themes and works such as the *Horst Wessel Lied* were banned outright (Anderton 2012, p. 46).

<sup>61</sup> Anderton (2012, p. 46) quoting Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, (1994, p. 217-9), asserts that Richard Strauss and Hans Pritzner were the most frequently performed 20th-century composers of the Third Reich.

<sup>62</sup> “On 24 and 28 October [1946] there were complete performance of ‘Tristan and Isolde’, with... Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the BBCSO. In December Beecham conducted two performances of ‘Die Walküre’” (*BBC Handbook* 1947. P. 43).

<sup>63</sup> A list “of those [alien] composers most in demand” whose works might now be broadcast was prepared in 1946, but with the warning to “guard against a flooding with foreign works as a result of this clearance...the actual choice of works also should be made more discreetly: for

“you will have to watch your step about the Strauss Festival, in view of the Board ruling that ex-Nazis can be employed ad hoc but not glorified by a festival or anything equivalent” (BBC WAC R27/3/7 26 June 1947).

Yet a photograph of Richard Strauss alongside BBC stalwart Adrian Boult adorns the *BBC Handbook* of 1949,<sup>64</sup> in resolution perhaps of the shattering discord of the image of the firebombed Queens Hall in 1941.

The BBC had been planning with Government the pattern of post-war sound broadcasting since 1943 (Briggs 1979, pp. 50ff), proceeding on the basis of three national services: on medium wave and long wave as soon as the General Forces programme became otiose, and a further service on medium wave “to be introduced at a later stage” (BBC WAC R34/580 13 September 1944). Plans were well advanced by March 1945 (BBC WAC R34/580 8 March 1945) and once victory in Europe was confirmed the first part of the new pattern was implemented from Sunday 29 July on the basis of a Home Service and a Light Programme, plus a “programme C” to follow later (BBC WAC R 34/420 24 July 1945).

From the outset, the new pattern of radio broadcasting was approached by the BBC according to an assumed hierarchy of class and taste:

The new Home Service, it is hoped, will contain something for all tastes in radio and some of the best of everything in each field... By its side will be the Light Programme, intended as the name suggests to provide the civilian listener with first-rate light entertainment. At a later date – on May 8 next year – it is planned to add to those a third programme so far unnamed, which will be frankly ‘serious’ in subject-matter and treatment. It can thus be seen that broadcast programme structure in this country will soon be nicely balanced if the horrid but convenient terms can be permitted. High-brows, low-brows, and middle-brows will each have a programme to themselves – thereby, one hopes, decreasing mutual jealousies and increasing the general stock of happiness. Personal taste of course cuts across frontiers. There will be nothing to prevent the lover of serious music listening, say, to a broadcast of a sporting event on the Light Programme, nor is the thriller ‘fan’ debarred from tuning into a talk on foreign affairs or astronomy on another wavelength. *The Listener* (1945).

BBC Senior Controller, Basil Nicholls, and Bliss had debated in 1941 what the latter called “coaxing Caliban” – getting a maximum audience for classical music radio – in the light of Nicholls’ view that “it was the size of audience that was primarily important, not what in a later decade was to be called the ‘quality of listening’” (Kenyon 1981, p.174-5).

Much of the BBC’s instincts were at odds with the democratisation of cultural interest during the wartime ‘renaissance’. It was as if many of the elite within the BBC (and elsewhere) wished to return to the pre-war class-division of culture. The themes of ‘height of brow’, and the extent to which listeners were ‘entitled’ to engage with programme output outside their ‘designated’ class, will run throughout this thesis, not least in the establishment of an aspirational pyramid of music radio in 1946 and its all-too-swift abandonment by the early Fifties.

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example, apart from its use in an appropriate feature programme, we should not yet perform Strauss’ ‘Ein Heldenleben’.” (BBC WAC R/27/3/6 February 1946)

<sup>64</sup> *BBC Handbook* 1949, between pp. 16 and 17. Strauss died on 8 September 1949.

## 5.4 Classical music on the Home Service and the Light Programme 1945-1946

Food rationing became steadily tighter in the later years of the war and beyond (Hennessy 2006). By May 1945 each person was allowed only 2oz of cheese and 2oz of butter per week.<sup>65</sup> It might be thought that classical music radio was similarly rationed. In the sample week for 1945, less than 20 hours programming was listed, with only 39 composers featured. The dominant musical offering was light music, with occasional classical items sprinkled within dance band programmes. Yet popular appetite for classical music remained. In the sample week, the highest audience for a scheduled classical programme on the Home Service was nearly 2 million adults, and that on the General Forces Programme getting on for 1½ million. On VE Day itself, Tuesday 8 May, a half hour of the BBCSO and Chorus was listened to by 3,300,000 people across the two networks.

Analysis of the first week of peace in 1945 (Table 5.2) provides a valuable picture of the *status quo ante*.

Table 5.2 Data summary sample week 1945

1945 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	13'25	4'10	0'45
General Forces	6'15	0'30	-

1945 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % of total population	Audience high	High % of total population
Home	1,100,000	3.7	1,920,000	1.9
General Forces	570,000	6.4	1,350,000	4.5

Notes:

- (i) The BBC Daily Audience Barometer gives figures for average listening to individual programmes as percentages. These are of a steadily increasing universe, the population of the UK (variously assessed as 5+ or 16+ in age). As a result, the actual numbers represented by the percentages change as this narrative progresses.
- (ii) An unscheduled VE Day concert broadcast on both networks reached an audience of 3,300,000 adults

1945 w/c 6 May Number of different composers featured	39	
This Week's Composer: Fauré	Faure	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	5
	Tchaikovsky	4
	Bach, Mozart	3

Of the scheduled programmes on the Home Service, the most popular was the fortnightly *Music Magazine* on Sunday morning of the sample week, and there was a substantial evening audience for a Tchaikovsky *Serenade* on Monday evening of 1½ million listeners. Daytime audiences of around 700,000 adults heard music very much centred on the conventional canonic repertoire, with the exclusion of any current composers apart from a scattering of British music. Contemporary perception was that

<sup>65</sup> Home Front Handbook. *Wikipedia* (accessed 10 April 2014)

there was “a constant demand for more programmes of good music”, not least from servicemen overseas:

We want music. Thank you for the records, they have been invaluable: but please send us more live music and musicians, and instrument and copies to that we can make our own music as well as enjoy more fully what is made for us by others (*The Times* 1945).

After the cataclysm of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, classical music across the Western world rapidly adjusted itself to work suitable for a nuclear age, with compositions wholly different from those of the pre-war canon (Ross 2008). The Office of Military Government, United States, helped to inaugurate the Darmstadt Summer Course for New Music, which was to become the principal show-place for the avant-garde from 1946 onwards (Fox 2007a, 2007b).

How would BBC radio respond to this new world? If nothing else, it needed to address the challenge of the British cultural renaissance, now firmly underway. For classical music that included the premiere of Britten’s *Peter Grimes* at Sadlers Wells in June to mark the opening of that house. The imminence of the new Programme C, now designated the ‘Third Programme’, was therefore not merely an internal BBC concern. Wittingly or not, it was part of a world-wide response to post war realities and opportunities, although conditioned by British musical and cultural isolation as a consequence of wartime conditions and decisions.

Table 5.3 Data summary sample week 1946

1946 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	17'30	5'30	0'45
Light	6'40	-	0'30

1946 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	700,000	3	2,800,000	8
Light	1,400,000	4	2,800	8

1946 w/c 4 May Number of different composers featured	47	
This Week’s Composers: Vaughan Williams, Bax		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	6
	Mozart	4
	Brahms	4

By May 1946, the Home Service and the Light Programme were firmly established. Director General William Haley, writing at the time of the launch of the Third Programme, asserted that

the range of the BBC Home Service and the Light Programme is admitted by all who have studied broadcasting programme throughout the world to be outstanding (*The Listener* 1946b).



While not accepting such puffery uncritically, the classical music output in the 1946 sample week (Table 5.3) certainly indicated a broad appeal, aimed at meeting the expectations of a relatively wide audience. On both networks, the majority of the output fell firmly into the centre of the canonic repertoire, and as such may be thought to have been generally accessible, not least to an audience which had been quite extensively exposed to this type of music during the war. The largest audience of the sample week on the Home Service was for Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, broadcast on Wednesday evening. For the Light Programme it was *Music in Miniature* – billed in *Radio Times* as “a musical entertainment” – of works by Jean Françaix, Liszt, Beethoven and Mozart. Each was listened to by almost 3 million adults, an audience well beyond any supposed elite.

The importance of the Light Programme in the totality of classical music radio in these years – and later – deserves to be stressed. It illustrates the broad availability of the genre in those early post-war years, and how it briefly escaped from its elitist preserve. The BBC acknowledged its demotic and pedagogic intent. *Music in Miniature* was to be picked out by a 1949 report on BBC music output as “one of the best things” on the Light Programme:

As far as the Light Programme is out to catch the wandering ear and teach it to be musical this feature shows the best method. The title is no more forbidding than ‘album of familiar music’, ‘time for music’, ‘musical memories’ and other enticements; and for a beginning the listener is given some fairly tuneful and go-ahead piece without being put off by the words ‘chamber music’ or ‘string quartet’. The songs and singing are the kind to catch the fancy; and other items are in keeping. A half-hour of pretty good entertainment-value music that handed out good stuff without giving the game away. (BBC WAC R27/495/2 August 1949)

Among other programmes attracting substantial audiences in the sample week on the Home Service were a piano recital late on Tuesday evening of Beethoven, Weber and CPE Bach, a Hallé orchestral concert under John Barbirolli of Weber, Delius, Ravel and Berlioz, and consistently the Light Programme's weekday *Concert Hour* which – although never lasting for a full hour – featured Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Holst, Borodin, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Rimsky-Korsakov. Consistently around 1½ million adults tuned in. The BBC was doing an excellent job of demonstrating the existence of a popular audience for classical music radio.

The total output of around 26 hours across the week was modest by later standards. Only 47 composers were featured. There were still very few contemporary composers included – apart from a few living British composers and the neo-classical Jean Françaix – no early music, and almost no baroque except one playing of CPE Bach (but none of his father). This was the year of the first *Darmstadt Ferienspiele*, but the BBC's *Composers of the Week* were Bax and Vaughan Williams. When the Home Service ventured to broadcast Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* in June, it was in the form of four excerpts rather than the entire opera. When the Home Service broadcast from the Festival of Contemporary Music in July, it did so in the knowledge that “contemporary” music was thought by most “to stand for every kind of nerve-wracking cacophony or deliberate experimentation” (*The Listener* 1946a).

### 5.5 The arrival of the Third Programme 29 September 1946

1946 was a year of new institutions in the UK. The Bank of England was nationalised in March, the Arts Council was established in August and the National Health Service Act was passed in November. Modern broadcasting also arrived. BBC television transmissions resumed on 7 June 1946<sup>66</sup> and the BBC ran trials of new-fangled frequency modulation (FM) transmissions (*The Times* 1946).

Carpenter (1996) and Briggs (1979) have both described exhaustively the institutional processes which led to the opening of the Third Programme on Sunday, 29 September 1946. They trace the BBC's wish to have a cultural programme back to an idea for a 'Minerva' programme, suggested by the Head of the BBC's Education Department in 1930, and relate the progress made from 1943 onwards up to Cabinet approval in January 1946. In Carpenter's view, "the Third was born at an exciting time" (1996, p. 14), although it faced immediate and continuing reception difficulties. It was run initially by "the triumvirate of Barnes, Amyot and Stokes" (1996, p. 17), who faced the prospect of having to postpone the new service in the light of the transmission challenge from a USSR station at Riga. Briggs (1979, p. 69) discusses in detail the administrative arrangements for the management of the Third Programme, including the explicit rejection by BBC management of "an identifiable educational dimension". In Briggs' view, the BBC expected that its audience "would doubtless widen as the years went by" but that it intended that "no effort should be made to force the process". Arguably, this was to misunderstand the opportunity presented by an unprecedented British public interest in and appetite for classical music:

The dangers of divergences between objectives and achievement in the Third Programme were obvious enough. They derive from the tendency of some producers and planners to go beyond Haley's initial rubric and to select avant-garde items which at times reduced the minority audience to a series of coteries. (Briggs 1979, p. 75)

Haley saw the Third Programme as "a cultural reinforcement and not a replacement" for the output on the Home or the Light.<sup>67</sup> Briggs notes – and the sample week analysis for 1947 confirms – that the arrival of the Third Programme increased the total offering by the BBC (1979, p. 80). Beyond that however, media history scholarship has had almost nothing to say about the classical music output on either the Home or the Light. This is a significant lacuna, which distorts understanding of a central part of British radio history. Discourse tends to conceptualise the output of the Third as new, unique to Britain, and almost validated by that alone, even as it flared briefly and then faded in the minds of its potential audience while classical music radio flourished on the Home and the Light. Nor was the Third exclusively or even primarily about 'serious' music. The wide provision and consumption of classical music radio across *all* the BBC channels is the notable occurrence, and indicative of the relationship between culture and society in those years.

The agreed terms of reference for the Third noted that:

this programme is designed to be of artistic and cultural importance. The audience is one already aware of artistic experience and will include persons of taste, of intelligence, and of education; it is, therefore, selected not casual, and

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<sup>66</sup> There had been test transmissions from February 1946 (Briggs 1979, p. 196).

<sup>67</sup> Address to the General Advisory Council 20 October 1947, quoted in Briggs (1979, p. 80)

both attentive and critical. The programme need not cultivate any other audience. (BBC WAC R34/890/1 22 January 1946)

Thus in the view of some, perhaps most, of its begetters, class distinction was built in to the new service from the very start, although they disagreed on what that should mean. George Barnes, the Head of the Third Programme, told the Board of Governors in June that:

the programme is for the serious, attentive listener, and not as a background to work, to reading or to washing-up. It can be assumed, therefore, that the audience would include the most intelligent and receptive listeners – persons who have a thirst for knowledge, and who wish to hear ideas discussed even if their own education is limited. (BBC WAC R34/420 18 June 1946)

insisting in September that the Third would set out to serve:

those who dislike being ‘talked at’, who demand ‘performance’ and nothing else, who find popular exposition often condescending and often irritating – highbrows is the name given to them by their opponents... We shall provide the programme and not the notes. There will be few ‘hearing aids’ for listeners to the Third Programme. We hope that our approach will be at once sensitive and adult: that our audience will enjoy itself without crutches and will satisfy its desire for knowledge without a primer. (*The Listener* 1946c)

However, Haley was telling the Governors in July that:

we do not intend that the three programmes shall be rigidly stratified. Rather will they shade into each other, their differences being in approach and treatment rather than in range of content. Music, plays, and talks, for instance, will be found in each... care will be taken consistently to ensure that the general aim of the BBC to raise public taste is not weakened. We feel, however, that it cannot be achieved simply by plunging the unsuspecting listener from Ivy Benson to Bach. We shall seek to do it more subtly; the classical music in the Light Programme will, we hope, be attractive enough to lead listeners onto the Home Service; the Home Service should lead onto the Third Programme. Items will, of course, be interchangeable. The Home Service and the Third Programme will repeat some of each other’s broadcasts. So will the Home and Light programmes. Light and Third Programme exchanges will be rarer. (BBC WAC R39/420 4 July 1946)

Haley was to argue 30 years later that he envisaged an active ‘pyramid of taste’ up which even the most ill-educated working class listeners might ascend:

I designed these three programmes with the idea that we would have a Light Programme which would cover the lower Third of the pyramid. We would have a Home Service which would take more than the middle Third, take everything up to the tip. Then we’d have a Third Programme... It was not meant to be a static pyramid... my conception was of a BBC through the years, many years, which would slowly move listeners from one strata of this pyramid to the next... I would want the Light Programme to play the waltz from *Der Rosenkavalier*. Then about a week or 10 days later I would hope the Home Service would play one act – the most tuneful act – of the opera. And within the month the Third

Programme would do the whole work from beginning to end, dialogue and all.  
(BBC WAC R143/60/1 6 July 1976) <sup>68</sup>

Listeners – especially the potential wider audience available in 1946 – were exposed to the contradictions in the BBC’s approach, and the implicit (often explicit) class-based assumptions. Hennessy (2006, p. 312) encapsulates the ambition shared by the founders of the Third:

Haley...would have wanted to be remembered for the pioneering, unique Third Programme, the kind of cultural gem that could only have been produced in early post-war Britain under conditions of broadcasting monopoly. In their way, Haley and George Barnes, the first controller of the Third, were licence-funded Medicis.

It was not likely, therefore, that the Third would seize the opportunity presented by a newly-hungry popular audience, although for a while that seemed a genuine possibility. Promotion of what was in store for the early weeks cited performances of new works by home-grown composers Britten, Tippett, Bax, Berkeley, and Rubbra, but nothing from contemporary composers playing and being talked about at Darmstadt – Hindemith, Schoenberg, Messiaen, Leibowitz, Boulez or Cage. The Third was envisaged as being part of the distinctively British cultural renaissance, notably separate from the American leadership of the classical music world and from the continental European composers.

An early research study of the Third Programme noted that the audience initially averaged 3.1 per cent of the civilian adult population (or a little over 1 million), but had steadily declined to below 2 per cent by the end of the year, when the patronage of the Third Programme was (ambitiously) claimed to be 2,350,000 adults (BBC WAC R9/9/11, 6 November 1947).

From the first, BBC research was built around stereotypical assumptions of the nature of the audience for the Third Programme. That early study found that

the section of the population which holds the Third Programme in real affection did not grow between October and June, despite the fact that during these months many people tried this programme for the first time” [and that] “the Third Programme’s public – those who are in sympathy with its aims and to whom its broadcasts frequently appeal – is about eight percent of the listening public, or roughly 2,600,000. (BBC WAC R9/9/11, 6 November 1947)

As to who they were, the class-based assumptions of the Forties could not be escaped even when the data challenged them:

as might be expected, the Third Programme appealed far more to middle class than to working class listeners (30 per cent of upper-middle-class as compared with 4 per cent of working class gave a warm welcome to the Third programme). Nevertheless, the numerical preponderance of the working class in the population is so great, that among the 2,600,000 Third programme enthusiasts...about one in three are working class listeners. (BBC WAC R9/9/11. Undated, but reporting on a study into audience and appreciation data for October to December 1946)

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<sup>68</sup> Haley was interviewed by Gillard for the BBC Oral History project. Carpenter (1996, p. 9) dates this as 4 April 1978, on the grounds that this was when Haley corrected the manuscript of the transcript. This quote is from the original transcript.

The Third Programme never made the progress in appeal which some of its designers had hoped; rather, it quickly found its audiences falling fast, and had to seek justification in that very elitism which evidently was a factor in the decline. It may be argued that this was because class-based preconceptions were built into its approach from the start, or that they surfaced all too quickly once it was broadcasting. That one third of Third Programme listeners initially were working class was counter-intuitive to the station's designers, and they wholly failed to act upon that finding.

## 5.6 Classical music radio 1947-9

Nevertheless, the 1947 sample week (Table 5.4) shows what could be achieved even in the most challenging of circumstances, by bringing together the elite and the popular in the three networks, and by extension in respect of British culture as a whole.

Table 5.4 Data summary sample week 1947

1947 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	16'20	5'05	0'50
Third	13'10	-	-
Light	6'30	-	-

1947 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	1,225,000	3.5	2,100,000	6
Third	700,000	2	1,050,000	3
Light	1,750,000	5	3,850,000	11

1947 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	52	
This Week's Composer: Elgar		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Bach	7
	Mozart	6
	Schubert	5
	Tchaikovsky	4

The winter of 1946/1947 had been a brutal test of the realism of the UK's post-war optimism, "as the big freeze started to tighten its grip" (Kynaston 2007, p. 190). Yet across the country, the cultural renaissance was sustained despite privations. Covent Garden Opera gave its first post-war performance in January, of *Carmen*, and the first Edinburgh Festival took place in the autumn. As the unusually harsh weather began to retreat, with the arrival of May 1947, the sample week provides an opportunity to look in detail at how BBC radio output of classical music compared with the initial ambition and rhetoric which had accompanied the launch of the Third Programme the previous autumn, and how far audience demand for the products of that renaissance continued after the initial relief and bloom of victory.

In line with Haley's expectations, there was interplay between the Home Service and the Third Programme. The Home broadcast on Wednesday evening a BBCSO concert of Bach, Mozart and van Dieren; the Third repeated that the following evening, adding

the second half of the Schoenberg *Piano Concerto* and a Dvořák overture. Van Dieren's overture, *Anjou*, was exactly the sort of curiosity which the Third had been expected to provide, but hearing it first on the Home Service indicates a wish to make it more popularly available.<sup>69</sup> Notably, the Home Service was the major provider, offering over 16 hours of classical music programmes compared with 13 hours for the Third Programme. Add in the Light Programme's 6½ hours and the Third represented just 37 per cent of this genre in the sample week.

In terms of the works selected for broadcast, the Home majored on works by Mozart, Haydn, Bach and Schubert, giving space also to Elgar as *This Week's Composer* and to British composer Lennox Berkeley. The repertoire on the Third ranged more widely, featuring British composers such as Walton, Vaughan Williams and Bax, but finding space also for Schoenberg and Hindemith. The Light Programme maintained a consistent level of mainstream classical music, including works by Rossini, Mozart, Massenet, Tchaikovsky and Weber. The *Friday Concert* exemplifies the genuinely popular but still unashamedly major works offered by the Light Programme: Schubert's 'Unfinished' *Symphony*, Bruch's *Violin Concerto No 1*, Ravel's *Pavanne* and Kodály's *Dances of Galanta*.

A listener of whatever class or level of education could spend the weekend of 4/5 May 1947 listening on the Home Service to two concerts by the BBCSO, one of Mendelssohn, Rousel, Rimsky-Korsakov and Lennox Berkeley, the other of Schumann, Carl Nielsen, Dvořák and Hindemith; plus the BBC Scottish Orchestra offering Rossini, Elgar and Tchaikovsky. He or she could also take in scenes from *Tosca*, and a Haydn string quartet, be educated by the fortnightly *Music Magazine*, or even hear 'gramophone records' of short works by Elgar, Dvořák, Wagner and Debussy on Saturday morning. On the Third Programme, there was string quartet music from Purcell and Walton, a Vaughan Williams mass and Schubert lieder. Not to be outdone (although more of its classical music output was available during the week than at weekends), the Light Programme chipped in with a concert of works by Rossini, Pierné and Vaughan Williams.

The significance of the Home Service was evident also on weekdays. For example, on the Tuesday of the sample week, there were five separate classical music programmes: a song recital; a Berlioz overture on records; a Schubert symphony; a concert by the BBC Northern Orchestra of works by Mozart and Harty; and a piano recital given by Clifford Curzon. For the 'ordinary' listener, this was surely the BBC's main classical music radio channel. The BBC's audience research shows audiences of over 2 million adults for a concert. Over on the Light, the weekday *Concert Hour* consistently attracted between a million and 1½ million listeners. *Music in Miniature* on Thursday evening – a 'musical entertainment' of works by an ensemble supporting contralto Kathleen Ferrier – was heard by a remarkable 11 per cent of the adult population, nearly 4 million people, while the *Friday Concert* on the Light Programme the following evening attracted over 3 million listeners to hear Schubert, Bruch, Ravel and Kodály. On the Third, the Berlioz *Requiem* played to an audience of 700,000 on Friday evening despite being up against the Light Programme's popular concert.

Taking the week as a whole, this was a cornucopia of classical music radio. Genuinely accessible music across all three networks was supplemented by enough highbrow ambition to produce a rounded whole. This was one of those moments of balance in

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<sup>69</sup> It had though disappeared from the BBC repertoire 30 years later (Grimley 1974).

the late Forties, replicated in the late Sixties and early Nineties, but otherwise absent. It was relatively heedless of 'brow' or of class, driven rather by the reflexively-related taste of producer and consumer, of broadcaster and listener.

The purist might argue that what was missing was significant reflection of the new modernism in classical music, pioneered by American-based composers and finding continued expression at Darmstadt, but British culture still ran along very different lines from that of the continent in terms of art, theatre and literature as well. Aware of this isolation, Barnes sent music critic William Glock on a fact-finding trip around Europe in May 1947, a trip which was to yield fruit in the Sixties (Carpenter 1996, p. 57).<sup>70</sup>

1947 marked the culmination of the post-war settlement for radio. There were renewed ambitions for the BBCSO, specifically stimulated by the arrival of the Third Programme, with "two series of public concerts...most impressive in terms of repertoire" (Kenyon 1981, p. 198). Within the 1946-7 season, Kodály conducted his own *Concerto for Orchestra*, Walton directed his *First Symphony*, and there were performances of symphonies by Balakirev, Goossens and Martinů. Already, things were changing in British musical life. The use of outside orchestras in the Proms from 1947 onwards

was a decisive step away from the past, and it was made in response to the enormous changes that were happening in the musical world outside the BBC. The increasing accessibility of orchestral music through the capital's burgeoning concert life, the availability and affordability of gramophone recordings, and the BBC's own broadcasting efforts had created a public that was markedly more discriminating than before the war. (Garnham in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 144)

Even at this moment of excellence, radio was about to lose its dominance. The televising of part of the 1947 *Last Night of the Proms* was very much an experiment, being the first television broadcast of an orchestral concert ever attempted in the UK, but it opened a window onto the new media landscape.

The post-war structure of Radio had divided the Proms between three very different networks. Now television had arrived, bringing with it a host of new technical demands and yet another audience to stake its claim to the series (Garnham in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, pp. 156-7).

Change was on the march by 1948. In technology, adding to the transistor devised by Bardeen, Brattain and Shockley the previous year, Norbert Wiener published *Cybernetics* and the first long playing record was produced. Socially, in April the *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury. Yet academically this was a year for codifying the old certainties in literature: TS Eliot published *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, FR Leavis completed *The Great Tradition*. In classical music, 1948 saw the institution of the Aldeburgh and Bath Festivals, confirming British attention on largely British music.

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 6 p. 91

Table 5.5 Data summary sample week 1948

1948 w/c 2 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	16'50	3'15	1'00
Third	20'35	0'30	-
Light	7'15	-	-

1948 w/c 2 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	1,080,000	3	2,160,000	6
Third	180,000	0.5	360,000	1
Light	1,080,000	3	3,240,000	9

1948 w/c 2 May Number of different composers featured	55	
This Week's Composer: Tchaikovsky		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	5
	Haydn	5
	Liszt	5

In 1948 also, BBC music was beset by changes in its leadership, and started to lose the impetus of the previous years.<sup>71</sup> The pattern of programmes did not greatly change (Table 5.5). There was a little less music on the Home Service during daytime, but when it was broadcast it achieved good audiences, including the network's second highest classical music reach of the sample week of 5 per cent for *Music For All* on Friday morning. The Light Programme continued to show some ambition in classical music, including a *Forces Educational Broadcast* on Saturday morning about Chopin in the *Great Composers* series. Third Programme output was notably more mainstream and less ambitious, with the only significant contemporary pieces in the sample week offered in a concert of Swedish and Finnish composers on Wednesday evening. The total output on the Third had increased in an extra evening hour, and exceeded that of the Home, although it was still not the majority provider of this genre of radio. By far the most successful classical music programme on BBC radio during 1948 was once again *Music in Miniature*, broadcast on the Light Programme on Thursday evening to 750,000 listeners and repeated on the Home Service to an audience of 1¼ million on Saturday morning.

<sup>71</sup> The BBC music department was hit by a series of agonising changes among its directors. Victor Hely-Hutchinson took over the Music Department in 1944, dying suddenly in 1947. He was succeeded briefly by Kenneth Wright and then by Sir Steuart Wilson at the beginning of 1948. Wilson lasted only until 1950, before being succeeded by his deputy, Herbert Murrill, who in turn fell ill after only a few months in post and also died in office, leaving Kenneth Warr as Acting Head in 1952. Richard Howgill, who as Controller of Entertainment had overseen the Music Department through this period, was then appointed as its Head. He provided stability and continuity until Glock arrived in 1959 (Garnham in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 140). During that same period, Wilson took the decision to remove Boult (to whom Wilson's first wife was then married) as chief conductor of the BBCSO, but fluffed the appointment of his successor (Kenyon 1981, p. 214).



What stands out, however, is a dramatic falling away in the audiences for the Third Programme classical output. Listening had shaded down a little on the other networks too – and in daytime, so not as a result of competition from television – but on the Third it seems little short of catastrophic in the sample week. There was no measurable audience at all for the Third Programme classical music output on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday. The highest audience of the week was just 360,000. When the Third Programme repeated Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin* on Friday evening, which had been broadcast on the Home Service the previous Wednesday evening to the second largest classical music audience of the week, 2,160,000, no one could be measured as listening.<sup>72</sup> The sample week analysis shows no previous example of an audience blank for an entire evening, and only rarely for a single programme.

Despite research assertions of a potential audience for the Third in 1946 at around 2½ million, it was becoming clear outside the BBC that no equivalent audience was being reached (BBC WAC R9/9/11, 6 November 1947). Carpenter (1996, p. 84) notes that “by the summer of 1948 the press was beginning to get wind of the drastic drop in audiences”. It is likely that some of this was due to worsening reception (BBC Annual Report 1946/7) and there was no early solution to this until the revised frequency allocations under the Copenhagen plan came into effect from 1950 onwards (*The Times* 1948). However, what seemed to be alienating listeners was the concept of the network as an “intellectual and aesthetic experiment”. This phrase, from Harold Nicholson, was part of a restatement of the highbrow purpose and target which the elite had intended for the Third Programme. Nicholson went on to address what he described as “the problem of audience” against a background that

the Fellows of Balliol and All Souls, the editors of the weeklies, are very busy people; they rarely listen to the wireless (*The Listener* 1948).

Harman Grisewood's response, as the new Controller of the Third, was that some light music should be seeded into the Third Programme output (Carpenter 1996, p. 85-7). However, that was seeing the BBC's classical music output only in narrow institutional terms. The sample week demonstrates that such lighter classical music was already available – and listened to – on the Home Service and on the Light Programme. Arguably, the problem confronting the Third was that as the decade progressed it became less one part of the whole of the BBC's output, and more something which would be regarded in its own right according to the elite aspirations of those responsible for it. Why else, in the 1948 sample week, would the Third Programme have scheduled an orchestral concert of relatively challenging music up against the Home Service's major opera presentation of *Eugene Onegin*? The initial inclusiveness of the BBC radio offer in 1947 was starting to fray at the edges.

That continued as the decade drew to its close in 1949 (Table 5.6). There was a further reduction in the amount of classical music on the Home Service in 1949, in the ambition of its programmes and in the audiences for them too. Only a few programmes on the Home or the Light now attracted as many as one million listeners, with the median audience on both much lower than in previous years. The average audience for the Third Programme of 750,000 in 1947 (BBC WAC R9/9/11 6 November 1947) was

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<sup>72</sup> Where the Daily Barometer (Chapter 6, p. 78) failed to find an audience of at least 0.1 per cent of the research universe for a programme, it was marked as being ‘below measurable levels’. The audience might have been zero, or it might have been, say, 49,999 (subject to caveats about sample sizes and their extrapolation to ‘actual’ audience levels).

down to a median of barely more than 100,000 in 1949. There was remarkably little music broadcast on records, a total of just three hours across the whole week.

Table 5.6 Data summary sample week 1949

1949 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	15'30	1'10	1'00
Third	17'00	0'20	0'30
Light	7'15	-	-

1949 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	540,000	1.5	1,080,000	3
Third	108,000	0.3	252,200	0.7
Light	720,000	2	1,080,000	3

1949 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	66	
This Week's Composer: discontinued until 1961		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Dvořák	7
	Beethoven	6
	Debussy, Chopin, Stanford	5

Only one full opera was broadcast in the sample week, Smetana's *The Two Widows*, on the Third. Otherwise, the BBC radio output in total contented itself with excerpts from *Rigoletto* on the Light Programme on Friday evening and from *Carmen* on the Home Service on Monday evening, while the Light Programme offered a *Forces Educational Broadcast* about *The Marriage of Figaro* on Saturday morning. The impression of a falling away of ambition in the classical music output is reinforced by an increase in light music at the expense of classical; through the mornings on weekdays on the Home Service there was almost no music which falls within the definition of classical music adopted for this thesis.<sup>73</sup>

The number of composers featured increased, but without any clear pattern. Boosted by a number of plays in a single programme, Dvořák tops the list with Debussy, Chopin and – of all people – Stanford all featuring. Beethoven is the most played of the 'usual suspects' with Mozart and Bach evident but not prominent. There were no plays at all across the entire sample week any of the contemporary modernists, nor of those associated with the Second Viennese School. With the increase of light classical items, there had been a notable shift towards a conservative and rather lacklustre approach.

<sup>73</sup> A letter to the *Radio Times*, welcoming a recent Light Music Festival, appeared under the headline "To make the snobs shudder". The writer perceived the improbability of "a programme of Strauss and Waldteufel works given by the BBCSO conducted by Sir Adrian Boult" (*Radio Times* 1949).

### 5.7 Assessing the output

Programme output broadened over this period. The number of composers rose steadily from 39 to 62, as the multi-platform output found its feet. The effect of the introduction of the Third Programme was to increase by around a third the amount of classical music programming broadcast. These years established the pattern which was to continue throughout the period, whereby the most-played composers were from the centre of the canonic repertoire, with Beethoven and Mozart consistently dominant. The Light Programme was a significant source of classical music, sustaining mass audiences often in excess of the other channels. Overall, however, audience levels were declining partly as television got into its stride, partly in the face of the returning normality of post-war distractions and partly in response to the loss of popular ambition among the producers.

Haley evidently felt enough concern to set in motion the commissioning of the reports into the BBC's music output (BBC WAC R27/495/2 18 November 1948). The reports – by Julius Harrison on the Home Service, William McNaught on the Light Programme and Dyneley Hussey on the Third Programme – concerned themselves firmly with 'serious music', and provide a view from the music establishment of the position as the Forties were ending and the impetus of the post-war reorganisation had dissipated.<sup>74</sup>

Harrison's report shows a high regard for the Home Service music output. He saw no grounds for believing that any particular group of composers were neglected, including British composers, and judged the great majority of performances to be a satisfactory level. He observed that

the problems which confront programme planners in the compilation and arrangement of programmes designed to satisfy both a majority and minority of listeners are nowhere more apparent than in the Home Services. Here the programmes must, like Janus, face both ways; music as an Art and as Entertainment must be provided in something like equal proportions and in contra-distinction to the more esoteric nature of what is heard in the Third Programme, or to the more frankly popular appeal defining the Light Programme. (BBC WAC R 27/495/2 August 1949)

For Harrison,

there was so much that was worthy of high praise both in the standard of performance, the choice of items and the general presentation of the programmes that the conclusion is reached that the Home Service programmes are providing the listening public with little short of as good and varied a selection of music as is possible in the existing circumstances within the framework of the Corporation and general policy.

McNaught on the other hand felt that in respect of the popular network there was a prevailing notion that "as it is only the Light Programme there is no need to try hard" in terms of its serious music output (BBC WAC R27/495/2 August 1949). He argued that there should be a particular repertoire for the Light Programme within a self-contained allocation of music, praising the approach of *Music in Miniature* (including the

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<sup>74</sup> Harrison was a distinguished composer and conductor in the tradition of Elgar, who had recently given up conducting through deafness. McNaught was editor of the *Musical Times*, while Hussey was a music critic and a regular contributor to *The Listener*.

programme's use of single movements). His approach drew particular criticism from the BBC Head of Music, Wilson, who saw the Home and Light as to a degree interchangeable in their deployment of the music from his department:

In respect of the lunch-time concerts, which form the bulk of the Light Programme's output of serious music, the Light Programme label is irrelevant and largely fortuitous. At lunch-time, as on Saturday nights, the Light Programme and Home Service roles are reversed and the Home Service carries variety programmes. The sensible thing is, therefore, for the Light Programme to carry popular classical music...the audience that listens to these concert is, I imagine, the same as listened to the Proms and the studio concerts. (BBC WAC R27/495/2 undated but probably August 1949)

Hussey wrote a report on the Third Programme very much from the perspective of those who ran it. He was concerned with the detail of programming far more than with its appropriateness or appeal to audiences. Thus while feeling that

the programme has admirably fulfilled its purpose and, no doubt, as time goes on such gaps as there are will gradually be filled

he went on to note the comparative neglect of the operas of Gluck, the failure to explore thoroughly Haydn's symphonies and the absence of the performance of Richard Strauss' less well-known operas (BBC WAC R27/495/2 undated, but probably summer 1949).

Taken together, these reports illustrate well the approach of the three networks – one trying to look both ways, one popular and one elite. They do so without reference to the declining audiences for all of such output on whichever station. They each offer specific recommendations regarding content, presentation and scheduling, but none takes a broader look at the pattern and structure of output, or its likely appeal to listeners. These 'outsiders' actually confirm the BBC at its most self-referential. With a diminishing amount of output and dwindling audiences, they presage and do little to prevent the Fifties becoming a disappointing decade for classical music radio.

From an historical perspective, the Forties contain many of the issues which were to dog the rest of the century: a spasmodic wish to innovate, then qualified and limited by an unwillingness among the elite to keep open the doors to a potential mass audience; concern about balancing the demands of the highbrow while addressing the middlebrow listener; and institutional uncertainties about the use of multiple channels. The assumptions of class were ever-present, and they undermined the perception of who might listen to classical music on the radio. Yet these years also include one of the high points in the provision of classical music radio, the years around 1947 when the BBC got the balance right between these conflicts and therefore provided inclusive programmes which ranged across the spectrum of classical music, achieving popular appeal and intellectual approval. That this lasted only a short time is an outcome which will recur in later decades.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Fifties**

#### **Adagio**

*general history and literature review*

*classical music radio 1950-53*

*conservatism and retrenchment 1954-55*

*re-organisation of BBC radio and the end of Haley's pyramid 1956-58*

*changing the guard 1959*

Classical music radio on the BBC entered the Fifties with every opportunity to flourish, both in itself and in its societal impact. The legacy from the Forties' innovation was extensive output, both popular and highbrow, and an aspirational social purpose. Writing in the *BBC Handbook* (1951, p. 12) Ernest Newman, the doyen of music critics, went out of his way to assert

the generally beneficial influence of broadcasting on the listener's range of musical experience...I would say that broadcasting is potentially the most vital factor in the broadening and the subtilization [*sic*] of musical taste that the world has ever known.

Despite this, the decade was notable for the abandonment by the BBC of its self-imposed duty to elevate listener taste. Further, just as the decade nationally saw a weakening in the radicalism of post-war ambitions, so in classical music radio the BBC's response to the mass-audience challenge posed by television was to be a withdrawal into conservative programming, responding chiefly to the demands of the elite. This Chapter examines the output and audiences for classical music radio in the years between 1950 and 1953; growing conservatism and retrenchment from the experimental achievements of the Forties in mid-decade; the establishment of a new pattern of output in 1956-57, and the general changing of the guard in British classical music and radio too at the end of the decade.

#### **6.1 General history and literature review: the Fifties**

When the Fifties started, food was still rationed; before they ended, Harold Macmillan could be re-elected on the slogan "you've never had it so good" (Hennessy 2006). Kynaston's titles catch the shift between old Britain and the new UK: from *Austerity Britain* (2008) to *Family Britain* (2009). Pretensions to great power status had to be abandoned: a decade which began with intervention in Korea in 1950 ended with the 'winds of change' blowing away the final shreds of Empire. Politically, these were the years of centrist conservatism, when the administrations of Churchill, Eden and Macmillan adapted and diminished the social reforms of the Attlee Governments – which were apotheosised in the 1951 Festival of Britain – but largely eschewed cultural change.

Three events coincided in 1956. The Suez crisis in July, when "the British people had been brought to the edge of an abyss" of division about the place of the UK in the wider world, (Kyle 2011, p. 3) marked the start of an acknowledgement that Britain was now moving to a post-imperial state. The completion of the first phase of the introduction of Independent Television (ITV) in May, confirmed the shift of attention and finance from

radio to television and ushered in the new consumer society (Sendall 1982). And, highly significant for this thesis and arguably reflecting the end of the post-war *dirigiste* cultural ambitions, the conclusion of the first Marriott Working Party in October confirmed that the BBC had abandoned the underlying principle of Haley's cultural pyramid, and no longer expected to move listeners' taste and patronage from the more popular to the more exclusive (BBC WAC R34/1022/2 18 October 1956).

Economically, the graph was rising, as the long post-war boom got into its stride. Culturally, the arrival of first skiffle and then the flood of rock and pop music looked forward to a Sixties society in which youth taste and economic clout would be prominent as never before, while the television explosion changed the face of society as well as that of broadcasting. The very make-up of the UK was changing. The Fifties saw the Notting Hill race riots in August 1958, after which

things were never the same again. The comfortable shared notion within a nation that prided itself on tolerance and civility...was gone for ever. The tone of British domestic politics shifted... (Hennessy 2006, p. 501)

The dichotomy within classical music in Britain, between the generality of performance and listening on the one hand and modernist composition on the other, was at its most intense during these years. The popularity of the anti-modernist Malcolm Sargent, Chief Conductor of the BBCSO from 1950 to 1957 (Kenyon 1981), contrasts strikingly with the first performance of Stockhausen's *Gesänge der Jünglinge* in 1956.

From 1955/6, when ITV brought competitive energy to that medium, the exponential growth in television set ownership, licences and viewing seemed to most commentators to be leaving radio in the doldrums or worse (Briggs 1979). The shift of the BBC's ever-pressed resources away from radio was hastened because the BBC was being "humiliated" by the overwhelming public preference for ITV services over the BBC's (Kynaston 2009, p. 607). In December 1955, 57 per cent of viewers told Gallup that ITV was better than the BBC, while only 16 per cent expressed a preference for BBC.

The question of an alternative service of radio remained dormant throughout the Fifties. Radio Luxembourg continued to be a surprising force, despite its rotten frequency:

from this period come the famous Horace Batchelor broadcasts which for an immediate post-war audience defined the station in the memory as did the Ovaltineys for listeners up to 1939. (Street 2006, p. 199)

However, Radio Luxembourg was undermined by the impact of commercial television, which among other things adopted its sponsored quiz shows such as *Take your Pick*, *Double your Money* and *Opportunity Knocks* all of which had "found large family audiences" on the radio station, and became a niche record-based station. BBC radio therefore had to stand on its own, dominated by that lack of financial, technical and political attention which was leading the medium towards seeming anachronism.

## 6.2 Classical music radio 1950-1953

With the move of the Third Programme onto more suitable medium wave frequencies on 15 March 1950 (Carpenter 1996, p. 96), substantial output on the Home Service and the Third, and the Light Programme still making a considerable impact, classical music radio was accomplished and well-established, although slipping from the high

plateau of a couple of years earlier. The reports of Harrison, McNaught and Hussey<sup>75</sup> described a robust and wide range of output across the three national radio channels, largely borne out by analysis of output and audiences in 1950 and 1951.

Table 6.1 Data summary sample week 1950

1950 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	13'10	1'55	-
Third	20'55	-	0'45
Light	5'00	1'25	-

1950 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	365,000	1	1,460,000	4
Third	73,000	0.2	547,000	0.4
Light	365,000	1	5,475,000	15

1950 w/c 7 May Number of different composers featured	62	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	7
	Bach	6
	Wagner	5
	Haydn	5

The programming during the 1950 sample week (Table 6.1) showed a good balance between highbrow and accessibly popular, with a solid middle ground. Verdi operas seemed to epitomise that middle ground, whether in the Home Service's *Sunday Afternoon Concert* or in the Light Programme's *Come to the Opera* on Tuesday evening. A full hour of excerpts on the Light Programme from *La Traviata*, not that different in content from the Home Service offering two days earlier, attracted an audience of fully 15 per cent of adults, over 5 million. It neatly encapsulated Haley's 'pyramid' aspirations (although the example he chose was *Der Rosenkavalier*).<sup>76</sup> The Wednesday evening *Orchestral Concert* on the Home Service was a dominant feature, with Menuhin featuring as a soloist in the Brahms *Violin Concerto* which, together with the last *Brandenburg Concerto*, represented the channel's largest audiences of the week of 1½ million.

There were two highbrow milestone broadcasts on the Third Programme. On Friday, the revival of Vaughan Williams' opera *Hugh the Drover* was relayed from Sadlers Wells to a creditable audience for such a difficult work of around 70,000. The previous evening, a broadcast of *Jephtha* by Handel hit much the same mark. There were two or three hours of classical music broadcasting almost every day on the Third Programme, many of which were not lacking in ambition – Rubbra and Yrjö Kilpinen on Monday evening, for example – but even here it is the mainstays of the classical music canonic repertoire who dominate. In total, 62 separate composers were broadcast on the three

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 67

<sup>76</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 59

BBC channels during the week, with Beethoven and Bach as always the most featured, closely followed by Wagner and Haydn.<sup>77</sup>

There were institutional changes afoot, as Carpenter (1997, p. 102), Kenyon (1981, pp. 236-8) and Garnham (in Doctor ed 2007, pp. 140-1) have reported. The Music Department became a Music Division. Steuart Wilson left his post as BBC Head of Music on 1 August, succeeded from the music establishment by Herbert Murrill, joining the BBC from the Royal Academy of Music. Although described in the *Radio Times* as “the BBC’s new music chief” (*Radio Times* 1950a), the novelty was in the administrative appointment and not the music that he was to champion. That conservatism was to apply to the BBCSO as well. Adrian Boult retired from his position as its permanent conductor on 17 June 1950, after 20 years at the helm (*Radio Times* 1950b). In a mixture of muddle and insensitivity, he was succeeded by Malcolm Sargent “who could not have been more different from the self-effacing Boult” (Carpenter 1996, p. 102). Personalities and institutional politics aside, in that change also there was a shift from dynamism to caution in terms of what was to be broadcast and performed. Live music, or music recorded for broadcast purposes, dominated the schedules. In 1950 only 2 hours 20 minutes of the 39 hours in the sample week was from gramophone records, so where the BBCSO went today, it was likely that radio programme output would follow tomorrow.

Table 6.2 Data summary sample week 1951

1951 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	18'00	1'15	0.40
Third	18'30	0'40	-
Light	6'55	-	-

1951 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	730,000	2	4,745,000	13
Third	109,000	0.3	292,000	0.8
Light	730,000	2	5,110,000	14

1951 w/c 6 May Number of different composers featured	56	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Haydn	12
	Brahms	9
	Beethoven	8
	Mozart	6

The Royal Festival Hall at the Festival of Britain site encapsulated the hopes of the early Fifties, and the BBC carried concerts from its inauguration. Two such concerts

<sup>77</sup> One feature of the following week was a broadcast of Richard Strauss's tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*, on the Third Programme on Sunday evening. This work had been at the centre of the BBC's distaste for the supposed Nazi composer, and had been among the relatively few works actually banned from broadcast during the war. The rehabilitation of Strauss was evidently complete by 1950.



were broadcast during the 1951 sample week (Table 6.2). The first featured the BBCSO under Malcolm Sargent playing Brahms, Vaughan Williams, Richard Strauss and Debussy on Sunday evening, and attracting a solid 2 per cent of the audience; the second, on the Third on Tuesday evening, was an all-Beethoven concert graced by Moiseiwitsch and Schwarzkopf, drawing 0.6 per cent. This latter was firmly mainstream, with the *Piano Fantasia* followed by the *Choral Symphony*, and it is a mark of the reducing attraction of the Third that even such a star-studded event could not rival the distinctly more recondite Home Service concert two days before.

Two concerts stand out in audience size in the sample week. The Light Programme broadcast excerpts from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* on Tuesday evening to a remarkable 14 per cent of the potential audience. That reach was almost matched by the Home Service the previous evening, with Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* live from Sadlers Wells with 13 per cent. These 5 million listeners were beyond question a mass audience, albeit for popular works. The wide appeal of programmes generally is borne out by the overall audience for classical music radio, with the Home Service – an equal provider with the Third of classical music – not infrequently reaching 1 million listeners for broadcasts, and the Third itself quite often coming close to 200,000, not far below that of the Light Programme's routine output.

Yet doubts were growing. The Board of Governors at their meeting on 25 October:

expressed the view that the Third Programme was making an important contribution to culture and thought and that it had fully justified itself. They regretted that the numbers listening were not larger, and hoped that, now that the reception had been much improved, every effort will be made to increase the listening figure, with a very clear understanding that standards should not in any way be lowered. (BBC WAC R34/890/1 1 November 1951)

Table 6.3 Data summary sample week 1952

1952 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	17'30	1'15	0'40
Third	19'00	0'50	-
Light	8'45	-	0'30

1952 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	730,000	2	1,095,000	3
Third	109,000	0.3	292,000	0'5
Light	1,095,000	3	1,059,000	3

1952 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	72	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Haydn	7
	Mozart	6
	Schubert	5

Across Britain in 1952, change was in prospect but not yet accomplished. EMI announced that it would be replacing 78rpm records with long-playing or extended play

(*The Times* 1950a), yet two months later Decca issued a new recording of Stravinsky on 10 sides of 78s (*The Times* 1957b). It was the end of an era rather than the start of a new one. *The Times'* coverage of the funeral of George VI reflected an almost bygone age, but amid all the "martial splendour and pageantry" the crowds were said to have been less than anticipated because of the impact of television (*The Times* 1952). In classical music, Cage's *4'33"* was given its first performance in August, but BBC radio airwaves remained safe from minimalist silence.

At the start of a second Elizabethan age (Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne in February), the BBC's charter was renewed in July. Haley resigned as BBC Director General to become editor of *The Times* in September, and was succeeded in December by the far less visionary Ian Jacob.

Jacob... had none of Haley's reservations about the value of television and was understandably focused on the need to deal with the newly arrived competition. Radio, and in particular in radio news, was neglected as a result. (Chignell 2011, p. 60).

Richard Howgill became Controller, Music, a post he was to hold until 1959. Lindsay Wellington replaced Basil Nicholls as Senior Controller, thus breaking the final senior link with the post-war pyramid. Haley and Nicholls subsequently disputed who deserved the credit for the introduction of the Third Programme (Carpenter 1997, pp. 8-9) with Haley asserting that Nicholls was "very anti-Third...having said that he had got the original idea he was then convinced that what had come out of it was all wrong" (BBC WAC R143/60/1 6 July 1976), but these two men shared a vision which Wellington was to set aside later in the decade.

The 1952 sample week (Table 6.3) confirms that while the Home Service and the Light Programme continued to offer a good range of music, the Third Programme was starting to retreat almost into a caricature of its output. Monday evening scheduled a five act opera, *Les Huguenots* by Meyerbeer and Friday evening offered Thomas Arne's *Love in a Village*, an 18th-century ballad opera in three acts which had gone unperformed since 1928. On Wednesday evening, a one act opera *Volo di Notte* by Dallapiccola, preceded by a concert of Telemann's *Tafelmusik* were features of an evening of scant appeal. The audience never rose above 0.1 per cent for Telemann, Poulenc, Busoni, Mozart or van Dieren, and was below recordable levels for the Italian opera. This means that around or below 35,000 people were all that were attracted to the 3¼ hours of the Third's classical music across the whole Wednesday evening.

The Light Programme continued to sustain the popularity of middlebrow output. Its regular weekday lunchtime concert consistently attracted 1 per cent or 2 per cent of the potential audience (30 times the total listening to the Third that Wednesday evening) without noticeably compromising on its output. Monday featured Schubert, Wagner and Haydn; Tuesday, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Schubert; Wednesday, Haydn, Strauss and Berners; Thursday, Weber, Lalo and Dvořák; and Friday, despite edging more to the light classical, included works by Bach, Gluck, Beethoven, Borodin and Glinka. This was good central classical canonic repertoire, with respectable audiences. It even included an educational component: Tuesday afternoon saw a broadcast of *Talking of Music* by Sidney Harrison, discussing the *Music of the Masters* concert to be broadcast

on the Light the following afternoon – both attracting  $\frac{3}{4}$  million listeners, and featuring Weber, Delius, Borodin and de Falla.<sup>78</sup>

The Home Service similarly offered some mainstream afternoon and evening concerts. It achieved its best audience figures with a couple of concerts on the Sunday, with well over 1 million people listening to the *Sunday Symphony Concert* of Bach, Haydn, Dukas and Elsa Barraine, and the same number tuning in to hear the BBC Scottish Orchestra play Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony* later in the evening.

Thus BBC output in 1952 embodied a relationship between the popular output of the Light, the middlebrow of the Home and the highbrow of the Third. The small audience figures for the Third Programme on Wednesday would have been thought justified since over on the Home Service the BBCSO, under Malcolm Sargent, were presenting a featured concert of works by Sibelius, which sustained an audience of 1 million through the evening. However that approach only remained valid if the more challenging output was presented in a way accessible to a wider audience.

Table 6.4 Data summary sample week 1953

1953 w/c 3 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	16'00	1'00	0'40
Third	21'20	0'30	0'45
Light	5'45	1'00	-

1953 w/c 3 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	365,000	1	730,000	2
Third	73,000	0.2	146,000	0.4
Light	365,000	1	730,000	2

1953 w/c 3 May Number of different composers featured	69	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	13
	Mozart	7
	Mendelssohn, Haydn, Stravinsky, Handel, Liszt	4

Although television in Britain had recommenced in 1946, Jacobs had thought that radio “was in full flight” in late 1952 (BBC WAC R143/3 6 July 1976). Yet whatever the excitements surrounding the impending Coronation (on 2 June), the 1953 sample week (Table 6.4) shows classical music output on the three BBC stations in 1953 becoming less appealing. The new combination of Howgill as Controller, Music with Morris as

<sup>78</sup> The Light Programme's Saturday evening concert, *The Hour of Music*, with the BBC Opera Orchestra, highlights the difficulties of specific taxonomy. The programme included an Elgar march, a von Suppé overture, one of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and Charles Mackerras' reworking of Arthur Sullivan's music in *Pineapple Poll*. This is light classical music, but still classical – and it achieved the Light Programme's highest audience of the week for classical music, 3 per cent or almost 1.1 million adults.

Controller, Third seemed to confirm the BBC in its growing conservatism. Television got going in earnest after the Coronation in 1953, when it “began to cover really big populations”, and Jacob recalled that questions arose whether the BBC was “prepared to keep up the whole apparatus of radio just for a small population” of perhaps a million listeners in the evenings, which had been radio’s main time before the advent of television. These questions started to condition the BBC’s thinking about radio, not least classical music radio.

Although the number of hours of classical music radio output was up slightly in 1953, the audiences reached for the top programmes were notably lower. With television – even before the competitive stimulus of ITV – now firmly established, there were to be few more blockbuster evening classical concerts on the radio such as had featured even two years before. In the wider world continents were shifting. Stalin died in March. In the USA, Aaron Copland appeared before the House Committee on un-American Activities in May. Yet while Messiaen’s *Réveil des Oiseaux* was receiving its first performance at the Donaueschingen Festival, the Third Programme’s approach was reflected in the sample week by just one outing each for Berg and Honegger and a dusted-down performance of Elgar’s *The Apostles* on Thursday evening, which barely attracted an audience at all. Hindemith enjoyed a couple of outings, including the performance of his *Symphony in B flat* on the Third Programme by the band of the Irish Guards.<sup>79</sup> William Glock made an appearance on the Third Programme, following up a concert of music by Stravinsky with a 45-minute *Study in Music Criticism*, which attracted barely a third of the concert’s audience of 220,000.

There was plenty of more standard fare elsewhere. The Home Service offered concerts almost every evening, the Light Programme continued with its lunchtime and sometimes afternoon concerts. But audiences were shading down, the repertoire was rarely refreshed, and the Third Programme made few concessions to inexpert listeners. Scholes wrote to *The Listener* in April urging that

if the Third Programme is to contribute, as it is surely intended to do, to the widening of the nation’s love of the best music there must be daily application on the part of those who draft and those who announce the programmes of what we may call...ordinary commonsense. (*The Listener* 1953).

The Home Service broadcast a concert by the Liverpool Philharmonic on Sunday afternoon, playing Beethoven, Brahms, Lennox Berkeley, Butterworth and Elgar to just under 400,000 listeners; and then on Wednesday evening the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra programmed Maurice Johnstone (that year’s favourite contemporary British composer), Rachmaninov, Stravinsky and Gordon Jacob, to 750,000. On Thursday, the Home broadcast a concert from the Westmoreland Music Festival given by the BBC Northern Orchestra, of Handel, Mozart and Ireland. It found no measurable audience.

The cost of radio was coming under close attention, and the BBC’s finance controller calculated the savings which would result from the closure of the Third Programme

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<sup>79</sup> Claimed by Arthur Jacobs to be “the first time, surely, that a military band has been heard on the Third Programme” (*Radio Times* May 1953).

(BBC WAC R20/189 22 September 1953), a total of £432,309 out of the BBC's total radio expenditure of £8,682,815, or five per cent.<sup>80</sup>

If the Third Programme was starting to be questioned, that is partly because it was narrowing its target listening. An audience research study in May concluded that

the Third Programme's character is such that no one would expect it to appeal to more than a minority of the population. Though it is not designed to appeal to any particular strata of the population [*sic*], its level of sophistication effectively precludes its appeal from being catholic (1 May 1953 BBC WAC R34/890/1).

Audience figures were beginning to matter, spicing up the confrontation between the popularisers and the elitists. Although Silvey (1953) wrote in the *BBC Quarterly* that the Third Programme had a weekly audience of 4.8 per cent of the adult population, 1.75 million, by 1953 BBC discourse was characterised by a concern for serving the elite rather than any widening of the audience:

Two percent of the population might be regarded as, according to a consensus of judgements, 'good prospects' for the Third Programme, i.e. to be at home with its level of sophistication, and a further six percent as 'fair prospects'. (BBC WAC R34/890/1 1 May 1953)

Its approach was increasingly condescending towards the mass audience:

Although the Third Programme reaches a much higher proportion of its 'primary market'...than the rest of the population, yet it remains true that no less than three quarters of its patrons are drawn from outside this primary market...listeners who like to hear Third Programme broadcasts even though they are *unlikely to be able to meet them on equal terms*. (my emphasis).

To continue the stereotyping, the report notes that

the average educational and *intelligence* levels of the Third Programme patrons are, *as might be expected*, considerably higher than those of the population (both my emphases).

Silvey (1953) makes specific observations on what makes people suitable 'prospects' for the Third Programme – educational level; intelligence level; degree of interest in a specified range of subjects or activities with which the Third Programme frequently deals; and "the reading of periodicals of a level of sophistication similar to that of the Third Programme" – which suggest that the reaction against Haley's inclusivity was gaining strength.

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<sup>80</sup> *BBC Handbook* for 1955 p. 132 gives radio expenditure as £8,682,815 in the year to 31 March 1953 and £9,387,166 in the year to 31 March 1954, thus qualifying slightly the contention that BBC resources for radio were ever more constrained.

### 6.3. Conservatism and retrenchment 1954-55

Table 6.5 Data summary sample week 1954

1954 w/c 2 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	14'40	1'50	0'45
Third	19'45	1'45	-
Light	5'45	-	-

1954 w/c 2 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	376,000	1	1,128,000	3
Third	75,000	0.2	150,400	0.4
Light	376,000	1	376,000	1

1954 w/c 2 May Number of different composers featured	69	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	12
	Mozart	8
	Bach	4
	Haydn	4

By 1954, Morris was acknowledging that increasing financial pressure on music output, as a consequence of the diversion of resources into television, was having its effect on Third Programme ambitions, and

the continuing need for economy has made it inadvisable for the Third Programme to embark upon any ambitious projects during the coming autumn and winter (BBC WAC R34/890/1 13 August 1954).

Morris also noted that “a modest series of programmes devoted to contemporary German music, hitherto somewhat neglected, will also be broadcast” – not necessarily something to set the pulses racing.

Elsewhere, the straitened times were producing a lack of ambition in the programmes. Output in 1954 was pretty conventional, the audiences consistently modest. The most popular programme of any classical music broadcast during the 1954 sample week (Table 6.5) was Anthony Hopkins introducing the BBC Northern Orchestra in *Music to Remember*, where more than 1 million listeners tuned in to a not-too-challenging 45 minutes of Beethoven, Telemann, Wolf-Ferrari and Dvořák. This was the middlebrow, middle-taste and middle-class content which characterised Home Service music.

Across all the channels, the dominance of works by Beethoven and Mozart is very noticeable. Twelve Beethoven works were performed, eight by Mozart; those apart, only Bach, Haydn and Schubert received multiple plays among the total of 69 composers represented in the schedules. Few of those composers were not readily recognisable by a middle-of-the-road British concert audience, and fewer still were themselves British, with only Elgar and Rawsthorne being felt worth a mention in the *Radio Times*' (1954) review of the week's music. Yet 'serious' discourse continued to be concerned with the tastes of the elite. *The Listener* carried features on Bax,

Hindemith and Schoenberg as well as on Dallapiccola, while the BBC broadcast in August a “forgotten opera” by Spontini whose neglect was thought by *The Times*’ critic to have been “neither surprising nor mistaken” (*The Times* 1954). The growing disconnect between the taste of the broader audience and the aspiration of the providers of classical music radio was becoming increasingly hard to ignore.

By the start of 1955, mid-decade Britain was apparently comfortable in its post-war prosperity, and seemed disinclined to change much. Anthony Eden duly succeeded Winston Churchill, winning a General Election in May which put the Conservatives more firmly in the policy seat. In the arts in Britain, the modern was the mainstream: Arthur Bliss – for two wartime years the BBC’s Director of Music – was made Master of the Queen’s Music and premiered a large-scale work for orchestra, *Meditation on a theme of John Blow*. The British premiere of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* was given in August at London’s Art Theatre. Such novelty however could be misleading. The nation was still dogged by “complacency, parochialism and lack of serious structural change” (Marwick 1990, p. 81).

The Television Act had reached the statute book the previous year, with the first ITV companies being appointed in October 1954 and beginning broadcasting in September 1955 (Sendall 1982). Although its imminent arrival had already constrained radio budgets in 1955, the BBC had yet to understand the challenge to its self-referential approach, asserting in that year’s Handbook that:

the BBC strives to discharge a threefold duty to music – that is, to the art itself, to this country’s achievement in the art, and to those who practise it (*BBC Handbook* 1955, p. 60).

There is nothing here about audiences, a point reinforced by Silvey’s observation that “the size of audience is, on its own, by no means a complete indication of a broadcast’s impact on the public” (*BBC Handbook* 1955, p. 42).

Table 6.6 Data summary sample week 1955

1955 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes, hours/minutes	Programmes comprising gramophone records, hours/minutes	Speech- based feature programmes, hours/minutes
Home	18’30	4’15	0’50
Third	16’40	1’45	-
Light	5’15	-	-

1955 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	387,000	1	774,000	2
Third	77,400	0.2	116,100	0.3
Light	580,000	1.5	774,000	2

1955 w/c 8 May Number of different composers featured	55	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	8
	Bach	5
	Brahms	4

The 1955 sample week data (Table 6.6) illustrate a programming pattern which seems flat, with little to inspire a gradually declining audience. Reduced hours for the Third Programme left the Home Service as the major provider of classical music, with continuing contribution from the Light Programme. Yet audience levels were surprisingly low, indeed often too low to be measured.<sup>81</sup> *Music Magazine* and a couple of other feature programmes sit alongside otherwise unexceptional programmes. Most of the concerts seem rather routine: the BBCSO broadcast from Leeds Town Hall on Sunday for a little under an hour, the BBC Northern Orchestra an hour on Monday during the day and the BBC Scottish Orchestra *Music to Remember* on Monday evening. The main concert for the week on the Home Service was the BBCSO from the Royal Festival Hall, conducted by Malcolm Sargent, starting with Bach and Bliss, and then devoting the second half to Sibelius.

The Third Programme equally seemed not to inspire. It offered two blockbuster operas: Smetana's *Dalibor* on Sunday, and Wagner's *Die Walküre* from Covent Garden on Saturday evening, the former attracting between 40,000 and 120,000 listeners, the latter finding an audience of around 40,000 for the second act but no measurable audiences for the first or third acts. Otherwise it was broadcasting mostly rather dull recitals. Even when, as on the sample Friday, Wilhelm Kempff played an attractive programme of Beethoven and Brahms, there was still no measurable audience. This seemed to be a channel now without a mission; there was certainly nothing which might attract or educate the uninformed listener.

The Light Programme continued to offer classical music, with a daytime concert every weekday, featuring programmes from the mainstream broadcast canonic repertoire achieving respectable audience levels of around 400,000 listeners, but well below its appeal of earlier years. The great post-war renaissance of the BBC's classical music output had largely run out of steam, and had settled into a new and rather stale orthodoxy while new leisure pursuits arose and television gathered strength.

#### 6.4. Re-organisation of classical music radio 1956-1958

Wellington's counter-reformation began in July 1956. It was occasioned by the BBC's alarm over the inroads which ITV was making into its television audiences, and to radio listening to the Light Programme in the evenings, which reinforced the pre-existing intention to make economies in radio to fund competitive activities in television. It came about in an atmosphere where enthusiasm for Haley's pyramid of rising tastes had long since dissipated. It was triggered by Richard D'Arcy Marriott, newly arrived from Northern Ireland to be Wellington's Chief Assistant.<sup>82</sup>

Until the implementation of the new pattern in September 1957, classical music radio in 1956 and 1957 continued largely unchanged, with its unexceptional character rather at odds with the turmoil behind the scenes.

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<sup>81</sup> This is slightly distorted because the Daily Barometer only uses whole percentage points for the Home Service and the Light Programme, but uses decimal points for the Third Programme where the audience otherwise would be usually invisible.

<sup>82</sup> Briggs (1995, p. 38) observes that Marriott was unsupportive of Haley's approach and "had no sense of reverence".



Table 6.7 Data summary sample week 1956

1956 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	15'15	1'40	0'50
Third	16'00	0'45	-
Light	3'10	-	-

1956 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	376,000	1	720,000	2
Third	72,200	0.2	225,000	0.6
Light	376,000	1	720,000	2

1956 w/c 6 May		
Number of different composers featured	58	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	9
	Handel	6
	Beethoven	5
	Debussy	5

Although the networks seemed to pull themselves together a bit at the start of 1956 (Table 6.7), there were still some strange programming decisions. The Third Programme broadcast different performances of Brahms *Fourth Symphony* on Sunday and Monday, under the title *Composer and Interpreter*, going up against the major Home Service concert of the week. Marriott may well have had his eye on the continued failure of the Home Service *Morning Recital*, broadcast on weekdays, to achieve any measurable audience.

Table 6.8 Data summary sample week 1957

1957 w/c 5 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	15'00	2'00	0'50
Third	16'30	1'25	-
Light	3'50	-	-

1957 w/c 5 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	378,000	1	756,000	2
Third	37,800	0.1	75,600	0.2
Light	378,000	1	378,000	1

1957 w/c 5 May		
Number of different composers featured	81	
Most played composers	Bach	9
	Beethoven	6
	Schubert	5
	Schumann	4

The first part of 1957 similarly saw little change in the total levels of output (Table 6.8). There is a sense of more contemporary composers getting a look in, with a greater number of composers featured, but Beethoven and Bach continue to be the only composers with regular multiple plays.<sup>83</sup> There is levelling down in overall audience levels, with no broadcast reaching more than 750,000 listeners and the Third Programme median falling to 0.1 per cent of the total potential adult audience, or under 38,000. Over on the Home Service, the largest audience of the week was to a concert on Monday evening comprising only the César Franck *Symphony in D minor*. On that channel on Sunday morning, *Music Magazine* reviewing Buxtehude and Joseph Marx was heard by 380,000 listeners, the same rating as the following *Your Concert Choice* with Ravel, Medina and Schoenberg. A performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra of works by Wagner and Richard Strauss achieved no measurable audience. BBC classical music radio appeared to be drifting.

'Future of Sound Broadcasting', a memorandum written by Marriott on 18 July 1956, set in motion a wholesale re-examination of the BBC's radio output, and a substantial challenge to the role and even existence of the Third Programme. This was a key moment in the narrative. Marriott's central assertion consciously implied

the rejection of an attitude that many of us have grown up with, about having a mission to educate, to up-lift, to lead people on to better things, to give them what we think they ought to want rather than what they do want....We ought to remember that about half the population consists of very simple people, with not very much education, who look to radio for their entertainment and relaxation (and who shall say that they are wrong?). (BBC WAC R34/1022/2 July 1956)

Both Briggs (1995, pp. 34-61) and Carpenter (1997, pp. 166-177) have written in detail from an institutional perspective of how the reorganisation of the BBC's radio services came about. It involved in future planning the Home Service and Light Programme together, while allocating to the Third Programme 10 per cent of radio hours. Despite that being disproportionate to its comparable audience size by a factor of ten (Briggs 1995, p. 41), the outraged reaction from the musical and cultural High Establishment, gathered together as the Third Programme Defence Society (Briggs 1995, p. 53), revealed an entrenched elite.<sup>84</sup> The eventual new pattern from September 1957 saw classical music banished from the Light Programme, slightly extended on the Home Service, reduced but entrenched on the Third Programme, and given an occasional outing on a new part-time early evening service on the Third's frequencies, Network 3.<sup>85</sup>

It was suggested at the time that Network 3 was introduced when the hours of broadcasting of the Third Programme were curtailed because "the Corporation's conscience still demanded that something should be done to uphold its reputation as a source of 'culture' as well as of entertainment" (*The Times* 1959). That does not seem to have been the view from inside the BBC where Controller of Sound Planning, Pelletier, wished to offer

'good' but not necessarily 'serious' music. Nursery slope repertoire in impeccable performances. The 'brow' is somewhere between the best of light

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<sup>83</sup> The Bach total in the sample week is inflated slightly by a broadcast from the Tilford Bach Festival.

<sup>84</sup> The deputation to see the Vice Chairman of the BBC Governors included TS Elliot, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Michael Tippett and Laurence Olivier (Briggs 1995, p. 57).

<sup>85</sup> Dubbed the "fretwork network" (*The Times* 1957c, p. 8) 1959

music and the most popular Prom. The afternoon would not have the character I imagine for it unless it included good, familiar light music – waltzes by Strauss and Lehár, Edward German dances, operetta, etc. ... We are seeking to present – I must use a horrible phrase to make myself clear – ‘familiar classics and near-classics’. (BBC WAC R 27/847/1 21 July 1959)

The process is an archetype for how the British establishment dealt with such matters in the Fifties: the initial memorandum from Marriott; a working party established under Marriott’s leadership by Wellington; proposals which were then leaked to and publicly challenged by the contemporary intellectual elite, gathered into the Third Programme Defence Society; leading to a new pattern of radio broadcasting.

The BBC asserted that the outcome represented “better and more balanced radio programmes on a smaller budget” (*The Times* 1957a.) The protesters regarded it as “a disaster for sound broadcasting, a retreat on all fronts in the face of the advance of competitive television” (*The Times* 1957b). Actually, the outcome was the re-assertion of elite intentions for the Third (albeit on reduced hours) and the discarding of any significant mission to enhance popular appetite for classical music radio until the mid-Sixties. The sample weeks analysis for the early Fifties show that the removal of classical music from the Light Programme in daytime disenfranchised a potential audience of 1 million listeners or more, who were no longer going to stumble across this sort of output in an easily accessible radio environment, and for whom a tiny amount of such music on Network 3 was irrelevant. As for how the BBC might recover those who had been alienated by the elitist nature of the Third, Carpenter (1997, p. 170) observes “nowhere was it suggested how this should be done”.

Academic discourse about the affair suggests that it was all about the Third Programme, and debates whether or not the changes were cultural “vandalism”.<sup>86</sup> Other than from an institutional point of view, however, what is most significant about their outcome lies elsewhere. As Wellington was aware, the essence of the Working Party’s argument was

that the Corporation’s preoccupation with its cultural mission is wrong in principle and impracticable in a competitive world. (BBC WAC R34/874/4 27 August 1957)

He preferred it to be expressed that the BBC

does not believe it right or sensible to try to dragoon taste, or compel it, by refraining from offering a straightforward programme of simple entertainment for those listeners – the majority of the community at any given time – who like and prefer it.

Either way, the BBC’s acknowledgement that it was abandoning its previous self-imposed duty to lift the musical tastes of the whole of its audience was in effect the re-assertion of the view that ‘good’ music was for the elite, and that the masses were better served by the pabulum of popular music.

It was not a new idea that such people had no right to be listening. These were the people who in the words of the 1953 report were “unlikely to be able to meet [serious output] on equal terms” (BBC WAC R9/13/99, May 1953). They were now to lose that

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<sup>86</sup> Carpenter (1997, p. 158) uses the Chapter title, “Little short of vandalism”, quoting a letter from Gerard Hoffnung to Cadogan 15 August 1957 (1997, p. 176).

opportunity. On the other hand, the highbrow elite – who had been so affronted by a reduction in the hours of output of the Third Programme – now had the guaranteed continued existence of their cultural radio channel until the end of the next decade. As Wellington wrote in *Radio Times*, when the new pattern was launched

we are not ‘fighting for the mass audience’, but we do not forget that it is our responsibility to entertain as well as to inform and educate. We have been asked if we have abandoned our mission to educate and improve public taste. We see our task rather as to provide the opportunities for people to widen their experience and extend the range of their enjoyment...in the belief that listeners are capable of choosing what they want. (*Radio Times* 1957)

The 1958 sample week provides a good opportunity to consider what – after all that institutional turmoil and public argument – the new pattern for classical music output meant for the radio audience, and what they chose to listen to.

Table 6.9 Data summary sample week 1958

1958 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	18'45	1'55	0'50
Third	13'35	0'30	-
Network 3	0'45	0'45	-

1958 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	378,000	1	756,000	2
Third	75,600	0.2	151,200	0.4
Network 3	37,800	0.1	37,800	0.1

1958 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	66	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Bach	10
	Mozart	9
	Sibelius	6
	Haydn	5

The conclusion must be that they were unimpressed, not least by the overall reduction in output to its lowest level since 1946, and the fewest hours of output at any time after the institution of the Third Programme (Table 6.9). Listening to classical music on the Home Service (now by far the majority provider of the genre) failed to increase, with many programmes not registering a measurable audience, and only *Music to Remember* on Monday evening exceeding 400,000 listeners. Audiences to the Third also remained static, while Network 3 made almost no impact on the music listening public. Classical music had disappeared completely from the Light Programme, although the weekday *Concert Hour* shifted to the Home Service where it kept its audience numbers (but not necessarily the same listeners). The arrival of *Record Review* on Network 3 (Carpenter 1997, p. 182) did not compensate for the loss of hours on the Light Programme.

Although the Home Service provided a respectable quantity of output, it did not become any sort of champion for popular appreciation of classical music. Efforts to expand the canonic repertoire meant that a few more British composers were featured, in what might be thought to be an act of appeasement to those who had lobbied against the BBC's changes. Although Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Walton barely got a look in, lesser lights (if it is fair to describe Dame Ethel Smyth in that way) were scattered liberally through the schedules. On Thursday evening the Home Service broadcast *Appointment with Music*, featuring living British composers, from Bliss to Ketelby and Torch. The following evening, *The Living Composer* featured works by Rawsthorne.

The Third Programme continued much along its usual track, albeit in fewer hours. On the Saturday of the sample week, it linked with Finnish broadcasting to offer a joint concert of works by Sibelius, the first half from Helsinki, the second from London, and was rewarded by audiences of 115,000 and 150,000 for the two halves.

It may be argued that – the reduction of hours apart – the new arrangements served the demands of the elite while reducing provision for a mass, popular audience. Sunday on the Home Service offered Honegger's *King David* symphonic poem head-on in mid-afternoon. The highbrow could continue to enjoy Bach cantatas and then quartets from Dvořák and Martinů one evening on the Third, followed by a full Haydn opera the next. Those who might previously have stumbled upon the Light Programme *Concert Hour* would now have to make an appointment for destination listening on the Home Service.

There were some early examples of what would later become the a more relaxed approach to radio programming. A Home Service feature, *The Story of the Proms*, was notable for playing one movement of Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*, just the scherzo from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and generally looking much more like a modern sequence programme despite its purported purpose of "tracing the development of this institution" (*Radio Times* 1958a). The BBC ran a 'radio record week' from 11 to 17 May, although the elite touch immediately surfaced, with the *Radio Times* claiming that "the record expresses, as Leopold Stokowski once predicted it would, the absolute soul and spirit of the music itself without any extraneous diversion" (*Radio Times* 1958b). Adorno would have disagreed.<sup>87</sup>

#### 6.5. Changing the guard, 1959

As a decade came to an end, there was something of a general changing of the classical music guard. The death of Vaughan Williams on 26 August 1959 in particular was an indicator of a shift away from the post-war musical consensus:

A major change took place in the musical climate of England. Vaughan Williams was a major figure in the context of England in the first half of the 20th century,

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<sup>87</sup> Adorno (1941/2002, p. 257) noted that "[the symphony's] qualities are radically affected by radio. The sound is no longer 'larger' than the individual. In the private room, that magnitude of sound causes disproportions which the listener mutes down. The 'surrounding' function of music also disappears, partly because of the diminution of absolute dimensions, partly because of the monaural conditions of radio broadcasting. What is left of the symphony even in the ideal case of adequate reproduction of sound colours, is a mere chamber symphony."

but more than any other English composer of our period he belonged to a certain style, a certain place, and a certain time. (Pirie 1979, pp. 213-4)

The first performance at the Cheltenham Festival of Peter Maxwell Davies's *St Michael Sonata* for 17 wind instruments, introduced a composer who was to write a new kind of symphony. His contemporaries and friends at the Royal Manchester College of Music under Richard Hall were leaders of a new radical but not revolutionary style in British music. At this time also some more progressive composers began to receive a hearing, including Lutyens and Goehr.

Table 6.10 Data summary sample week 1959

1959 w/c 3 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	19'55	3'55	0'50
Third	17'25	1'30	-
Network 3	1'35	-	0'30

1959 w/c 3 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	264,000	0.7	567,000	1.5
Third	75,600	0.2	75,600	0.2
Network 3	37,800	0.1	75,600	0.2

1959 w/c 3 May Number of different composers featured	75	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	10
	Mozart, Bach, Elgar, Rachmaninov	4

BBC classical music radio however was firmly in the grip of Wellington's counter-reformation. During the 1959 sample week (Table 6.10), there was not a single work from the Second Viennese School: no Schoenberg, Webern, Berg; and absolutely no musique concrète, no minimalism. The Home was now the majority provider of classical music radio and occupied the centre of the canonic repertoire as stolidly as did Howgill's "leaderless" Proms (Garnham in Doctor and Wright, eds. 2007, p. 167).<sup>88</sup>

In the sample week, the channel broadcast from the West of Ireland Music Festival on Wednesday evening a typical programme (in the sense of being firmly in the middle ground) of Wagner, Tchaikovsky, plus the first UK broadcast performance of Rimsky Korsakov's orchestration of a work by Mussorgsky. There was little response in audience numbers, with listening continuing to decline.<sup>89</sup> The largest Home Service music audience for the week was Monday evening's *Music to Remember*, with just 1.5 per cent of the adult audience for a concert of Liszt, Saint-Saëns and Falla given by the BBC Scottish Orchestra. One positive innovation was *Music at Night*, offered every evening for half an hour a little after 11 pm. These were original BBC recordings, again

<sup>88</sup> Garnham (in Doctor and Wright eds., 2007, p. 167) quoting Herbage, BBC WAC R/30/2345/6, who in his subsequent report on the 1960 Proms observed that "I have in the past referred to the Proms as the Music Division's dustbin [but, with the arrival of Glock] the Proms are clearly in a new lease of life".

<sup>89</sup> An impression confirmed by a BBC Audience Research decision to report tenths of a percentage point for the Home; previously, that had been done only for the Third.

mostly of mainstream works, and their audience varied from not measurable to 0.1 per cent.

The most striking feature of the Third Programme during the sample week was the eighth in the series of Hans Keller's remarkable *Functional Analysis* programmes. These were wordless programmes featuring a score specially composed by Keller which was "a musical discussion born of the material found in an original work" (Walker in Babbitt 1986, p. 396).<sup>90</sup> They were each a product of "[Keller's] instinct that music should be capable of being discovered in terms of itself, rather than through words" (Wood in Babbitt et al 1986: 401) and "a most extraordinary (and probably rather un-English) creation" (Garnham 2003, p. 4). Otherwise, the Third Programme maintained a decent level of output and mostly a measurable audience. With the exception of Keller it was fairly unexciting, offering a wider range of contemporary composers than the Home Service but not going overboard about it. During the sample week, much was made of a series of concerts on Saturday evening starting with *Chamber Music of the Baroque*, moving on to Russian piano music and concluding with the Boccherini string quartet, with a BBCSO concert of Britten, Ravel, Prokofiev and von Essen representing the meat in the sandwich – although still only listened to by about 75,000 people.

There were already questions being asked about music on Network 3, which had taken the frequencies of the Third in the early evening as part of the 1957 reorganisation. Marriot wrote to Wellington in January suggesting that

Network 3 had...double the audience of the Third Programme a year before and, even now, is fractionally bigger than the Third Programme two years before. Nevertheless the drop is considerable and may well lead us to reconsider our plans for early evening broadcasting. (BBC WAC R27/847/1 20 January 1959)

When challenged by Wellington that "this is an area where size of audience, whether in itself or in comparison to another one, does not itself provide a conclusive answer" (BBC WAC R27/847/1 20 January 1959, manuscript note 19 February 1959), Marriott's reply was couched in terms of institutional tactics rather than audience needs:

We have to keep firmly in mind that the Third Programme Defence Society's claims for the extension of Third Programme hours could only really be based on two things: that there is absolute value in the quantity of cultural and intellectual material broadcast, regardless of the time of day it goes out and who listens to it...[and] that the potential audience is being deprived of the service that they really need at that time of day. (BBC WAC R27/847/1 20 February 1959)

Without allowing an equivalent role to the 'angry young men' who were re-inventing literature and art, classical music radio in the Fifties was at the mercy of the conservatives and the anti-popularists. The risk of conceding dominance to the demands of the elite had not escaped Marriott, even though he was the commissioner of the new arrangements:

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<sup>90</sup> "When Clifford Curzon learned Keller's 'Functional Analysis' of Beethoven's G major piano Concerto, the two scores merged in his memory and he disentangled them with difficulty. Keller interpreted this episode as the best compliment that could possibly be offered to his scores." (Walker in Babbitt 1986, p. 396)

It seems to me that we are, as so often is the case, tending to cater for the minority within a minority and that we are not doing enough for the middle range of the music public (which itself is well above the middle range of the general public). I mean specifically that we seem to be doing too much chamber music and difficult orchestral music in relation to the great well-known orchestral works which are undoubtedly what the majority of the music public want. (BBC WAC R27/847/1 15 January 1959)

In the autumn of 1959 William Glock took over as BBC Director of Music. As both Kenyon (1981, p. 290) and Carpenter (1997, p. 193-4) describe, the process of appointment involved Glock turning down the directorship of the Guildhall School of Music very much at the last moment.

Glock arrived at the end of a decade which had seen classical music radio decline from the high aspirations of the Forties, through a reorganisation of BBC radio which entailed the abandonment of earlier ambition, to a fairly workmanlike but mostly unexciting state. In that, it reflected the new conservatism of British society as a whole, as well as the reduced budgets and attention caused by the dominance of television. Music audience levels had fallen savagely, partly but not wholly as a result of the competition for all radio from television. Programme planning had always been largely self-referential, but in the course of the Fifties – with the explicit abandonment of the socially-redistributive role of the Third Programme – it became a matter dominated by the tastes of the elite. Those were not always for highbrow output, but they certainly did not allow much space for seeking to extend the popularity of this genre of music. The Fifties had been a time without highlights for the mass audience, with only the demands of the elite receiving much attention. The Sixties were to change that eventually, by initiating a renewed experiment with popularity for classical music radio in the form of the Music Programme, while Glock set about re-defining and then protecting the highbrow.



## **Chapter 7**

### **The Sixties**

#### **Scherzo**

*general history and literature review*

*classical music radio in 1960*

*the impact of William Glock*

*classical music radio 1961-1964*

*the Music Programme*

*classical music radio 1965*

*reactions to the new pattern of classical music radio*

*classical music radio 1966-1969*

*“Broadcasting in the Seventies” report*

*multi-channel radio*

The Sixties were regarded at the time and since as a fabled decade, although they also included the days when – in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 – the world came closest yet to nuclear annihilation. These years were characterised by a revolution in popular cultural attitudes and social mores (Marwick 1998). For classical music radio, as for so much in the history of Britain, the Sixties are a key pivot on which this account must turn. In particular, the pattern of output across BBC radio which accompanied the introduction of the Music Programme in the second half of the decade is the second high water mark in the provision of accessible and classless classical music radio in the UK, which blended the highbrow with the popular.

After considering the existing literature in its historical context, this Chapter examines classical music radio in 1960 and the significance of the arrival of William Glock. It then evaluates radio output in the years up to 1964, before turning to examine in detail how the Music Programme came about, the pattern of broadcasting which it engendered and reactions to that. After reviewing output between 1966 and 1969, it turns to examine the impact of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, which returned classical music radio to a restricted ghetto. The Chapter concludes by considering the multi-channel approach to classical music radio.

#### **7.1 General history and literature review: the Sixties**

The historiography reflects two possible approaches to understanding the decade. On the one hand, the intense years from the middle Sixties until the early Seventies represented a time of popular cultural ferment, and can be examined in their own right. This is the approach taken by DeGroot (2013), entitling his subject a “disorderly decade”, in which transistor radios, the beat poets, the contraceptive pill and the *Lady Chatterley* trial are all factors in social change going along with political change; and largely too by Sandbrook (2006b, p. xvii),<sup>91</sup> although he acknowledges that

for millions of other people, the reality of daily life was rather different. Change came slowly to provincial towns and rural villages... Many of the best-known changes in the period, like the growth of television, the introduction of the mini-

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<sup>91</sup> Sandbrook treats the years of the early Sixties separately along with the late Fifties in *Never Had it So Good* (Sandbrook 2006a).

skirt or the development of the pill, provoked considerable unease or anger in some sections of the population.

The alternative approach is to look with Hennessy (2007) and Donnelly (2005) at a 'long decade' from the late Fifties through to the early Seventies. Hennessy regards 1960 as the "moment that marked a change of period in British History" (2007, p. 620). He argues that

the 'Wind of Change', the failed summit,<sup>92</sup> the turning of the European question, the abandonment of the attempt to stand alone as a nuclear power – all crammed into the first six months of 1960 – combine to illustrate a proud old political society on a tilt.

For this thesis, the longer approach is more relevant as the experimentation of rock music found only a few echoes in the classical music world, possibly because that had already undergone the genuine radical re-appraisal of the early Darmstadt years. The effect on it of the tsunami of pop and rock music was chiefly to render classical music a minority taste even for most experimental musicians.

Comprehensive general scholarship is to be found in Marwick's (1998) *The Sixties*, which examines cultural change in Britain, France, Italy and the USA, and includes a summary of what happened over those pivotal years. Marwick (1998, pp. 16-20) identifies a "cultural revolution", discernible through the formation of new subcultures and movements; innovative entrepreneurialism; the "unprecedented influence of young people"; technological change, especially in broadcasting; the emerging dominance of 'spectacle' in entertainment; internationalism in youth culture; "massive improvements in material life"; "upheavals in race, class and family relationships"; 'permissiveness' in sexual matters; changes in fashion for clothing and personal presentation; a new popular culture, centred on rock music; "original and striking (and sometimes absurd)" developments in elite thought; the continuing liberal consensus contrasted with some extreme conservative reaction; concerns for personal rights; and the advent of multiculturalism.

For radio, the start of permanent stereophonic broadcasting in 1966 was a significant vindication of the growing importance of VHF transmission,<sup>93</sup> but it was the invention of the transistor that meant that by the Sixties "radio was suddenly in its modern state: portable, personal, freed from electrical supply wires" (Stoller 2010, p. 17). The arrival of rock 'n' roll from Nashville in 1956 and in Britain as the Sixties began, and the attempts of the BBC to keep it "at arms length" (Barnard 1989, p. 38), set up a stand-off between the aspirations of the newly commercially enfranchised teenage cohort and those who saw themselves as guardians of the heritage of British radio, which was the main driving force in radio broadcasting as a whole in the Sixties (and afterwards).

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<sup>92</sup> In Paris, 14-17 May, between Khrushchev, Eisenhower, de Gaulle and Macmillan.

<sup>93</sup> For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was popular usage to identify radio broadcasting bands, and the services on them, according to their wavelength. Thus services were broadcast on *medium wave* or *long wave*. The alternative nomenclature based on modulation characteristics of *amplitude modulation (AM)* or *frequency modulation (FM)* was not common outside technical publications. When the very high frequency bands began to be used for sound radio broadcasting, *VHF* was the normal identifier just as it was for television. Gradually however, the technical usage began to become common usage, so VHF became *frequency modulation* or *FM*. This thesis generally uses the term which would have been current at the time of the events described. (Stoller 2010, p. 169n)

The most obvious manifestation of that stand-off was the brief three-year phenomenon when offshore pirate radio stations flourished without being directly illegal. They triggered (or, more probably, coincided with other forces that would have produced) a resurgence in radio in the UK, demonstrating between 1964 and 1967 that radio could once again attract audiences of many millions, and that the medium could appeal to the newly enriched younger generation (Street 2006, p. 202-3).<sup>94</sup>

There were winds of change, too, in English classical musical life. Composers from the Royal Manchester College of Music – including Peter Maxwell Davies, Harrison Birtwistle and Alexander Goehr, together with pianist John Ogden – were beginning to make their mark, and there were hearings as well for progressive composers such as Thea Musgrave, Iain Hamilton and Humphrey Searle among others. The names of American and Continental avant-garde composers such as Stockhausen, Henze, Dallapiccola, Copeland, Barber, Ives, Lutosławski and Penderecki started to become more familiar to UK concert audiences (Pirie 1960, p. 218), but they were often ill suited to radio.<sup>95</sup>

BBC classical music arrangements, although largely unaffected by the offshore pirates, are thought by many historians to have had their own revolution with the arrival in the autumn of 1959 of William Glock as BBC Controller of Music (Kenyon 1981, Carpenter 1996, Briggs 1995).<sup>96</sup> Glock's approach is shown in his autobiography (Glock 1991), via academic study (Edmunds 2006) and in Black's memoir (2010). Glock's seminal influence on the Proms is considered by Kildea (in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007), Kenyon (1981) and Hall (1981). His sometime lieutenant Hans Keller is the subject of two major works (Garnham 2003; Garnham and Wintle 2011) and a memorial symposium (Babbitt 1986), along with his autobiography (Keller 1994). Given that popular music – and to a large degree popular culture generally – came in these years under mostly transatlantic influences, it is significant that Keller overwhelmingly and Glock substantially were themselves dominated by the European musical heritage (Black 2010, Garnham 2003).

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<sup>94</sup> The history of those pirate ships has been described entertainingly by Skues (1994, 2009), very much written from the inside (or, perhaps one should say, from on board), and in everything from nostalgic television journalism to feature films. Briggs (1995, pp. 502-15) sees them from a largely BBC perspective, with issues of the availability of gramophone records and relations with the Musicians' Union prominent. Street (2005) and Barnard (1989) both present more rounded pictures. I have written elsewhere that "for the mass audience of British teenagers...it was the 'top 40' sounds of the offshore stations... which were the true sounds of their lives for those three years, and which created an expectation of what ought to be provided by legitimate stations". (Stoller 2010, p. 19)

<sup>95</sup> Contemporary classical music in the West as a whole had embraced modernist expressionism in the Forties and Fifties, followed in the Sixties by minimalism which offered little which was easy for radio to broadcast. Deutsch (2009, p. 32) argues that minimalism may have emerged because few orchestras could afford the lengthy rehearsal time required for complicated works, and that therefore more recent composers try to write music of "singular simplicity from the performers". That seems an insufficient explanation for such a major change. A more persuasive view is that "minimalism in both visual and sound art forms developed as a reaction to the expressionism of the post-war years... Characterised in art by clean lines, blocks of colours and abandonment of extraneous embellishments, minimalism in music prizes objectivity not subjectivity; self-expression was no longer the goal." - London Sinfonietta *Landmarks*, Turner Sims Concert Hall 28 February 2013, programme notes

<sup>96</sup> Carpenter (1996, p. 193) suggests that Glock was first approached about the job as early as March 1958.

## 7.2 Classical music radio in 1960

In 1960, the BBC's classical music output was still relatively conservative. The 1960 sample week (Table 7.1) illustrates a narrow range of composers, led by Mozart and Haydn. The Home Service was the dominant provider, not just in terms of hours offered but also in consistency of accessible output. Much of the provision was firmly middlebrow. Sunday's Home Service programmes for example offered works by Handel, Mozart, Gounod, Bizet, Schumann, Haydn, Stravinsky, Nielsen, Smetana, Mozart and Bach, with only John Rivez managing a look-in from the fringes. On the Wednesday of the sample week, it broadcast the whole of Beethoven's *Fidelio* (rather incongruously broken by the *Nine O'Clock News*) from Sadlers Wells, supported by a *Radio Times* feature. Home Service concerts in general – and there were 11 of them during a week – almost always came in at less than one hour. Other musical programmes were usually around half an hour. Against this background, it is easy to understand why the idea of a continuous service of good music was to gain currency. There is a hint of things to come on the Saturday afternoon on Network 3. This was a two-hour programme *Music of the Masters*, which was a BBC recorded concert featuring works from the mainstream classical canon.

Table 7.1 Data summary sample week 1960

1960 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	22'45	3'05	-
Third	16'35	-	1'45
Network 3	2'40	-	0'45

1960 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	190,000	0.4	429,000	0.9
Third	47,000	0.1	94,000	0.2
Network 3	47,000	0.1	94,000	0.2

1960 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	62	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	10
	Haydn	7
	Schumann, Bach, Brahms	4

The Third Programme still demonstrated its belief that it was catering for listeners of a level of musical education and discernment which would have been highly exclusive. *The Innocent Ear* comprised works broadcast without their title or composer being given in advance, challenging listeners to identify them:

What a humbling experience is a guessing game called The Innocent Ear...the four composers of last week's programme were Arne, Roussel, Schoenberg and Bax, and anyone [*sic*] might feel reasonably sure of spotting their distinctive styles. In fact you are not likely to unless you happen to know the work itself which presents an unusual and little-known view of the composer. (*The Listener* 1960a)

The Third could still bridge the gap between highbrow and accessible on occasions. To take one example: Hans Keller wrote brilliantly about *Schoenberg and the String Quartet* in *The Listener* (1960a) ahead of a broadcast on the Third Programme on 27 April. Yet such educative efforts received little audience support. Of the Third Programme's 16 hours in the sample week, an hour and a half of those comprised a feature about Berlioz's opera *The Trojans* in *Birth of an Opera* on Monday. The opera itself took up fully five and a half hours on Tuesday, in a relay of from Covent Garden on Tuesday. Yet the opera never reached more than 47,000 people, and there was no measurable audience for the previous day's feature.

The BBC continued to assert that it took its classical music very seriously, and to cross the line into self-satisfaction:

No other organisation can compare with it in range of repertory. At the same time, the infinity of possible programmes is a tremendous challenge; a constant effort is made to ensure that only vital works, both past and present, shall be performed and, equally, that the standards of performance shall maintain a high level. (*BBC Handbook* 1960, p. 58)

Overall, audience figures for the sample week in 1960, while reflecting what seemed to be the inevitability of smaller audiences for radio as television asserted itself, show the potential of large audiences for approachable works, even those which are relatively challenging. *Fidelio* on the Home Service on Wednesday evening achieved the highest audiences for the weekly classical music, not far short of half a million. But the median audience for the Third was just 50,000, the highest 100,000.

### 7.3 The impact of William Glock

The Fifties had ended, as it were, with music radio's equivalent of Castro's almost simultaneous overthrow of Batista in Cuba, what Kildare has called Glock's "cultural *coup d'état*" (Kildare in Doctor, ed. 2007, p. 21). As Kenyon (1981), Carpenter (1996), Kildare and others have amply demonstrated, the impact of Glock on the BBC orchestras and on the Proms was revolutionary. For the generality of radio's music output, however, the situation is less clear-cut." That had its effect on programme content, but his influence on routine programme output was less draconian.

There are two contrasting views about Glock in this respect. Goehr (quoted by Carpenter 1996, p. 206) felt that he

devoted all his attention to the Proms, the invitation concert, and the BBCSO, leaving his staff to get on with the rest of the programmes without interference.

Critic David Wright on the other hand is said by Black (2010, p. 51) to have regarded Glock as

the sole redeemer of an outdated and fusty department, the rejuvenator of broadcast music in Great Britain, without a wart in sight.

In reality, the institutional politics of the BBC meant that the Controller, Music was in constant 'dialogue' with the Controller, Third Programme, and Glock's real impact was to ensure that, within the political maelstrom of the BBC, individual producers were given scope to commission performances and recordings and to make programmes. Black (2010, pp. 51-2) believes that this was the key to the achievement and problems of BBC classical music output in the Sixties:

The music output of Home and Third, as later of Radio 3, depended on the initiative and energy and knowledge of producers given every encouragement by line managers... Which in turn brought out the balanced output in the profoundest sense, that of representing everything worthwhile and not merely what each individual producer thought worthwhile.

Julian Lloyd Webber took the view that under the influence of Glock “classical music turned its back on audiences and shot itself in the foot”.<sup>97</sup> Glock undoubtedly influenced the climate within BBC music radio as a whole. His assertion of modernism within BBC was seminal, and its impact on the various set pieces was profound and wide-ranging. The opening up of BBC radio to modern and European composers was overdue, and if it was led by his programming of the Proms and his championing of composers and conductors such as Boulez (especially Boulez), it was still timely. The significance of Glock’s role within the debate about the importance of biography in media history is considered in the conclusion to this thesis.<sup>98</sup>

#### 7.4 Classical music radio 1961-64

Table 7.2 Data summary sample week 1961

1961 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	21'10	0'50	1'20
Third	16'55	0'15	1'15
Light	2'00	-	-
Network 3	1'00	0'30	0'30

1961 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	238,500	0.5	524,700	1.1
Third	47,700	0.1	95,400	0.2
Light	286,200	0.6	286,200	0.6
Network 3	*	*	*	*

\*unmeasurable, i.e. less than 47,000/0.1%

1961 w/c 6 May Number of different composers featured	66	
This Week's Composer: Berlioz		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	6
	Mozart	6
	Tchaikovsky	5

The 1961 sample week (Table 7.2) shows two changes from the previous year: the reintroduction of classical music on the Light Programme for one hour on Saturday evening, with *Saturday Concert Hall* playing Sullivan, Delius and Beethoven; and a short stereophonic experiment broadcast between Network 3 and BBC television. Otherwise, the Home Service continued to make the running, with *Music to Remember* on Tuesday evening attracting the largest classical music audience of the week – in

<sup>97</sup> Edmunds 2006, p 252 quoting Julian Lloyd Webber: “why classical music lost out to Elvis and Buddy” <http://www.music.gla.ac.uk/tfowler/articles/Webber.html> (accessed 12 March 2013).

<sup>98</sup> Chapter 12 pp. 208-9

excess of 500,000 – with a concert of Berlioz, Bartók and Elgar. Sundays on the Home Service were particularly successful in audience terms, with *Music Magazine*, *Your Concert Choice* and the *Sunday Symphony Concert* each attracting three times as many listeners as the most popular programme on the Third. Audiences for the Third were by now very disappointing. They never reached 100,000, while there was no measurable audience at all for classical music on Thursday evening on the Third, despite the *Thursday Invitation Concert* featuring the Amadeus String Quartet.<sup>99</sup>

Some trace of Glock's *glasnost* was beginning to be felt during the sample week in terms of what was on offer to listeners. Contemporary British composers were heard in a song recital on Monday evening on the Third Programme: Thea Musgrave, Richard Rodney Bennett and Dallapiccola, along with Schoenberg. A concert from Berlin on Sunday evening included Henze and Hartmann alongside Britten and Stravinsky (with Peter Peters singing Britten's *Nocturne*). A motet by Anton Heiller completed the evening.

Audiences might be absent, but the Board of Governors were impressed. At their meeting on 27 April 1961 they "considered that Mr Glock's contribution on music was highly encouraging" although one governor

suggested that the policy, which had been successful last year, was right but it should not go too far in the way of excluding works which were very familiar to old people but which came fresh to each generation of young listeners. (BBC WAC R27/847/1 10 May 1961)

Early in 1961 – before the arrival of the Music Programme – there were four clear strands of classical music output on BBC radio, not quite coinciding with the institutional arrangements:

- the Home Service, attracting significantly larger audiences than the Third Programme, offering mainly workaday programming with the occasional featured concert;
- featured programmes on the Third, often major concert major relays of opera performances, promoted in the *Radio Times* and covered in *The Listener* but hardly attracting an audience;
- more eclectic output, representing a small proportion even of the Third Programme's music time but attracting disproportionate coverage in *The Listener*;
- and just a little popular classical output on the Light Programme and educative efforts on Network 3.

There were however some evident stirrings of interest in addressing the middle market in new ways. Pelletier rehearsed in January the possibility of an evening slot on Network 3 being given over to "orchestral music of the Prom type" (BBC WAC R 27/847/1 12 January 1961), and a general wish "to increase the amount of orchestral music broadcast in the daytime if possible" (BBC WAC R 27/847/1 11 January 1961). It

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<sup>99</sup> One interesting sidelight: the interval talk on the Third Programme on Saturday of the sample week was the fifth in the series of six lectures by EH Carr, entitled 'History as Progress', later brought together in his seminal book *What is History* – which, as discussed in Chapter 4, has been a guiding influence on this thesis.

is reasonable to see this as illustrating the general thinking which was to lead to the institution of the Music Programme later in the decade.

Table 7.3 Data summary sample week 1962

1962 w/c 5 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	23'55	2'40	1'20
Third	14'00	1'15	-
Light	1'00	-	-
Network 3	1'45	0'45	1'00

1962 w/c 5 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	243,750	0.5	438,750	0.9
Third	97,500	0.2	195,000	0.4
Light	341,750	0.7	341,750	0.7
Network 3	48,750	0.1	48,750	0.1

1962 w/c 5 May		
Number of different composers featured	70	
This Week's Composer: feature discontinued until 1965		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	8
	Bach	7
	Beethoven	6
	Haydn, Schumann	5

While the Cuba missile crisis raged, and – appropriately – Britten's *War Requiem* received its first performance in Coventry Cathedral, such of the BBC attention in 1962 as could be spared from the new television sensation of *That Was The Week That Was* turned to introducing a daytime service of 'good music'. The Pilkington Committee report in June 1962 recommended colour television and a second BBC TV channel and dismissed competition in radio, but it allowed the BBC to float what was to become the Music Programme in 1964.<sup>100</sup> Meanwhile, if the years between 1960 and 1962 represented the time when Glock was "testing the waters" at the Proms (Wright in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 178), for radio output as a whole they were unremarkable.

There is a danger – not always avoided in existing discourse – of allocating disproportionate significance and attention to the BBC's great summer music festival. Each Prom attracted a maximum of 6000 patrons,<sup>101</sup> while routine programme output striving after 500,000 listeners for a single programme seemed to play second fiddle. Glock's early pre-occupation with the Proms – and his real impact there and on the BBCSO too – was to an extent achieved by letting the routine radio output alone, to the detriment of potentially vastly more listeners. This also illustrates how the interests of the elite could over-ride the needs of the majority; not that a Prom concert need be an exclusive occasion, as later history shows.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, Cmnd. 1753 (London: HMSO, 1962)

<sup>101</sup> See Chapter 4 p. 39

<sup>102</sup> See Chapter 10 p. 169



During the 1962 sample week (Table 7.3), there is a sense of classical music being more widely spread and more comfortably accommodated on the four BBC platforms, although the hard data give only small indications to that effect. There was more music on the Home Service, which included some feature material, but rather less on the Third. Network 3 provided a couple of features – from Anthony Hopkins as usual, and Julian Bream – while the Light Programme continued to deploy the BBC Concert Orchestra to good effect, but only for one hour a week. The audience numbers show some slight extra strength, with fewer instances of unmeasurable listening and good steady audiences for the Home Service and the Third. As usual, the First Viennese School of composers dominated, with Mozart and Bach, Beethoven, Haydn and Schumann the most played. There was little evidence of innovation, although the likes of Rubbra, Berkeley and Wood get the occasional play.

There were two obvious destination programmes during the week. The only opera was von Einem's *Dantons Tod* relayed from Germany with support from Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) on the Third Programme through Sunday evening. The *Radio Times* was at pains to point out that although the composer

was born as recently as 1918 his music is not 'modern' in the currently accepted sense. His score is liberally sprinkled with accidentals but not atonal. Nobody who enjoys Richard Strauss and Mahler need shy away from Dantons Tod. (*Radio Times* 1962)

Listeners took the publication at its word, with an unusually high 100,000 audience which carried across to a BBC recording of the Dartington String Quartet playing Schubert and Haydn later in the evening.

Bach's *B Minor Mass* broadcast on Monday evening on the Third did even better, with nearly 200,000 people listening to the cream of English soloists, singers and chamber players. The major Home Service offering was a BBCSO concert on Wednesday evening which drew 250,000 listeners to a choral concert of works by Gabrieli, Mozart and Kodály. *Concert Hour* consistently attracted this level of audience for mainstream works, even though it was deprived of a regular slot and jumped around the schedules.

With Frank Gillard becoming Director of Sound Broadcasting, the scene was set for change in BBC radio. 1963 was in the centre of Glock's "re-invention" of the Proms (Wright in Doctor, ed. 2007, p. 168) but not yet of the democratisation of the radio output. Elsewhere, change was happening, not just prefigured: the National Theatre opened, John Robinson published *Honest to God* and EP Thompson published *The Making of the English Working Class*. For radio, the patterns of the early Sixties continued into 1963, with the balance of power shifting still further away from the Third Programme towards the Home Service in terms of classical music output (Table 7.4). On Tuesday and Friday, the Third Programme broadcast barely half an hour of classical music each evening. Audience levels were generally respectable, but precarious. Solid concert offerings on the Home Service reaching between 200,000 and 350,000 listeners, and *Concert Hall* on Saturday morning featuring records of Beecham conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was listened to by 600,000, the highest figure for four years.

Table 7.4 Data summary sample week 1963

1963 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	21'15	3'20	1'40
Third	13'00	-	0'40
Network 3	2'15	-	1'15

1963 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	196,000	0.4	588,000	1.2
Third	49,000	0.1	98,000	0.2
Network 3	49,000	0.1	98,000	0.2

1963 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	55	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	7
	Mozart	6
	Stravinsky	5

The Third Programme was having a hard time of it generally in finding listeners. The sample week's seemingly most spectacular offering, Verdi's *Macbeth*, in an Italian recording supplied by Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) to the Third Programme on Sunday, attracted no measurable audience. Friday evening's cycle of works by Beethoven, Ravel and Webern recorded no listening, but then nor did any of the programmes broadcast across that entire evening on the Third Programme or on Network 3. It requires a particular view of the nature of a public good to see this failure to attract an audience as valid public service use of a broadcasting frequency. For a few people in the Fellows' Dining Rooms at Balliol or All Souls,<sup>103</sup> Val Gielgud's production of Sophocles' *Electra* no doubt seemed deeply worthwhile, as did the reflections of the foreign editor of the *Economist* on the Moscow-Peking schism which followed the short music programme. This was 1963, when according to Philip Larkin a new carnal world was dawning.<sup>104</sup> Not, it seems, on the BBC Third Programme.

The works of only 55 composers featured during the sample week – albeit on reduced hours of music output on both the Home and Third – the lowest number since 1947 and a nadir never again to be reached. As usual, Beethoven and Mozart dominated, but there were works by Bach, Stravinsky and Britten sprinkled through the week. Those apart, there is little whether modern, baroque or eclectic to surprise the listener.

Moreover, it appeared that BBC radio was being sidelined even in respect of broadcasting classical music. The dominant musical broadcast of the month was a repeat of Ken Russell's film about Elgar, in the BBC TV *Monitor* series. This was ground-breaking, almost epic broadcasting which resonates to this day. It could have been matched by equivalent genuine popular exposure of the high art of music on the radio, but it was not. Gillard's answer was to come in the form of a new radio service of

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 63

<sup>104</sup> Phillip Larkin "Annus Mirabilis" in *High Windows* 1974

accessible classical music through the daytime, but not until the end of the following year.

Table 7.5 Data summary sample week 1964

1964 w/c 2 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	20'30	2'50	1'10
Third	12'45	1'50	-
Light	1'40	-	-
Network 3	1'30	0'30	1'00

1964 w/c 2 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	196,000	0.4	441,000	0.9
Third	49,000	0.1	98,000	0.2
Light	490,000	1	490,000	1
Network 3	49,000	0.1	49,000	0.1

1964 w/c 2 May Number of different composers featured	62	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	7
	Mozart	6
	Stravinsky	5

1964 was the pivotal year for radio in many ways. The launch of Radio Caroline in April 1964 changed the game for popular radio. In a vaguely analogous move, the BBC introduced the Music Programme during daytimes on the frequencies of the Third, an “almost continuous service of good music” in Marriott’s 1959 phraseology (BBC WAC R34/1585/1 1959). There may be no direct causal linkage between the changes in popular radio and classical music radio, but the social, cultural, political and economic forces of the Sixties worked in different but comparable ways across the whole cultural field in the UK. In a *BBC Lunchtime Lecture*, Gillard (1964) acknowledged that radio could not remain as it had been before the “‘almost fully arrived’ television age”.

In these final months before the arrival of the Music Programme, what is most evident from the sample week of programming in May 1964 (Table 7.5) is the Home Service as in the Fifties asserting itself at the expense of the cultural channel. The Home offered classical music output in concerts during the day on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of the sample week, and in the evenings on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, typically to around 400,000 listeners. Set against these, the Third relayed Verdi’s *Falstaff* from Covent Garden on Monday evening to around 50,000. Its *Thursday Invitation Concert* had become the *Tuesday Invitation Concert*, but despite a reasonably accessible programme it attracted no measurable audience, in sharp contrast to *Music to Remember* with over 300,000 patrons on the Home Service the previous hour.

It was abundantly clear that the musical offerings between the Home, the Third Network, Light Programme and Third Programme still needed sorting out, despite the attempts of 1957 to do just that. On Wednesday evening of the sample week, the Home Service broadcast a strong concert by the BBCSO from Canterbury Cathedral,

which attracted getting on for 500,000 listeners. Unsurprisingly, *Record Review* on the Third Network at the same time failed to achieve a measurable audience. With the Third Programme offering Bartók and Haydn quartets later on Wednesday evening, the feeling persists that the Third Programme was now serving a small and exclusive club, and operating with scant regard for the wider audience. Of some 45 hours of classical music broadcast by BBC radio during the sample week of 1964, the Third represented only a little over one third. On Saturday evening, the Light Programme's only classical music offering, *Saturday Concert Hall*, attracted the highest audience to this genre of music across the whole of the sample week with around half a million listeners, and simply wiped the floor with the Third Programme's *Saturday Concert* with which it overlapped; Lutyens and Hindemith were no match for Lambert, Chabrier, Liszt and Tchaikovsky on the popular channel.

### 7.5 The Music Programme

It was therefore more than time for a reappraisal of classical music output. Consequently – 20 years after the process was begun to provide a cultural channel in the post-war settlement, the Third Programme, and a decade after the abandonment of Hayley's pyramidal approach to elevating listener taste – the BBC launched the Music Programme in August 1964. This was a dedicated daytime service of serious music, serving the demonstrable middle-market appetite for the type of music which the Third Programme had steadily abandoned, within a single channel rather than part of mixed programming output. That would provide a pattern for the decisive shift to genre radio across BBC national services as a whole at the end of the decade.

The Music Programme was one critical part (and in audience terms by far the largest) of how Radio 3 was to be put together following *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. It was the legitimate parent of the recast Radio 3, which Nicholas Kenyon produced in the early Nineties, and arguably also the begetter of Classic FM – albeit on the wrong side of the blanket. Classical music radio as we understand it today in the UK is in a direct line from the Music Programme between 1964 and 1970. Given that, it is surprising how little academic examination or discourse it has generated. Carpenter (1996, pp. 222-237) devotes half of one Chapter to it, although his concern is with the institutional arrangements. The relevant volume of Briggs (1995, pp. 579, 580, 740, 757) mentions the Music Programme in only four paragraphs out of 1004 pages, without noting its contemporary impact or its broader relevance.

The genesis of the Music Programme is traced back by Carpenter to the perception of senior management in 1959 that the introduction of Network 3 in September 1957 had been a failure (1996, p. 222). However, Marriott had already floated the notion with Wellington in 1956 at the start of that review process (BBC WAC R34/1022/2 8 October 1956). Arguably, part of the institutional impetus towards change came from Marriott's dissatisfaction with the serious music output well before 1959.<sup>105</sup> He had been on the receiving end of complaints from the Music Department about the planning of classical music on the Home Service in the middle of 1957, with evidence that this major channel was going its own way irrespective of "pleas for regular relays of standard opera", and that it showed "a reluctance to accommodate chamber music" (BBC WAC

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<sup>105</sup> Marriott is arguably as convincing a candidate as Glock for the relevance of individual biography to media history, being involved at this point and then again in the late Sixties ahead of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. See Chapter 12 pp. 208-9

R27/847/1 15 July 1957). Marriott's response had been to press for the relatively popular rather than concede to the elite. He asked that

there should be every day in the best listening time, at sometime between 7 and 10 pm, a concert of good music which is primarily orchestral in character... There is no doubt that orchestral music is more popular than chamber music and recitals among the general public that takes pleasure in good music. (BBC WAC R 27/847/1 27 November 1957)

an approach greeted unenthusiastically by the Music Department of the time (BBC WAC R27/847/1 6 December 1957).

It is reasonable to infer that Marriott had this type of exchange and dissatisfaction in mind, when framing his 1959 memorandum to Wellington:

I am somewhat worried by the nature of our music output but before pursuing the matter further with those concerned, I would be grateful for any advice you can give from your greater personal knowledge of the subject. It seems to me that we are, as so often is the case, tending to cater for the minority within a minority and that we are not doing enough for the middle range of the music public (which itself is well above the middle range of the general public)." (BBC WAC R27/847/1 15 January 1959)

The second quoted sentence might serve as a draft manifesto for the Music Programme. At that stage, Marriott was careful not to propose any substantial change in the institutional arrangements, but the Area and Local Broadcasting Committee (which Marriott chaired) recommended that the unoccupied daytime frequencies used for the Third Programme and the Third Network should carry "throughout the daytime an almost continuous service of good music" (BBC WAC R34/1585/1 1959).

Carpenter asserts (1996, p. 225) that Glock was privately dubious about the idea of the Music Programme. However the full transcript of Gillard's interview with Glock in 1983, which Carpenter cites as his source, is far more nuanced. Glock indeed recalled that he had "in the back of one's mind...the danger of musical wallpaper" (BBC WAC R143/51/1 March 1983).<sup>106</sup> Glock had heard Britten's plea that using classical music as a background accompaniment to daily tasks was "a devaluation of the currency of sublime art" (Britten 1964) and needed to acknowledge his awareness, but he was adamant at the same time that "it gave the listener the chance to experience an entirely new kind of programme." (*The Times* 1966) Carpenter's emphasis seems wrong. Writing in 1963, Glock had seemed unequivocal in his support:

[the Music Programme] will certainly double our output and just as certainly confront us with a tremendous challenge to whatever resourcefulness we may

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<sup>106</sup> Given the difference in interpretation, it is worth setting out the full transcript in this footnote. Interviewed by Frank Gillard in March 1983 as part of the Oral History of the BBC, Glock said: "I felt two things about it, one really reminding me of criticisms by people like Benjamin Britten that one shouldn't be able to hear the B minor Mass on 3 July, or any time, or St Matthew Passion say would be a better example, but one must go at Easter time and it should be the right occasion and the only occasion. And the other of WH Auden that we've become a society of consumers. Consumers who really didn't take things in any more than we took in the newspapers, in other words by the next day even the greatest things had been forgotten. There is that uncomfortable feeling in the back of one's mind and I shared it a little bit and called it the danger of musical wallpaper. On the other hand it gave the listener the chance to experience an entirely new kind of programme, a new kind of musical succession." (BBC WAC R143/51/1)

possess... It is an exciting prospect that lies ahead, a prospect not without its dangers, including that of musical saturation. But whatever else may happen, there is one thing we intend to maintain; and that is liveliness. (1963 BBC WAC R27/847/1 probably late January)

The BBC proposed to the Pilkington Committee in February 1961 that it should use the frequencies of the Third Programme for classical music during the daytime, and the Committee noted the scheme and concluded in June 1962 that it should be allowed to go ahead.<sup>107</sup> Wellington and Marriott could now plan what was very much their programme idea, rather than that of either Glock or Controller Third Programme, Newby.

As Glock himself recalled 20 years later, the Music Programme was from the beginning an example of the commodification of classical music radio (BBC WAC R143/51/1 March 1983). Reflecting on a name for the new service, Pelletier was even driven to talk about "the core of the brand image" (BBC WAC R 27/818/1 13 June 1960), and although Marriott was sceptical about the idea that an advertising agency might be involved (BBC WAC R 27/818/1 16 June 1960), they were both addressing a new relationship between producer and consumer, characteristic of Sixties broadcasting.

As they moved closer to the point when the Music Programme would happen, BBC reflections on its purpose are revealing in their historical context, but also in how the new station offered an opportunity to rethink that relationship between producer and consumer. Controller, Home Service, Ronald Lewin, believed that

the appeal of the Music Programme should be to the 'general listener' with genuine but not necessarily highly sophisticated musical interests who will welcome the opportunity of a service which provides him, from morning to evening, with a continuous alternative to Home and Light. It is not a service intended to cater simply or even primarily for the listener with a specialised sophisticated musical taste... We must recognise that the greater part of the time we should be providing background music, and that the majority of our listeners will be those who prefer good music as a background rather than pop music or speech. (BBC WAC R27/818/1 17 December 1962)

Negotiations with the Musicians' Union (MU) to secure more 'needletime'<sup>108</sup> continued until the summer of 1964,<sup>109</sup> so that the new Music Programme was not able to launch until the end of August that year, initially on Sundays only. The issue of needletime was central to the success of the Music Programme. Glock believed that 50 per cent of the programme output needed to come from gramophone records to ensure a sustained quality of output (BBC WAC R27/847/1 15 February 1963).<sup>110</sup> As negotiations with the MU dragged on, BBC management sought the support of the Central Music Advisory Committee, and in doing so set out the broader public benefits which they argued it would bring:

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<sup>107</sup> Report of the Committee on Broadcasting 27 June 1962, Cmnd 1753

<sup>108</sup> 'Needletime' is the amount of commercially recorded music a radio station is licensed to play

<sup>109</sup> Carpenter (1996, p. 227) notes a report in *Music and Musicians* that "in return for an increase in needletime, the BBC would maintain its house orchestras 'for the foreseeable future'". This was part of the general understanding between the BBC and the MU which Singer was to rip apart in 1980. See Chapter 9

<sup>110</sup> As the content database for this thesis demonstrates, that figure was never approached once the station was on air.

A regular Music Programme devoted wholly to good music – including good light music – would be an important development in itself which would in the course of time attract many new adherents to music and must render great service to the art and practice of music. (BBC WAC R 27/818/1 17 December 1962)

This was to be a familiar argument in the early years of Classic FM, that bringing people to classical music through its more accessible aspects would in time enhance public appreciation of serious music as a whole. Arguably, the Music Programme – like Haley's pyramid before it, and the aspirational stage of Classic FM after it – was not given enough time to validate these claims. However it reveals a wish to spread the understanding and appreciation of culture beyond the *cognoscenti*, and as such reflect a Sixties attitude which – Haley apart – had not been much in evidence in the BBC's approach to classical music radio hitherto.

Even the approach to presentation was to be different. Rather than typical formality, it was agreed that

the object of the presentation is to add to the enjoyment and understanding of listeners...the personal contribution of the announcer is needed to create a relaxed and friendly presentation which is essential if we are to involve a distinctive Music Programme style and avoid the 'awed' approach. (BBC WAC R 27/847/1 30 July 1964)

Here again is a ground-breaking shift in the relationship between the BBC and its listeners, as mediated through the presentation staff, who were even urged to include back-announcements because "it is expected that people will be tuning into this new programme throughout the day. Many are bound to do so while music is being played".

Gillard was forthright in demanding that the Music Programme "should not be regarded as a channel for new, difficult and advanced music" on the grounds that it had to attract a decent size of audience.<sup>111</sup> He endorsed Marriott's view that

we shall have to keep firmly in mind that the majority of the potential audience for [the Music Programme] are music lovers with fairly simple and conservative tastes, and that our first task is to attract and build up an audience for this new programme venture. (BBC WAC R 27/818/1 30 July 1964)

As a way of ensuring that, the Chief Assistant who planned and then took responsibility for the Music Programme – John Manduell – reported to the Controller, Home Service and not the Third Programme, in order "to keep the service firmly in the 'middlebrow' range" (Garnham 2003, p. 84). Manduell's working definition was that it would offer

music capable of affording a degree of aesthetic satisfaction [which was] interpreted as excluding popular music which can only be regarded as entertainment music in the commercial sense but including a wide range of music composition that can legitimately be regarded as stemming from a genuinely artistic impulse. (WAC R27/847/1 11 November 1964 BBC)

That allowed the Music Programme to include jazz, brass band music and operetta as well as chamber music, orchestral music and opera.

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<sup>111</sup> This approach is encapsulated in what Seaton (2015, p.96) calls the "old BBC saw... 'No Bartók before breakfast'".

## 7.6 Classical music radio 1965

The Music Programme came on air in three phases: from Sunday 30 August 1964, just on Sundays; from Saturday 12 December 1964, extending to weekdays from 8am to 2pm, and Saturdays up to the start of sports coverage usually at 12.30am; and then from Saturday 20 March 1965 with the weekday hours increased to run from 7am to 6.30pm, when Study Session retained some elements of the old Third Network until the Third Programme itself began at 7pm. It absorbed a number of programmes from the Home Service – the *Sunday Symphony Concert*, *Music Magazine*, *Your Concert Choice* and *Talking About Music*. The intention was to find “various ways in which the expansion in our music broadcasting can assist and strengthen the general position of music and the musician in this country” (WAC R27/847/1 11 November 1964 BBC). Alongside material provided by European broadcasting organisations, plus of course the new needletime allowance, Manduelli was confident of “the successful execution of this whole vast project”.

What was offered even on the first Sunday morning was revelatory for classical music radio. Throughout the morning, the Music Programme provided the envisaged continuous service of serious music, beginning with a sequence programme entitled *What’s New* and moving through a mixture of gramophone records and original recordings. The popular daytime service ranged from Gluck to Handel, Haydn to Bach and Mozart to Verdi and Vaughan Williams. Although consciously accessible, this was not to be a soft touch, with a short Puccini opera, *Gianni Schicchi*, filling the middle of the following Sunday morning, an approach followed on subsequent Sundays with *Pagliacci* and then the *Barber of Seville*. The show was on the road, and can be considered in its full form in 1965.

Whether you came from the intellectual elite or the broad middlebrow – or even, however counter-intuitive for the BBC, from among those uneducated in the genre – 1965 was a good year to be a consumer of classical music on the radio. It represents one of those peaks – along with the late Forties and the early Nineties – when the range, quantity and accessibility of classical music radio demonstrated what could be done. For the first time on UK radio, it was possible to listen to classical music radio virtually all day long, between the Home, Third and Music Programmes (Table 7.6). In the 1965 sample week that meant on Sunday all the way from 8am until 11.30pm, apart from 30 minutes early evening and an hour and 20 minutes mid-evening; on weekdays from 7am until the Study Session began at 6.30pm. It resumed with the Third Programme at 7.30pm together with not inconsiderable Home Service output in the evening; and from 8am to 11.40pm on Saturdays, interrupted only by sports coverage in the afternoon before the Home Service *Music of the Masters* concert came to the rescue at 4.30pm.



Table 7.6 Data summary sample week 1965

1965 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	13'00	2'30	0'20
Third	15'35	0'30	0'40
Music	63'25	28'05	2'00

1965 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	190,000	0.4	429,000	0.9
Third	47,000	0.1	94,000	0.2
Music	148,500	0.3	247,500	0.5

1965 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	124	
This Week's Composer: Fauré		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	19
	Bach	10
	Haydn	9
	Mozart, Brahms, Tchaikovsky	7

The Music Programme was meeting its brief to be accessible but not slight. On Monday of the sample week for example, it opened with *Overture*, with records of Scarlatti, Gluck, Rodrigo; moved through a string orchestra performance of Ferguson, Handel and Schoenberg, before coming to Fauré as *This Week's Composer*. Turning away briefly to music by Noel Coward, it came back at lunchtime to a *Midday Prom* of Haydn and Schumann. A 10-minute *Concert Calendar* reviewed the British musical scene, before programming records of William Walton's *First Symphony*, *Music in Miniature* and then an *Intermezzo* of British baroque music. David Oistrakh playing Beethoven preceded half an hour of world music, before returning to the classical canon with Bach cantatas from 4pm. At 5pm *Further Hearing* included "music that might perhaps be heard more often than it is", which in this instance was Tippett's *Concerto for Orchestra* and Messiaen's *Chronochromie*. The final half-hour of the Music Programme featured *Scores from the Films*, which in the sample week was excerpts from Prokofiev's music for Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (an example of film music justifiably being included within the classical canonic repertoire).

The Home Service carried *Music to Remember* in the evening when there was speech programming on the Third (and attracted the largest classical music audience of the week in the process, almost 300,000) before the Third Programme broadcast the first half of an ambitious BBCSO concert of Stravinsky, Bartók and Webern from its American tour. During the interval of that concert, listeners could switch across to hear records of John Ogden playing Bach, Mozart, Schumann and Liszt on the Home Service, before coming back to the Third for the second half of the concert including Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Debussy. The Third then offered a Campra motet before a Smetana string quartet in *Music at Night* on the Home.

This was the approach adopted right through the week, so that the classical music output on the BBC can be seen as having been cut from a single piece of cloth. That was part of its great strength. The producer/consumer relationship was enhanced

because classical music was not confined within a single ghetto channel, but was available to both specialists and non-specialists. The listener could stumble across it on the Home Service, have the opportunity to sample it at any time during the day on the Music Programme, but still not be denied a genuinely highbrow offering on the Third in the evening. The Music Programme and the Home Service also did not shy away from programming more challenging works: Schoenberg, Webern, Tippett and Messiaen on that single Monday, for example.

Further, the cornucopia of output empowered and liberated the Third Programme to undertake some ambitious programmes. It broadcast two major opera broadcast during the sample week: *Moses* by Rossini by the Welsh National Opera on Sunday evening; and *Hippolytus and Aricia* by Rameau on Thursday evening from Birmingham University (the Music Programme chipped in with Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* across lunchtime on Sunday). As well as covering two concerts of the BBCSO's American tour, the Third also featured works by Gerhard in the *Tuesday Invitation Concert*.

The Home Service kept a firm place for classical music. On Saturday afternoon of the sample week there was a series of attractive programmes starting with a song recital on gramophone records, and moving to *Music of the Masters*, with the BBC Scottish Orchestra playing an attractive, mid-market programme of Berlioz, Elgar, Dvořák and Beethoven's *C Minor Symphony*. *Gala Concert Hall* in the evening with the BBC Concert Orchestra offered "a programme of works all the family". It featured extracts rather than full works: from Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, from Herold's *La Fille mal gardée* and the last movement of Beethoven's *Third Piano Concerto*. Whatever the purists might have thought, the audience responded well, with 200,000 and then 250,000 listening to these programmes.

Overall, however, audience levels were not particularly exciting. The Home Service with a top audience of 300,000 and the Music Programme at around 250,000 were attracting some of the potential audience but without hitting the high notes. Third Programme audiences remained stubbornly at or below 100,000 for all the programmes broadcast during the sample week. The BBC was to claim a listening hinterland of around 5 million, which is closely in line with the underlying classical music radio audience identified throughout this study, but there is no evidence that anything like that number were listening across the middle of 1965 (BBC Annual Report 1966/7).<sup>112</sup>

### 7.7 Reactions to the new pattern of classical music radio

The internal reaction within the BBC was mostly positive, although – possibly because of the absence through illness of Manduelli in these early months – many people within the BBC hierarchy wanted their own twopenny-worth about the Music Programme. Abraham was not happy about the representation of British orchestral music in the schedule (26 March 1960 BBC WAC R27/818/2 26 March 1960), Marriott tried to ensure that there was light music "of the widest possible appeal" when the Home Service and the Light Programme were carrying schools broadcasting and Woman's Hour respectively (BBC WAC R 27/818/2 9 April 1965). Keller complained that it was "faceless" (BBC WAC R27/818/2 12 January 1965) and then pressed for the inclusion of a programme of Beatles music (BBC WAC R27 818/2 26 January 1965), despite

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<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Briggs (1995, p. 579)

having been in charge of the Music Programme at the time.<sup>113</sup> The engineers wanted more stereo broadcasts (BBC WAC R27/818/2 9 August 1965), the record industry was pressing for a different recent releases programme (BBC WAC R27/818/2 14 May 1960). The 'advice' continued, covering the interval in the *Midday Concert*, the amount of biographical detail to be included in announcements, the appeal of afternoon programming, the sequencing of works chosen for broadcast – virtually all as a result of internal BBC views, almost none responding to the expressed or perceived needs of the listener.

Of all of these probably unwelcome interventions, perhaps the most interesting (and certainly the most powerful institutionally) was that of Gillard, on the subject of the length of items to be included in breakfast-time programmes. Responding to a request from Manduelli, he set out policy which was to be adopted by Radio 3 in the early Nineties and then by Classic FM:

You ask about the length of items in the breakfast-time programmes. The answer is of course that ideally they should not be too lengthy. If the repertoire is all that much restricted, we should copy the Italians and not hesitate to repeat suitable works at frequent intervals. But if a more popular policy involves acceptance of longer works, we should not shrink from it. Far better to speed the worker on his way with regret in his heart at having to miss a movement of music than start off his day with a fit of annoyance and irritation because of the altogether unsuitable choice of item. (BBC WAC R 27/818/2 10 November 1965)

It had been Gillard's view from the outset that "if we fail to find an audience of reasonable size of the programme, we shall before long become embarrassed by it" (BBC WAC R27/818/1 30 July 1964). The BBC conducted a separate research study into the Music Programme in September 1965 (BBC WAC R9/9/30 March 1966). From that it deduced that 5½ per cent of the population listened "fairly regularly" to the Music Programme on weekdays and weekends, with another 4½ per cent listening fairly regularly at weekends only, giving a total of 10 per cent as the Music Programme's "following" or 5 million people. That is improbable. It was based on data derived from a questionnaire given to those who had already expressed an interest in the output. Total patronage was much more likely to have been in the order of 2½ million.<sup>114</sup>

Demographic data suggested that Music Programme listeners were more middle-aged and slightly better educated than the population as a whole, but "they are very far from being all 'music lovers'". It concluded that

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<sup>113</sup> Once back in his normal role after covering for Manduelli's illness, Keller's interventions became scatological:

what the bloody hell is the first Symphony, which is not comparable to Beethoven 9, to do with the second, which admittedly isn't either, yet is a jolly sight better? What the still bloodier hell have Hummel and Moscheles to do with Leo? Who cares anyway? And when did he spring from that background? It must have been while I wasn't looking. What, the bloodiest conceivable hell, has Leo to do with the hacks?

Memorandum from Chief Assistant (orchestral and choral) (Keller) to Chief Assistant Music Programme (Manduelli) (BBC WAC R 27/818/2 13 May 1965)

<sup>114</sup> See Appendix B p. 273

the Music Programme's audience will always contain a fairly significant proportion listening, not because of their interest in serious music as such, but because they preferred it to any of the other radio services available to them.

Despite the steps it was taking towards a new, accessible way of presenting classical music radio, the BBC continued to worry about what Glock had spoken of as "musical wallpaper". At the very time that he was directly responsible for the Music Programme, covering for Manduell's illness in the early months of 1965, Keller was writing that

although he himself was 'constitutionally incapable of background listening', not enough was yet known about 'musical perception and cognition' to be able to say that such listening is always a bad thing...People who assimilate a musical language pre-consciously may thus learn to absorb the musical substance more readily. (*New Statesman* 1985)<sup>115</sup>

*The Times* summarised well the divided views of the late Sixties:

A seven-day all-day service of broadcast music must largely cater for the housewife who is not content with Housewives Choice as an accompaniment to the washing of the breakfast dishes, and who would rather make the beds to Mozart than to Music While You Work. Also in mind are husbands driving to and from work through slow-moving traffic, people who work more efficiently with a background of congenial music, people of all kinds who cannot, and perhaps are not minded to, devote complete attention to what they hear, but prefer Bach or Bartók to the Pops.

Some high-minded souls firmly believe that music is too sacred art – 'Eine Heilige Kunst'<sup>116</sup> – to be degraded into any background role...but in our own age, when so much of the music we hear is long familiar, there are two ways of listening: the way of complete surrender for special occasions, the intellectual way; and the sympathetic but not completely engaged receptive faculty, which may extend to no more than sensuous apprehension of the music. (*The Times* 1964b)

The argument continues to this day – not least in respect of the arrival of Classic FM in 1992 and Radio 3's pre-emptive response to that. Nor was it merely a British concern. As the Music Programme was being launched, the director-general of the French state radio and television service was dismissing fears expressed by French intellectuals that high-minded programming would suffer as its new France Culture network set out to attract larger audiences (*The Times* 1964a). In Germany, Lüthje (2008) has demonstrated similar arguments surrounding the arrival of Klassik Radio in 1992.

## 7.8 Classical music radio 1966-1969

From 1965 onwards, until subverted by the implementation of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, this multi-channel pattern continued. Audiences in 1966 had climbed slightly (Table 7.7). The Music Programme audience peaked on Saturday morning at 300,000, and the median audience was 150,000. The Third Programme also saw a higher maximum audience and a median audience of around 100,000, while the Home

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<sup>115</sup> Quoted by Garnham (2003, p. 84).

<sup>116</sup> The words sung by a soprano in the role of 'the Composer' in the prologue to Richard Strauss' opera *Ariadne Auf Naxos*.

Service enjoyed its largest audience of the week of 450,000 for *Music to Remember* on Tuesday evening of the sample week – a concert of Weber, Mendelssohn and Berlioz by the BBC Northern Orchestra – and a median audience through the week of around 200,000.

Table 7.7 Data summary sample week 1966

1966 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	11'45	2'20	0'10
Third	13'30	-	0'40
Music	65'45	29'05	0'30
Study Session	0'30		0'30

1966 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	200,000	0.4	450,000	0.9
Third	100,000	0.2	200,000	0.4
Music	150,000	0.3	300,000	0.6

1966 w/c 7 May		
Number of different composers featured	100	
This Week's Composer: Handel		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	22
	Bach	15
	Beethoven	11
	Schubert, Brahms	7

Glock's influence over the general content was now more evident. A concert on the Third on Monday evening was built around a new Boulez work conducted by the composer – whom Glock championed avidly – and began with works by Berger. The *Monday Concert* the same day on the Music Programme included a work by Goehr, part of the Boulez circle. Henze appeared late on Thursday evening on the Third and there were outings for Stockhausen and Webern. This was not to be allowed to go too far. Noting a reference in a meeting between Glock and the Composers Guild about "the possibility of placing substantial quantities of contemporary music in the Music Programme", Marriott stressed to Glock that "it is very clear from audience research...that new music has a very small following among listeners to this programme" (BBC WAC R27/818/3 18 March 1966)

Nevertheless, and even though the number of composers broadcast reduced slightly from the plethora of the previous year, the focus remained firmly as usual in the canonic centre. Works by Mozart dominated the sample week to a remarkable degree, just as those of Beethoven had done the previous year. Bach also was much more to the fore, and although the relay of the Tilford Bach Festival on the Home on Friday evening at the sample week boosted the numbers slightly, even without that he would have been the second most played composer, followed at a little distance by Beethoven and then Brahms and Schubert.

In 1967, the issues surrounding the future of radio began to crystalise, although the implementation of changes was not synchronous. The offshore pirate radio services

were outlawed by the Marine. &c., Broadcasting (Offences) Act in August, and on 30 September the BBC launched its own pop service, Radio 1. The Light Programme and the Home Service became Radios 2 and 4 respectively. The Music Programme, Network 3, Study Session and the Third Programme were lumped together under the portmanteau title of 'Radio 3', but without any real change in their respective outputs until 1970.<sup>117</sup> For classical music radio, therefore, listeners might barely have noticed any difference, except at the Proms where Boulez conducted Stockhausen's *Gruppen*. A mortally ill Malcolm Sargent appeared at the Last Night of the Proms on 16 September 1967, his innately conservative approach dying with him 17 days later.

Table 7.8 Data summary sample week 1967

1967 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes
Home	10'45	-	-
Third	16'55	3'50	0'15
Music	60'50	28'00	2'30
Study Session	0'30		0'30

1967 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	200,000	0.4	400,000	0.8
Third	50,000	0.1	100,000	0.2
Music	100,000	0.2	200,000	0.4

1967 w/c 7 May		
Number of different composers featured	112	
This Week's Composer: Handel		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Bach	14
	Mozart	13
	Beethoven	11
	Schubert	9
	Dvořák, Debussy	6

The programme pattern of the 1967 sample week (Table 7.8) – before any of the name changes took effect – was little changed in 1967 from previous years. The only Third Programme opera of the week was Wagner's *Lohengrin* on gramophone records, which began with an audience of 50,000 listeners but had lost them by the time of the second act. Once again the Home Service seemed to have the most assured touch, consistently exceeding 250,000 listeners for attractive programmes on Saturday of *Music at Four* and then *Gala Night at the Opera*. Even with a reduced number of programmes, concert performances such as that of Barenboim on Thursday evening, and the New BBC Orchestra on Friday evening offering Mendelssohn, Mahler and Wagner, still addressed the centre ground. *Music at Night* continued on each evening apart from Friday, and although much of the music was of limited appeal, being chamber works by Bach, Debussy, Dvořák, Richardson, and Mozart on successive

<sup>117</sup> The tables in this thesis therefore continue to refer to the 'Third Programme', etc, until 1970.

evenings, several of the programmes at least managed to score the minimum measurable audience of 50,000.

Apart from *Music in Our Time* on Friday afternoon, the Music Programme remained firmly centred in the canonic repertoire, dominated by essentially middlebrow classical music. In the Proms, “Glock continued to widen the representation of contemporary music... with works in more experimental compositional idioms” (Wright in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 194). The Music Programme, however, was content that *This Week’s Composers* should be from the centre of the canon. From week 19 onwards they were successively Handel, Dvořák, Les Six, Rossini and Verdi, Ireland and Britten, Schumann, Purcell, Haydn, Bach, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, Mozart, Debussy, Monteverdi, Brahms, Bach’s contemporaries, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, Beethoven and so on until the very end of the year, with only Messiaen in week 29 providing a hint of modernism (and his work was balanced with that of Couperin). The station offered two operas during the sample week. Holst’s *The Perfect Fool* on Sunday afternoon and Prokofiev’s *The Gambler* on Thursday afternoon, but neither drew a measurable audience.

Audience levels generally were not encouraging. The Home Service held up reasonably well, with the top audience of any classical music programme of the week achieved by a performance by Barenboim of Beethoven piano sonatas relayed from the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. The median audience for the slightly reduced total output also held up well. For the Third, however, the best audience of the week was merely 100,000 listeners, and the median had fallen to 50,000. For the Music Programme, audiences seemed stuck firmly in the range between 50,000 and 150,000, indicating a real settling down, albeit that *Your Concert Choice* managed the service’s best audience of the week of 200,000 listeners. Gillard by this stage was alarmed at the low audience figures for individual programmes. He still accepted Silvey’s estimate of a catchment pool of 5 million listeners, but had accurately taken the impression “that Music Programme figures have at best been static in the last two years, and may in fact have slightly declined” (BBC WAC R34/1034/2 19 October 1967).

The Music Programme in 1968 continued in its now established pattern, but with a little more evidence of works by modern composers slipped in, as it were, into more generalist offerings: thus Hoddinott’s *Piano Concerto* on Saturday morning of the 1968 sample week (Table 7.9), a new work by Grace Williams in the *Midday Concert* on Tuesday and Tippett’s *Piano Concerto* the following day, for example. The channel offered two operas across the week: a little-known work by Bizet, *Djamilen* on Sunday afternoon; and *Tosca* by Puccini on Thursday afternoon. *This Week’s Composers*, Rawsthorne and Warlock on weekday mornings, managed to achieve measurable audiences throughout. In addition to *Music in Our Time* on Friday afternoon, more astringent music by Schoenberg, Berg and Webern late could be heard on Wednesday evening on the Third, and Busoni late on Friday evening.

However, it was the re-labelled Radio 4 which showed the most ambition across a sample week, and reaped the largest audiences. A programme of music performed by American orchestras on Saturday afternoon reached 300,000 listeners, while *Gala Concert Hall* that evening attracted 450,000, as did *Music to Remember* on Tuesday evening. There were classical music features during the weekdays: *This is Ballet* on Monday afternoon and *Opera Round the Clock* on Tuesday afternoon, both attracting good audiences. Perhaps the most ambitious programming of the week was a three-hour performance of Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in a concert performance from the Festival

Hall on Wednesday evening. This was rewarded with an audience of close to half a million listeners, a significant figure for an evening radio broadcast of opera in the television and pop music age. The Home Service maintained its ambition on the following evening with a concert performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Festival Hall of works by Beethoven and Stravinsky; and then again on Friday evening, with the Hallé Orchestra offering Glinka, Schubert and Tchaikovsky. Both were heard by audiences in excess of 300,000.

Table 7.9 Data summary sample week 1968

1968 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Home	14.35	3'05	1'00
Third	12'20	0'40	-
Music	59'40	22'05	0'40
Study Session	0'30		0'30

1968 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Home	250,000	0.5	450,000	0.9
Third	100,000	0.2	200,000	0.4
Music	150,000	0.3	250,000	0.5

1968 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	109	
This Week's Composers: Rawsthorne, Warlock		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	15
	Beethoven	12
	Bach	11
	Haydn, Dvořák	8

In 1969, as the BBC prepared for the full implementation of Radio 3, output on Radio 4 was reduced, although the station once again achieved the highest audience for classical music of the sample week (Table 7.10). 300,000 heard *A Man and his Music* on Saturday evening and *Music to Remember* on Tuesday evening. Radio 4 also broadcast features on Caruso early on Sunday evening and on Bartók on Thursday evening. Completing the offering, the Music Programme continued to provide a good range of music, mostly from the centre of the canonic repertoire, but introducing some early and some contemporary music from time to time.

The range of composers during the sample week in 1969 was reduced a little from the previous year, but still allowed for the introduction here and there of some contemporary works. Nevertheless, coming to the end of the multi-channel era, the First Viennese School remains dominant, with the most played composers in order Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, and Haydn. Other composers receiving multiple plays were Bach, Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Elgar.



Table 7.10 Data summary sample week 1969

1969 w/c 3 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Radio 4	12'00	2'55	2'20
Third (within Radio 3)	16'35	-	-
Music (within Radio 3)	60'05	22'00	2'25

1969 w/c 3 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 4	150,000	0.3	300,000	0.6
Third (within Radio 3)	50,000	0.1	150,000	0.3
Music (within Radio 3)	100,000	0.2	200,000	0.4

1969 w/c 3 May Number of different composers featured	98	
This Week's Composers: Holst, Tippett		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	11
	Mozart, Schubert, Brahms	9
	Haydn	8

Debates about 'popularity' continued. Silvey's department produced a report in 1969 (BBC WAC R9/9/33) examining the tastes and opinions of Music Programme listeners. Sampling in Greater London only, it suggested unsurprisingly that listeners were more comfortable with composers from the centre of the canonic repertoire – Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Chopin – then with the 'moderns' – Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Britten. The dominant finding was a wish among those who patronised the Music Programme to be able to find music whenever they wanted it, rather than being inconvenienced by too much speech.

Dodd, Manduell's equivalent in the Gramophone Department, challenged the populist interpretation:

We should not aim to give the majority of listeners exactly what they want... If we were to do this we should only need a dozen or so discs: the Nutcracker Suite, Beethoven's Fifth and a few others (separate movements only, of course) would keep us going, repeated ad nauseam. In other words by giving the majority exactly what they want we could easily make the Music Programme more 'popular'. (BBC WAC R27/818/4 27 March 1969)

As the Sixties came to a close, and the time for the full implementation of an integrated, generic Radio 3 approached, the sample week in 1969 confirms the impression of the whole of the second half of the decade that the BBC across its three classical music services was offering a good range of music, both accessible and challenging, and scheduling at least some of it where listeners might come across it by accident as it were. With the addition of a little feature and educative material, this was a creditable fusion of mass and elite, of popular and highbrow, and firmly outside any single

classical music ghetto – an inclusive and relatively classless approach which was about to be discarded.

### 7.9 Broadcasting in the Seventies

*Broadcasting in the Seventies* was the title of the report published by the BBC in July 1969, which was informed by and followed the report from McKinsey management consultants commissioned by new BBC Chairman, Charles Hill, in February 1968. The phrase is also used as shorthand for the fundamental shift of BBC radio into four generic networks, thus abandoning the mixed programming approach which had applied since the launch of the BBC itself. It therefore represented the final shedding of the notion that listeners might come across material – such as classical music – by accident, and as a consequence be enlightened and educated.

Existing histories have given extensive attention to the institutional circumstances by which *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was commissioned and its outcome implemented. Chignell (2011, p. 92) notes that

the message contained in the document, and the extraordinary and significant reaction to it...[are] essential...in understanding what happened in the 1970s<sup>118</sup> – a decade profoundly influenced by the pamphlet and its impact.

Briggs (1995, pp. 721-810) identifies the start of the process with concerns over BBC finances felt by Hill when he was controversially appointed as Chairman in September 1967, while noting that its origins reach back into the work of Marriott and his first Working Party in the Fifties. Hendy (2007, pp. 51-57) sees change arising from “acute” financial pressure and a sense that radio had ceded centre stage to television. He observes (Hendy 2007, p. 56) that Hill’s role was substantial and surprisingly personal:

The sense of dramatic change at the end of the decade suited Lord Hill, who had told Gillard that he had wanted a great milestone to mark his regime as chairman, and was looking to radio rather than television to provide it.... It made *Broadcasting in the Seventies* needlessly provocative.

As Briggs notes (1995, p. 733), an initial internal review was carried out by a working group once again under the guidance of Marriott, which worked between 14 December 1967 and 15 November 1968, when it was replaced by a Policy Study Group chaired by Gillard himself. As with his first working group in the Fifties, Marriott’s work set the tone for the eventual outcome, recommending that the Music Programme and the Third should be “brought together under single controllership”, and “dropping the names Third Programme and Music Programme and uniting the whole network programme service under the single title Radio 3” (BBC WAC R78/548/2 24 March 1969). Both Marriott’s and Gillard’s groups were considerably exercised by available resources and uncertain whether the BBC could sustain four national networks. They debated whether the new Radio 3 should become in time an all-music programme, rather than retaining some elements of speech, and if so whether it should be under the control of the Music Department. In the event, some speech remained, and Newby – who had been Controller, Third Programme – became the new Controller, Radio 3.

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<sup>118</sup> The text in the book reads “1960s”, which the author confirms is a misprint (personal communication 19 August 2014)

The whole issue of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was one of those *causes célèbres* which dominate institutional histories of UK broadcasting. There was extensive and acrimonious debate about the report: inside the BBC, in public discussion, in Parliament and in the press. Briggs discusses the extensive “staff discontent” expressed through “angry speeches at meetings... [and] letters to *The Times*”.<sup>119</sup> Public discussion was corralled by the Campaign for Better Broadcasting – an organisation in direct lineage from the Third Programme Defence Society in the Fifties – which was again mainly concerned to protect the elite image of the Third Programme; and by Free Communications Groups, which pressed for democratic control of broadcasting with a view to achieving “a radical change in the present state of society”.<sup>120</sup> Parliamentary discussion framed itself in terms of a wish to protect the quality of BBC broadcasting (*Hansard* 1969), but was conducted against a keen awareness of increasing pressure within the Conservative party for the introduction of commercial radio to break the BBC’s final broadcasting monopoly.<sup>121</sup>

Yet, for all the distinguished academic examination of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, that discourse has focussed largely on the politics of right and left, and the even more byzantine internal institutional politics of the BBC. The likely wishes or interests of the listeners to classical music – as individuals rather than members of class-based action groups – featured very little if at all in the discussions within and outside the BBC in the late Sixties, any more than they do in pre-existing academic discourse. Thus, for example, Hendy (2007, p. 148) notes only that the BBC’s expectation that listeners would move between different generic services, tuning to “a little [*sic*] Radio 3 when they felt in the mood for classical music”. Briggs (1995, pp. 803-4) reports that, for Radio 3, “listeners, while still asking questions, showed that they did not object to the new programming pattern. Audiences rose slightly”. The audience databases for 1968 and 1971 (Table 7.11), however, suggest rather a shading down in patronage.

Table 7.11 Audience comparison between Music Programme and Third Programme

	Maximum audience	Median audience
1968 – Music Programme Sample w/c 4 May	250,000	150,000
1971 – Radio 3 Sample w/c 8 May	202,000	101,000

### 7.10 Multi-channel radio

For classical music in particular, as this narrative history has demonstrated, listeners were well accustomed to moving as the deckchairs were repositioned on the BBC liner. Early in the Sixties, programmes such as the lunchtime *Concert Hour* – in objective audience-data terms one of the most popular BBC classical music offerings – would

<sup>119</sup> See Chapter 8, pp. 116-7

<sup>120</sup> Notice of the Meeting of the 76 Group, quoted by Briggs (1995:796)

<sup>121</sup> These debates also prompted Tony Benn’s memorable statement about “broadcasting being really too important to be left to the broadcasters”. George Clark. “Gunter broadside at Benn’s ‘frightening’ attack on BBC.” *The Times* 21 Oct. 1968, p. 1. *The Times Digital Archive*. (accessed 29.8.2014)

move from the Light Programme to the Home Service, and then on to the Music Programme which was housed on the daytime frequencies of the Third. Thus when the new Radio 3 began broadcasting on 4 April 1970, a listener who was not a keen student of *Radio Times* might well not have noticed the difference.

This serves to highlight once again the extent to which some academic discourse has tended to be complicit with the historic attitudes of broadcasting insiders about what was most important. Chignell (2011, p. 95) notes that “the uproar in the letters pages of *The Times* and elsewhere”, especially in respect of the supposed end of the Third Programme, was almost more important than the changes themselves. As audience summaries in this thesis demonstrate, listening to classical music radio did not shift greatly over the supposed watershed of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

For the average listener to classical music radio on the BBC, the main impact of the reorganisation of services which followed *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was reduced availability.<sup>122</sup> There were fewer hours of broadcasting on offer (a reduction of around one third) and as a consequence fewer composers featured (down around one fifth from 1968). Most critical of all, in terms of the accessibility of classical music to the non-specialist listener, for the first time since the BBC began, classical music was available only on one single station.

The short period between 1965 and the end of the decade was one of the highpoints in the provision of classical music radio. There was a wide range of output, embracing the highbrow and the middlebrow. Educative attempts linked elite and popular material, which was available without too many class-based assumptions. And classical music was offered across three or four platforms, meaning that those listeners who knew where it was could find it, while those who might enjoy it if they heard it could still stumble across it. It was one of the damaging consequences of the theory and practice of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* that this achievement was cut off before it had a full opportunity to yield fruit. It did, however, leave the field clear for the surprising entry of private radio into what had been the BBC’s own walled garden, as ILR offered classical music within just such mixed programming as the BBC abandoned in 1970.

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<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 8 p. 119

## **Chapter 8**

### **The Seventies**

#### **Counterpoint and Variations**

*general history and literature review*

*classical music radio 1970-1973*

*the arrival of competition in UK radio*

*background*

*development of the ILR network*

*obligations towards live music*

*secondary rental mechanism*

*classical music radio 1973-1977*

*ILR's programme approach*

*'rumours of wars' 1978-9*

*the end of the affair*

Nationally, the Seventies they were seen as drab and depressing, rocked by oil shocks, terrorism and industrial unrest, a "long, dispiriting interlude" when "the prevailing mood was one of a somewhat weary, increasingly conservative, increasingly apprehensive disenchantment" (Sandbrook 2010, p. 9).<sup>123</sup> In radio, the decade was heralded by the BBC's re-shaping of its network services following the *Broadcasting in the Seventies* report and shaken by the breaking of the BBC's monopoly with the arrival of Independent Local Radio (ILR). The departure of Glock in 1972 allowed conservatism to re-assert itself in the BBC's approach, but revitalisation arrived in an unexpected form in ILR from 1973 onwards. This radio duopoly also presented in a new guise the long debate over whether such music could be opened up to a wider public, or needed to be grounded in the tastes and demands of a cultural elite.

#### **8.1 General history and literature review: the Seventies**

There is now an emerging corpus of general UK history describing the Seventies as a troubled, violent decade (DeGroot 2011). Politically, these years saw relatively little change until 1979, as the task of dealing with an increasingly fractured society flip-flopped between the two major parties. The key historical event was economic. The oil price shock, which was a consequence of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, brought to an end the long post-war boom and therefore exposed the unresolved elements from the churn of the Sixties (Beckett 2009, Turner 2008). These showed themselves in financial and industrial turmoil, characterised by the so-called 'Winter of Discontent' and the International Monetary Fund bailout in 1978-9, and would lead to a revolution from the right which then set the tone for the Eighties (Sandbrook 2013). The UK joined the EU in 1973, but spent most of the rest of the decade handling financial crises and facing industrial relations discord. The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland flared up with Bloody Sunday in January 1972 (Coogan 1987, Foster 1989), and British society became both more fearful and more repressive. Perhaps as a consequence, these

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<sup>123</sup> Christopher Booker quoted in Sandbrook (2010, p. 9) but unsourced.

were also barren years for liberal experimentation, with the Open University getting into its stride<sup>124</sup> but few other social initiatives.

Broadcasting came under scrutiny from the last of the great public enquiries, the Annan Committee. It paved the way for Channel 4 to come into existence as a liberal and permissive publisher of television (Brown 2007), but its other proposals – especially for the radicalisation of radio – were made obsolete by the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government in May 1979. Meanwhile, in radio, two seminal changes during the Seventies were to alter the ecology of the medium. The first has been considered in the previous Chapter's examination of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* – seen by Briggs (1980, p. 5) as “perhaps the most controversial report the BBC has ever produced” – which completed in 1970 the reshaping of BBC network radio (Trethowan 1970). Moving from mixed programming to generic output produced an unprecedented new structure for BBC classical music radio. Seaton (2015) examines these years in detail, including the musician's strike at the start of the decade.

The second tectonic shift saw the BBC's monopoly of radio broadcasting finally broken, and replaced by a duopoly akin to that which had applied in television since the mid-Fifties. “An alternative service of radio broadcasting” was the title of the 1971 White Paper, and under the auspices of a reconstituted IBA, the first ILR stations came on air from October 1973 (Stoller 2010). ILR made major contributions to radio, including providing competition in the provision of classical music radio to the BBC's single cultural channel, but has received remarkably little academic attention. Briggs' final volume of *The History of Broadcasting in the UK* (Briggs 1979) gives it just three pages out of a thousand.<sup>125</sup> Barnard (1989), Crisell (1994) and Baron (1975) have written about its early years and there are a couple of recent memoirs (Myers 2012, Whitney 2013), but only Starkey (2011) and Stoller (2010) offer broad accounts and evaluation of a medium which at its peak attracted significantly more listeners than all BBC radio combined (Stoller 2010). None has examined the impact of its classical music output.

## 8.2. Classical music radio, 1970-1973

The full new form of Radio 3 began on Saturday 4 April 1970, just before the General Election whose unexpected result was to start the process towards commercial radio for the UK. While Heath's Government was addressing the widespread disenchantment of the youth audience with the BBC's popular music output (Stoller 2010), the dissatisfaction of the elite with the BBC's classical music offering rumbled on long after the conclusions of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* were established beyond revision in January. A letter published in *The Times* the following month, from 134 members of the BBC's radio programme staff, argued that with the replacement of the Third Programme “the outstanding creative achievement of BBC radio will be abolished, and no project of comparable vision will take its place” (*The Times* 1970b). Gerard Mansell, who as deputy to Gillard had led the implementation team for the change, urged complainants to wait and see, relying on the continuance of “the provision of high quality programmes for minorities” (*The Listener* 1970a). However, *The Listener* carried letters headed “dissatisfied” across the early months of the year, and that

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<sup>124</sup> The first Open University radio broadcast was on 3 January 1971.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/historyofou/story/small-screen-heroes-the-ou-and-the-bbc> (accessed 27 November 2014)

<sup>125</sup> Briggs' timeline lists ILR station openings under ‘ITV’. (Briggs 1979, pp. 1071-5)

dissatisfaction did not go away when the schedules appeared. New Managing Director, Radio, Ian Trethowan, reacted furiously to criticism of the new plans from an anonymous 'well-known broadcaster' in *The Times* in March (*The Times* 1970a). But these were either BBC insiders or the self-appointed intellectual elite, from Leo Black to Oliver Zangwill.<sup>126</sup> There is no evidence of expressions of discontent from listeners, who had so recently enjoyed one of the high periods for classical music radio. They simply stopped listening.

For the first time since the war, from April 1970 classical music was provided by the BBC only on one single station.<sup>127</sup> New Director General, Charles Curran, thought of classical music within the BBC from the point of view of a patron of the arts. He was pressed by Government to spend money on keeping orchestras going, but wondered "a little ruefully whether its dedication to the tasks which it shouldered nearly 50 years ago is not too readily taken for granted" (*The Listener* 1970d). After its flourish in the late Sixties, led by the Music Programme, the BBC, in its planning, assumptions and public utterances about classical music, returned to being self-referential. When it glanced outside, that was chiefly to meet the insistent demands of the elite. The wider audience remained largely unknown to the Corporation or its intellectual critics.

Table 8.1 Data summary sample week 1970

1970 w/c 9 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Radio 3	88'50	30'15	4'45

1970 w/c 9 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	151,000	0.3	363,500	0.7

1970 w/c 9 May		
Number of different composers featured	88	
Composer of the Week: Liszt		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	18
	Mozart	17
	Bach	9
	Haydn	9
	Schubert	7

What did the first year of Howard Newby's Radio 3 offer to the generality of listeners? The output was still dominated during the 1970 sample week (Table 8.1) by the First Viennese School of composers. Of the 88 composers featured, most were heard only once and only five of them enjoyed more than four plays. However those five – Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Haydn and Schubert – could not have been more central in

<sup>126</sup> See for example a letter in *The Listener* on 29 January 1970, page 150, signed by 28 intellectual luminaries including EM Forster and Bernard Williams (*The Listener* 1970b.)

<sup>127</sup> An outcome of which the elite perhaps approved? It is notable that for Stephen Walsh writing in *The Listener* the entire output of the Home Service, the Music Programme and the Light Programme over previous years appeared not to have existed: he estimated an increase in classical music output of around 10 per cent brought about by the arrival of Radio 3 (*The Listener* 1970c).

the canonic classical music repertoire. By contrast, the Second Viennese School enjoyed only two performances of works by Webern in *20<sup>th</sup> Century Music* on Monday evening. Stockhausen and the British eccentric Havergal Brian were both given one outing.

Equally striking is the move away from live or relays of live performances to what the BBC still mostly called 'gramophone record' output. In the sample week it comprised around 36 per cent of the musical output, despite a number of repeated concerts by the BBC orchestras. That proportion applied too in the customary three operas broadcast over the course of the sample week. Monteverdi's *Vespers* from 1610 was relayed from the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Sunday evening to a barely measurable audience; Bizet's comic opera *Don Procopio* in a repeated studio recording was offered on Sunday afternoon, but heard by only 0.1 per cent of the audience; while Wagner's *Tannhäuser* on Thursday afternoon on gramophone records did no better.

Radio 3 sustained a little educational effort, although the *Ernest Read Concert for Children* on Sunday morning was simply a relay of an external event. On Friday evening, *Interpretations on Record* considered different performances of the first movement of Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*, while the repeated *Talking About Music* and Sunday's *Music Magazine* provided a small amount of speech-based feature programming.

The 1970 offering comprised largely mainstream classical music radio without being particularly inviting. The inheritance from the Music Programme of middlebrow output during the day mostly continued, but with little spark. Mornings, particularly at weekends, attracted the largest audiences, but otherwise it was unusual for more than 100,000 people to be listening to the station at any time. The highest audience of the week early on Saturday morning was 350,000 adults (while ten years earlier, even up against a dominant television medium, the Light Programme equivalent had attracted almost 1 million).<sup>128</sup>

Arguably, so much energy had gone into institutional in-fighting about the creation of Radio 3 that not enough was left for the programming output, at least not for the popularising of the genre which is scarcely evident in the output. On Saturday evening on Radio 4 there was one sign of the distant future. Robin Ray – later to be one of the creators of Classic FM – was hosting a panel show, the *Clever Stupid Game*, while Radio 3 was deep in Monteverdi. Ray's audience was four times that of Radio 3.

The quantity and the make-up of the output in 1971 changed little. A couple of contemporary English composers featured as the *Composers of the Week*, but it was a notably retrospective choice. Walton was in the last stages of a long career, and Rawsthorne had by now finished with composing and was to die in July.

The 1971 sample week (Table 8.2) began with two operas – five and a half hours of Wagner's *Parsifal* on Saturday evening from Covent Garden, and three acts of Hindemith's opera *Cardillac* on records on Sunday afternoon – neither of which achieved a measurable audience during any time. That means that fewer than 50,000 people listened to Radio 3 at any time across the whole of these broadcasts. The week's third opera, *L'Ormindo* by Cavalli, on Thursday afternoon did slightly better, with

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<sup>128</sup> Radio audiences fell after the arrival of television in the Forties, a process accelerated by competitive TV from the mid-Fifties onwards, but they did not suffer constant or irreversible decline. Radio listening was revived by the arrival of the offshore pirate stations, subsequently by Radio 1, and then by ILR (Stoller 2010).



a 0.1 per cent audience, but none of these supposedly ‘destination’ programmes met the needs of more than a tiny number of listeners.<sup>129</sup> The dominance of the interests of the elite, and the sidelining of a wider audience, could hardly be more evident.

Table 8.2 Data summary sample week 1971

1971 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Radio 3	85'35	21'15	3'00

1971 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	101,000	0.2	202,000	0.4

1971 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	84	
Composers of the Week: Walton, Rawsthorne		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	13
	Mozart	13
	Schubert	13
	Haydn	9
	Brahms	9

The weekday output fared little better. The audience across the whole of Monday only rose to 100,000 for a half-hour piano recital in the morning, while huge chunks of the output achieved no measurable audience. It was programming without appeal. The routine middlebrow output was just that, routine, whilst *20th-Century Classics* offered some Schoenberg to barely any listeners. *Music in Our Time* on Tuesday afternoon, regarded by Carpenter as a “ghetto for new music” (Carpenter 1996, p. 235), simply rebroadcast part of a concert given by Peter Maxwell Davies earlier in the year. The previous evening, an interview with Benjamin Britten about his new opera, *Owen Wingrave*, was presented as a sideshow to the main event, the first broadcast of the opera on BBC television the following Sunday evening. Radio 3 would have to put up with a performance on records 10 days later.

Pierre Boulez was interviewed briefly at lunchtime on Friday “about Germany’s musical life – and his own role in it”. If any measurable number of Radio 3 listeners had tuned in, they might have learned about Glock’s “bold choice” for the new conductor of the BBCSO (Kenyon 1981, p. 345) and Boulez’ aspirations; but they did not listen in measurable numbers, nor to an hour and a half of experimental modern music by Shepherd, Messiaen, Birtwistle and Satie on *Evening Sequence* on Friday.

The gulf between the popularisers and the elitists seemed as wide as ever. In November, Richard Hoggart in the second of his 1971 Reith Lectures asserted that

<sup>129</sup> Lest there should be any doubt that this was still a pre-modern time, *The Times* was reporting in February that radio sets were likely in the future to become standard accessories in cars. “None of the major companies had yet committed to fitting a standard radio to a major production line model, but the suppliers were quietly confident that within the next year or two they may at last see their dream – mass production cars coming off the assembly lines with “line-fit” radios – as a highly profitable reality”. “Cars with radio sets a standard accessories.” (*The Times* 1971a)

“ideas should be made as available as possible without unnecessary obscurity or dilution” (Hoggart 1972). Director General Charles Curran however thought that the BBC was “in many respects...like a university” (*The Times* 1971b), and BBC classical music output remained firmly in Curran’s camp, not Hoggart’s.<sup>130</sup> Even though during 1971 there was much to-ing and fro-ing among the elite (and self-interested newspapers) over the plans for commercial radio, so that the BBC faced a “gathering storm over the future of radio” (*The Times* 1971c), that addressed only popular music radio. The fact that ILR when it came would broadcast classical music as well was never mentioned during the Parliamentary debates about the White Paper (1971).

Table 8.3 Data summary sample week 1972

1972 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes
Radio 3	89'20	27'00	6'05

1972 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	151,500	0.3	303,000	0.6

1972 w/c 6 May Number of different composers featured	110	
Composer of the Week: Vaughan Williams		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	11
	Mozart	9
	Haydn	8

Bloody Sunday convulsed Derry and then Britain in January 1972, the Sound Broadcasting Act creating radio competition was enacted in July, but in classical music and its radio representation the direction of gaze was substantially retrospective. New British music was exemplified by Tippett’s *Third Symphony*, concluding his “visionary trinity of major works” (Pirie 1979, p. 237).<sup>131</sup> He represented the epitome of the Third Programme’s legacy, both in his compositions and also in his activism within the Third Programme Defence Society. The year was marked also by the departure of Glock after 13 years as Controller, Music. His successor, Robert Ponsonby, was a man of a very different stamp, identified by Black (2010, p. 93) as “Eton and the Guards” and someone who – unlike Glock – “wanted to be involved in day-to-day decisions”. He held this key post right through the rest of this decade and into the next, partly by learning to accommodate the views of subsequent Directors of Radio, although towards the end he was by his own admission very nearly broken in spirit by the

<sup>130</sup> A significant innovation on Radio 3 this year was David Munrow’s *Pied Piper* programme of “tales and music for younger listeners”, broadcast most weekday afternoons. Munrow is widely acknowledged as “one of the most brilliant and appealing broadcasters in the BBC’s history” (Carpenter 1997, p. 265). But these programmes do not fall within the definition of classical music radio employed for this thesis. By the time audience data is available – in 1972 – on three occasions the programme failed to achieve a measurable audience, on the fourth it reached just 50,000 people.

<sup>131</sup> Along with the *Vision of St Augustin* (1966), and the *Knot Garden* (1971).

musicians' strike at the end of his 14-year tenure (Ponsonby 2009, p. 55).<sup>132</sup> Newby became Director of Programmes, Radio, and was replaced at Radio 3 by Stephen Hearst, another "abrasive, Viennese-born ex-television executive", initially given to insisting "on programmes which listeners would understand and not switch off", in which stance he alarmed the Music Division (Black 2010, p. 93). The BBC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert on 11 November was the first concert to be broadcast simultaneously (simulcast) by BBC2 television and Radio 3.

The 1972 sample week (Table 8.3) shows a pattern during the weekdays of mostly derisory audiences during the daytime. Radio 3 essayed more feature programmes exploring, for example, early keyboard music, the work of the string section of the orchestra and the woodwind in separate half-hour programmes, as part of the early evening *Study on Three* sector. On Saturday morning it even tried a link with that day's football Cup Final between Arsenal and Leeds, by offering performances by a flautist from Highbury with a pianist from Yorkshire: but there was no measurable audience. Featured evening concerts attracted a slightly larger audience, that is to say usually measurable and sometimes as high as 150,000. The BBCSO playing live from Paris a concert of Webern, Boulez, Wood and Varese – with Boulez himself conducting – kept an audience of 150,000 throughout Thursday evening, despite its modernism.

The pattern of output on the sampled Saturday and Sunday was not hugely different. In each instance there were record-based programmes all morning, with featured output later in the day. On Saturday, that was a BBCSO concert live from Geneva, once again conducted by Boulez, offering works by Stravinsky, Berio, Webern and Boulez. The Saturday programmes effectively attracted no measurable audience at all until 50,000 tuned in for the *Evening Concert*. On Sunday, on the other hand, there was a good morning audience, rising to the week's peak of 300,000 for *Your Concert Choice*; before a Wagner afternoon of *Tannhäuser* on records allowed the audience to slip away.

There is evidence of some renewed ambition in the programme output. Far more composers featured than in previous years. As usual, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms, Schubert were all prominent, but in addition – perhaps under the influence of Boulez – there is more evidence of modern composers: Boulez himself, Webern, Varèse, Xenakis and others. The second opera of the week, filling Thursday afternoon, was *The Greek Passion* by Martinů from French Radio, although once again there was no measurable audience. There was a little more evidence of British composers also, with Elgar coming back into favour and Vaughan Williams not only *Composer of the Week* but also being featured at other times along with such as Lambert, Parry, Sullivan, Britten and Walton.

Yet there is no sign that this was meeting the needs of the general audience. Rather to the contrary, there was another extended spat about what one letter writer to *The Times* called "the creeping vulgarisation of Radio 3" (*The Times* 1972). This was once again a debate among the few, ignoring – indeed consciously rejecting – any participation by a wider franchise. Regular *Listener* critic, Steven Walsh, argued that

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<sup>132</sup> In 1975 Ponsonby was apologising for giving "professional offence" to Trethowan for insisting that "if a public performance is damaged by the requirements of TV or radio, we shall broadcast something second-rate. The opening night of the Proms was at risk in this respect... I think you believe that I am putting the public concert, as such, before the broadcast, as such. I'm not. I'm simply saying that the broadcast can only be as good as a public concert". Controller, Music (Ponsonby) to MDR (Trethowan) (BBC WAC R101/302/1 31 July 1975)

“the central problem is as usual one of control. There is a feeling...that the people best-qualified to run a musical operation, i.e. musicians, are given insufficient power to do so” (*The Listener* 1971). What was lost was any awareness of the legitimate interests of the middlebrow audience which the Music Programme had identified, but which Radio 3 seemed too dominated by the various vested interests to continue to serve effectively.

Chignell (2011, p. 105) notes that the BBC in these years displayed a new ambition and seriousness in the aftermath of the controversy over *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, which “provided fertile ground for some of the most interesting programmes ever produced on BBC radio”. He cites the current affairs documentary series *Analysis* and the rise of the radio feature, such as *The Long March of Everyman*, both on Radio 4. Yet *Analysis* when introduced in 1970 was reaching audiences of 250,000, higher than even the most popular Radio 3 programme across the whole sample week. There were those within the BBC who wished to demonstrate a seriousness of purpose in defiance of the popularising tendencies of Mansell and Gillard (Chignell 2011, p. 108), but as the sample week analysis demonstrates, in Radio 3 that very largely meant elitist conservatism in programming judgements.

Meanwhile, plans for the introduction of what the BBC resolutely termed “commercial radio” were proceeding apace. What nobody had spotted was that these new stations might provide competition in classical music radio. But that was about to happen.

### 8.3. The arrival of competition in UK radio

#### 8.3.1 background

I have written at length elsewhere (Stoller 2010) about how a medium which had appeared to be largely supplanted by television found new opportunities amid the societal change of the Sixties and as a consequence of new technology. The offshore pirate radio stations, with Radio Caroline from Easter Day 1964 in the vanguard, demonstrated that radio could be once again an innovative, mass appeal medium. The BBC’s response to the re-awakening of popular music radio in the Sixties, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, was in part intended to head off such competition. However, the relatively unexpected Conservative victory in the June 1970 General Election brought to power a Government which had ‘commercial radio’ as a central plank in its manifesto. Heath’s Government began at once to shape the appropriate alternative service of radio broadcasting to end the BBC’s monopoly. This service was to mirror the very successful pattern of ITV. It was to be public service radio, funded by advertising, locally owned and tightly regulated by the IBA (Stoller 2010).<sup>133</sup>

Although it had demonstrated an appetite for innovative radio, Britain was not yet ready for full *commercial* radio, even if there was a substantial potential audience for it. As I have argued elsewhere, the nation’s leaders “contemplated vistas of radical change only through the frosted glass of tradition, caution and deference, which had characterised their society”. (Stoller 2010, p. 24) The resulting system of *independent* radio was a bold experiment. Even though it was introduced in economically unpropitious times, it proved to be successful until new social economic and political forces overwhelmed it during the Eighties.

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<sup>133</sup> The old Independent Television Authority with an additional duty, which it had accepted only reluctantly (Stoller 2010, pp. 30-1)

### 8.3.2 development of the ILR network

The ILR stations came on air in a series of phases from the autumn of 1973, dictated by the emerging political view of the system.<sup>134</sup> The Sound Broadcasting Act 1972<sup>135</sup> required the IBA to ensure that each station broadcast “a wide range of programmes”, which the Authority interpreted as applying to the music output of the stations as well. The effect was virtually to mandate classical music output on every station.

When Heath’s administration was replaced by a minority Labour Government under Harold Wilson in 1974, the IBA was given a limit of 19 stations while the Annan Committee considered the future of broadcasting in the UK (Stoller 2010, p. 63).<sup>136</sup> These stations operated within a specific public service remit. After the Annan Committee’s report in March 1977, the system was allowed to expand from 1979 onwards. By the end of the Eighties, it had grown to 60 stations, covering all the major towns and cities in the UK. Those new stations came on air with the same obligations of public service broadcasting as the first 19, and therefore reflected the same approach to classical music programming as the pioneers had done.

### 8.3.3 Obligations towards live music

When the ILR system was being devised, Government and administrators came under considerable pressure from the powerful Musicians’ Union (MU). Without the MU’s agreement, it was felt, it would not be possible to build the necessary consensus to allow the system to be introduced.<sup>137</sup> The Union also had considerable influence over the copyright societies,<sup>138</sup> with whom negotiations needed to be concluded to allow the ILR stations enough needletime to play commercial records. As a consequence, a requirement was included in the legislation that stations must spend 3 per cent of their net advertising receipts on the employment of musicians. The effect of this was to ensure that within each ILR station there was a pot of money waiting to be spent. Bringing that together with the wish to gain regulatory approval, the effective obligation to broadcast classical music and – as may be discerned – a genuine wish on the part of at least some of the stations to take a lead in this radio genre, meant that music initiatives could be funded even when the stations were experiencing significant commercial restraints in other respects.

### 8.3.4 The ‘secondary rental’ mechanism

The statutory regime for ILR also included provision for ‘secondary rental’, in effect a tax on profits which might be excessive.<sup>139</sup> It yielded significant sums, 40 per cent of

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<sup>134</sup> The first batch of licences were awarded in London to LBC and Capital Radio, followed by Glasgow (Radio Clyde), Birmingham (BRMB), Manchester (Piccadilly Radio), Newcastle (Metro Radio), Swansea (Swansea Sound), Sheffield (Radio Hallam), Edinburgh (Radio Forth), Plymouth (Plymouth Sound) Nottingham (Radio Trent) and Teesside (Radio Tees).

<sup>135</sup> later consolidated into the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1973,

<sup>136</sup> The remaining six stations in Bradford (Pennine Radio), Portsmouth (Radio Victory), Ipswich (Radio Orwell), Reading (Radio 210), Belfast (Downtown Radio) and Wolverhampton (Beacon Radio) were all broadcasting by April 1976.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with John Thompson 16 December 2013

<sup>138</sup> Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) represented the rights interests of the record companies. The Performing Right Society (PRS) did so for composers, arrangers and performers of music. For more details about this long-running issue see Stoller (2010: 181-196)

<sup>139</sup> Once profits exceeded 5 per cent of net advertising revenue, after pre-operational costs and accumulated losses in paid off, as much as 50 per cent of that profit was skimmed off into a central fund administered by the IBA (Stoller 2010: 131)

which was used by the IBA to develop ILR, leaving 60 per cent “to be spent by the contractors on projects agreed with the Authority” (ITA/IBA/Cable Authority Archive 1976). As early as 1979, the IBA had £1.9 million to allocate; the following year this had risen to £2.7 million (ITA/IBA/Cable Authority Archive 1979).

Partly through its own inclinations, and partly as a result of continuing pressure from the MU, the IBA determined that much of this money was to be spent on classical music projects. IBA Director of Radio, John Thompson, explains that although this was never actually a requirement, most of those involved in the discussions ahead of ILR

hoped there’d be some elements of classical music because they thought that dealing with orchestras was actually going to be administratively less difficult...there wasn’t much earnest discussion of types of music. Occasionally, both the Union people and indeed the copyright societies would josh me about it, saying ‘of course it’s going to be popular music’, but I think they actually were not taken by surprise when it emerged that there was going to be what you and I would broadly describe as classical music.<sup>140</sup>

The members of the IBA were drawn from that administrative class for whom classical music was part of the desired ‘fabric of culture’ as Matthew Arnold would have understood it (Arnold 1875). Thompson himself agrees that “from the outset, if I had any individual role, I certainly hoped there would be elements of classical music.”<sup>141</sup> The same was true of most of the Authority’s senior staff (including this researcher). The IBA celebrated the 10th anniversary of the ILR system with a string quartet concert.<sup>142</sup>

#### 8.4 Classical music radio output 1973-1977

For BBC Radio, little changed in 1973. The range of composers played locates the actual output firmly in the middle of the canonic repertoire. A few contemporary British composers were included, but there was no Elgar, no Vaughan Williams, and only brief exposure for Britten and Walton. The output during the 1973 sample week (Table 8.4) shows a little less music in total broadcast than in previous years, and a slight increase in sequence programming (at least if the two standard weekday morning programmes can be fairly so classified). Overall though, it appeared to be a station with a repertoire retreating in upon itself.

One new programme, each weekday evening, was *Homeward Bound*, a sequence of light classics and gramophone records nominally for car-bound listeners. Not that they responded to it with huge enthusiasm. The audience varied from 0.1 per cent to unmeasurable. The other innovation was the arrival of a classical record requests programme, *Your Concert Choice*, broadcast for nearly 2 hours on Sunday morning. That was backed up by Wednesday morning’s *Your Midweek Choice*, requests again, although in that instance yielding less than popular works: with a JC Bach symphony, a Handel organ concerto and an Ireland concertino, this was not a classical *Top of the Pops*.

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with John Thompson 16 December 2013

<sup>141</sup> Interview with John Thompson 16 December 2013

<sup>142</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1983/4, p. 51

Table 8.4 Data summary sample week 1973

1973 w/c 5 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	83'50	22'35	3'10	13'50

1973 w/c 5 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	151,500	0.3	303,000	0.6

1973 w/c 5 May Number of different composers featured	89	
Composer of the Week: Vaughan Williams		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	13
	Schubert	9
	Beethoven	8
	Brahms	5

The BBC Music Department seemed at times to be living in a parallel universe. Glock's final promotion was a series of Winter Proms at the Albert Hall and elsewhere over the New Year of 1973, where "the paying audience at several of the nine concerts was only about one tenth of the Hall's capacity" (*The Times* 1973c).<sup>143</sup> Despite that, it was only "under heavy pressure" that Ponsonby agreed to abandon the Winter Proms for the following year. He felt this "a deplorably retrograde step, and an abdication of the BBC's role of patron toward contemporary music" and – possibly even more significant – something that would "disappoint Pierre Boulez" (BBC WAC R101/302/1 7 February 1973). In *The Listener*, Steven Walsh<sup>144</sup> similarly disparaged the inclusion of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony in a Raymond Leppard concert on the grounds that the work was "agreeable but inconsequential". The editor of *Radio Times* pointed out the contrast between what the elite wanted and what at least some people in the BBC still continued to regard as their duty to a wider audience:

*Radio Times's* readership... is over 11 million. Steven Walsh does not have the responsibility of making features paying serious attention to music of interest to millions of readers whose only other reading-matter is the *Sun* or the *Mirror*. I do, the job can be done, and *Radio Times* is doing it. (*The Listener* 1973b)

On television, BBC2's success with Joseph Cooper's *Face the Music* demonstrated once again the existence of the substantial potential audience for classical music broadcasting if presented in an accessible form. Cooper took particular pleasure from "making music appeal to a wide audience" and getting people to attend concerts as a result. He noted that

<sup>143</sup> If accurate, that means that only around 600 people were present for those concerts.

<sup>144</sup> At that time the deputy music critic of the *Observer*, later to hold a chair in music at Cardiff University: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/music/contactsandpeople/profiles/walshs.html> (accessed 2 April 2014)

professional musicians get very snooty about ‘bleeding chunks’<sup>145</sup> – that’s where you play a little and stop. But those are what drive people to the record shops. (*The Times* 1973a)

Trethowan seemed insouciant towards both parts of his potential audience for Radio 3:

Radio 3 has not justified the fears of most of those who were so concerned at the disappearance of the Third. The cornerstone of the network is still the service of serious music during the daytime to the car-bound and house-bound who so bombarded us with their anxieties when it was reported (quite wrongly) that the Music Programme was going to be axed. In the evenings we broadcast regular concerts of mainstream serious music...as well as providing a platform for contemporary music. (*The Listener* 1973a)

The narrative demonstrates that the quality Trethowan missed was *integration*. Of course Radio 3 could broadcast *outré* music in the evenings to no audience; and equally it could peddle standard repertoire to the “house-bound” during the daytime. The point was about making the connection between the two. Haley in the Forties had understood with great clarity that this was the BBC’s duty and therefore mission. Joseph Cooper in the Seventies did so as well. Trethowan, Newby and Ponsonby seemingly did not.

Table 8.5 Data summary sample week 1974

1974 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	84’45	27’50	2’45	14’50

1974 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	101,000	0.2	252,500	0.5

1974 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	96	
Composer of the Week: Tchaikovsky		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	9
	Haydn	9
	Brahms	8
	Beethoven	6
	Bach	6

Radio 3 had settled down by 1974. Although the peak audience reached during the 1974 sample week (Table 8.5) – for a BBCSO performance of Brahms’ *Symphony No 3* on Friday evening – was a little down on the previous year, the audience was more consistent with fewer zero ratings. It is significant that a feature programme on the great cellist Pablo Casals, on Radio 4 on Tuesday evening, attracted 150,000 listeners, a figure typical of the more popular of Radio 3 programmes. It was a reasonable ambition in this year to hope for an audience of between 150,000 and 200,000 for

<sup>145</sup> See n. 278, p. 182 for more about the phrase “bleeding chunks”



classical music radio programmes with appeal. That may be contrasted with the *Desert Island Discs* audience of 700,000 in the sample week, to hear humourist Arthur Marshall's choice of gramophone records – including Elgar, Liszt, Bach, César Franck, Borodin and Schumann.<sup>146</sup>

The challenge of ILR was not being felt by the BBC in classical music at this stage, even though it was gaining momentum (*The Listener* 1973a). Some critics who also earned their living broadcasting for the BBC were quick to disparage the efforts of the new stations. Broadcaster and journalist Fritz Spiegel jeered at ILR's "unserious" musical offering (*The Listener* 1973c) allowing Gillian Reynolds (then Programme Director of Radio City) to make the point that the Liverpool station

presents an hour every Friday of local classical music; there is a half-hour programme every Saturday evening on the coming week's musical calendar; one-and-a-half hours on Sunday nights are devoted to recorded classical music. (*The Listener* 1973d)

In the sign of what was to come in the Nineties, Robin Ray – one of the leading spirits behind Classic FM – hosted a lengthy classical music record programme on Capital Radio, although not without incident, as when

the last minute or two of Mozart's *G minor Symphony* disappeared to make room for the lugubrious voice and spooky noises which advised us to buy the Evening News. (*The Times* 1974)

Table 8.6 Data summary sample week 1975

1975 <sup>147</sup> w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	81'05	27'30	2'50	19'10

1975 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	202,000	0.4	404,000	0.8

1975 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	81	
Composers of the Week: Scarlatti, Boccherini		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	14
	Bach	11
	Haydn	8
	Beethoven	7

1975 provided further evidence of Radio 3 drawing back. Fewer composers featured, despite a notable level of exposure for Bach and evidence of the emergence of enthusiasm for French composers. Apart from specific programmes such as *Music in*

<sup>146</sup> His list of eight records was completed by Olive Gilbert's *Highwayman Love* and Ethel Merman *Doing What Comes Naturally* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/desert-island-discs/castaway/958f379c#p009n7wp> (accessed 16 March 2014)

<sup>147</sup> Daily Barometer data for Saturday 3 May are missing from BBC WAC. The sample data are therefore for Saturday 10 May instead.

*Our Time*, there is less evidence of European modernism, and almost none of the more experimental American composers. British composers got the occasional broadcast, but only Walton more than once. There was no place for the works of Vaughan Williams, Bliss (who died in March) or Arnold, once towering BBC figures but now sidelined. With Glock long gone, Keller unwell and Boulez about to step down from the BBCSO, it was unclear whence any new initiatives might arise for classical music radio on the BBC. Kenyon's assessment of Boulez' tenure as "that strange phenomenon, a revolution that changed nothing" (Kenyon 1981:395) arguably serves also as a verdict on Radio 3 across the Seventies.

The 1975 sample week (Table 8.6) provides examples of Radio 3 indulging its own higher-ground taste while relinquishing any claim upon a mass audience. *Record Review* on Saturday featured records of German harpsichord music. Saturday, Sunday and Monday saw the broadcasting of three successive operas: *Il Trovatore* from Covent Garden; Berlioz' *The Damnation of Faust* from the Birmingham Town Hall (in recording); and then an unfinished Mozart opera, *Zaide*, live from the Congress Hall in Saarbrücken. Apart from half an hour of the Berlioz on Sunday afternoon, none attracted more than 50,000 listeners. The *Midday Concerts*, which in the Fifties were attracting at times half a million listeners or more, but by 1974 reached only a tenth as many. Yet a sizeable potential middlebrow audience still existed: a broadcast of Mozart's *Requiem*, preceded by Alfred Brendel playing Mozart's *F Major Piano Concerto* on records, peaked at an audience of 400,000 against mainstream evening television.

By now also, the ILR stations were beginning to get into their stride. Metro Radio in Newcastle, for example, broadcast five hours of classical music each week. Capital Radio's *Collection* programme began, Radio Clyde relayed the Cleveland Quartet and the Scottish Proms, and there were even *lieder* recitals on Radio City (ITV 1975).

Table 8.7 Data summary sample week 1976

1976 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	80'45	24'35	3'50	16'15
Radio 4	5'10	-	-	-

1976 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	151,500	0.3	404,000	0.8
Radio 4	202,000	0.4	353,500	0.7

1976 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	98	
This Week's Composer: Josquin des Prez		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	15
	Brahms	10
	Beethoven	9
	Bach	9
	Dvořák	7

Ill-fortune dogged Radio 3 during 1976. Boulez' successor as Chief Conductor of the BBCSO, Rudolf Kempe, fell mortally ill in March 1976 and died in May.<sup>148</sup> Given the importance of the BBCSO repertoire for imaginative programming on Radio 3, the loss of Boulez and then Kempe and the subsequent interregnum was another factor reducing innovation and originality.

Financial pressures obliged Radio 3 and Radio 4 to share some programmes in 1976, thus re-introducing classical music to Radio 4 after a gap of six years. This unlooked-for return of multi-platform BBC classical music (along with ILR) showed what the radio audiences had been missing when forced into the ghetto of Radio 3, and how they would respond in greater numbers to freer access with fewer prior assumptions about their 'right' to listen. The second-largest classical music audience of the 1976 sample week (Table 8.7) was for "a weekly selection of popular classics" presented by Robin Ray at Saturday lunchtime on Radios 3 and 4 – another indicator, unremarked at the time, of the potential for this type of output which Ray was later to exploit so successfully in his conception of Classic FM. There was further sharing on Saturday afternoon of *Music of the Masters*, a record sequence again. Indeed, the proportion of live or relayed original recordings fell further, record-based programmes representing represented 33 per cent of all music output across the sample week.<sup>149</sup>

The celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Third Programme in September revealed that Radio 3 was still resting on the laurels of the Third. Hearst, the station's Controller, felt that the linking of the Music Programme with the Third Programme had

provided the new network, Radio 3, with so solid a base of cultural, intellectual and political support that its future was made as secure as anything can be in our unstable world... Moreover, British musical life had, and has, an excellence and vitality that transferred to broadcasting, and brought added strength (*The Listener* 1976).

Few agreed with him. For some commentators, Radio 3 represented 'The Fall' (*The Times* 1976a). The leading radio critic of the day, David Wade, talked about it as being "son of the Third", predicting "premature senility: fiddling on innumerable violins while Rome – which is now smouldering – burns" (*The Times* 1976b). Nor was there genuine evidence of a wide audience. Stephen Hearst, marking the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Third Programme, claimed that "nearly five million listeners...listen at least once a week to Radio 3" (*The Listener* 1976), but independent research the following year suggests a weekly audience of around 2.7 million adults, and 2.6 million in 1978.<sup>150</sup> On the assumption that it could hardly have fallen significantly from 1976, this suggests that Hearst was either gilding the lily or was himself misled.

On ILR, however, Radio Clyde was reporting a "substantial listening audience" attracted to its classical music programmes, leading it to increase the time devoted to these.<sup>151</sup> Other major city stations were starting to record their local orchestras for broadcast: the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra by BRMB (Birmingham) and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra by Radio City (Liverpool).<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> David Munrow of *Pied Piper* fame committed suicide in the same month.

<sup>149</sup> See Appendix A pp. 231-2

<sup>150</sup> See Appendix B p. 258

<sup>151</sup> *TV & Radio 1976* IBA 1976, p. 149

<sup>152</sup> *IBA Annual Report 1975/6*, p. 35

For BBC radio in 1977, shared classical music programming with Radio 3 yielded strikingly high audiences in the sample week (Table 8.8). Robin Ray's Saturday record programme Radio 3 plus Radio 4 was heard by 555,000 listeners. As well as sharing with Radio 3 a concert with Pinkas Zuckerman playing and conducting Mozart on Tuesday evening, Radio 4 went further and broadcast a light classical programme of its own, *These You have Loved*, on Saturday evening to just under half a million listeners, repeated on Thursday morning to a striking 900,000 listeners. The other simulcast was with BBC2, Strauss' *Salome*, which attracted 100,000 listeners to Radio 3 on Saturday evening, and four times that number to BBC2.<sup>153</sup> Such simulcasting was to continue on and off in future years.

These audience levels illustrate once again what was lost when classical music was deported to the ghetto of Radio 3. A larger and broader audience existed for this genre of output, if only it could be made available on the platform and in a style with which they felt comfortable. The achievement of ILR in reaching a wider audience – discussed below – offers further evidence to this effect.

Table 8.8 Data summary sample week 1977

1977 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	84'35	31'10	2'25	15'45
Radio 4	3'10	-	-	-

1977 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach adults 15+
Radio 3	151,500	0.3	555,000	1.1	2,702,000
Radio 4	454,500	0.9	555,000	1.1	n/a

1977 w/c 7 May Number of different composers featured	98	
This Week's Composer: Chopin		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	12
	Mozart	11
	Haydn	6
	Schubert	6
	Strauss	5
	Shostakovich	5

During the 1977 sample week on the BBC, the First Viennese School remained dominant, with Beethoven and Mozart overwhelmingly the most played, backed up by Haydn, Schubert and Mendelssohn. Yet, although there was more evidence of established 20th-century composers, including Strauss and Shostakovich, it seemed on the face of it that contemporary music was on the retreat. *Music in Our Time* had been relegated to late on Tuesday evenings and no measurable audience. Hindemith and Penderecki enjoyed very short late-night slots with much the same outcome, and although Ligeti was accorded an "evening" on Sunday on Radio 3 (an hour and three

<sup>153</sup> BBC WAC Daily Viewing Barometer, May 1977. BBC2's output was watched by between 454,500 and 353,500

quarters of his music, some of it introduced by the composer) no measurable audience tuned in. Peter Maxwell Davies flew the banner for the new generation of British composers with *Fires of London* early evening on Saturday, ahead of the Strauss opera. New music from Finland was featured on Friday afternoon. Generally, a larger number of less well-known composers were featured, usually brought together by nationality. The works grouped under the banner of *Music of Tchaikovsky's Russia* on Thursday morning attracted a high audience of 250,000 listeners.

The drivetime<sup>154</sup> sequence programme, *Homeward Bound*, however, failed to find a measurable audience all week. This failure to connect with the popular audience is all the more notable given the evidence of Ray's success. Similarly, although all the 1977 Proms were broadcast on Radio 3, that was in the belief that

the need to educate Proms audiences has passed. Today's music-lovers, educated by radio and record, have a far wider experience music of all sorts than even the critics and performers of 50 years ago (*The Listener* 1977).

By contrast, across in the private sector the Managing Director of Capital Radio was pointing out that:

A popular radio station with a large audience drawn to it by pop...has...an ability to educate far beyond anything that could be achieved by a station catering exclusively to minority interests. We at Capital Radio can – and do – use our ability to introduce our listeners to, for example, classical music. The result is that more Londoners listen to *The Collection*, our classical music programme, than to any classical music programme on Radio 3. (*The Times* 1977).<sup>155</sup>

For the elitists, the repertoire of Capital Radio's Wren Orchestra<sup>156</sup> “consisted of what Radio 3 normally regards as shaving-time fare: genial suites, symphonies and concertos” (*The Times* 1977b). Yet ILR was extending its audiences, the ambition of its repertoire, and its promotion of classical music performances in its localities.

### 8.5. ILR's programming approach

By 1977, all of the now 19 ILR stations transmitted classical music programmes, although the content of individual stations' programmes varied hugely. In the BBC, programme content was dictated by

the BBC producers' extraordinary cultural power to choose what goes on air, and so have a controlling influence on the shape of national culture across all the boundaries of national political debate. (Hendy 2000, p. 78)

In ILR the programme presenter was left entirely to his or her own devices. This applied even in a major station like Capital Radio, where Peter James recalls:

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<sup>154</sup> The late afternoons on weekdays, typically the period between 4 and 7pm

<sup>155</sup> Whitney's audience claims stand up with the exception of the Robin Ray programme on Radios 3 and 4. A further unsubstantiated claim by Steven Hearst reported in *The Times* on 13 September 1977, repeating his claim from the previous year that Radio 3 was listened to by 5,000,000 listeners a week, was less forgivable. The true figure, substantiated by independent research, was around 2.7 million (see Appendix B).

<sup>156</sup> The Wren Orchestra was ILR's major single classical music initiative. See Chapter 9 *passim*

I did what I liked. They let me spend all this money, and commission these great orchestras. I had a completely free hand, and could programme whatever I thought the audience would like. A typical response was after I broadcast a live recording of Richard Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* and wondered how the audience would react. The following day a taxi driver came in to the station to say how much he had liked it and to ask where he could get a recording of it, and also to ask if Strauss had written other symphonies.<sup>157</sup>

It was even more so in smaller stations like Radio 210 in Reading, as Fiona Talkington (then a presenter on Radio 210) remembers:

ILR wasn't playlist driven and was only constrained by what was in the station library and one's own collection. But, if you can call it a constraint, there was also the sensitivity to station sound and audience profile, at the same time recognising the interaction listeners enjoyed and the sorts of pieces they asked to hear... this could range from the most popular – which people just enjoy – to the most obscure – which they enjoy often because it enables them to show off their knowledge).<sup>158</sup>

ILR ambition ran beyond routine output of record programmes. Many stations sponsored significant local concerts by orchestras. Piccadilly Radio broadcast the final night of the Hallé Proms from the Free Trade Hall in Manchester and also a Hallé performance of the *Messiah* at Christmas, as well as the Manchester midday concerts. Radio Clyde, as part of its 'Clyde 76' Festival, sponsored concerts by the Scottish National Orchestra in May; Radio City broadcast a series of Sunday evening concerts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; and BRMB Radio sponsored free concerts by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, including a notably successful 'Young People's concert'.<sup>159</sup>

The ILR companies were very much in thrall to the IBA, at least until the relationships began to break down in the mid-Eighties (Stoller 2010). The Chairmen and Managing Directors of each station – very much the dominant figures – comprehended early on that they could win the IBA's approval by offering some good local classical music either in local concert promotion, or on-air broadcasts, or both.<sup>160</sup> This pleased the cultural expectations of the Members of the Authority, its senior staff and also politicians and Government officials; it enabled the IBA's ambitious decision to broadcast all programmes in stereo to be heard to good effect; and it gave each company a standing among the opinion formers within its local area who might be won over to provide political support and advertising bookings.<sup>161</sup> These were times when those who made up the most influential strata in society regarded classical music as an unalloyed virtue, and were prepared to give credence to the public service assertions of a medium which provided it.

Goodman (2011, p. 118) has explained how a very similar situation pertained in the United States, at least up until the Second World War:

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with Peter James 30 May 2013

<sup>158</sup> Fiona Talkington Personal communication 30 May 2013

<sup>159</sup> *IBA Annual Report 1976/7*, page 35

<sup>160</sup> Not only, as has been suggested – a little unkindly, given that this researcher was one of them – because at least two ILR Managing Directors, of Radio Hallam and Radio 210, were themselves the presenters. Interview with John Bradford 15 September 2013

<sup>161</sup> Interview with John Bradford 15 September 2013

Classical music, most of it broadcast live, was by all later standards astonishingly available to listeners to mainstream American commercial radio in the 1930s.

He relates how, as someone who had enjoyed publicly-funded broadcasting on Australian radio, he

took for granted an association of classical music with high culture and the sense that it is somehow above all opposed to commercialism... the mixture of classical music and commercialism seemed transgressive to me, some kind of cultural mistake. American friends were surprised at my surprise. They had grown up accustomed to just that kind of linking of classical music with up market consumerism that I was hearing. (Goodman 2001, p. 116)

Part of this was what Goodman describes as a “regulatory artefact”, and it is reasonable to deduce that a similar situation pertained in the UK during the years when the regulator showed a concern for such matters. However, that by itself did not fully explain – in the USA any more than for ILR fifty years later – the widespread and ambitious presence of classical music:

[Commercial] broadcasters wanted and even needed classical music because it was so indisputably highbrow, sacralized, high status, and self evidently in the public interest. Classical music was a crucial part of the civic paradigms, and its ambition to create modern citizens with a developed capacity to absorb information, empathize across cultural borders, experience and control emotion, and arrive at reasoned personal opinions. (Goodman 2001, p. 118)

Although the BBC had begun to notice ILR’s classical music activities, there is no evidence that they influenced BBC output at all. Rather, they sought to damn them with faint praise. Capital presenter Peter James recalls the station’s outstanding broadcast on 9 March of Verdi’s *Otello* from Covent Garden,<sup>162</sup> which was broadcast across the ILR network:

Ian McIntyre, the BBC’s then Controller of Radio 3, wrote in the *Evening Standard* acknowledging ‘the splendid recording’ but then proceeded to say that ‘it was easy for Capital Radio to do this once while the BBC was broadcasting high quality music every day of every week.’<sup>163</sup>

The week-by-week output of each ILR station was indeed more mundane than the highlights which the IBA chose to report, but it was nevertheless consistent, popular and effective programming.<sup>164</sup> Nor were these programmes played out into the empty air, an observation which this thesis has made about much of the Radio 3 output. A new audience was established for classical music (as well as, arguably, the old middlebrow audience better served).<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> The performance was recorded on 19 February 1980, in what presenter Peter James recalls was “a vintage year for classical recordings” on Capital Radio – personal communication 10 October 2014

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Peter James 30 May 2013

<sup>164</sup> By this time also, ILR output began to benefit from funding from secondary rental, remitted to it by the IBA for ‘worthwhile projects’, as discussed above pp.125-6 and in Chapter 9 pp. 157-8

<sup>165</sup> See Chapter 9 p. 157

## 8.6. 'Rumours of wars' 1978-9

For those who regard the history of broadcasting through a corporate, strategic lens, it was as if the generals were being quietly moved into place during 1978 for a major assault. Ian Trethowan had become Director General the previous year, and radio was to be run by a new MD, Aubrey Singer, who “did not love music” (Seaton 2015, p. 94). He set about marshalling his forces for an attack on the cost of the BBC house orchestras. Ian McIntyre, who was essentially concerned with speech radio, assumed the controllership of Radio 3 after a tough time at Radio 4 (Hendy 2007, p. 176). Gennady Rozhdestvensky became Chief Conductor of the BBCSO after a long ‘courtship’ by Ponsonby (Kenyon 1981, pp. 412 ff), neither of them yet aware of the storm which Singer was brewing.

Any prospect of the survival of the market-liberal consensus (DeGroot 2010, p. 485) was snuffed out by the impact of the “Winter of Discontent” (Beckett 2009, pp. 464 ff.). The report of Annan Committee Report (1977) was therefore destined to become an anachronism, but it freed the IBA to expand the ILR system. Those new stations would all be expected to broadcast some classical music programming and be active in their local musical scene. The Annan Committee argued for the superiority of good concerts to gramophone records, while arguing that extra finance should be provided to the Arts Council to help with the funding of the BBC orchestras, especially outside London.<sup>166</sup> Little attention was paid to these recommendations, although they were another sign of the impending battle over BBC orchestras at the end of the decade.

Table 8.9 Data summary sample week 1978

1978 w/c 9 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	82'10	24'20	2'25	14'45
Radio 4	4'00	-	-	-

1978 w/c 9 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach adults 15+
Radio 3	151,500	0.3	353,000	0.7	2,613,000
Radio 4	101,500	0.2	151,500	0.3	n/a

1978 w/c 9 May		
Number of different composers featured	101	
This Week's Composer: Purcell		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	11
	Schubert	11
	Haydn	9
	Brahms	6

<sup>166</sup> Annan Committee. *Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting* March 1977 Cmnd 6753: paras. 21.12 and 21.24



Radio 3's output was not greatly altered in the 1978 sample week (Table 8.9), although it had mislaid its most popular programme, *Robin Ray*, of the previous two years; and Radio 4 not only simulcast *Music of the Masters* but also now had its own classical music programme on Sunday afternoons, *Music To Remember* featuring works by Gounod, Ireland and Janáček (but to a modest audience of at most 100,000 listeners). Each weekday evening at close-down, Radio 3 broadcast one song by Schubert, a diverting idea but never attracting a measurable audience.

During the sample week, the simulcast opera by Radio 3 and BBC2 television on Saturday evening was Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performed by the Welsh National Opera, but again the radio audience never rose above 100,000. Indeed, there were notable fluctuations in audience levels. To take the sample Friday for example, listening to the early morning sequence programmes topped out at 300,000, and held up fairly well for most of the morning and the very early afternoon. However from mid-afternoon onwards, including the *Homeward Bound* sequence programme, none of the seven programmes achieved a measurable audience, including the Lennox Berkeley 75th birthday concert broadcast live from the Queen Elizabeth Hall. This suggests yet again that there was an audience for music broadcast at an accessible time, in an accessible way, drawn from largely the centre of the canonic repertoire, for listeners who are not made to feel excluded; but that listeners were no longer turning to Radio 3 to be introduced to music which they did not know and which they had been firmly given to understand that they could not "engage with on equal terms".<sup>167</sup>

Barry Fantoni wrote slightlyingly in *The Times* of the "appalling condescension" of the network, arguing that

woven into the fabric of the BBC's cultural policy is the idea that what we hear on the radio should improve our minds and that those who plan broadcasting know what is best for us. We are to be lifted from the murky depths of Frank Sinatra and Lionel Bart to the celestial heights of Peter Peers and Hugo Wolf. (*The Times* 1978a)

His article immediately drew a furious response from those who wished to protect the elite position of Radio 3 as "an island of normality in a media ocean of unreal trivia". (*The Times* 1978b)<sup>168</sup>

For ILR, Capital Radio secured a considerable coup by recording and broadcasting a concert by Leonard Bernstein and the Vienna Philharmonic at the Royal Festival Hall on 18 February, a programme relayed by virtually all of the other ILR stations. Radio City promoted and broadcast an experimental transmission in quadraphonic sound of a performance of Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* from Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral. The performance featured a specially augmented Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and six choirs, conducted by Sir Charles Groves.<sup>169</sup> Secondary rental payable to the IBA reached £1 million, and was used to fund *inter alia* Capital Radio's concert series *Great Orchestras of the World*, while the radio companies made their first reference to the Copyright Tribunal in the misplaced expectation of better terms (Stoller 2010).

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<sup>167</sup> Chapter 6 p. 77

<sup>168</sup> There was a range of letters similarly supporting the status quo in *The Times* correspondence columns on 28 January, 21 January, 21 February, 3 March

<sup>169</sup> *IBA Annual Report 1977/8*, p. 35

Table 8.10 Data summary sample week 1979

1979 w/c 5 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	85'40	35'05	2'00	14'35

1979 w/c 5 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach adults 15+
Radio 3	156,600	0.3	313,200	0.6	2,350,000

1979 w/c 5 May Number of different composers featured	111	
This Week's Composer: Brahms		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	10
	Bach	7
	Debussy	6
	Mendelssohn	6

Radio 3 changed its medium wave frequency on 23 November 1978, but Radio 3 schedule during the 1979 sample week (Table 8.10) shows little change from 1978, although there were 111 different composers broadcast, the most for the decade. The increased importance of records in Radio 3's output is the other notable feature emerging from the analysis of the sample week. Excluding feature programmes, record-based programmes were around 40 per cent of the total music output of the station, the highest percentage for the decade.

The weekend again featured record-based programmes all morning, with *Record Review*, focused upon Holst's *Planets Suite*, achieving the top audience of the week, 313,000. The featured opera on Saturday evening, *Rigoletto* performed by the Scottish Philharmonia and Opera chorus, remarkably received a sponsorship credit in the *Radio Times* listings for Commercial Union Assurance. The afternoon audience on Saturday peaked at 52,500 early in the afternoon and then remained unmeasurable for the whole of the rest of the day. Clearly there was no popular audience for a music drama in two acts by Rutland Boulton, *The Immortal Hour*; nor, more surprisingly, for Schubert, Kreutzer and Paganini in a recording of *Southbank Summer Music*; disappointingly for a concert of Walton, Stravinsky, Hindemith and Tchaikovsky; and probably inevitably for a late night concert of Birtwistle, Stravinsky and Sackman.

This raises once again the worth or otherwise of an extensive and expensive period of network radio, on a peak day for radio listening, being devoted to material which only a disappearingly small percentage of the audience chose to listen to. Certainly, Boughton's opera "set in the Hebrides, deep in the mists of time, amid the fairy world of Celtic mythology" (*Radio Times* 1979) might arguably only ever have received public exposure in a Radio 3 broadcast;<sup>170</sup> but so few listeners for that programme and for the rest of the evening calls into question whether this is proportionate public service to society as a whole – or even a specialist part of it.

<sup>170</sup> Although see Chapter 9 p. 157, concerning an ILR station's airing of an equally recondite work by the composer Peter Wishart

Arguably, the exposure of difficult music was a legitimate public service aim. That can be said to be the case for the first performance of Hoddinott's *Job* on Tuesday afternoon, even if it was not achieving a measurable audience, not least as it – like Boulton's work – was supported by a *Radio Times* feature. But how does that argument stand up in the case of the extended drive-time sequence of *Homeward Bound* and *At Home*, rarely achieving a measurable audience all week? It is reasonable to conclude that BBC's senior management continued to mistrust anything smacking of seeking popularity. As one specific example, the decision to drop from the 1980 Proms programme the *Viennese Night*, which was to have been introduced by Richard Baker and Esther Rantzen, left those in BBC television feeling that the decision "will deprive millions of a programme they enormously enjoy, apparently because a few people believe Esther Rantzen in some way belittles music" (BBC WAC R27/1081/1 3 December 1979). Confirming the elitist attitude, Ponsonby riposted that "the Proms really cannot dance to the tune of television's ratings" (BBC WAC R 27/1081/1 17 December 1979).

It might have been expected that Radio 3's music output would start to change when McIntyre announced his new schedules in July (BBC WAC 10120750 17 May 1979).<sup>171</sup> In a paper to the Governors he had asked "should we be concerned about [increasing the audiences for Radio 3] and seek to broadcast a format which would fit the lifestyle of the busy housewife with a taste for classical music?" before concluding that "the temptation to turn Radio 3 into a 'top 100 (or 500) Classics' must be resisted" (BBC WAC R92/69/1 7 December 1978). However his detailed plans "were concerned solely with speech" (Carpenter 1996, p. 300), and analysis of the sample week in 1980, set out in the following Chapter, indicates little dramatic change in the overall format or schedule.

There is evidence of the ILR companies embracing classical music broadcasting in ways that went well beyond their statutory and regulatory obligations.<sup>172</sup> Writing its own pages in the IBA's *TV & Radio* (1979, p.146), the Birmingham station BRMB, for example, vaunted its community involvement with this genre of music:

The station has sponsored a series of highly successful youth concerts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Birmingham town Hall. Held on eight Saturday mornings throughout the year, the concerts were recorded and subsequently broadcast on the station's Sunday evening classical music show.

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<sup>171</sup> "Pleasure and enlargement" [sic], a working paper not yet formally released into archives, was prepared for BBC Governors by Ian McIntyre on his appointment as Controller, Radio 3 (BBC WAC 10120750 17 May 1979). Carpenter (1997, p. 299) draws out McIntyre's comparison of Radio 3 to a stately home which did not need the popularisation of a Safari Park in the grounds. The paper's title comes from McIntyre's recollection of his predecessor Howard Newby

"who presided so lovingly over this area of broadcasting for so long [telling] the story of going to the States and describing the Third Programme to Americans he met. 'Oh I see' they said, 'it's educational broadcasting'. 'No' said Howard, 'it's putting out good minority programmes for people who like that sort of thing. No ulterior motive. Just pleasure and enlargement."

<sup>172</sup> The implication for concerts of the scheduling of advertisements on radio was sufficiently widespread for the IBA to make special mention of it in the IBA 1978/9 *Annual Report* (p. 169): "there will be occasions when a particular programme – perhaps an opera, classical concert or Parliamentary broadcast – will not lend itself to advertising interruptions and on those occasions the Authority is prepared to consider a reasonable redistribution of displaced advertising, provided that twelve minutes is not exceeded in any one clock hour."

The BRMB radio music scholarship was held for the first time in 1978 and over 70 young musicians from all over the Midlands entered the competition.

### 8.7 The end of the affair

For the UK, Thatcher's General Election victory on 3 May 1979 was pivotal, marking the end of post-war social liberalism and the arrival of the market liberalism which was to rule the roost until well beyond the end of the century. That was to change the climate in which broadcasting operated as well by the end of the Eighties. For ILR, the shift in the *zeitgeist* was to overturn the settlement which engendered its classical music broadcasting, while for BBC classical music storm clouds were gathering.

As early as February 1979, Singer had informed the Governors that he was "grasping the nettle of the orchestral problem" although "he could not help feeling that he was doing so while wearing gloves" (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 8 February 1979). According to Seaton (2015, p. 103), Singer and Trethowan had already cooked up their plan while travelling together in China, well away from senior BBC music figures. Singer decided to start by tackling the Scottish orchestras, and in May he was reporting "that in the face of Scottish resistance to the idea of devolving regional orchestras to their regions he was considering an alternative approach, which was to disband the Scottish Radio Orchestra" (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 10 May 1979). His forthright approach led Patrick Ramsay, Controller, Scotland to try to set up working channels and gentler negotiations (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 14 May 1979). Meanwhile, Singer was in discussions with the BBC legal team about what obligations they had towards the MU and what chance they would have of moving ahead without detailed discussions with the Union (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 12 June 1979).

Even at this early stage, the BBC Governors should not have doubted his determination. He told their June meeting "that he was not prepared to continue spending five million pounds a year without producing one world-class orchestra" (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 26 June 1979). By early July he felt that "at last the orchestral strategy matter might be on the move", asking Deputy Managing Director Radio, Douglas Muggeridge, to take on responsibility for the task (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 3 July 1979). Singer used a resolution at the MU conference on 23 July to persuade the Governors to agree that he could move ahead more quickly than originally planned (BBC WAC R78/2258/1 9 July 1979), starting the events that were to convulse BBC radio's classical music as the Eighties began.

There were moments during the Seventies – especially during the enforced simulcasting of Radios 3 and 4 which briefly widened the classical music radio franchise for the BBC – when some of the peaks of the late Sixties were glimpsed again. From 1973 onwards, classical music radio was alive and well, and living – albeit modestly – in ILR too. But the Eighties were destined to be different. It is not unreasonable to see a link between Thatcher's confrontational style and that of Singer, in their decisions to tackle those trade unions which seemed most to symbolise the restrictive practices they especially abhorred. That carried over to the ILR companies, as they sought to drop their public service remit, and they too challenged the power and influence of the MU. External pressures of labour relations, finance and the market would undermine classical music radio at the start and the end of the Eighties.

## **Chapter 9**

### **The Eighties**

#### **Fugue**

*general history and literature review*

*classical music radio in 1980*

*BBC musicians' strike and its impact*

*classical music radio 1981-84*

*apex of ILR classical output*

*audiences for classical music on ILR*

*secondary rental and programme sharing*

*Heathrow Conference and ILR's retreat from 'independent' radio*

*classical music radio 1985-9*

Classical music radio in the Eighties experienced two major upheavals: to the BBC at the start of the decade: and then to ILR as it came to an end. For the BBC, deliberate confrontation with the MU in 1980 thrust it into the turmoil of an industrial dispute, closely analogous with what was happening in UK industry as whole. For ILR, the commercial freedoms of the decade lured it away from public service-based *independent* radio towards full-scale *commercial* radio in 1990, in which it seemed there was to be no place for this genre of music. Meanwhile, analysis shows that the two sectors approached their classical music tasks with differing intent. The BBC settled into relatively unambitious service for its middlebrow audience, with virtually segregated attention to the higher brow; ILR shone with ambition for a few years, before being dimmed and eventually extinguished by the lure of commercial freedoms.

#### **9.1 General history and literature review: the Eighties**

For the UK, the decade from the election victory of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 (or arguably from her confirmation in power as well as office following the Falklands war of 1981) until her resignation in 1990 were revolutionary years for British society, politics, economics and culture. Historical perspective shows that what was regarded at the time as a breakdown in a 40-year consensus was actually the moving of the centre of gravity from a planning-dominated to a market-dominated economic and political nexus. Even the public confrontations – with the miners at Orgreave Colliery, the IRA in Brighton's Grand Hotel or amid the Poll Tax riots – were a working through of the past in untypical and ultimately cathartic violence. Nevertheless, these are in many ways the Thatcher years, dominated – at least in the public mind – by one individual to a degree wholly unusual for Britain in peacetime. Revealingly, two of the main historical works take their titles from phrases uttered by Margaret Thatcher during her dominant premiership: *Rejoice, rejoice* (Turner 2010) and *No such thing as society* (McSmith 2011). Along with Vinen (2010), they chart the social and economic upheavals of the times. Assorted political autobiographies (Thatcher 1993) and biographies (Harris 1992, Young 1990, Campbell 2009) provide a flavour of the Eighties, although many are too close to hagiography for any objective comfort.

Internationally, the Eighties saw the collapse of the Soviet empire in middle and eastern Europe, the end of the Cold War and the apparent triumph of the liberal

capitalist model. This had a huge impact on classical music as well. Taruskin (2010c, p. 437) notes that:

partly in response to a general turn away from utopian thinking that mounted through the Eighties towards a dramatic climax in the fall of the Berlin Wall... several...prominent and successful serialists (and a few avant-gardists of different stripe) defected to 'tonal' idioms that the master narrative had long since declared dead. The loosening of cold-war thinking allowed the reopening of many old and ostensibly settled questions, including the question whether commitment to historical progress was worth the sacrifice of the audience. No longer shadowed by the spectre of totalitarianism, 'accessibility' regained a measure of respectability.

The opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 seemed to complete the period of history which had begun in the Thirties (Ross 2008, p. 579). These were highly symbolic weeks for classical music. On 12 November, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim played a concert for East and West Berliners in the Potsdamer Platz, performing Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*.<sup>173</sup> On Christmas Day, Leonard Bernstein conducted an international orchestra in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with Goethe's *Ode to Joy* recast as an *Ode to Freedom*,<sup>174</sup> in a performance broadcast across much of Europe.<sup>175</sup> *Mitteleuropa*, which had given birth to classical music, now reunited in its performance and broadcast, and music began to escape from the dead-end of serialism.

Habermas had posited "the irreconcilable nature of aesthetic and social worlds" (quoted in Taruskin 2010e, p. 508), and this approach had been required thinking among classical composers. With Beethoven ringing across the now redundant no-man's-land between East and West Berlin, and around the broadcast world, it was no longer necessary to observe Habermas' orthodoxy, and a way opened for a new approach to the broadcasting of classical music and its composition in the Nineties. When a Puccini aria could reach number two in the UK hit singles chart,<sup>176</sup> the historian can hear echoes of the mixed concert programmes of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Weber 2004), and recognise a new and modern gloss on the debate about high and popular culture.

This debate had seemingly been put on hold through the Eighties within BBC radio, which was dominated by the need for economies. Personal rivalry – endemic in the BBC – means that a history more concerned with actual output rather than institutional politics needs to treat contemporary accounts with considerable care. Hendy (2012) has written about the historical significance of biography and personal emotions in media history, and there is evidence of that in this narrative. Ponsonby (2009), who succeeded Glock as Controller, Music reveals in his autobiography the depth of

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<sup>173</sup> The *Guardian*, 1989. Barenboim recalls that there was no particular reason for choosing this symphony, which was "a purely practical decision because we'd been practising it for the recording" they had been rehearsing at that time.

<sup>174</sup> 'An die Freude' was replaced by 'An die Freiheit' (Rehding 2005, 37)

<sup>175</sup> But not, seemingly, in the UK. See Chapter 9 p. 166

<sup>176</sup> Puccini's aria *Nessun dorma* from his opera *Turandot*, sung by Luciano Pavarotti and used by the BBC for its coverage of the 1990 football World Cup in Italy, was in the UK singles charts for 11 weeks in 1990, reaching number 2 (Betts 2005, p. 606)

personal feelings both positive and negative.<sup>177</sup> Seaton notes of one significant aspect of the re-organisation which combined the Gramophone and Music Departments that “many thought he took revenge as well” (2015, p. 105). There is a sense that classical music was being “demoted” within the BBC through much of the Eighties, its *esprit de corps* severely shaken by “bitter negotiations” with the MU over the proposed closure of BBC orchestras in 1980, exacerbated by BBC management’s “inhumane” approach (Kenyon 1981, p. 432).

During these years, the broadcasting initiatives were mostly with television. Channel 4 began broadcasting in 1982 (Brown 2007), and both daytime and breakfast television started in the middle of the decade. ILR was starting to move away from any public service remit following the pivotal Heathrow Conference in 1984 (Wray 2009, Stoller 2010).<sup>178</sup> Only towards the end of the decade did the prospect of new national radio services – commercial analogue, and digital for all – start to be discussed, and at that stage a new classical music service was not in prospect.

## 9.2. Classical music radio in 1980

Table 9.1 Data summary sample week 1980

1980 w/c 3 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	86'05	31'45	2'50	19'05
Radio 4	6'50	-	-	-

1980 w/c 3 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach adults 15+
Radio 3	130,050	0.25	261,000	0.5	2,210,000
Radio 4	208,000	0.4	313,200	0.6	n/a

1980 w/c 3 May		
Number of different composers featured	99	
This Week's Composer: Brahms		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Brahms	10
	Beethoven	9
	Mozart	8
	Schumann	8

BBC radio entered the Eighties with little fanfare. The main contextual constraint was finance, with the BBC cancelling all live opera relays in 1980 as an economy measure (Carpenter 1996, p.306), and continued sharing of programmes between Radio 3 and Radio 4. However the extension of classical music across wider platforms seems in retrospect to have been an advantage to listeners less at home on the ‘higher plane’ of Radio 3. During the 1980 sample week (Table 9.1), Radio 4 broadcast nearly 7 hours of classical music programming. The shared concert on Thursday evening of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra playing Sibelius, Britten and Brahms, was billed in

<sup>177</sup> Ponsonby in his *Musical Heroes* (2009) writes warmly of Glock, as being “a man with a mission” (p. 112) and “a hard act to follow”; that “Drummond could be arrogant and vain and intolerant” (p. 110); and that Singer “adopted a deeply offensive, sabre-rattling posture” (p. 55).

<sup>178</sup> See below pp. 156-7

*Radio Times* as being a Radio 4 programme. *Play It Again* on Saturday afternoons, “a personal selection of outstanding music broadcasts of the past week” achieved the second highest audience of the week on both Radio 3 and Radio 4 for classical music.<sup>179</sup>

Two major works were simulcast between radio and BBC2 television. Lehár’s opera *The Merry Widow* was a Bank Holiday treat on the Monday of the sample week, with its radio output – on Radio 4 rather than Radio 3 – attracting the highest classical music audience of the week of 313,000. A performance of Britten’s *War Requiem* on Friday evening, again a radio/television simulcast, drew 200,000 listeners to Radio 3. This enforced multi-channel approach highlights once again the error in regarding Radio 3 as the only classical music radio channel, even before considering ILR below. Radio 4 was showing itself fully capable of maintaining some solid classical output. As well as the two simulcasts, *Music to Remember* on Sunday night and the feature *Music for a Living* on Tuesday evening point to a clear returning presence on the network.

On Radio 3, however, the output during the sample week was unambitious. The only other major programme was a Swiss Radio recording of Ponchielli’s *La Gioconda* on Bank Holiday Monday afternoon, which attracted a meagre audience. There was plenty of what might be considered oddities. Finnish male-voice part songs, for example, on Wednesday morning; or Elizabethan motets, consort songs, canzonetes, madrigals and a ballett [sic] in *Music of the Golden Age* on Tuesday morning, with a second in the series broadcast on Friday morning. Contemporary music enjoyed little attention, with even *Music in Our Time* late on Tuesday evening limited to three works by Xenakis. The main challenge to the standard repertoire came from the amount of early music broadcast, fully 6 hours and 45 minutes of dedicated programming, compared with just one hour of a contemporary music programme.<sup>180</sup>

Mainstream morning output, mostly specified sequence programmes played from records, regularly attracted a decent audience of 100,000 to 200,000 listeners and sat firmly in the centre of the canonic repertoire. The number of composers featured differed little from previous years, with very few surprising entrants among the just under 100 composers whose works were broadcast. Even among those, when Brahms and Schumann are featured more than Beethoven and Mozart respectively, it suggests a rather academic turn of mind among the programme-makers.<sup>181</sup> *Mainly for Pleasure* replaced *Homeward Bound* as “continuous stream programming” on the early evenings from the start of the year, with sequence programmes both specified and unspecified now a staple part of the output. Carpenter regards this as the major event of the early Eighties, using the new programme’s title for a Chapter title (1996, p. 298). Yet for the listener, there seems to have been little perceived difference, and no marked change in audience levels.

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<sup>179</sup> The programme had the highest audience for Radio 3, but Radio 4’s highest audience for *The Merry Widow* on Monday was slightly larger

<sup>180</sup> ‘Early music’ in this context is defined as pre-Baroque, and falls outside the definition of classical music used in this thesis

<sup>181</sup> Brahms and Schumann are among the less accessible of the canonic composers. Tchaikovsky wrote in his diary of Brahms “What an untalented shit! It angers me that this presumptuous mediocrity is recognised as a *genius*.” (original emphasis) (quoted in Brown 1992, vol IV, p. 83) This is more usually as rendered as “what a talentless bastard” (e.g. *Independent* 1997)



### 9.3. BBC musicians' strike and its impact

In a climate of cost-cutting for BBC radio (Kenyon 1981, p. 431), the strike of musicians in the BBC orchestras dominated the early years of the Eighties. Documents specially released by the BBC Written Archives Centre for this thesis make clear that Singer was indeed intending from the outset to be confrontational, as Kenyon (1981) and Carpenter (2010) had surmised. The minutes of the BBC Board of Management in January 1980 are specific about Singer's intention, and the extent to which he was supported in this by Trethowan:

MDR [Singer] was proposing to disband the London Studio Players, the Northern Radio Orchestra and the Midland Radio Orchestra, to disband the Scottish Symphony and Radio Orchestras and to create a new Concert Orchestra of 50 players.

MDR explained what he was trying to achieve. In the present financial climate he wanted not only to improve the musical quality of programmes but also to go to the Board with some real savings. He had taken into account the possibility of industrial action, and was convinced that this nettle must be grasped. DG strongly endorsed what he said. The BBC had been talking about its orchestral problems for 11 years, and the time had come to do something; it was a now or never orchestral strategy. (BBC WAC R92/40/1 10 January 1980)

Others within the BBC were less supportive than Trethowan. Those same minutes record that

the national regional controllers...were aggrieved by what they saw as the lack of consultation (and trust) between MDR and them on this issue.

The tensions between Ponsonby and Singer were also evident from an early stage. When Ponsonby made so bold as to suggest that the issue of quality needed to be addressed in the context of the Welsh Symphony Orchestra (BBC WAC R 92/40/1 20 February 1980), Singer jumped in offensively:

You are being tedious! Insofar as it is possible I will enhance the symphony orchestras. However, I have to have room for manoeuvre. Meanwhile, do you think you could send your memoranda on this delicate subject under confidential cover? (BBC WAC 92/40/1 21 February 1980)

Equally, Singer could have had little doubt that the MU would be prepared to take industrial action. It is reasonable to infer that he welcomed a 'trial of strength', which was very much in line with the new Thatcherite mood of the times. Carpenter (1996, p.306) reports Ponsonby as saying that "by the time the proposals were put to the MU, 'the light of battle' gleamed in Aubrey Singer's eyes". By his own account, Singer met with the two leading officials of the MU to discuss cutting the numbers of full-time contracts for BBC musicians between September and November 1979, and was told then that moving from permanent to 'first-call' contracts in the popular music orchestras "was completely unacceptable and would be strongly contested if we put it to them formally" (WAC R92/40/1 10 January 1980 BBC). By January the following year, Singer's assistant, Starks, was examining the wide range of implications of serious strike action by the MU (BBC WAC 92/40/1 29 January 1980). When the proposals were formally put to the musicians, on 22 April 1980, the BBC was already dug in for a strike (WAC R92/40/1 30 April 1980 BBC).

After delaying strike action for a month, in the hope of reaching a negotiated settlement, the MU called out its musicians in the BBC orchestras on 1 June. This was to be a classic early Eighties industrial confrontation – strange words to use between orchestral musicians and the great cultural institution of the country, but wholly apt. The BBC Board of Management noted that the Union “was mustering its forces in preparation for a long slog” and, worrying about the effect of all this on the Proms, “agreed that much would depend on the timing of the playing of certain cards in negotiation on both sides” (BBC WAC R92/40/1 28 April 1980). The Musicians’ Union wrote to the BBC chairman, Sir Michael Swann, on 18 June alleging “irresponsible” and dishonourable” behaviour by the BBC’s management (BBC WAC R92/7/1 18 June 1980).

Kenyon (1981, p. 432) recounts how cancellation of the first night of the Proms on 18 July, and of the opening 20 concerts, hit traditionalists within the BBC hard. Carpenter (1996, p. 307) sees it as a “traumatic episode”. The loss of the Proms had been envisaged earlier by the Board of Management as a risk they would not welcome (BBC WAC R 92/40/1 28 April 1980). There are anecdotes about the reactions of BBC Governors – most significantly, according to Seaton (2015, p. 104), the Chairman’s wife – which induced greater BBC willingness to negotiate. Swann contacted Arnold Goodman, who had gained a reputation for mediating in intractable industrial disputes and who had told Ponsonby that the Arts Council – which he chaired – would consider promoting the Proms if the BBC and the MU were still in dispute (BBC WAC R92/7/1 9 July 1980).

It was Goodman’s mediation which broke the deadlock. The Proms resumed on 7 August, and although the detailed negotiations were to drag on in respect of the Scottish and Ulster Orchestras until the middle of 1981, by then (and perhaps only by then) “the heat had gone out of the dispute so far as the musical world as a whole is concerned” (BBC WAC R92/7/1 2 June 1981). When all was concluded, the BBC had indeed made some modest savings but nothing like the draconian changes envisaged at the outset. The settlement of 24 July involved the withdrawal of all notices of dismissal. The Northern and Midland Radio Orchestras were to be retained until the spring of 1981, and the Scottish Symphony Orchestra saved, although the Scottish Radio Orchestra would go in its place. The full-time numbers of the BBCSO were actually increased.

Human relations between different factions within BBC management were severely damaged. Wright noted that “Ponsonby’s honourable position with regard to the Proms...further confirmed him as ‘not one of us’ in BBC terms” so far as Singer was concerned (in Doctor, ed. 2007, p. 204). Ponsonby himself believed that the staff of the Music Division were “outraged” by the way in which Singer conducted the negotiations (Carpenter 1996, p. 307) and that morale plummeted. He personally found the strike anguishing (Seaton 2015, p. 104). On what was now firmly ‘the other side’, Singer “seethed at the thought that Radio 3 had broadcast a talk by a member of staff attacking the ‘Philistinism’ of the BBC” (BBC WAC R92/7/1 4 August 1980).

What then of the listeners? They were deprived of many Prom relays.<sup>182</sup> The BBC had to dip deep into its needletime allowance, and to use tapes of recorded music from other broadcasters, but this latter was not unusual. The real impact was on the morale

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<sup>182</sup> The MU arranged ‘unofficial Proms’ to be performed at Wembley Stadium (Wright in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007) and the striking musicians staged lunchtime concerts outside Broadcasting House (Kenyon 1981), but self-evidently these would not be broadcast.

of the service and those who produced it, reflected in the years immediately afterwards in a flatness of output and ambition. The events also “compromised the BBC’s image as a disinterested guardian of the nation’s music.” (Wright in Doctor and Wright, eds., 2007, p. 205). As well as provoking challenge from such as BBC producer and notable composer Robert Simpson,<sup>183</sup> it was a further step in the demystifying of the BBC (as Bagehot (1867) would have understood it), which now descended into the slew of commonplace industrial relations confrontations. Reducing BBC music’s auratic quality also prepared the way for the great revolution of the Nineties with Classic FM, and the democratisation of Radio 3 which accompanied it.

#### 9.4. BBC classical music output 1981-4

BBC output of classical music in 1981 continued along rather unexciting lines, arguably the effect of continued economies and lowered morale. Records made up an unprecedented 46 per cent of the total music output in the 1981 sample week (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 Data summary sample week 1981

1981 w/c 9 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	90'20	37'10	3'20	22'35
Radio 4	2'50	-	-	-

1981 w/c 9 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach Adults 15+
Radio 3	100,000	0.2	250,000	0.5	2,590,000
Radio 4	100,000	0.2	150,000	0.3	n/a

1981 w/c 9 May		
Number of different composers featured	112	
This Week's Composer: Monteverdi		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	11
	Beethoven	8
	Haydn	8
	Schubert	7

There were no outstanding programmes in the sample week, which included two operas – one, Bellini’s *I Puritani*, on Sunday afternoon on gramophone records and the other an Offenbach operetta, *Mesdames de la Halle*. The noteworthy contemporary broadcast was of Robert Simpson’s *Sixth Quartet*, and his arrangement of Bach, on Sunday evening. Given Simpson’s place as a senior figure within the BBC music hierarchy, and his increasingly controversial role in public debate, it is reasonable to query why he received such prominence. The answer lies in the BBC’s continuing self-referential approach to programme decisions, an example of its elitist assumptions even amid a generally middlebrow output.

<sup>183</sup> See below p. 146

The issue of elitist defence was never far away from public debate. Simpson (1981) himself published *The Proms and Natural Justice* in the autumn of 1981 effectively attacking Ponsonby for being too long at the helm of the Proms and failing to give exposure to more obscure contemporary composers.<sup>184</sup> That provoked complaints about the “curiously narrow and prescribed views about contemporary and modern music” supposedly implemented by “the Glock-Keller regime” (*The Listener* 1981c). In vain might Ponsonby assert “Isaac Stern’s immortal dictum about unpopular concerts: ‘if nobody wants to come, nothing will stop them’” (*the Listener* 1981b). The debate dominated the correspondence columns of *The Listener* but the potential audience seemed wholly uninterested. Former Controller of Radio 3, Steven Hearst, reported on behalf of the Radio Network Working Party, that Radio 3 was dominated by

a tone and style that, we believe, deter thousands of music lovers from listening in, out of a vague but deeply felt conviction that this particular service is ‘not for them’. (*The Times* 1981)

Yet new Controller Ian McIntyre was said to have been set the task of “keeping the radio Philistines at bay” (*The Times* 1981).

In the event, they showed little interest in entering the Promised Land. 1 per cent of the population listened to Radio 3 in a day,<sup>185</sup> equating on the BBC’s own measure to just over half a million adults. Compared with the known potential audience for this radio genre of some five or six million, it is little wonder that Singer agreed “that a service of popular classical music was exactly what was needed”. (*The Listener* 1981d)

Table 9.3 Data summary sample week 1982

1982 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	89'40	34'50	1'40	22'00
Radio 4	2'20	-	-	-

1982 w/c 8 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % of total population	Audience high	High % of total population	Weekly reach adults 15+
Radio 3	100,000	0.2	200,000	0.4	2,684,000
Radio 4	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/a

Note: BBC audience figures for individual Radio 4 programmes in a single week are not available from 1982 onwards

1982 w/c 8 May		
Number of different composers featured	99	
This Week’s Composer: Brahms		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Brahms	10
	Beethoven	9
	Mozart	8
	Schumann	8

<sup>184</sup> Simpson’s essay was quoted in *The Listener* on 10 September (*The Listener* 1981a) and extensively in subsequent issues

<sup>185</sup> BBC broadcasting research Radio Weekly Bulletin week 19 (1981), BBC WAC R9/38/4

In 1982, with a new Director General in Alasdair Milne, and a new Managing Director, Radio in Richard Francis,<sup>186</sup> the BBC once again changed the boundaries of the music radio empires. The Gramophone Department and Music Division were combined into a single Radio 3 Music Department headed by Christine Hardwick who reported to McIntyre, not to Ponsonby. Carpenter regards this as a matter of institutional politics (1996, p. 309), as no doubt it was, but it also reflected the growing importance of records *vis-à-vis* live or originally recorded music in the BBC's output. In the 1982 sample week (Table 9.3), 90 hours of output on Radio 3 were made possible by some extensive use of records representing two fifths of the total music output, while to exploit the brand opportunity the *Radio 3 Magazine* appeared in October.

Ponsonby that year told the Governors that:

When, in 1980, we embarked, after long and careful reflection, upon our present orchestral strategy (accepting that this would almost certainly involve an MU strike) we had two original objectives: the disbandment of five orchestras in the field of light in popular music...[and] the reorganisation and improvement...of our symphony orchestras. (BBC WAC R92/8/1 18 March 1982)

He felt that standards had risen, duplication had been cut out and with an extra £300,000 allocated "for improvements to the BBCSO", and the renaming of the Northern Symphony Orchestra as the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, a new and agreeable pattern had been set. Certainly, Radio 3 now had the confidence to offer three operas in the 1982 sample week: William Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* on Saturday early evening; Chabrier's *L'étoile* on Monday at the same time; and Verdi's *Luisa Miller* on Thursday afternoon. This was an interesting range, especially as all apart from the Walton were original performances. There were several programmes of modern music in different guises. *Music in Our Time* remained on Thursday evening, but it is noticeable that through the week there were programmes featuring contemporary works, such as performances of Ligeti and then modern British music on Radio 3 on Sunday evening; and a concert given by the Boulder Wind Ensemble on Wednesday afternoon of works – fittingly for an American Youth Orchestra – by Krommer, Toensing, Dahl and Ives.

Generally, this research has not been able to examine the content of sequence programmes. However, unusually, listings for Radio 3's *Mainly for Pleasure* are more extensive in 1982. The programme on the Tuesday evening of the sample week, presented by composer and author Michael Berkeley, reveals the essentially light nature of the output, blending arias and excerpts from works by Chabrier, Rossellini and Handel, with accessible works by Schubert, Rachmaninov, Haydn and Schumann. This is the type of popular and undemanding fare which made Classic FM such an audience success 10 years later, yet in 1982 Radio 3 output attracted no measurable audience, a fairly unusual feature for Radio 3 in the sample week. It seems reasonable to conclude that listeners were not expecting such easy access, so that significantly fewer than 50,000 of them would turn to Radio 3 when 10 years later – in a more fiercely competitive situation, with increased presence of daytime television – Classic FM was achieving audiences of 100,000 to 150,000 with similar output at the same

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<sup>186</sup> Singer had left radio to become Managing Director, BBC Television, before being fired two years later. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2007/may/28/guardianobituaries.broadcasting> (accessed 11 May 2014)

time.<sup>187</sup> Radio 3 audiences generally were settling to a fairly discouraging level. Although few programmes during the day failed to attract an audience, the largest audience for any programme was 200,000, and daily patronage was just 400,000.

The two classical music programmes on Radio 4 were *Music to Remember* on Sunday evening, which offered works by Elgar and Dvořák as compensation for a challenging play on Radio 3; and a notable performance of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* in a deferred relay from Munich, performed by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus on Thursday evening.<sup>188</sup> Across the entire sample week, Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn were the most performed composers, followed by Schubert and Dvořák with Tchaikovsky more prominent than in previous years. *This Week's Composer*, Greig, also belongs in the centre of the canonic classical repertoire.

By 1983, the new BBC music arrangements were in place, and were to continue to the end of the period under review and beyond. The upheavals in the private sector were yet to begin. It was a year of stasis, a good time to assess where BBC classical music radio provision had reached. Radio 3 still did not have a monopoly of BBC output. Radio 4 carried an attractive programme of Haydn and Purcell on the Thursday evening of the 1983 sample week (Table 9.4), a repeat of an earlier Radio 3 broadcast, and its own *Music to Remember* on Sunday evening of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra playing Tchaikovsky *Suite No. 3 in G*.<sup>189</sup>

Table 9.4 Data summary sample week 1983

1983 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	87'40	27'25	2'00	17'55
Radio 4	2'40	-	-	-

1983 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)
Radio 3	75,000	0.15	150,000	0.3
Radio 4	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k

Notes: BBC audience figures for individual Radio 4 programmes in a single week not available from 1982 onwards.

Weekly reach data not available for 1983.

1983 w/c 7 May		
Number of different composers featured	133	
This Week's Composer: Lennox Berkeley		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	11
	Brahms	10
	Beethoven	9
	Haydn, Handel	6

<sup>187</sup> Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) *passim* See Appendix B

<sup>188</sup> Audience data for individual programmes ceased to be available from 1982

<sup>189</sup> On Radio 4 on Wednesday of the sample week in 1983, *Midweek* was being presented by Henry Kelly, who would go on to be the most prominent of the Classic FM presenters – and the one perhaps most sneered-at for inconsequential comments and mispronunciation – when the commercial competitor launched in 1992.

Radio 3 now offered classical music output across most of each day, with a little drama, some features, some jazz and a discussion programme, reflecting the inclusive approach taken at the launch of the Music Programme.<sup>190</sup> Each weekday scheduled between 12½ and 14 hours of classical music programmes. Records represented over 31 per cent of the total output. There were sequence programmes each weekday morning and on Saturday morning, while on weekday afternoons *Mainly for Pleasure* between 5 and 6.30pm was a mostly unspecified sequence programme. Even that managed to include a concert of works by Vaughan Williams, Warlock, Elizabeth Poston, Rubbra and Arnold Cooke on Tuesday evening. The average audience for the programme remained firmly stuck at around 50,000 across the month.

Radio 3 was heavily dependent upon music supplied by European broadcasting organisations, to ease pressures on needletime allocation. A European Broadcasting Union (EBU) concert from Radio Bremen on Monday evening, music of Mozart and Hindemith from NDR on Tuesday morning, *Music of Eastern Europe* from Sender Freies Berlin on Wednesday afternoon and an Austrian Radio recording of Handel's *Acis und Galatea* from January's Salzburg Festival on Thursday afternoon were typical examples.<sup>191</sup>

The works of 133 different composers were broadcast. That is a remarkably high figure compared with typically around 100 composers in the Seventies or around 110 in the Nineties, and hints at a change of course. For example, Sunday afternoon's Nielsen broadcasts were part of a series of 16 programmes, while *The English Madrigal* programmes on Saturday, Sunday and Friday were from a 34-part series. *This Week's Composer* was Lennox Berkeley, justly celebrated on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, but not increasing the accessibility of the network. The First Viennese School composers were still the most played on Radio 3, but the output of two dozen composers whose names were barely familiar – such as Stenhammer, Muffat, and Kunhau – arguably deterred potential listeners beyond those of the highest brow.

Humourist Miles Kington captured the general perception of Radio 3 in a satirical piece in April:

There will be a procession to the Tomb of the Unknown Composer, who is responsible for so much of Radio 3's output. Wreaths will be laid by the Baroque Society, the Friends of French Opera Overtures, the Society for the Preservation of Rural English Song Writers and CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Albinoni). There will then be a performance of the song-cycle "on Warlock edge" and six concerti grossi by Galtieri. They will then be played again at the right speed. (*The Times* 1983)

Meanwhile, ILR stations were typically attracting audiences for their very few hours of classical music output which were around one third of the total achieved by Radio 3 across the entire week.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> See Chapter 7 pp. 98-101

<sup>191</sup> A further EBU feature, of recordings made by the BBC itself during the EBU's *International String Quartet Days* earlier in the year, and broadcast on Thursday evening, was given little prominence – possibly because the ILR entry, the Brodsky Quartet, had won the competition. See below pp. 156-7

<sup>192</sup> See below p. 154

Table 9.5 Data summary sample week 1984

1984 w/c 5 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	90'40	35'55	1'40	16'30

1984 w/c 5 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % of adult population	Audience high	High % of adult population	Weekly reach Adults 15+
Radio 3	156,600	0.3	313,200	0.6	2,695,000

1984 w/c 5 May Number of different composers featured	113	
This Week's Composer: Smetana		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	13
	Beethoven	11
	Haydn	11
	Brahms	10
	Schubert	8

After the eclecticism of the previous year, the return to dominance of the central canonic repertoire in 1984 is most notable. Hardly any of the composers played in the 1984 sample week (Table 9.5) would not be recognised by a mainstream audience. The overwhelming dominance of the First Viennese School is especially striking, with Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms and Schubert all receiving a high number of plays. Following them in number are Elgar, Shostakovich and Handel, with Dvořák and Britten also well featured. Opera was mostly mainstream Mozart, with *Die Zauberflöte* on Bank Holiday Monday afternoon and an historic Glyndebourne recording of *Idomeneo* on Thursday afternoon, to mark that opera house's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>193</sup>

There was a performance of Burgon's *Requiem* from the Three Spires Festival for an hour on Tuesday evening, and *Music in our Time* still provided 50 minutes of contemporary output – which in contrast with the previous year rarely appeared elsewhere in the schedules. Baroque music was more in evidence, notably a complete performance of Rameau's *Platée* on Wednesday evening. Some less frightening British composers were broadcast, notably in *Dreamer of Dreams* on Saturday afternoon, the 11th in a 16-programme series dominated by the accessible compositions of Elgar and Vaughan Williams, often in short sections taken from larger works.

Audience levels recovered as well. Daytime programmes steadily attracted some 100,000 listeners, rising to 200,000 for *Your Concert Choice* on Sunday morning and part of *Morning Concert* on Thursday. There was still audience potential in the evenings, with a concert of Walton, Haydn and Bruckner by the London Philharmonic Orchestra on Thursday evening live from the Royal Festival Hall reaching 150,000 listeners. Equally, that audience could not be relied upon; right across the sampled

<sup>193</sup> Radio 3 had the field to itself apart from ILR. Radio 4 had finally quit classical music, although *Desert Island Discs* on Friday morning of the sample week featured soprano Rosalind Plowright, who chose works by Vaughan Williams, Schubert, Wagner, Verdi, Bellini and Bruckner.



month there was no measurable audience at all for Radio 3 on Saturday evenings from 6pm or on Friday evenings from 6.30pm.

Why this change? Perhaps the BBC was stung by charges of obscurantism, shying away from the hostility directed at it from Margaret Thatcher, for whom the BBC was “her greatest *bête noire*” (Turner 2010, p. 196). Home Secretary Tebbit regarded the BBC as being “a sunset home for the insufferable, smug, sanctimonious, naïve, guilt-ridden, weak and pink” (Turner 2010, p. 301) – a grotesque picture, but one perhaps recognisable here and there within Radio 3. With Charter renewal in 1996 coming into focus, there is a sense of Radio 3 swinging away from obscurity a little too far towards familiar output, arguably to protect the station from the charge of irrelevance in the context of an emerging and new market-based political mood.<sup>194</sup>

By the time that the Peacock Committee was set up in March 1985, to examine degrees of privatisation of BBC radio, Radio 3 had good reason to be fearful. 1984 had seen the first of the long series of privatisations – of British Telecom – and the Thatcher Government was in its most militant stage of confrontation with the National Union of Mineworkers (McSmith 2011). In May and June, outside the Orgreave Coke Works, in a Staffordshire hamlet just north of Lichfield, thousands of police and pickets fought a series of running battles. In the early hours of 12 October, the IRA bombed the Conservative Conference in the seaside resort of Brighton. This was a year when the unthinkable started happening in what had been thought to be just ordinary parts of England:

The scale of the atrocity, the attempt to murder the Prime Minister, was unprecedented in the Northern Ireland war – indeed one had to look back to the gunpowder plot or the Cato Street Conspiracy for a parallel. (Turner 2010, p. 188)

It would have seemed a minor matter to do away with a classical music radio network which had become too detached from its audience.

### 9.5. Apex of ILR classical music output 1980-1984

While the BBC had languished in the aftermath of the musicians’ strike, ILR in 1980 was advancing to the apex of its classical music output, boosted by secondary rental of £2.7 million funding classical music concerts in London, at the Snape Maltings and in Aberdeen, Sheffield and Belfast (Stoller 2010). The IBA was jubilant, lauding

many memorable occasions of exciting programmes...including the first of Capital’s *Great Orchestras of the World* series and the same station’s recording of a splendid performance of Verdi’s *Otello* from Covent Garden.<sup>195</sup>

The IBA reported in 1980 that many ILR stations had their own orchestras. The Swansea Sound Sinfonia was at that time Wales’ only professional chamber orchestra,

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<sup>194</sup> There are – so far – no data to support this assumption. The BBC has not generally released its archive files for the years after 1979, and although some have been made available to this researcher they do not cover this issue. Release of the files may throw more light on the BBC’s shift of emphasis.

<sup>195</sup> *Great Orchestras of the World* was not without incident, as the music establishment hesitated about their new funders. Street (2002, p. 122) relates how Karajan demanded that his fee in cash be delivered to him backstage during the interval before he was prepared to go out and conduct the second half of a concert.

with an inaugural concert in 1979 in Brangwyn Hall in Swansea, of a programme including Handel, Warlock and Bach. Capital's Wren Orchestra took concerts out around London in its *Music on Your Doorstep* series. Piccadilly Radio supported Manchester orchestras in Greater Manchester, notably the Hallé (sponsoring the last night of the Hallé Proms) and its own Piccadilly Concert Orchestra.

With the first tranche of new stations coming on air, each with the expectation that they would broadcast classical music and be active in their local music scenes, it seemed that ILR might go on to achieve the salience of pre-war stations in the USA (Goodman 2011), which made significant commitments to classical music, beyond their financial obligations.<sup>196</sup>

By 1981, the IBA was reporting that "classical music, often taking the form of live specially recorded broadcasts of orchestral works...has become increasingly more important in ILR's repertoire".<sup>197</sup> There is a real sense of commitment building to a high point. ILR by 1981 was actively participating in British musical life, especially in the localities. Many musical bodies increasingly turned to ILR for help and support, not least in the form of sponsorship of local musicians. Radio Clyde continued to sponsor and record for broadcast the baroque ensemble *Catalina*, sponsored a series of factory lunchtime concerts by Scottish Opera and began to commission work from composers resident in Scotland. The station's Head of Programmes, Andy Hickey, was a member of the Council of the Scottish Society of composers. Capital Radio entered cellist Robert Cohen and soprano Janice Kelly for a competition run by the UNESCO International Music Council, Britain's first-ever entry into the competition.<sup>198</sup>

The following year, although the secondary rental pot had shrunk, the established companies continued to be active in promoting and broadcasting concerts, and together with the new stations maintained their classical output with a certain swagger and ambition. ILR achieved exclusive broadcast rights to the Royal Opera's *Madame Butterfly*, to Luciano Pavarotti's UK performance (in Manchester), and to the Edinburgh Festival production of the *Barber of Seville*.<sup>199</sup> CBC in Cardiff, the first of the new tranche of ILR companies, broadcast a two hour gala concert performance by the Welsh National Opera. Capital Radio again led the field, with nine concert recordings in its *Great Conductors of the World* series featuring such maestros as Zubin Mehta, Ricardo Muti and Sir Colin Davis. In conjunction with little Radio Orwell in Ipswich, Capital presented a series of concerts at Snape Maltings, including performances by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and London Philharmonic Orchestra.

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<sup>196</sup> The role of Lyndon Jenkins at one of the new stations, Mercia Sound in Coventry, is illustrative that some at least of the ILR stations had taken this aspect of their programme output very much to heart. His obituary by Andrew Jowett at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham shows that he was Classical Presenter at Mercia Sound from 1980 until the ending of such output in 1989. A specialist in British music, British artists and British musical history, he was a regular contributor to specialist music journals and writer of CD booklets for many leading record labels including EMI, Testament and Dutton. He broadcast regularly on Finnish and Danish radio about Sibelius and Nielsen, and his promotion of Danish music led to him being awarded a knighthood from HM The Queen of Denmark for services to Anglo-Danish cultural relations. He gave the first Adrian Boult lecture in Birmingham in 1986, was Chairman of the Delius Society from 1994-2000, latterly Vice-President, and Chairman of the Federation of Recorded Music Societies. (Personal communication from Jim Lee, BBC 25 April 2014)

<sup>197</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1980/1, p. 38

<sup>198</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1980/1, p. 44. The two competitors were placed first and fourth respectively.

<sup>199</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1981/2, p. 46

There was one poignant indicator that ILR felt itself to be part of a long tradition of classical music radio in the UK. Capital Radio offered an annual award of £2,500 in memory of Anna Instone, who – with her husband, Julian Herbage – had been for so long a stalwart of the BBC’s Gramophone Department, joining Capital shortly before her death. The award was designed to assist a musician’s postgraduate studies.<sup>200</sup>

### 9.5.1 Audiences for classical music on ILR

Another measure of the impact of classical music programming on ILR is the level of audiences achieved. Data on this are uneven. Research surveys were conducted generally for individual stations, within their own transmission areas, and many of the smaller stations were unable to fund such research in their early years. Nevertheless, there is enough information from the larger stations – and especially Capital Radio – from which to extrapolate for the network as a whole.

*Capital Collection*, a weekly two hour programme of classical music – often featuring live concert recordings – was a staple element in the station’s Sunday evening programming up until the mid-Eighties. During its peak years, the programme achieved substantial audiences (Table 9.6).

Table 9.6 Capital Radio classical music audiences

Year	Adult audience (15+), peak		
	Sunday evening	Sunday morning	Total
1978	201,000	64,000	265,000
1979	273,000	73,000	346,000
1980	181,000	71,000	252,000
1981	197,000	57,000	254,000
1982	166,000	50,000	216,000

Source: JICRAR special analysis<sup>201</sup>

In 1979, Capital Radio was attracting almost 350,000 listeners to its classical music each week, at a time when the average reach for Radio 3 in Greater London was 1,152,000.<sup>202</sup> Extrapolating this ratio across the nineteen ILR stations can only be a guesstimate, in the absence of any equivalent data, but it is not unreasonable to assume that, in the areas covered by ILR stations, they were achieving an audience for their classical music programmes of around 30 per cent of the total Radio 3 audience.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>200</sup> An equally poignant indicator of how far commercial radio has come from those ambitious days is that no comprehensive record can now be found of the Anna Instone Memorial Award winners.

<sup>201</sup> From the private papers of Tim Blackmore

<sup>202</sup> JICRAR Radio Network Survey 1979

<sup>203</sup> There is indirect substantiation of this in BBC research undertaken in 1981, using 1979 data (BBC WAC R9/927/1). This found what to the BBC appeared to be an anomaly. “At the outset of this study it was assumed that listeners who said that one of their favourite radio programmes was categorised as a “serious music” programme [9 per cent of the sample] would also give Radio 3 as one of their four most frequently used channels [which 7 per cent did]. However, this was not the case for a small but not negligible (2 per cent) proportion of the sample.” Since the BBC by that stage broadcast serious music only on Radio 3, this must either have meant that 29 per cent of self-styled serious music listeners placed Radio 3 lower than fourth on their list of radio stations, which is improbable given that few people regularly listened then to so many stations; or that the balance were tuning in to the quite extensive output of classical music on

At the start of the Eighties, the number of ILR stations – still with specialist music programme and live music obligations – increased swiftly, from 19 to 60 by 1989, and their total audiences from 14 million in 1979 to nearly 18 million in 1989. Taking the 30 per cent base, it would be reasonable to posit a classical music audience on ILR across all of the areas served in 1980 of over 750,000 adults, rising to around 1 million by the mid-Eighties.<sup>204</sup> This remarkable figure, for what was by no means only popular run-of-the-mill programme output, bears out Seaton's (1997, p. 319) belief that there is "a resilient consensus" in favour of public service broadcasting (PSB), which arguably extended to ambitious classical music broadcasting on ILR stations.<sup>205</sup> Whether this accords with Hendy's (2013) more restricted specification of PSB is discussed further in Chapter 12.<sup>206</sup>

Of equal significance to the size of the ILR classical music audiences was their composition. Wren Orchestra conductor Howard Snell was in no doubt that the orchestra had captured a new audience outside the static pool of people interested in concerts, theatre and ballet:

You can tell by their response. They clap between movements. They look different. They apparently aim to enjoy themselves. (*Daily Telegraph* 1978)

Similarly, the IBA noted that

one of ILR's strength is in breaking down the sometimes elitist barriers that can intimidate potential new listeners from experiencing different types of music. In Liverpool, research showed that about half the audience attending Radio City's summer series of 'Proms' with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra were attending a classical music concert for the first time. BRMB's series of Saturday family concerts in conjunction with the CBSO were designed to enable parents to enjoy a concert with their children.<sup>207</sup>

The audience data for demographic groups need to be approached with caution.<sup>208</sup> Nevertheless, the five surveys into Capital Radio's *Collection* programme seem on the face of it to support the contention that ILR audiences for classical radio were not made up in the same way as those for BBC programmes. Capital's audience profile was notably more lower-class than upper-class. Unlike the BBC, there were times when more women than men were listening, and the audience was predominantly younger people. This was surely 'transcendent culture' in Matthew Arnold's construction (1875), meeting also Hendy's criterion of worthwhile content not "restricted to the lucky few", but "spread around, so that all can share in its benefits" (Hendy 2013, p. 46). It demonstrated once again that classical music need not be the preserve of the few, if there is no empowered elite wishing to exclude the many.

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ILR. That conclusion is not even hinted at in the BBC study, but it is hard to think of an alternative explanation.

<sup>204</sup> Based on Hallett Arendt special analysis of JICRAR/RSL data, which indicates a weekly reach for Radio 3 in ILR areas of around 2.5 million

<sup>205</sup> Quoted in Hendy (2013, p. 104)

<sup>206</sup> See Chapter 12 pp. 207-8

<sup>207</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1981/2, p. 47

<sup>208</sup> The sample sizes are too small to permit anything other than broad indications to be asserted. Figures are for individual half hours, and are not aggregated for complete programmes. The raw numbers are likely to fluctuate hugely, given the small sample sizes.

### 9.5.2 Secondary rental and programme sharing

The statutory and contractual basis for secondary rental has been discussed above.<sup>209</sup> Its impact, especially in the field of classical music programmes, was substantial. This was enhanced by the introduction of a scheme, funded by secondary rental money, to encourage and allow individual radio stations to share 'programmes of merit' around the ILR network. From early 1978, a combination of pride in the programmes they made and a wish to get regulatory 'brownie points' meant that a good number of programmes were offered for sharing with such of the other ILR stations wished to take them. That could mean as many or more than 25 programmes in a month, once the system was up and running. (Stoller 2010, pp. 139-40)

A sample of significant programme sharing tapes are held in the Bournemouth University archive. These show that from the beginning of the programme sharing scheme in 1983, quite a wide range of ILR stations offered programmes for sharing around the network.<sup>210</sup> These were by no means just easy-listening options. In 1983 Radio Clyde in Glasgow offered a series of concerts from the Scottish early music consort<sup>211</sup> while the tiny Reading station, Radio 210, offered the world premiere of a modern chamber opera by Peter Wishart.<sup>212</sup> In 1984, when the programme sharing scheme was fully underway, there was a cornucopia of classical music offerings. Capital Radio offered a concert of Schubert played by the Wren Orchestra from the Snape Maltings;<sup>213</sup> a performance of Verdi's *La Traviata* from the London Coliseum;<sup>214</sup> and a National Youth Orchestra performance of Richard Strauss.<sup>215</sup> Radio Trent in Nottingham provided a concert by the Allegri String Quartet, a recital of Schumann, Chopin and Brahms by Genese de Pryer and Gwyneth Pryor;<sup>216</sup> and County Sound in Guildford a recital by the Brodsky String Quartet.<sup>217</sup> Radio Clyde made available its *Cantilena* classical music programmes,<sup>218</sup> the first example in the programme sharing scheme of a full series of programmes rather than concert promotion, but illustrating what had been the approach in many individual ILR stations from the outset.

1985 saw continued musical promotion through the programme sharing scheme by Capital Radio and Radio Clyde. They are joined in the archives by Radio City in Liverpool with its own *Last Night of the Proms*, concerts by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>219</sup> Some of these concerts were popular classics, but others showed real ambition, such as the performance of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* by the London Choral Society and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Simon Rattle.<sup>220</sup> Other stations joined the process later in the Eighties, with the local nature of much of

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<sup>209</sup> Chapter 8 pp. 123-4

<sup>210</sup> The Programme Sharing archive of tapes and associated documents is part of the Felicity Wells Memorial Archive at Bournemouth University. Individual programmes such as those quoted here are also accessed through the British Universities Film and Video Council.

<sup>211</sup> British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC)

bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/ilrsharing/index.php/1185

<sup>212</sup> bufvc 1046, recorded and broadcast while this researcher was the station's Managing Director.

<sup>213</sup> bufvc 2054

<sup>214</sup> bufvc. 2051

<sup>215</sup> bufvc 1862

<sup>216</sup> bufvc 1741

<sup>217</sup> bufvc 1415

<sup>218</sup> bufvc 1050, 1986,

<sup>219</sup> bufvc 1256

<sup>220</sup> bufvc 2045

ILR's classical music promotion demonstrated by Hereward Radio's programme featuring the Peterborough Roth Quartet,<sup>221</sup> while Piccadilly Radio in Manchester broadcast and offered for sharing the Hallé Orchestra's Christg138

mas Concert.<sup>222</sup> The stations ventured beyond just concert output too. Among the items on the programme sharing scheme were a documentary from Red Rose Radio in Preston about Kathleen Ferrier<sup>223</sup> who was born in Preston; from BRMB in Birmingham about West Midlands soprano Dame Maggie Teyte;<sup>224</sup> while even the news and talk London station, LBC, was not to be left out with a documentary series celebrating the life of Yehudi Menuhin.<sup>225</sup> Although only a sample of the tapes which were circulated around the ILR networking these years are archived, these programmes show competence and ambition from small local stations which went beyond merely observing the letter of their contractual obligations.

Perhaps foremost among all the ILR initiatives continued to be Capital Radio's support for and ownership of the Wren Orchestra. This was an outstanding example of the use of secondary rental to provide extensive on-air programming, material for programme sharing, promotional activity out and around the community and a significant boost to London classical music as a whole. Founded in 1976, it was swiftly taken up by Capital Radio which effectively ran the board which supervised the orchestra up to and beyond the watershed of 1990. Although it ceased to have any on-air presence in the late Eighties

nobody at Capital Radio would have dared to close it down while the founding chairman, Richard Attenborough (later Lord Attenborough) was still around.<sup>226</sup>

#### 9.5.3 The 'Heathrow Conference'

ILR's commitment to classical music – and indeed to its full public service statutory remit – had continued unabated in 1983. New licensing meant that by the end of 1983 there were 42 stations broadcasting regular classical music programmes as well as undertaking related community activity and concert promotion. The IBA, proud of what was being broadcast and largely oblivious to the gathering storm, enjoyed noting that:

ILR's confidence and reputation in the provision of high standard classical music programming grew over the year. Metro Radio won the music teachers' discretionary media award for the best musical education project; its classical calendar was designed to alert O and A level students to relevant set works broadcast in the weekly programme in the classical mood; comprehensive background material on the works of their composers was included in the programme. Neighbouring Radio Tees' *Fine Tuning* focused on a different aspect of local music-making each week.<sup>227</sup>

Radio Tees put forward the then young and unknown Brodsky Quartet to be the IBA's entry into the EBU *International String Quartet Days* in Cambridge in 1983. Selected from half a dozen similar proposals, the quartet won the competition. It has become one of the main UK string quartets, and remains as a surviving example of what was

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<sup>221</sup> bufvc 1446

<sup>222</sup> bufvc 1393

<sup>223</sup> bufvc 1926

<sup>224</sup> bufvc 2112

<sup>225</sup> bufvc 1496

<sup>226</sup> Interview with Kevin Appleby, General Manager of the Wren Orchestra, 24 April 2013

<sup>227</sup> *IBA Annual Report 1983/4*, p. 52

being achieved by ILR stations in the Eighties before they turned their back on public service output.

In 1984, the sands began to run out from the IBA's vision of *independent* radio, and with it the steps the stations had taken in respect of classical music output. I have written at length (Stoller 2010, pp. 142-153) about the challenges mounted to their public service obligations by the majority of the older ILR companies, and the IBA's relatively ineffective response. Under pressure from city analysts (an inevitable consequence of the decisions taken by the larger companies to seek stock-market listings), chasing the potential financial returns which many believed commercial freedom would provide for them corporately and individually, anxious at the prospect of national commercial radio competition, and emboldened by the de-regulatory spirit of the middle years of the Thatcher administration, ILR began the process of shaking off its public service obligations and becoming *commercial* radio – and, along the way, jettisoning classical music output. That took another half dozen years, before confirmation in the 1990 Broadcasting Act, but it was in a conference at the Sheraton Skyline Hotel, Heathrow on 23 June 1984 that the process was begun.

Stoller (2010) and Wray (2009) have described the events surrounding that 1984 conference of the Chairmen and Managing Directors of the ILR companies, known as the Heathrow Conference, which marked the start of the collective move against the IBA and the regime which it was implementing:

1984 represents two key points in commercial radio history...it was the pivotal moment in the endorsement of change, and...Heathrow was the key catalyst behind the start of a new ideology in UK commercial radio. (Wray 2009, p. 152)

For many of those ILR executives who had embraced the public service ethos, this event and its aftermath had unintended consequences. Seeking some easement of the financial impositions caused by the nature of the regulatory regime, they found themselves rushing pell-mell along the road towards commercialism. However, this chimed in precisely with the Thatcher Government's intention for a market-based regime for Independent Television. By extension, and without any worthwhile resistance from the Authority, the Broadcasting Act 1990 specifically ended ILR's public service obligations and with that its brave history of classical music broadcasting.

The harsh irony in terms of ILR's classical music involvement was that 1984 represented the highest point which that genre had yet reached in the private sector in the UK. In the Belfast area, for example, Downtown Radio's *Concert Choice* achieved a markedly higher weekly audience than any programme on Radio 3.<sup>228</sup> The iconic accolade came when Piccadilly Radio's *Mr Hallé's Band* won the prestigious Sony Radio Award for the best radio classical music programme in 1984. All this would be gone by 1990.

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<sup>228</sup> IBA Annual Report 1984/5, p. 38

## 9.6 Classical music radio 1985-9

Table 9.7 Data summary sample week 1985

1985 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	100'40	31'00	2'30	17'30

1985 w/c 4 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % of adult population	Audience high	High % of adult population
Radio 3	156,600	0.3	313,200	0.6

Note: weekly reach data not available for 1985

1985 w/c 4 May Number of different composers featured	100	
This Week's Composer: Dvořák		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	13
	Schumann	11
	Mozart	9
	Haydn	8
	Brahms, Bach, Ravel	7

Radio 3's output increased significantly in 1985 with the addition of an extra hour up until midnight, with the consequence that more than 100 hours of classical music programming were broadcast nationwide in the 1985 sample week (Table 9.7), the highest of any year to date. The programme approach had moved back to the middle ground – probably partly a defensive pre-emption of the Peacock Committee's deliberations, and the imminent renewal of the BBC Charter. There is no evidence that this was a response to ILR, although Seaton (2015, p. 106) notes that BBC2 and Radio 3 increased their simulcasts as a response to Channel 4's music initiatives.

Major programmes continued on Radio 3, with two operas broadcast on Saturday: Handel's serenata *Parnasso in Festa* and the first of the Wagner *Ring* cycle in a recording from the 1980 Bayreuth Festival. Tippett's *King Priam* was given by Kent Opera on Tuesday evening, completing an impressive triple. With a relay of the St Louis Symphony Orchestra from the Royal Festival Hall on Wednesday, the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra from Bangor on Bank Holiday Monday and St David's Hall on Thursday, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Stirling on Saturday morning, and the BBC Philharmonic across Thursday lunchtime from Hull, there is evidence of renewed vigour.

However, this did not extend much beyond the centre of the classical canonic repertoire. Despite significantly increased hours, the number of composers featured hardly increased and the list is notable for the absence of almost any modern compositions. Beethoven, Schumann, Mozart and Haydn were the most played, closely followed by Bach and Brahms, and also, less usually, Ravel. There were multiple plays as well for Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, Schubert, Dvořák and Debussy. With Dvořák also *This Week's Composer*, this all feels like standard, centrist fair. *Music in Our Time* remained confined to late Thursday evening, and apart from some modern American song early on Sunday evening in *A Net of Fireflies*, there was not much to catch a casual listener unawares. As Charter renewal loomed, Radio 3 swung firmly towards



cautious programming. The sequence programmes of *Morning Concert* and *Mainly for Pleasure* continued largely unchallenged.<sup>229</sup>

Despite the infighting over the future, ILR continued its commitment to classical music output. The IBA could still report that:

As a curtain raiser to the 1985 International youth year, Radio Clyde recorded the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland performing works by Beethoven and Prokofiev. Clyde also became the first ILR station to offer classical music to the European Broadcasting Union programme exchange, with performances by the Scottish Early Music Consort and Catalina.<sup>230</sup>

In the early Eighties, the ILR companies were hit by the general UK recession. As profits fell, only £168,000 in secondary rental was available for distribution in 1985 (Stoller 2010, p. 137). It is therefore notable that the ILR stations continued with their classical music ambition, rather than reining that back.

Table 9.8 Data summary sample week 1986

1986 w/c 3 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	95'10	31'50	3'40	20'10

1986 w/c 3 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	3,109,000

Note: BBC audience figures for individual Radio 3 programmes in a single week are not available from 1986 until the start of RAJAR in 1992

1986 w/c 3 May		
Number of different composers featured	117	
This Week's Composer: Ockegheim		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	14
	Schubert	9
	Beethoven	7
	Fauré	6

Radio 3 in the sample in 1986 week (Table 9.8) took the same broad approach to the classical music canonical repertoire. Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven once again dominated, with a number of plays for Fauré revealing the steady interest in French music. There was a little more that was potentially serendipitous. Ligeti escaped the ghetto of *Music in Our Time*, although only very late at night. Radio 3's *This Week's Composer* was Ockegheim, opening with "the earliest surviving setting of the Requiem Mass" (*Radio Times* 1968). A fifteenth century composer of liturgical music, his works fall outside the definition for classical music adopted in this thesis.

<sup>229</sup> *Mainly for Pleasure* was presented on Tuesday evening by Fritz Spiegel, who had presumably recanted his opposition to unscheduled sequence programming on the basis of which he had berated the output of Radio City 10 years previously – see Chapter 8 p. 127

<sup>230</sup> *IBA Annual Report* 1984/5, p. 38

There were three destination programmes during the week. In a series of *German Opera after Wagner*, Zemlinsky's *Kleider Machen Leute* was broadcast on the evening of Bank Holiday Monday, and Martinů's cycle of four one-act operas, *The Miracle of our Lady*, on Wednesday evening. Neither of these were obvious crowd-pleasers. A concert relayed on Tuesday evening from the Barbican, in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, consisted of Leonard Bernstein conducting Leonard Bernstein. At the other end of the scale, sequence programming continued in the form established by the mid-Eighties, but with a specified sequence of *Midweek Choice* replacing *Mainly for Pleasure* on Wednesday.

ILR was steadily building involvement between the metropolitan stations and regionally-based symphony orchestras.<sup>231</sup> The smaller stations were not to be left out. Radio 210 presented a series of concerts at the Wilde Theatre in Bracknell, and Chiltern Radio concerts by the Leipzig Gewandhaus. Radio Wyvern produced a documentary on the life of Elgar and Hereward Radio sent the Roth String Quartet of Peterborough to Salzburg as finalists in the EBU's 1986 string quartet competition. Although the report of the Peacock Committee (1986) endorsed all that the ILR companies might have wished in terms of potential deregulation (Stoller 2010, p. 160), there was no sign of any lack of enthusiasm or ambition for classical music output in 1986. Peacock recommended – as his Committee had been set up to do – the privatisations of Radio 1 and Radio 2 but proposed leaving Radio 3 largely untouched.

Table 9.9 Data summary sample week 1987

1987 w/c 2 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	93'35	34'45	3'00	17'35

1987 w/c 2 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	3,653,000

1987 w/c 2 May		
Number of different composers featured	131	
This Week's Composer: Rachmaninov		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	12
	Mendelssohn	7
	Haydn	6
	Brahms, Ravel	5
	Schubert, Schumann, Britten	5

There were intimations by 1987 of major changes which would impact significantly upon listeners and audiences for classical music radio. John Drummond in June won the contest with Ian McIntyre to be Controller of Music, Proms Director and Controller, Radio 3. That was part of the process which saw the BBC Music Division disbanded and replaced by a Radio 3 Music Department, a further break with the founding philosophy of Third. The BBC governors sacked Alistair Milne, appointing Michael

<sup>231</sup> IBA Annual Report 1986/7, p. 40

Checkland in his place. Checkland in turn appointed David Hatch as Managing Director, Radio.

The Green Paper on Broadcasting (1987) envisaged Radio 3 (and Radios 1 and 2) being virtually continuous music stations (*The Listener* 1987). It also foreshadowed the surrender of BBC frequencies for Independent National Radio, leading to what the BBC in its five-year strategy paraded as a “leaner, fitter Radio 3” remaining “the nation’s premier cultural service” (*The Times* 1987). Radio 3 was to be broadcast only on VHF and carry 90 minutes each weekday of schools programmes. These changes were not to be implemented until 1990, and their impact is discussed in the following Chapter.

For ILR, the Green Paper effectively announced the imminent demise of *independent* radio, and its replacement by *commercial* radio (Stoller 2010). This was given extra force by the decision of Capital Radio to seek a full listing on the London Stock Exchange in February. Capital remained at that time the major provider and promoter of classical music among the ILR stations, but this ambition was not to survive into the next decade with a stock market quote to sustain. However, the effect was not felt immediately and the process of ditching public service output – and classical music programmes along with it – was not accomplished until 1990. The IBA noted that

despite constant pressure on programme budgets, independent radio maintained a strong commitment to serious music. Most stations retained a weekly slot, combining music and performance with reviews of local events... Programmers are developing, with increasing success, the art of presenting serious music in a style attractive to mainstream audiences.<sup>232</sup>

The end of the requirement for ILR stations to simulcast on AM and FM provided an opportunity for some to experiment with more classical music. That they chose to do so is further evidence that ILR was going beyond what was required by statutory or regulatory fiat. Piccadilly Radio in Manchester, for example, took full advantage of the opportunity to split its frequencies and offer prestige classical music concerts with the Hallé.<sup>233</sup>

BBC output in 1987, now all back on Radio 3, was much in line with previous years in terms of quantity and balance. What if anything stands out? Not obscurity, despite Drummond’s claim when he took over later in the year that “less time shall be devoted to the obscure works of obscure men” (*The Times* 1987a). Drummond was the “champion of opening the doors to Europe”,<sup>234</sup> but he had misinformed himself about where Radio 3 had got to before he took over as Controller. In the 1987 sample week (Table 9.9), a concert by the BBCSO of works by Per Nørgaard from the Brighton Festival on Saturday evening was the only obviously modern/contemporary output over the weekend of the sample week, and listeners had *Baker’s Dozen* across on Radio 4 to console them if needed.<sup>235</sup> On weekdays there was, if anything, even less. *Music in Our Time* on Thursday was one of two editions of recorded electro-acoustic music

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<sup>232</sup> IBA Annual Report 1985/6, p. 37

<sup>233</sup> TV & Radio 1987, p. 144

<sup>234</sup> Interview with Gillian Reynolds 29 October 2014

<sup>235</sup> No *Radio Times* listings are available for this series of programmes, which ran between 1977 and 1988. However, an LP compilation issued by BBC Records in 1976 (REB 247) included single movements of works by Delius, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Puccini, along with songs by Dvořák, Canteloube and Puccini and other light classical works. On that basis, it is assumed that the programme (just) falls outside the definition of classical music radio established in Chapter 2.

(outside the definition of classical music adopted for this thesis), but being between 11.10pm and 11.57pm it was hardly an intrusion into mainstream classical music listening. There was a bit of contemporary – but not extreme – British music, a very little Honegger and Damase late on Friday evening, but otherwise this was the central canonic repertoire all week. There were more composers played in the sample week than usual, but the additional numbers were made up by minor – often light – classical composers. There was less Beethoven than usual, with only three plays. However the First Viennese School still dominated, with Mozart, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Brahms, Schubert and Schuman to the fore, leavened by five performances each of works by Ravel and Britten.

Little had changed by the 1988 sample week (Table 9.10). Drummond had certainly ensured that the Radio 3 audience rediscovered Beethoven, whose works received more plays in 1988 than any composer across all of the sample weeks of this thesis. Along with extensive playing of Mozart, the central canonic repertoire was dominant. Equally, a large number of composers were included, notably in programmes linking relatively unknown composers either by their nationality (for example American songs, with works by Barber, Copland and Ives in the sample week) or by a sub-genre of classical music such as *17<sup>th</sup> Century Chamber Music* on Monday morning featuring Froberger, Schmeltzer and Biber).

Table 9.10 Data summary sample week 1988

1988 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	95'40	40'30	1'30	18'25

1988 w/c 7 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	3,410,000

1988 w/c 7 May		
Number of different composers featured	125	
This Week's Composer: Dvořák		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	19
	Mozart	14
	Schubert	5
	Dvořák	5

Typical of Drummond's time as Controller, the sample week included a continuation of Radio 3's Australian Season. If any listener chose to tune in they could hear on Tuesday afternoon, for example, *Figures in a Landscape*, works by "Antipodean composers and their response to the environment" including Mills, Butterley, Antill, Sculthorpe, Sunderland and Grainger – all but Grainger probably heard for the first time (and quite possibly for the last too). The only two operas of the week featured a rarely heard Australian work, *Fly* by Conyngham, on records, along with Donizetti's comic

opera, *La Fille du Regiment*, in a recording from the Sydney Opera House the previous year of the Australian Opera Company.<sup>236</sup>

Much of the programming was undeniably aimed at a popular audience, although by no means all. *Morning Concert* every weekday and *Mainly for Pleasure* each weekday afternoon both offered highly accessible mainstream material. The Australians in *Music in our Time* could be balanced against revivals on record of the piano playing of Solomon on the Saturday afternoon of the sample week and the conducting of Karajan on Monday afternoon. Then again, a live relay from the Concertgebouw, Haarlem of an EBU 20th anniversary season concert of works by Messiaen, de Leeuw and Chausson, was the main featured item of the week and broadcast on Monday evening.

The impression given is one which was to last right through until the end of Drummond's time, that a great deal of popular music was offered at a reasonably undemanding level, that there was some ambitious and unusual programming – although away from the avant-garde mainstream – but that little attempt was made to relate one to the other. The only feature output of the sample week which was music-related was *Music Weekly*, broadcast in the peak time of Sunday morning and then repeated on Monday afternoon.<sup>237</sup>

In ILR meanwhile, classical music programming continued, but on a downward curve as the end of this type of output came closer. Neither the IBA's *Annual Report* nor its *Handbook* for 1988 make any significant mention of classical music output, a sign of how far the regulator's priorities had shifted. Capital Radio, however, by this stage a public company, maintained its support of the Wren Orchestra. Kevin Appleby, Orchestra Manager of the Wren from 1989 and later General Manager, recalls that the Wren was still backing the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballets at the end of the decade. Capital's personality DJs were happy to plug concerts if they thought them accessible, another sign of the extent to which the previously-sceptical ILR folk had come to value their classical output:

When [the Wren] started, it was different, because there was a sense that classical music was still that elite art form that people didn't engage with. However, if the *Collection* on a Sunday night offered two hours of classical music, potentially you'd listen to it if Kenny Everett said to you, "Don't miss the next Wren Orchestra gig"...Chris Tarrant wouldn't talk about the Mahler Eight at the Royal Albert Hall. What he would talk about is, "Oh, don't forget, come to Kenwood on Saturday night, it's the Capital Radio Music Festival..."<sup>238</sup>

In 1989, there were at last some efforts on Radio 3 to link the higher-brow output with the popular. The 1989 sample week (Table 9.11) is notable for a revival in the number of features about classical music, and with it the attempt to start to educate an audience attracted by popular output. As well as *Music Weekly* on Sunday morning and Monday afternoon, there was an interesting discussion in *Third Ear* early on Thursday evening between Oliver Knussen and Nicholas Kenyon (soon to be elevated to the Controllorship of Radio 3) about the place of the modern symphony orchestra. The

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<sup>236</sup> Drummond's enthusiasm for featured weekends, weeks or seasons is discussed further in Chapter 10 p. 170

<sup>237</sup> In the temporary absence of *Talking About Music*

<sup>238</sup> Interview with Kevin Appleby April 2013. He also recalls that the accompanying fireworks were a significant attraction. "I remember an English Heritage representative saying that the Capital Music Festival concert had a budget twice as big for fireworks than any other night in the season!" (Personal communication 29 November 2014)

intervals of several concerts were adorned not by the unrelated talks which had previously been placed there but by features on the music itself. Beyond this, David Owen Norris presented *The Worms* on Friday evening, “a down-to-earth look at the grassroots of music”, while on Tuesday afternoon there was *An Afternoon with Ravel*, billed by the Guardian as “a dramatised conversation”,<sup>239</sup> and reviewed in *The Listener* (December 1988) as being

dense in significant information, crammed full with quotable remarks, and...prevented...from resembling a vintage BBC scripted interview.

Table 9.11      Data summary sample week 1989

1989 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	110'40	29'30	5'00	17'30

1989 w/c 6 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	2,750,000

1989 w/c 6 May Number of different composers featured	112	
Composers of the Week: Mozart's Rivals in Vienna, Ravel		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Mozart	13
	Beethoven	11
	Haydn	6
	Mendelssohn	5
	Schubert	5

There were four operas during the sample week in 1989. For two of these, Radio 3 was again indebted to its European broadcasting partners: Prokofiev's *War and Peace* on Saturday evening, from French Radio and *Masaniello Furioso* by Keiser on Monday evening as part of the EBU Concert Series from Bremen via Norddeutscher Rundfunk. Sandwiched between those, on Sunday, making three operas on successive evenings, was a performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mlada* from London's Barbican Hall, while on Thursday afternoon there was a performance on record of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. More live music was used generally, again taking advantage of offerings from other broadcasters but also of a wider range of domestic orchestras: the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, the BBC Philharmonic, the Ulster Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the BBC Welsh and Scottish orchestras and the Northern Sinfonia, although remarkably nothing from the BBCSO itself.

Only 112 composers were featured during the sample week, well down on previous years. The move towards the popular centre is evidenced by there not having been a single play all week of Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, nor any of the post-war modernists except in *Music in our Time* on Thursday evening. The dominant composers as ever were Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and Schubert, with Mendelssohn also in favour. Perhaps equally significant is the 'second-ranked' list of composers: Britten, Elgar,

<sup>239</sup> *Guardian* 20 December 1987 (when the item was first broadcast as part of a BBC mini-season marking the 50th anniversary of the death of Ravel).

Ravel and Brahms all received multiple plays. A comparison of *Morning Concert* between 1979 and 1989 reveals that the taste for novelty had faded a bit. 1979 featured Leopold Mozart, Michael Haydn, Fanny Mendelssohn and CPE Bach; 1989 preferred Wolfgang Mozart, Joseph Haydn, Felix Mendelssohn and JS Bach.

This is not to say that only conventional composers were given airtime. *Composers of the Week* featured “Mozart’s Rivals in Vienna”, and extended beyond Salieri to such as Vanhal, Paisiello and Kozeluh. There was even a smattering of women composers: Clara Schumann, Grace Williams, Rebecca Clarke and Elisabeth Lutyens. Add in Radio 3 relative favourites Fanny Mendelssohn and Ethel Smythe, played from time to time on Radio 3 but not during the sample week, and there was a hint of a chance to move the classical music canonic repertoire away from being wholly male.<sup>240</sup>

Across in the private sector, the IBA had acquiesced in the wiping out of most public service obligations for ILR in the new legislation after 1990. That need not have been the case. The Broadcasting Act retained an obligation on the new commercial radio stations to broadcast news, material of local applicability and of high quality. The Authority made no effort to protect one of the great and unexpected successes of its time of responsibility for public service radio. Part of this reflects a change of personnel at the IBA – John Thompson had retired, and John Whitney had returned to the commercial world – although I have argued elsewhere that there was also a failure of institutional nerve (Stoller 2010, pp. 173-4).

The ILR companies simply took an opportunistic approach to the ending of the old regime, cutting their wider programme output (and costs). Fiona Talkington, then the presenter of Radio 210’s *Masterworks*, recalls from 1989:

I don’t remember having a sense of a long run up to it ending, other than one day [the station Managing Director] told me along with all the other specialist presenters that *Masterworks* was to go...I remember feeling that this wasn’t just some whim of 210, but this was general policy that the music world on radio as we knew it was about to change.<sup>241</sup>

Capital’s Peter James says that there was

no official end to classical music on Capital...There was a total revamp of weekend programmes...and other programmes like Brian Rust’s weekly vintage jazz *Mardi Gras* bit the dust at the same time. Probably drama went then too.<sup>242</sup>

Listeners though have long memories. Talkington again:

Still to this day postmen knock on my door with parcels and say “I remember working in the sorting office when you were on 210”. That was the beauty of 210. The loyal audience would happily listen...morning, noon or night...whether it happened to be classical music, or the rock show, or the country show.<sup>243</sup>

It is notable that barely a couple of years after making so much in its published pronouncements of the importance of classical music on ILR, the IBA spurned a chance to establish a classical music station in London as part of the belated extension of ILR through the ‘incremental’ licences (Stoller 2010). The applicant for this licence

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<sup>240</sup> See Chapter 12 p. 209

<sup>241</sup> Interview with Fiona Talkington 2 November 2012

<sup>242</sup> Personal communication from Peter James 28 September 2014

<sup>243</sup> Interview with Fiona Talkington 2 November 2012

argued that “what Capital Radio has done so well for pop we, or people like us, can do for classical music in London” (*The Times* 1989a) but they were not to be given that opportunity. Following the Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report (1988), which had foreshadowed the end of the restriction of needletime, even copyright arrangements seemed to be conspiring in favour of the broadcasting of commercially recorded pop music. The arrival of Classic FM just three years later seemed at this point most unlikely.

Yet, as related at the start of this Chapter, classical music briefly resumed centre stage internationally in November 1989, as it had not done since wartime.<sup>244</sup> The Barenboim and Bernstein concerts were perhaps rather contrived set-pieces. Not so the events in Prague:

It was 7:36pm in the opulent art nouveau Smetana Hall in the People’s Palace. As the last strains of *My Country* by the Czech composer, Smetana, faded away, the conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra turned to the audience and raised his hand in a victory sign. The audience of 3000 stood up cheering. A man in a bow tie strode to the podium to read the historic message. The news of the mass resignation of the politburo electrified the hall. People with eyes moist from the emotion of the music wept. (*The Times* 1989b)

Radio 3 seems to have stood apart from this musical celebration. It was one of the few European broadcasting organisations not to take the relay of Leonard Bernstein’s Christmas concert from Berlin.<sup>245</sup> Drummond was to lead a Berlin weekend on Radio 3 the following year, but nothing about the BBC’s radio music set-up tended towards spontaneity. That weakness, betrayed accidentally, is arguably symbolic of where classical music output had got to on Radio 3 at the end of the decade. The music was there, both popular and highbrow (though still rarely adequately linked) but there was an absence of the sort of passion which could connect with the mass audience. No wonder there was so much space for Classic FM to occupy; and no wonder either that a new Controller was to be tasked with – and achieve – a recasting of the BBC’s whole approach.

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<sup>244</sup> See above p. 139-40

<sup>245</sup> None of the *Radio Times* listings over the period of Christmas and New Year 1989/90 includes this concert. If it was broadcast unannounced as a last-minute alteration, there is no evidence to that effect.



## **Chapter 10**

### **The Nineties**

#### **Finale nobilmente**

*general history and literature review*

*classical music radio 1990-1992*

*the recasting of Radio 3*

*the arrival of Classic FM*

*classical music radio 1993-5*

*comparing Radio 3 and Classic FM*

*content comparisons*

*audience comparisons*

*concluding the narrative*

The Nineties saw further fundamental changes for classical music radio, and the third high water mark for inclusive and accessible programming. The 1990 Broadcasting Act broke the final BBC broadcasting monopoly by sanctioning national commercial radio – and thus, indirectly, Classic FM – while permitting the abandonment by ILR of its public service activities including the broadcasting of classical music. Almost simultaneously, concerned at the lack of wider appeal of Radio 3, the BBC took advantage of the departure of Drummond as Controller, Radio 3 in 1992 to appoint Nicholas Kenyon, whom they hoped would be a moderniser and populariser. Drummond embraced Gardam's ironic description of him as having been "tainted by [the] experience" of BBC internal politics.<sup>246</sup> The station was reinvigorated by a combination of accessible popular output, high ambition in the presentation of serious music – culminating for this thesis in the *Fairest Isle* programme series across 1995 – and cheerful iconoclasm, allowing innovations such as the *Blue Peter Prom* from 1999. The positive symbiosis between a recast Radio 3 and an initially culturally aspirational Classic FM represented the third high point of post-war UK classical music broadcasting.

These were also years when classical music briefly entered the mainstream of popular culture, enjoying but coming to the end of the great CD boom (Feist 1990, p. 36). That success was bracketed by *Nessun Dorma* being adopted as the theme of the football World Cup in 1990, and the hugely successful *Three Tenors* concerts four years later (Dane and Laing, 1998). As a result of it being broadcast on Classic FM, Gorecki's highly modern *Symphony of Sorrows* remarkably reached number six in the UK overall album chart.<sup>247</sup> The commodification of classical music had become ubiquitous and inescapable, and radio providers could not ignore it.

After a review of the general history of the decade and the existing literature, this Chapter will set out the historical narrative for classical music radio between 1990 and 1992, and the recasting of Radio 3 within that. It will then examine how Classic FM came about, before resuming the historical narrative from 1993 to 1995. Next, it will offer a quantitative content comparison between the two stations, comparing also the

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<sup>246</sup> Interview with Gillian Reynolds 29 October 2014. Drummond's (2000) autobiography is entitled *Tainted by Experience*

<sup>247</sup> <http://www.nonesuch.com/artists/henryk-gorecki> (accessed 21 January 2014). Nonesuch Records issued in 1992 a recording featuring Dawn Upshaw and the London Sinfonietta which was taken up by the newly-launched Classic FM

audiences achieved, before considering the nature of the positive symbiosis between Radio 3 and Classic FM in the mid Nineties.

### 10.1 General history and literature review: the Nineties

UK politics and economics in the Nineties and beyond constituted the continuation of Thatcherism by other means. Almost the last act of the troubled Major administration was to provide the legislative framework for the introduction of digital television and digital radio (Stoller 2010). Beyond the end of the period covered by this thesis, successive new Labour Governments under Blair continued advancing the primacy of 'the market', not least in broadcasting.<sup>248</sup> National economic discomfiture at the start of the Nineties soon gave way to increasing prosperity and a prolonged boom which was to last until 2008.

Political biographies and memoirs apart, there is little general historical scholarship on this decade. Such as there is illustrates the perils of writing 'contemporary history'. Reviewing Turner's (2013) general history of the Nineties, Aaronovitch has noted:

There is a question about how much time can elapse after complex events for a proper history usefully to be written. Taking the example of the Nineties, the principals are not just still alive but many of them are still active and therefore have reputations to protect; the Cabinet papers for the period are not available; the political battles are still being fought and the meticulously researched micro-histories – upon which any portmanteau history must rely – simply have not been published yet. (*The Times* 2013)

That is not wholly true for broadcasting history. Curran and Seaton (2009) address significant contemporary issues concerning media and society. A major feature of the Nineties was the arrival of satellite television and of BSkyB, and Horsman (1997) captures that tale in a shrewd mixture of history and journalism, while the first Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) transmissions in September 1995 started a rather slow-motion radio revolution (Stoller 2010, Stoller in Mollgard ed., 2012), The would-be modernising of the BBC is covered by Born (2013), and in autobiography by Birt (2002). Service (in Doctor, ed. 2007) considers the evolution of the "post-modern" Proms. There is data about music sales, broadcasting and concert-going in *Cultural Trends*, while Wall (2009) and Selwood (1998) both consider aspects of public service radio in these years.

National commercial radio competition, in the form of Classic FM from September 1992, was the major single change in classical music radio at least since the creation of Radio 3 in 1970, and probably since the launch of the Third Programme. As the 'official historian' of Radio 3, Carpenter writes about Classic FM with some generosity, acknowledging that its "success was beyond dispute" by the beginning of 1993 (1996, p. 345), but remaining focused upon an analysis of the evolving BBC bureaucracy. Marwick (1990, p. 407) fails to spot Classic FM's place in the direct lineage of British classical music radio, seeing it as "markedly American in character, broadcasting little gobbets of classical music, and obsessed with compiling hit parades of classical recordings". Lüthje (2008) and Goggin (2006) provide European comparisons, with Germany and the Republic of Ireland respectively. Both serve *inter alia* to show how

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<sup>248</sup> *A New Future for Communications* (2002) Cmnd. 5010

Classic FM was more influenced by and faithful to the established tradition of serious music radio than were its continental avatars.

That apart, there is almost no published scholarship about either the reinvention of Radio 3 or the history and significance of Classic FM. Both are critical aspects of the culmination of the narrative history of classical music radio, and will be addressed in this thesis in that respect. More than that, however, they may be seen to be exemplars of the two great traditions: preserving and making available through radio the high art of classical music; and addressing, serving and encouraging popular appetite for this genre. In that, they confound the assumptions of Bourdieu (1984), LeMahieu (1988) and others, that the competence and willingness to embark on the appreciation of classical music requires innate, class-based pre-conditioning of the consumer and service from the producer on that same stratified basis only. Neither station was wholly fish or fowl during these years: Radio 3 avowedly wanted to be more popular; Classic FM – at least in the period considered by this thesis – sought the respectability of intellectual aspiration. Together, they represented the logical culmination of classical music radio, and are paradigmatic of how that genre illustrates the changing relationship between class, taste, culture and society in the UK between 1945 and 1995.

## 10.2 Classical music radio, 1990-1992

Table 10.1 Data summary sample week 1990

1990 w/c 12 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	92'30	32'40	-	22'00

1990 w/c 12 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	3,130,000

1990 w/c 12 May		
Number of different composers featured	112	
Composers of the Week: Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	13
	Bach	10
	Debussy	7
	Mozart	7
	Beethoven	13

As the Nineties began, composer Michael Tippett, now far from his antagonistic days within the Third Programme Defence Society,<sup>249</sup> reached his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday and Radio 3 “cleared its schedules” in celebration (*The Times* 1990). Otherwise, Drummond’s schedules were by then well-established. The weekday schedule was built around the daily *Morning Concert* and two *Composers of the Week*, (one on weekdays in the morning and an evening repeat of the previous week’s composer). *Morning Sequence*

<sup>249</sup> See Chapter 6 p. 80

was mostly sequence programming<sup>250</sup> or grouped by rather contrived attempts to provide a linking theme for a range of usually fairly popular works: *Inspired by Israel* on 7 May, the *Georgian Music Room* on 15 May and *Always it's Spring* on 18 May. *Mainly for Pleasure*, on weekday late afternoons was another indicator, as was Friday afternoon's *The Works*, and sub-titled *TGIF*.<sup>251</sup>

The 1990 sample week (Table 10.1) saw the first performance of Hans Werner Henze's *Das Verratene Meer*, based on Mishima's novel *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With The Sea*, and a production in Russian of a lesser-known opera by Tchaikovsky, *Vakula the Smith*. Typical of Drummond's approach was the Berlin Weekend just before the sample week which involved extensive relays of live or specially recorded concerts, together with feature material. Drummond regarded this – along with a similar weekend the following year from Minneapolis and St Paul – “as peaks in his achievement for Radio 3” (Ponsonby 2009, p. 110).

Table 10.2 Data summary sample week 1991

1991 w/c 4 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	96'25	41'05	4'35	28'40

1991 w/c 4 May Audiences	Weekly reach (adults 15+)
Radio 3	2,695,000

1991 w/c 4 May		
Number of different composers featured	112	
Composers of the Week: Poulenc, Gesualdo, Victoria		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	12
	Mozart	10
	Chopin	8
	Brahms, Dvořák	6
	Beethoven	13

That pattern continued in 1991, although in the sample week (Table 10.2) the *Composers of the Week* were less popular than usual – Poulenc, Gesualdo and Victoria. Major operas continued to have their place, whether the reasonably accessible such as Verdi's *Simon Boccanera*, broadcast on the Saturday evening of 4 May, or the frankly obscure, such as *Die Ferner Klang* by Franz Schreker on 13 May. The latter was billed in the *Radio Times* as an “erotic and mystical opera (1912) about a young musician's search for the source of the distant sound he hears in his imagination” (*Radio Times* 1991). Generally, the usual composers dominate the listings: Beethoven and Mozart are out front, with Dvořák, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt some way behind on numbers of plays. A Cole Porter musical, *Anything Goes*, was broadcast on Bank Holiday Monday afternoon. Most of the output came from an extended canonic repertoire, which now stretched back to Byrd (*Morning Concert*, 5

<sup>250</sup> Programmes where the works to be played are not given any public listings.

<sup>251</sup> But not to be confused with the television programme, *TFIF*, with which Radio 1 presenter Chris Evans achieved some notoriety in the Late Nineties

May) and forward to Per Nørgaard (*Music in Our Time*, 9 May) but with the overwhelming emphasis in the established chronological and taste centre.

While the broad output and the pattern of listening seemed stable, debate was stirring as the possibility of competition became clearer. A leader in *The Times* (1991c) on 28 January spoke of Radio 3 as being “so long sunk in musicological elitism”. The possible arrival of competition – though at this stage by no means certain – also prompted debate about the impact of monopoly. Janet Daley, from a neo-Liberal position<sup>252</sup> wrote in *The Times* (1991a) that the debate was

not between those who wish to replace Mozart with Mantovani. To the extent that one could call the defender’s attitude elitist, it is elitism based not on quality but on esoterica...there are those who frankly regard Radio 3 as the official outlet for the musical establishment: as a promoter of British composers, to protect the British orchestral players and a noticeboard for what those on the inside like to call “the living tradition” of British music.

One may speculate how many in Radio 3 regarded the second part of this catalogue as criticisms rather than compliments. Nevertheless, those who felt aggrieved attacked Daley in turn, framing the debate in terms of likely new commercial competition. Yehudi Menuhin, for example, responded that:

It is this offering of an essential background to informed and sophisticated opinion and taste in all realms, from the political to the musical, that has created the very hallmark of British leadership and its standards, both broad and high, in so many spheres. The new commercial classical music radio channel will no doubt profitably provide a favourite fare of most beloved works, on which, incidentally, no royalties will be owing and no musicians costs incurred... We will need Radio 3 as it is now more than ever. (*The Times* 1991b)

His assertions about royalties misunderstand British copyright arrangements.<sup>253</sup> Arguably, both sides over-stated their case to make their general points about mass and popular culture in UK society; equally, neither spotted the symbiosis that was to emerge.

Peter Ackroyd published his novel *English Music* in 1992. His youthful protagonist, Timothy, comes finally to understand the power of the composer over what is heard, and himself to hear the ‘English music’. With the changes in Radio 3 that year, that may be thought to apply also to the BBC. Self-evidently, 1992 was the year of change. Drummond left Radio 3 to be replaced by Nicholas Kenyon; Radio 3 ceased broadcasting on AM (29 February) with the frequency being transferred to the Radio Authority for eventual use by Virgin Radio; John Birt became BBC Director General; and Classic FM began broadcasting on 7 September.

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<sup>252</sup> Daley says of herself that “she began her political life on the Left”...before “moving to Britain (and to the Right) in 1965”. <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/author/janetdaley/> (accessed 24 September 2014).

<sup>253</sup> Classic FM paid handsomely for its use of commercially recorded music, to PPL and – for all composers, performers and arrangers - PRS, but unlike the BBC it funded individual elite musicians only when it paid to broadcast their own concerts.

Table 10.3 Data summary sample week 1992

1992 w/c 2 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes
Radio 3	97'20	36'25	2'30	26'30

1992 w/c 2 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach (adults 15+)	Weekly reach % of All adults
Radio 3	80,000	0.2	214,000	0.4	2,912,000	6

1992 w/c 2 May Number of different composers featured	111	
Composers of the Week: Beethoven		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	20
	Mozart	10
	Haydn, Stravinsky	6
	Bach, Maxwell Davies	6

Even though the sample week in May 1992 (Table 10.3) showed only incremental change from previous years, the imminent arrival of Classic FM now had the BBC's attention. A research study in May (BBC WAC R9/1267/1 May 1990) addressed audience responses to what it called Classic FM's "test transmissions".<sup>254</sup> It noted that people had reacted positively to Classic FM, with 50 per cent saying they liked it a lot and hardly anyone disliking the station. There was little gender differentiation in the response, nor any significant class variation, although unsurprisingly older people were more likely to respond positively. The research conclusion was that Classic FM would be a significant challenge to the BBC:

Radio 3 listeners may be 'closet' listeners. They are more hesitant about praising Classic FM, but nevertheless, many were attracted to their repertoire. As such, Radio 3's share is more vulnerable than its weekly reach. Radio 2 has more of a potential problem. Radio 2 listeners who like Classic FM may desert Radio 2, and hence share and reach are vulnerable. And although Classic FM is unlikely to damage the strong parts of Radio 4's schedule, it may represent an alternative when listeners do not want speech radio.<sup>255</sup>

Radio 3's output during the week that Classic FM launched shows that it had firmly embraced sequence programming. *On Air*, *Morning Sequence* and *In Tune* dominate the weekday daytime schedule. The whole of Sunday morning is covered by two such programmes, *Morning Concert* and *Brian Kay's Sunday Morning*, and Saturday by *Morning Concert* and *Record Release*. Radio 3's *Composer of the Week* during Classic's launch was the canonically uncontroversial Tchaikovsky. Radio 3 broadcast the Proms throughout that September week, but had to devote Saturday from 10.25am to 7.30pm to live commentary of cricket's NatWest Trophy final from Lord's.

<sup>254</sup> See below p. 178

<sup>255</sup> *Will Classic FM threaten the BBC?* May 1990 BBC WAC R9/1267/1

### 10.3 The recasting of Radio 3

Thirteen years earlier, Kenyon had castigated the outgoing controller of Radio 3, Stephen Hearst, for judging

the acceptability of the BBC's programmes to the public by the listening figures they attract. The consequences, clearly, were dire. How can the BBC preserve its role of 'public service broadcasting'...if the beastly competitor is turning out programmes which are fun? (*The Listener* 1979)

Now Checkland and Hatch brought him in as Controller Radio 3 in March, to cope with precisely that conundrum, and it is they who should be seen as the true instigators of change at Radio 3, along with Kenyon:

We told Nick what we wanted to do – it wasn't so much content, it was more about style and accessibility, in terms of the tone of the presentation and the way programmes were organised, and generally loosening the way that music had been presented.<sup>256</sup>

For Kenyon himself, the situation he inherited was dauntingly high-minded:

John Drummond, though he would fiercely say he had made many changes to Radio 3, and many of them for the better, was still on a very high intellectual level, and was considered by BBC management to be off-putting. I think there was a mood shared within the musical world that the announcers were a bit stuffy, and the programming was a bit set in its ways.<sup>257</sup>

Belatedly, the BBC was remembering that there was a substantial underserved potential market for classical music radio, termed "Radio 3's missing listeners". A research survey conducted in June (BBC WAC R9/1286/1 August 1992) identified far more people who actively consumed classical music than listened to Radio 3, representing

a large potential audience for Radio 3, [but] Classic FM will of course target these people, and has the advantage of being a new station with a blast of novelty about it, that may make people try it rather than Radio 3.

A report on the listening patterns in the first four weeks of Classic FM broadcasts (BBC WAC R9/1235/1 October 1992) noted that in achieving a substantial early audience

Classic FM has probably gained a small proportion of its audience from Radio 3, but has also gained a new listening *by appropriating some of the potential audience that Radio 3 has been trying to attract*. (my emphasis).

There are echoes here of BBC attitudes in earlier years. The size of potential audience identified in 1992 is broadly equivalent with that identified by Silvey back in 1946 (BBC WAC R9/9/11, 6 November 1947). Just as before, the BBC was taking a proprietorial attitude towards them; they *ought* to be listening, and steps need to be taken to *make*

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<sup>256</sup> Interview with Sir Michael Checkland, 20 September 2013

<sup>257</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon 15 July 2013

them listen. That an upstart commercial competitor might attract them instead was unthinkable, almost *lèse-majesté*.<sup>258</sup>

Once installed at the BBC, Kenyon urgently set about recasting Radio 3. Carpenter has written at length and in detail about the internal battles surrounding Kenyon's work in changing Radio 3 (1996, pp. 337-352). While Kenyon observes that "the producers were entirely focussed on internal battles, which they ran with consummate enthusiasm",<sup>259</sup> for the listener it was simply the programmes which counted. Equally it is a mistake to assume that the changes were only a competitive response. As Checkland makes clear, competition was really just a catalyst for overdue change: "the BBC would probably have been happy to have carried on, and it needed something really to jog it. It was rather like ITV arriving in the Fifties".<sup>260</sup> The arrival of Classic FM was an opportunity not to be missed. Given that "some Radio 3 devotees undoubtedly think that Kenyon is knocking the last nail in the coffin of civilisation" (*The Times* 1992b), he would have been hard pressed to make as many changes as he did without the opportunity and the excuse of competition.

Kenyon was able to drop the 17-year-old discussion show *Music Weekly*, reduce the amount of drama and end the documentary programme, *Soundings*. He introduced a new late night live arts programme, and a three-hour show presented by Brian Kay on Sunday mornings. There were also two new music shows on weekday early mornings and evenings, confirming the place of sequence output: *On Air* in the mornings and *In Tune* every weekday evening. They annoyed the elitists no end. Senior Labour politician Gerald Kaufman claimed that the station was "plunging down market" and would "degenerate into junk radio". Kenyon was backed by *The Times* leader-writer, but otherwise received little support among the self-appointed defenders of the highbrow (*The Times* 1992c).

Kenyon's personal mission was clear:

I always regarded myself as an enthusiast and a communicator on behalf of classical music, and that was what underlaid how we should be broadcasting; a knowledgeable, informed companion. And so it's worth saying that we did invent quite a few programmes then which survive to this day, Michael Berkeley on *Private Passions* and *In Tune* which eventually settled down with a single lead presenter, Sean Rafferty.<sup>261</sup>

He concentrated on presentation styles and personnel initially, rather than major changes to the content (although these would come later). But he was concerned to

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<sup>258</sup> One reaction to the arrival of Classic FM was a poster campaign during September, designed by Saatchi & Saatchi concentrated in London. One series of posters focused on drivetime, aiming to promote Radio 3's late afternoon programming but without specifically naming *On Air* or *In Tune*. The other, a *Great Composers* series, aimed to communicate the station's role in live music. It was not a success. Research showed that "awareness of the posters was low". Even in the London area only 16 per cent had noticed any of them. Even where they saw them, "people tended to take away fairly general messages about Radio 3 playing classical music, rather than the specific messages". Worse still, "the adjective used most often to describe the Great Composers series was 'boring'". The Radio 3 poster campaign. (BBC WAC R9/1304/1 October 1992)

<sup>259</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon, 15 July 2013

<sup>260</sup> Interview with Sir Michael Checkland, 20 September 2013

<sup>261</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon, 15 July 2013



acknowledge, accelerate and implement change even if he set about that with what he now considers might have been a little too much haste:

I wanted a much more integrated system where people who talked on Radio 3, talked from a position of knowledge and enthusiasm, and I would say, looking back at it, that we probably changed too much, too soon...[but, as] de Tocqueville says about the French Government in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the worst thing about change is when you leave it too late.

The actual content did not change hugely. Looking at the output data for the equivalent sample weeks from May 1990 until May 1996 – therefore starting even before Classic FM was more than an unlikely possibility – what stands out is the consistency of output allied to a steady growth in sequence programming (Table 10.4), suggesting that what Kenyon altered was indeed style and approach rather than musical content:

Table 10.4 Radio 3 classical music format 1990-1995

Radio 3	Total classical music output (Hours and minutes)	Record based programmes	Sequence programmes	Feature programmes
1990	92'30	32'40	22'00	-
1991	96'25	41'50	28'40	4'35
1992	97'20	36'35	26'30	2'30
1993	95'50	43'35	34'30	1'40
1994	99'45	35'00	39'30	3'00
1995	101'05	31'00	38'15	3'50

Consistency in the actual output is evident also in the number of composers whose works were featured in programme listings (Table 10.5).<sup>262</sup>

Table 10.5 Radio 3 classical music composers featured 1990-1995

Radio 3	Number of composers	Most frequently played (number of plays)
1990	112	Beethoven (13) Bach (10) Debussy (7) Mozart (7)
1991	115	Beethoven (12) Mozart (10) Chopin (8) Brahms (6) Dvořák (6)
1992	111	Beethoven (20) Mozart (10) Haydn (6) Stravinsky (6) Bach (6) Maxwell Davies (6)
1993	114	Mozart (10) Schubert (9) Brahms (8) Haydn (7)
1994	109	Dvořák (9) Beethoven (8) Bach (8)
1995	107	Brahms (8) Britten (6) Debussy (6) Ravel (6)

It was not the impact of Classic FM's output which somehow 'drove' Radio 3 in the Nineties towards the centre of the canonic repertoire. This was ground which it had always, assertively occupied, evident in the sample selection of composers featured in *Composer of the Week* (Table 10.6) in the sample weeks.

<sup>262</sup> One caution is needed in considering these data. The source of them is the *Radio Times*, and some of the sequence programmes – notably *In Tune* – do not have any listings. The information is therefore more valid as comparative than as absolute figures.

Table 10.6 Radio 3 Composers of the Week 1990-1995

Radio 3	Composer of the Week
	(Sample weeks)
1990	Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn
1991	Poulenc, Gesualdo, Victoria
1992	Beethoven, Barber
1993	Handel
1994	Dvořák, Fauré
1995	Fauré, Brahms

It was the manner of presentation rather than the matter which needed to be addressed first, if Radio 3 was to achieve the optimum fusion of ambitious output with accessibility of listening, linking the highbrow with the broader middlebrow in output and audience appeal.

#### 10.4 The arrival of Classic FM<sup>263</sup>

Classic FM was the first of the three national commercial radio stations to be licensed by the new Radio Authority following its establishment by the Broadcasting Act 1990, and the only one on FM. The IBA had been responsible for introducing ILR, the first challenge to the BBC's monopoly of classical music radio. It fell to its successor, the Radio Authority, to license a national commercial station.<sup>264</sup> I have written at length elsewhere (Stoller 2010, pp. 202-4, 211-13) about the work of the Shadow Radio Authority in planning how its three national channels should be disposed, and of the regulatory, Governmental and parliamentary to-ing and fro-ing which surrounded the eventual decision to make the only FM frequency a non-pop service – but by no means necessarily a classical music one.<sup>265</sup>

It is tempting to see the licensing of a classical music competitor to the BBC either as an act of deliberate policy; or as a Thatcher-style punishing of Radio 3 (akin to the simultaneous dismantling of the old ITV system); or as part of the lineage of ILR radio which had preceded the commercial radio settlement of 1990. Only the last of those three suggested causal links stands up to critical examination.

A classical music service was never prescribed by Government or regulator, and came within a whisker of not happening. The licence, advertised on 11 January 1991, was required by statute to be awarded to the highest cash bidder, irrespective of programme format (so long as it was not pop music). After the original Classic FM consortium announced that it was withdrawing from the race (*Marketing Week* 1992), a revised group only came up with an application at the last moment. The driving force behind the new consortium, Ralph Bernard, recalls that “everyone thought we had

<sup>263</sup> I have reflected above in Chapter 4 p. 43 about my own role as the regulator of commercial radio from 1995. The issues discussed here, however, all occurred before I took up that role.

<sup>264</sup> In the Broadcasting Act 1990, the IBA's responsibilities were split between three separate institutions: the Independent Television Commission, National Telecommunications Ltd and the Radio Authority.

<sup>265</sup> Speaking in the House of Lords in June, Minister of State Earl Ferrers revealed the Government's less than subtle understanding of pop music genres. “The Bill also now says that one of these stations must be a speech-based service and another must be devoted to music other than pop music – and I am sure that that will please some of your lordships. It will not all be ‘Thump, thump, thump!’” (*Hansard* 1990)

deliberately put our application in late to shock. The reality is we got it in so late because we cocked it up.”<sup>266</sup>

And initially, its application failed. The highest bid had come from First National Radio (FNR) with £1.75m. It proposed ‘Showtime’, a service of light popular music linked by a showbusiness theme and with an assurance that “music defined as ‘not pop music’ will form at least 75 per cent of all music broadcast” (Radio Authority Archive May 1991). Classic FM had only bid £0.67m. INR1 was duly awarded to Showtime on 4 July. However, FNR was unable to raise sufficient capital by the deadline of Friday 16 August.<sup>267</sup> The Authority therefore turned to Classic FM, offering the INR licence subject to the consortium demonstrating that it could raise the necessary funds. Classic FM delivered the necessary documents to the Authority at 11.40 am on 30 September, this time beating the deadline by just 20 minutes (*Financial Times* 1991). The UK got a commercially-funded national classical music radio station after an almost comedic sequence of events and by the skin of its teeth. Classic FM happened more through a series of accidents than as a result of deliberate policy by either Government or regulator.

Blake (1997) has argued that Classic FM came about as a result of Government action driven by the “conservative anti-establishment” who were hostile to Drummond’s embrace of new rather than traditional music on Radio 3. He claims they “demanded dismemberment of Radio 3 in recompense for Glock and Drummond’s confirmation of their prejudices” (Blake 1997, p. 64), the latter in a speech in June 1991. Accordingly, he believes that the Conservative Government decided

to sanction the creation of a new national radio station to broadcast ‘light’ classical music (mainly c. 1700-1850) in assumed opposition to the elitist BBC network. Classic FM duly began to operate in September 1992. (Blake 1997, p. 65)

This assertion flies in the face of the circumstances which led to the arrival of Classic FM as described above, and also its actual broadcast content. Blake presupposes a level of prescription about the station’s broadcast output which was wholly outwith the powers of either Government or regulator under the legislation, and which simply did not happen. The contractual obligation was solely to provide programming which was 75 per cent music – “predominantly classical and light classical music, but may include some film and stage music”. Up to 25 per cent of the music programming was permitted to be pop music (Radio Authority Archive September 1992). Within those limits, Classic FM’s music choice was a matter solely for the station itself.

There was some linkage between ILR’s classical music lineage and the arrival of Classic FM. There had been a maverick application in 1972 for the London General and Entertainment franchise – subsequently awarded to Capital Radio – for a light classical music station but that had come to nothing.<sup>268</sup> A consortium under the name of Classic FM had applied, unsuccessfully, for one of the so-called ‘incremental’ local

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<sup>266</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 19 November 2007

<sup>267</sup> Showtime had needed to raise £12m, given their ambitious business plan. Had they been more prudent in their proposals, it is wholly possible that the almost £10m they actually raised would have been enough to gain the licence, and to deny Classic FM (Stoller 2010, p. 213).

<sup>268</sup> Interview with John Thompson 16 December 2013

licences offered by the Radio Authority in December 1988.<sup>269</sup> The ultimately successful initiative came from GWR's Brunel Radio, which had broadcast a three-hour afternoon show – devised by Michael Bukht – on AM only, when it split its frequencies in 1988. Bernard recalls that:

We put together a schedule of popular classical music, and it sounded fantastic. People started talking about it in Wiltshire and in Bristol. It was a sea-change, because you had, for the first time, people in their thousands listening to local commercial radio and hearing classical music.<sup>270</sup>

Although the GWR board initially declined to apply for a national classical station, it was persuaded by Bernard and the Brunel experience to put together a consortium, which eventually linked up with the original Classic FM when the latter's supporters began to fall away.<sup>271</sup>

Classic FM began broadcasting at 6am on Monday, 7 September 1992. It had been able in advance to “play around with the programming in live time”.<sup>272</sup> The Radio Authority granted it six short term licences for three weeks for 24 February in Bath, Coventry, Durham, Edinburgh, southwest Manchester and Teddington, “to test the reaction to [Classic FM's] classical music programme format prior to the station's national launch” (Radio Authority Archive February 1992). BBC research into these trials concluded that

Classic FM is making classical music digestible. It is therefore much more attractive to most classical music listeners than Radio 3, which is believed to play long and heavy pieces. And perhaps ironically – Classic FM is seen to offer more choice than Radio 3, because it hardly counts as a choice if you do not like any of it. (BBC WAC R/1267/1 May 1992)

The station at its launch divided the commentariat. Steven Pettitt thought that it was “saccharine” and that culturally it would “contribute to the relegation of the status of serious music from high art to low entertainment” (*The Times* 1992e). Richard Ingrams on the other hand observed that:

There will be people – many of them, I imagine, working for Radio 3 – who will sneer at...an “undemanding” diet; I see nothing wrong with it. Personally I would rather listen to a single movement of a Mozart symphony than to a whole batch of bassoon concertos by CPE Bach. (*The Times* 1992d)

Brian McMaster, a former director of the Edinburgh Festival, believed that “it is wonderful to have a classical music station, and...fuddy-duddies like me will have to adjust to the style”. Just in case anyone doubted that the BBC class system was alive and well in Covent Garden, Nicholas Payne, director designate of the Royal Opera, came up with a quote which Ingrams's satirist colleagues on *Private Eye* would have been hard pressed to invent:

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<sup>269</sup> See above pp. 165-6

<sup>270</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013 – not actually for the first time at all, as Chapters 8 and 9 have shown

<sup>271</sup> Personal communication from Ralph Bernard 2 December 2014

<sup>272</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013

My radio is permanently tuned to Radio 3, but my PA really believes that classical music in bite sized chunks is going to be the trend. (*The Times* 1992f)

So it was to prove, with more young people and women listening to the commercial station than to Radio 3. However, BBC audience research's warning two years earlier also stands good, that plenty of the great and the good were closet Classic FM listeners as well (BBC WAC R9/1267/1 May 1990)

By December, it was clear that Classic FM was at least a *succes d'estime*. As I have written elsewhere (Stoller 2010, pp. 215-6), Classic won a remarkable 4½ million listeners in just a few months.<sup>273</sup> It was dubbed "an instant classic, the sound of middle England, the voice of the heartland" (*Sunday Telegraph* 1992). When "George calling from his car along the M4" won a magnum of champagne in a competition to find the link between Beethoven, Haydn and Strauss, the caller turned out to be the Housing Minister, Sir George Young (*The Times* 1992g).<sup>274</sup>

The station was on air for 24 hours a day, an innovation which Radio 3 was to copy in 1996. It was partly the highly commoditised product which its critics had anticipated, but it also aspired to a place within the longer tradition of classical music broadcasting in the UK. Most of the daytime output comprised sequence programmes built around personality presenters, but the station showed more ambition at lunchtime and especially evening programmes, and before long included some live relays of concerts and operas. Programme controller Michael Bukht also wanted the presence of some time-honoured BBC voices, such as Susannah Simons and Margaret Howard.

Bukht specifically approached planning Classic FM's schedules very much along the lines of his creation of Capital Radio in 1973. He liked to claim that "Classic FM was Capital come again but with slightly smarter clothes".<sup>275</sup> As Simons recalls:

When Classic came along, [Bukht] did most, or an awful lot of the same things, with memorably, an awful lot of the same people [as at Capital]... The mixture of programming at the very beginning reflected his view that you could make classical music accessible if you placed it in the same context as pop music and you treated it in exactly the same way.<sup>276</sup>

The station tried to make a virtue of both its informality and of not infrequent mistakes in presentation. When Classic breakfast presenter Nick Bailey announced *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* and played instead the prelude from Previn's *Invisible Drummer*, the station's managers just laughed (*Observer* 1992).<sup>277</sup> Radio 3 Continuity would have been apoplectic. Simons stresses that the station's presenters felt that they were participating with their listeners in a learning experience:

The bulk of us...were all on the same learning journey, so in a way what we were doing was taking the audience with us on this voyage of discovery...always treating it with respect and love, but a spirit of curiosity, and

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<sup>273</sup> Radio Audiences Joint Audience Research: Source RAJAR/RSL. Quarter 1 1993

<sup>274</sup> The answer, incidentally, was 'Emperor' (quoted in Stoller 2010, p.216n)

<sup>275</sup> Michael Bukht interviewed by this researcher 2 February 2009, quoted in Stoller (2010, p. 215n)

<sup>276</sup> Interview with Susannah Simons 19 August 2013

<sup>277</sup> Quoted in Stoller (2010)

making absolutely no assumptions about how much or how little they knew – and that was the secret.<sup>278</sup>

The sequence programmes, which accounted for at least 20 of the 24 hours of daily broadcasts, generally included short pieces of music, just as if this was a popular music station, together with commercial radio staples of interviews, recipes and guests.<sup>279</sup> Bernard, who was the launch Chief Executive as well as the begetter of the station, is forthright about this:

We discovered...that people did not reject the notion of classical music or classical music as such, but...they knew what they liked and they liked what they knew. They weren't terribly adventurous, because the outlets for classical music were so few and forbidding and somewhat elitist, so Radio 3 would not have been [suitable] for the vast majority of the UK listening public. Attending a concert at the Albert Hall they might do once in their lifetime, or attend a live classical music concert, but if they heard it on a commercial on ITV, or they had experience of it in a regular format so that they could become used to it and familiar with it,... if it was wrapped up...and styled and presented in a way which was acceptable, then it became admired and enjoyed.<sup>280</sup>

Those hostile to the station – notably from the arts elite – were most critical of all about Classic FM's decision to broadcast single movements of symphonies, the so-called "bleeding chunks"<sup>281</sup> (*Daily Telegraph* 2002a). Jonathan Miller thought the station was "a symptom of global decline where all thought is reduced to soundbites" (*Daily Telegraph* 2002b).<sup>282</sup> Alan Bennett dubbed listeners to Classic FM "Saga louts", going on to say:

I loathe Classic FM more and more for its cosiness, its safety and its wholehearted endorsement of the post-Thatcher world, with medical insurance and Saga Holidays rammed down your throat between every item. Nor does the music get much respect; I'm frequently outraged when they play without acknowledgement or apology a sliced up the version of Beethoven's ninth, filleted of all but the most tuneful bits.<sup>283</sup>

Bernard however feels not so much unapologetic as vindicated

There was never, ever any doubt in our minds. There was no debate about whether we would play movements or whole symphonies. It was a complete no-brainer to us. We would be programming the station like a pop station, so we

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<sup>278</sup> Interview with Susannah Simons 19 August 2013

<sup>279</sup> See p.193 below for a comparison of the length of pieces played on Classic FM and Radio 3

<sup>280</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013

<sup>281</sup> According to record company Naxos, the phrase was coined by Sir Donald Tovey in his 1935 *Essays on Musical Analysis* Vol. II (1935) p.71, where he wrote, "Defects of form are not a justifiable ground for criticism from listeners who profess to enjoy the bleeding chunks of butcher's meat chopped from Wagner's operas and served up on Wagner nights as *Waldweben* and *Walkürenritt*". The Naxos Blog, accessed 9 October 2014 <http://blog.naxos.com/2011/09/bleeding-chunks-of-wagner/>

<sup>282</sup> Note though that the BBC National Programme pre-war broadcast shortened versions of Shakespeare plays and extracts from them. Thus, for example, extracts from *Hamlet* on 30 May and from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on 20 June 1930, and *Macbeth* in a "shortened version for broadcasting" on 13 October 1935. [genome.ch.bbc.co.uk](http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk) (accessed 19 October 2014)

<sup>283</sup> "What I did in 1996". Alan Bennett. 2 January 1997. *London Review of Books*. The reviewer attributes the phrase 'Saga louts' to Hugh Stalker, but it has attached itself firmly to Bennett.

would no more play a full symphony then we would play a full album. However we did say that we would play full symphonies in the evening.<sup>284</sup>

Classic FM's music choice was based on the expectation of Bukht and Bernard, drawn from their experience of popular music radio, and supported by pre-launch research, that the station should

adhere systematically to a core repertoire of popular classical music... Given the tendency to narrow segmentation elsewhere in UK radio, it was reasonable to expect many listeners of Classic FM would not willingly accept too broad a definition of the classical repertoire.<sup>285</sup>

Its music catalogue, compiled by programme consultant Robin Ray, is a remarkable document (Ray 1992). It lists virtually every work in the established canonic repertoire of recorded classical music, providing timings for single movements and complete works for over 50,000 items. Only one recording of each work is included. Tracks are identified as either "essential repertoire", "standard repertoire", "widely popular" or "universally popular". Each track is labelled as either "clean" (having a positive end or beginning) or "fade" (where the end or beginning requires fading in or out).<sup>286</sup> This provided the Classic FM repertoire, which the Selecta computer programme would then choose from according to guidelines established by the Programme Committee of Bernard, Bukht, Ray,<sup>287</sup> Nicolas Tresilian and others from time to time.

It is not fanciful to conclude that the Ray's catalogue represents the ultimate fulfilment of Adorno and others' concern about the commodification of culture and especially classical music. However it does so without necessarily carrying the negative connotations which they would have applied to it. As one part of a duopoly of output, with Radio 3 offering alternative recordings and indeed some additional content, it can be seen as part of a necessary balance which served to open up the entire canonic repertoire – 50,000 works of art – to listeners who did not and would not wish to identify with the elite.

### 10.5 Classical music radio 1993-1995

By 1993, Radio 3 was blending popular and highbrow, and an easy listening style with more traditional formal presentation. Radio 3's output in 1993 and in subsequent years, displayed some continuity with 1990-2. In the sample week (Table 10.7), the weekdays held to a steady pattern. *On Air* between 7 and 9am, *Morning Sequence* between 10am and noon and *In Tune* from 5 to 7.30pm were the cornerstones of the sequence

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<sup>284</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013

<sup>285</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013, quoting research undertaken by Lauren Benedict and by Deanna Hallett

<sup>286</sup> Ray's seriousness of approach is indicated by a note on the draft catalogue. "Apologies are offered for the fact that this word processor cannot provide accents for capital letters." Evidently, he remained strongly influenced by the expectations and aspirations of BBC broadcasting, for whom he had broadcast on classical music since 1965.

<sup>287</sup> Ray had been part of the abortive consortium which had applied in the name of Classic FM for a local London licence in the late Eighties. Relations between him and the radio station soured over time, leading eventually to an action in the Chancery division of the High Court of Justice challenging "the entitlement of [Classic FM] to the intellectual property rights in five documents containing proposals how the tracks on music recording should be categorised". The High Court eventually upheld Ray's claim that his copyright had been infringed (Fleet Street Reports FSR 622 1998).

output. However, although their presentation was relaxed, not all of the music was wholly middlebrow. *Record Review*, broadcast on Saturday morning and then repeated on Wednesday afternoon, ranged from Handel and Vivaldi to Stravinsky and Heinichen. *Morning Sequence* attracted criticism from the stalwarts,<sup>288</sup> but its contents seem unexceptional, even ambitious. Monday had a Strauss *Concertino*, Tuesday a Suk *Fantasy*, Wednesday a Goetz *Piano Trio*, Thursday a Schmidt *Concertante* and Friday Alwyn's *Overture to a Masque*. There was no 'dumbing down' here, despite the accusations that were made. However, by positioning the station as newly accessible, the BBC maintained its audiences in the face of a highly successful competitor, and drew complaints from the guardians of the highbrow even where that was not justified.

Table 10.7 Data summary sample week 1993

1993 w/c 8 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech- based feature programmes	Sequence programmes all	Sequence programmes unspecified
Radio 3	96'50	43'35	1'40	34'30	12'30
					Non sequence programmes
Classic FM	161'00	140'00	21'00	135'00	5'00

1993 w/c 8 May		
Radio 3: Number of different composers featured	112	
Composers of the Week: Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Beethoven	13
	Bach	10
	Debussy	7
	Mozart	7
Classic FM: Number of different composers featured	13	
Most played composer (number of plays)	Beethoven	3

Note: Classic FM listed programmes only

The number of composers featured was close to that earlier in the decade, with Mozart, Brahms, Schubert and Haydn maintaining the First Viennese School's preponderance, and the amount of music was similar. However, the framing of the musical offering was greatly changed. The proportion of records to live or original recordings was much higher, and the amount of sequence programmes much increased, comprising over one third of the total Radio 3 output of classical music.

The *Saturday Opera* continued to be a feature of the early evening on Radio 3, in the sample week with the performance of *Falstaff* from the Vienna State Opera. By contrast, the channel programmed Hindemith's contemporary opera *Neues vom Tage* (*Today's news*) on Thursday afternoon, highlighting again the balance between mainstream popular and challenging avant-garde. A major programme on Wednesday evening, running for over three hours, explored European music in the context of the rebellions of 1968; featured modernist composers were Berio, Pousseur, Stockhausen, NoNo and Xenakis. Taken together, the clear impression is of a diverse network, soundly based in the classical canonic repertoire, unafraid to test the margins of that repertoire or to blend the comfortably popular with potentially uncomfortable modern or

<sup>288</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon, 15 July 2013



early music. If this outcome was a consequence of commercial competition (and I have argued that it was not caused only by that), then it seems a particularly benign one.

Classic FM's output was almost double that of Radio 3. By direct contrast, only 21 hours of its total of 161 hours were not sequence programmes, while there were five hours of music features. The database shows that in the non-sequence programmes Beethoven was the most often featured composer. *Radio Times* listings were confined to a quarter of a page, but some conclusions can be drawn. Daytimes were built around personality presenters: Paul Gambaccini, Petroc Trelawny, Adrian Love, Sarah Lucas and Nicky Horne at weekends; Nick Bailey, Henry Kelly, Susanna Simons, Trelawny and Margaret Howard on weekdays. Along with short pieces of music there were interviews, recipes and guests.

The station's ambition to be taken seriously is shown in the sample week by its weekday *Lunchtime Concerto* – an hour of, respectively, Kabalevsky, Haydn, Kodály, Beethoven and Bach – the broadcasting of Bellini's *Norma* in the classic recording with Maria Callas on Saturday night, and of Fauré's *Requiem* on Sunday. In its own way, Classic FM was trying to do what Radio 3 was trying to do – find the right blend of the popular and the serious for its own audience. There was a two-hour concert every weekday evening, with complete major works on records, preceded by an hour-long feature. These differed in style of presentation from Radio 3, but not in ambition nor in erudition. In the sample week they covered early Verdi operas in *Authentic Performance*, Humphrey Burton's *Life of Leonard Bernstein*, and Hugh MacPherson's *Opera Guide*. At 6pm each weekday Margaret Howard introduced a news programme, *Classic Reports*.

Commentators remained divided. Celebrating – that is not too strong a word – the first set of official audience figures for Classic FM in January 1993, *The Times* (1993a) thought that more than 4 million listeners was “happy news for everyone who cares about serious music and about the standards of popular taste”. It argued that:

For those who believe that exposure to high art – of which great music is one of the most approachable forms – can benefit everyone, the popularity of Classic FM must be immensely cheery. Even in small, easily digested doses, the enjoyment of fine music is a civilising pastime. If the presentation of it can be divested of the intimidating, class-bound order with which it has tended to be surrounded in Britain, then a great many lives will be enriched.

In case anyone had missed the point, *The Times* leader continued:

Those who defended the monopoly of classical music broadcasting by Radio 3 argued that any infiltration by commercial interests would mean the death of standards. But in a country in which more people attend concerts than attend football matches (and in which the sale of classical recordings has risen dramatically) it could scarcely be acceptable to have only one radio station broadcasting classical music. Pluralism has added more choice and subtracted nothing. Instead of the barbarians sacking the temple, all that has happened is that far more people are hearing and appreciating the music which is rightfully part of their own cultural heritage.

This was not a universally held view. Composer Harrison Birtwistle felt that British music was suffering from “a crisis of misplaced populism. Its currency is being devalued by things like Classic FM” (*The Times* 1993d). Birtwistle's argument was that having the radio on was not the same as listening, and that the effort of a composer to

produce complex structures needed to be differentiated from “aural wallpaper”.<sup>289</sup> Columnist Libby Purves on the other hand opined that in 70 years of British radio history it was “Classic FM which came closest to a real popularisation of classical music” (*The Times* 1993c).

Table 10.8 Data summary sample week 1994

1994 w/c 7 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes all	Sequence programmes unspecified
Radio 3	99'45	35'00	3'00	39'30	11'15
					Non sequence programmes
Classic FM	166'00	159'00	7'00	136'00	23'00

1994 w/c 7 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach (adults 15+)	Weekly reach % of adult population
Radio 3	56,000	0.1	168,000	0.3	2,780,000	6
Classic FM	95,000	0.2	510,000	1.5	4,839,000	10

1994 w/c 7 May		
Radio 3: Number of different composers featured	109	
Composers of the Week: Rachmaninov		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Dvořák	9
	Beethoven	8
	Bach	8
Classic FM: Number of different composers featured	27	
Most played composer (number of plays)	Dvořák	5

Note: Classic FM listed programmes only

Both stations were evolving by 1994. Radio 3's total of sequence programming increased slightly. Classic FM on the other hand was even more music-based than before, having dropped its regular news magazine programmes. In the 1994 sample week (Table 10.8), the weekend pattern is the most interesting. Radio 3 was completely record-dominated through Saturday morning, with *Record Review* followed by *Building a Library*, *Record Release* and then *Reissues*. Over on Classic FM, the morning was entirely sequence programming, with *Classic Countdown* between 9am and noon, a top-of-the-classical-pops, but the station then detoured into what might be thought BBC territory, with a two-hour programme hosted by Margaret Howard investigating English folk song and dance, followed by *Gardening Forum*. Early Saturday evening on Classic FM included the rather strange *Classic America* programme, which blended records with in-studio performance in an attempt to do something with sound that resembled BBC ambition.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>289</sup> The BBC's Music Programme in the Sixties had been accused of providing “musical wallpaper”: see Chapter 7 p. 99

<sup>290</sup> But without the BBC's level of accomplishment. Adrian Jack in the *Independent* 29 December 2013 wrote that “production values were rather low”.

The same pattern of an ambitious but relatively more accessible BBC and a popular but still aspirational Classic FM was evident again on the Sunday. Radio 3's first morning programme, *Sacred and Profane*, was effectively a sequence programme. *Brian Kay's Sunday Morning* sequence offered unashamedly popular works, concluding with Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. By contrast, *Music in Our Time* on Radio 3 that evening had a piano recital of works by Conlon, Nancarrow, James Wood and Xenakis, followed by an entire performance of *The Seasons* by Haydn. On Classic FM, the standard sequence programmes were balanced by a one-hour *Master Class* in the afternoon exploring string instruments, *Authentic Performance* in the early evening discussing early Verdi operas, an *Evening Concert* and then *Contemporary Classics*.

Both stations were also making audience progress, with research (BBC WAC R9/1491/1 March 1994) stressing the symbiosis between them. There was a similar increase in weekly reach year-on-year for both stations: Radio 3 gained an extra 400,000 adult listeners (to 2.9 million), and Classic FM gained 500,000 (to 4.8 million). The two stations shared a significant overlap audience of around 1 million, with a third of Radio 3's listeners also tuned in to Classic FM, and a fifth of Classic FM's listeners also tuned in to Radio 3.<sup>291</sup>

Kenyon<sup>292</sup> and Bernard<sup>293</sup> both aver that the stations had worked out a *modus vivendi*, at least in the middle ground, but the public debate between the elitists and the popularisers continued. Former Controller of the Third Programme, Ian McIntyre, berated new BBC Radio Managing Director, Liz Forgan, for saying that "Radio 3 must adopt a new tone that reflects the sound of the nation" (*The Times* 1994a). Peter Barnard (*The Times* 1994b) announced that he had decided to desert the "Classic FM fan club" because of its "banal... gimmicky" programming. Brenda Maddox confirmed the stereotype, but from an approving stance, seeing their combination as "a classic duet of British success":

Classic FM's main achievement lies in its unashamed appeal to the uninitiated. It will provide the name of any piece of music played on air if listeners ring up and say when they heard it. And for those starting a collection, its new magazine... recommends Beethoven's Fifth: the one that begins "da da da dah". How very different from Radio 3, which recognises a serious listener as one who buys more than one version of the same piece of music and who is willing to weigh 30 different performances of Sibelius' Second Symphony before settling on von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic because "nothing is overstated, there is an abundant sense of atmosphere and the temptation to build up excessive climaxes is held in check"... Radio 3 is a success story too. In the face of competition it has held its audience fairly steady [and] has survived the cost-conscious and yoof-oriented BBC management. (*The Times* 1995b)

Each station attempted to move its tanks onto the others' lawn at times,<sup>294</sup> but it is reasonable to conclude that each doing its rather considerable if separate best. Radio 3 had managed by recasting its approach to hang on to most of its middlebrow, middle-class audience despite the attraction of Classic FM. Classic FM had not yet discarded

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<sup>291</sup> Classic FM's total audience was much larger, hence the variation.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon 15 July 2013

<sup>293</sup> Interview with Ralph Bernard 13 June 2013

<sup>294</sup> In February 1994, Classic FM 'poached' the entire team from one of Radio 4's most popular programmes, *Gardeners Question Time*

the heritage of the long tradition of UK classical music radio. The stations can convincingly be seen together, as different but complementary responses to the increasing modernisation of society as a whole, and the commercialisation and commodification of culture. Each in their different ways was offering a means of preserving an important aspect of heritage for a broad audience.

Taken together, they represented the third<sup>295</sup> (and, to date, last) comprehensive fusion of the highbrow and the middle brow, the elite and the popular, with – crucially – effective links between those within the stations themselves and *de facto* between the stations as well. The amount of dual listening bears out this last point. When this symbiosis is achieved, it serves to set aside the restrictions of class, to offer the opportunity to expand the horizons of taste for a mass audience, and to allow high culture to enter with comfort into the popular sphere, echoing Said's view expressed that same year of classical music as a universal heritage (Said 1994, p. 28).<sup>296</sup>

Table 10.9 Data summary sample week 1995

1995 w/c 6 May Station output (hours/minutes)	Total classical music programmes	Programmes comprising gramophone records	Speech-based feature programmes	Sequence programmes all	Sequence programmes unspecified
Radio 3	101'05	31'00	3'50	38'15	10'05
					Non sequence programmes
Classic FM	157'00	150'00	7'00	130'00	20'00

1995 w/c 6 May Audiences	Median audience	Median % (of total population)	Audience high	High % (of total population)	Weekly reach (adults 15+)	Weekly reach % of adult population
Radio 3	62,000	0.1	200,000	0.4	2,397,000	5
Classic FM	122,000	0.2	485,000	1.0	4,751,000	10

1995 w/c 6 May		
Radio 3: Number of different composers featured	107	
Composers of the Week: Fauré		
Most played composers (number of plays)	Brahms	8
	Britten	8
	Beethoven	6
	Debussy, Ravel	6
Classic FM: Number of different composers featured	18	
Most played composers (number of plays)	Fauré	6
	Brahms	6

Note: Classic FM listed programmes only

The final year examined in detail for this research project saw the overall patterns continuing. What is of interest is how each station approached that which was out of the ordinary, where once again there is both difference and similarity.

<sup>295</sup> A fourth challenge, that from ILR, was more limited in geography and general scope.

<sup>296</sup> See Chapter 3 pp. 32-3

On Radio 3, the influence of a year-long festival of British music – *Fairest Isle* – was felt across the whole programme range. For Kenyon, this was a central initiative and also a re-affirmation of the vigorous health of Radio 3:

As well as all the changes that we were making, to make Radio 3 more available and accessible and welcoming, I was looking for a big statement that proved that it was still a really important cultural patron that could do major things with a major impact, because I felt that that was so often taken for granted. All the live music; all the orchestras; all the new commissions; all those things were somehow under the radar of how Radio 3 was perceived.<sup>297</sup>

In the 1995 sample week (Table 10.9), *Fairest Isle* provided a running thread for music features, and the context for a major Thursday afternoon and evening broadcast from Birmingham featuring the composer Mark-Anthony Turnage, plus music by Bantock, Elgar and Britten. British composers were much more prominent in the sample week, led by Britten who in numbers of plays is followed by Elgar, Purcell (all of whose music was broadcast during this 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary year) and Tippett.<sup>298</sup>

Classic FM paid much attention in the sample week to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day, broadcasting a sequence programme of wartime romance on Sunday morning and giving over its Monday evening concert to a Bank Holiday celebration live from Blenheim Palace.

Birt's modernising zeal had left Radio 3 untouched in his early years. He was not even on the interview panel which was to appoint Kenyon, and his major reorganisation of radio structures did not take place until 1996.<sup>299</sup> However, in 1995 he began to challenge the station. Kenyon observes that Birt

couldn't understand the difference between Classic FM and Radio 3...his approach was, "These are both classical services, and why is Classic FM getting a much bigger audience?"<sup>300</sup>

Birt (2002, pp. 386-7) largely confirms this in his autobiography:

Radio 3... was like a stuffy private club, out of tune with meritocratic modern Britain, in which love of serious music was growing, as the extraordinary success of Classic FM – with many times Radio 3's audience – demonstrated. Radio 3's defenders in the 1980s had acted like old cultural buffaloes, snorting and charging at any invader threatening change. Controllers Nicholas Kenyon and later Roger Wright worked valiantly to build a bridge to new audiences while maintaining the cultural and intellectual authority and integrity of the station – but the bridge was never quite completed in my time as Director General.

Pressure from Birt gave rise to the highly symbolic Paul Gambaccini issue. Gambaccini is a much-feted popular music radio presenter, and was also one of the most popular and prominent presenters on Classic FM when it launched. With audience research showing that Radio 4 listeners switched to Classic FM at the end of the *Today Programme*, Kenyon was pressed to provide a more populist programme to attract them to Radio 3 instead. The result was unfortunate, as Kenyon recalls:

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<sup>297</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon 24 April 2014

<sup>298</sup> Handel was ahead of all three, but is probably not a 'British composer'

<sup>299</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon, 15 July 2013

<sup>300</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon 15 July 2013

It was also a time when independent production was growing...and so the idea [arose] of giving another section of the daytime to an independent producer, in this case Mentorn Radio... They offered us Paul Gambaccini, who I still believe, to this day, is an extremely professional...very good broadcaster. The problem was in doing a programme for Radio 3 he tried to make himself sound like a Radio 3 presenter. We persevered and we defended it, but at the end of the day it just didn't work, and so we agreed to take it off.<sup>301</sup>

For Kenyon, this was not merely the BBC rushing after popularity, but also taking the opportunity to experiment.

It was taking risks with a well-known name in the hope that he might draw people in who would not have otherwise thought of even tuning in to Radio 3. But the balance between that well-known name and whether they could actually do what you were asking them to do proved to be a mismatch.

Nevertheless, it was a symbol of the growing wish of Radio 3 to be open to new styles of presentation even more than of content. Kenyon again:

It got the debate going about how people wanted to have classical music presented to them. And I don't think you would have had Petroc Trelawny, the excellent Sara Mohr-Pietsch and a few others who are now around on Radio 3, had we not, as it were, opened Pandora's box.

In what was the last set-to between the elitists and the popularisers in the period addressed by this research, the battle lines resembled the previous dialogues. Journalist Brenda Maddox sneered when Gambaccini mispronounced the title of an aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*:

We were about to hear 'Ba-tee, ba-tee, bel Masetto' he said, hitting the second syllable of batti' as if he were saying 'batik without the 'k. Bad enough for anybody named Gambaccini not to know the Italian imperative for 'to beat'; disastrous for Radio 3 to have a new presenter who sounded as though he had never before heard the aria. Anybody who knows this vocal number... knows that Mozart's lilting sado-masochistic plea for forgiveness simply cannot be sung without the stress on the 'bat. (*The Times* 1995b)

The Chairman of the House of Commons National Heritage Select Committee, Gerald Kaufman, announced that as a consequence of the deteriorating intellectual quality on Radio 3, he regretted endorsing the renewal of the BBC's charter. He would not vote for it again unless clauses were inserted obliging the BBC to safeguard standards. Journalist Anne Karpf "railed to all who will listen, in the Guardian and on Radio 4's Today programme, that Mr Gambaccini signals the arrival of 'Radio 2½'" (*The Times* 1995a).

In vain might Giles Coren point out that Gambaccini was an Oxford graduate and an accomplished classical pianist. The point was that he symbolised everything which the defenders of the elite aspects of Radio 3 felt was under threat:

Gambaccini's crimes are manifold, it seems. First of all he is American, which is not suitable at all. Then he is a purrer, not an announcer. His voice is too treacly and smooth for the serious business of introducing music played on wood, string and brass. And then, of course, he is a defector from Classic FM, the channel for people who do not already know their Bach from their Berio (*The Times* 1995a).

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<sup>301</sup> Interview with Sir Nicholas Kenyon 15 July 2013

Simons notes that Classic FM presenters such as Nick Harvey, Petroc Trelawney, Robert Cowan and Paul Gambaccini – for all their skill and knowledge had voices that

wouldn't have fitted on Radio 3 because 20 years ago people cared.  
Gambaccini could get away with it on Classic FM. He didn't get away with it when he went to Radio 3.<sup>302</sup>

In institutional terms, the Gambaccini incident exemplified the tensions created within the BBC by aggressive popularising. In terms of broadcasting and culture, it illustrates how the perceptions of the producer and consumer of classical music radio had been distorted by the dominance of elite assumptions right through the Seventies and Eighties, and how difficult it was to put that right.

## 10.6 comparing Radio 3 and Classic FM

### 10.6.1 content comparisons

Detailed comparisons of the two stations' output – hindered by the lack of listings information for sequence programmes – are made possible by three BBC research studies: one in 1993, and two in 1995.

The first survey (Table 10.10), based on two days in December 1992 (BBC WAC R9/1370/1 April 1993), shows Classic FM to have had at least twice as much speech during music programmes as Radio 3, comprising chiefly news, travel and weather, interviews and advertisements, with speech about music, competitions and events listing less prominent. Radio 3 broadcast less than half of the amount of speech, about music primarily, with some news travel and weather, music-related interviews and events listing. The average length of a piece of music on Radio 3 was twice as long as on Classic FM, 12 minutes compared with around 6 minutes; or for the sequences:

Table 10.10      Average length of broadcast works on Classic FM and Radio 3 1993

Classic FM programmes	Average length (minutes)	Radio 3 programmes	Average length (minutes)
Nick Bailey (Thur)	4 minutes	On Air	8 minutes
Henry Kelly (Thur)	5	In Tune	4
Nick Bailey (Sun)	5	Brian Kaye	10

(BBC WAC R9/1370/1 April 1993)

What is striking is not only that Classic FM was offering shorter pieces of music, but that the average length of piece in the BBC sequence programmes was also quite short, confirming a different but analogous approach by the two stations to providing accessible listening for quite a wide range of listeners. There was a similar two-edged conclusion to the analysis of how many complete works are played. Radio 3 played over twice as many complete works on Classic FM: four fifths of pieces on Radio 3, compared with only two fifths on Classic FM. Yet between 37 and 41 per cent of the works broadcast on Classic FM were complete works, which accounted for nearly half of the total hours of Classic FM output.

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<sup>302</sup> Interview with Susannah Simons 19 August 2013. However, in a sign of how far along the popularising route Radio 3 was to travel, at the time of writing this thesis Trelawney is the main presenter of Radio 3's breakfast show and a mainstay of the BBC's concert presentation team. Cowan's shows are also central to Radio 3's current approach while Gambaccini presents the regular BBC musical quiz, *Counterpoint*, as well as *America's Greatest Hits*..

The research found that the most heavily featured composers on Radio 3 were Sibelius, Mozart and Stravinsky; on Classic FM they were Mozart, Puccini and Dvořák. More ‘modern’ music was played on Radio 3 but, once again, the figures for Classic FM although lower are still creditable.<sup>303</sup> Both stations played more romantic music than any other, and – possibly again counterintuitively – the percentage of baroque music was broadly the same on each. The researchers had expected that Classic FM might play more orchestral music, but the same research shows that the balance of orchestral, chamber, keyboard and vocal music across the two stations was broadly similar (Table 10.11).

Table 10.11 Sub-genres of classical works on Classic FM and Radio 3 1993

	Radio 3		Classic FM	
	Thursday	Sunday	Thursday	Sunday
per cent of music output accounted for by:				
Orchestral	40	59	57	49
Chamber	16	11	8	24
Keyboard	3	13	10	8
Vocal	31	15	21	17

(BBC WAC R9/1370/1 April 1993)

Add in the audience composition discussed below and it is shown that the two stations were achieving surprisingly similar results from surprisingly similar output. In many ways what is common between them outweighs what is different. Essentially, both are based in the middlebrow mainstream, but have different aspirations for how they extend beyond that. Radio 3 strikes upward, Classic FM mostly downward. Radio 3 is more exclusive in its appeal, Classic FM more inclusive. Radio 3 listeners will tune in to Classic FM in notably significant numbers, Classic FM listeners are much less likely to find in the differences of Radio 3 something to attract them.

This squares with qualitative research carried out for the Radio 3 Strategy Group early the next year, which questioned people who listened to classical music but not on Radio 3 (BBC WAC 9/1360/1 February 1993). It found that

the very things that make Radio 3 distinctive will be too challenging for many classical music listeners: serious conversation about music (and the arts), complete works (i.e. long), a wide range of music, not all of which is designed to be accessible, and a higher proportion of contemporary music [on Radio 3] than Classic FM.

As the content analysis has shown, this was not necessarily the case, but it reflects the BBC’s own pre-conceptions. Most striking were the key aspects of each station accorded to them by interviewees (Table 10.12).

Table 10.12 Key characteristics accorded by listeners to Classic FM and Radio 3 1993

Classic FM	Radio 3
For ordinary people	For serious music buffs
Plays popular classics	Obscure, difficult music
Short pieces (good)	Long pieces (bad)
Easy to listen to	Demands concentration
Could get boring for some	Some nice surprises, but probably not worth the effort

<sup>303</sup> This research was carried out over two separate days, and the results were not aggregated. This paper compiles data for the two days on an intuitive basis



Two content analyses in 1995, when both stations had settled to the competitive reality, came to similar conclusions, analysing output in January (BBC WAC R9/1545/110 March 1995)<sup>304</sup> and during the fourth quarter (BBC WAC R9/1599/1 22 February 1996) of the year.<sup>305</sup> Radio 3 comes out of this research as the 'worthier' and the broadcaster of more substantial pieces. Classic FM is more popular, caring less for the traditional shibboleths of classical music radio. But the counter-intuitive findings are again striking: Radio 3's average length of piece was just 8.4 minutes, albeit longer than Classic FM's 5.6 minutes but still rather short; as much as 45 per cent of Classic FM's broadcasts in terms of time were accounted for by complete works; and Classic FM continued to play a respectable amount of music from the modern period.

#### 10.6.2.audience comparison

Classic FM very quickly achieved the audience levels which it was to sustain throughout the decade, between 4 and 5 million listeners, compared with Radio 3's 2½ million. As well their much larger numbers, Classic FM listeners tuned in for nearly twice as long each week as those to Radio 3. It also won more loyalty: Radio 3 took 12.6 per cent of its listeners' weekly radio patronage, with 9.3 per cent of that going to Classic FM; Classic FM on the other hand took 24.3 per cent of its listeners' patronage, with only 3.4 per cent of that going to Radio 3 (BBC WAC R9/2163/1 May 1995). The effect of removing the highbrow presumptions in presentation lend further support to the argument that it was the perceived elitism of Radio 3 as much as its content which kept 'ordinary' listeners away.

Once Classic FM was available for comparisons, the lack of listener loyalty to Radio 3 was thrown into sharper relief. Hours listened to Radio 3 were very low, averaging just over three hours per listener compared with the 10 hours or more which were typical of Radio 2 and Radio 4. Well over half of 'Radio 3 listeners' only tuned into the station on one day of an average week. At most times, more 'Radio 3 listeners' would be tuned to Radio 4 and Radio 2 than Radio 3 itself (BBC WAC R9/2163/1 May 1995).

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<sup>304</sup> A content analysis of Radio 3 and Classic FM (January 1995). BBC Broadcasting Research 10 March 1995. BBC WAC R9/1545/1. "Radio 3 broadcast a little more music than Classic FM (72.9 per cent compared with 68.0 per cent) ...pieces of music on Radio 3 lasted on average 8.4 minutes, compared with 5.6 minutes. ...Radio 3 played a total of 650 pieces accounted for by 255 composers; Classic FM play 906 pieces accounted for by 281 composers. Classic FM played 14 pieces twice during the week; Radio 3 repeated two pieces. Classic FM played markedly more music from the Romantic period, 46.5 per cent compared with Radio 3's 29 per cent, while Radio 3 played more modern music (post-World War I), 39.4 per cent compared with Classic FM's 20.9 per cent. There were no marked differences in the amount of early, baroque or classical music."

<sup>305</sup> Content Analysis of Radio 3 and Classic FM (Q4 95) BBC Broadcasting Research 22 February 1996 BBC WAC R9/1599/1. "Radio 3 and Classic FM play similar amounts of music (65 per cent of output and 70 per cent respectively)... 84 per cent of music on Radio 3 is accounted for by complete works, compared with 45 per cent on Classic FM... 39 per cent of music on Classic FM is accounted for by a group of nearly 20 well known composers (Bach, Beethoven, Mozart etc) compared with 25 per cent on Radio 3... Classic FM plays more music from the Romantic period (48 per cent compared with Radio 3's 26 per cent); conversely, Radio 3 plays more from the modern period (post-World War I – 44 per cent compared with 17 per cent on Classic FM). One third of Radio 3s music is live (or deferred) compared with 2 per cent on Classic FM... Radio 3 plays more vocal music (28 per cent compared with 16 per cent on Classic FM). Classic FM plays more orchestral music (54 per cent compared with 30 per cent on Radio 3). Classic FM speech is dominated by news etc (30 per cent) and advertising (23 per cent). Radio 3's speech is mostly general presenter talk (34 per cent) and interviews (26 per cent)."

Table 10.13 Weekly audiences for Classic FM and Radio 3 1991-6<sup>306</sup>

Year	Classic FM weekly audience (adults 15+)	Radio 3 weekly audience (adults 15+)
1991	-	2,800,000
1992	4,255,000	2,500,000
1993	4,494,000	2,736,000
1994	4,587,000	2,380,000
1995	4,751,000	2,397,000
1996	4,586,000	2,407,000

However, this is not to denigrate the audience impact of Kenyon's recasting of the network. Radio 3 stood up well to the initial onslaught from Classic FM; its audiences for 1991, the year before it faced direct competition, had averaged around 2.8 million compared with 2.7 million in 1993 (Table 10.13). There was room and demand for both, as the reach figures above illustrate. Both stations enjoyed their largest audiences for programmes on Sunday morning. Moreover, at that time Radio 3's audience of 290,000 was its highest for a single programme of any sample week since 1979, despite the head-to-head competition with Classic FM.<sup>307</sup>

Across the week as a whole, as the charts for Radio 3 and Classic FM for 1995 in Appendix B demonstrate, all the conventional demographics are surprisingly similar. Classic FM's audience is slightly younger, slightly less ABC1 and slightly less male; but if any of the charts was viewed casually on its own and unlabelled, the audience patterns might be allocated to either station.<sup>308</sup> The audience for classical music in the Nineties was remarkably consistent, on whichever of the two stations, and different from the demographic for ILR, which was notably younger, less high-class and less male-dominated.<sup>309</sup>

### 10.7 engaging the potential audience

The position at the end of the research period illustrates the extent of missed opportunities in the preceding fifty years. The revival of listening from 1992 onwards demonstrates once again that the *potential* classical radio audience was substantial right through the years after the Second World War. When there was adequate middlebrow provision, the middle market listened. For long periods, the BBC's stereotyping of the classical audience, blinded by class assumptions, had meant that it had failed to engage and involve the broader middlebrow consumer. As the influence of class diminished, the multi-channel combination of a recast, accessible Radio 3 and a

<sup>306</sup> Radio Audiences Joint Audience Research: based on 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of each year, so not necessarily the same as quoted elsewhere.  
[http://www.RAJAR.co.uk/listening/quarterly\\_listening.php](http://www.RAJAR.co.uk/listening/quarterly_listening.php) (accessed 21 August 2014). The 1991 figure derives from an average of JICRAR data.

<sup>307</sup> Taking the 1993 figures for the first quarter, Classic FM's largest audience of the week was 441,000 adults between 11 and 11.30am. It exceeded 400,000 listeners to the entire period between 10am and noon. Radio 3's largest audience was 290,000 adults between 10 and 1030 that morning, and Radio 3 exceeded 200,000 listeners between 9 and 11am. The following year they shared exactly the same peak time, 10 to 10.30am on Sunday, with Classic FM having an audience of 435,000 adults and Radio 3 an audience of 170,000 adults. By 1995, Classic FM kept the same peak half-hour with virtually the same audience, but that of Radio 3 had gone back to between 9 and 9.30am, with only 154,000 adults listening. Source RAJAR/RSL

<sup>308</sup> See Appendix B pp. 288-94

<sup>309</sup> See Chapter 9 p. 154

popular Classic FM re-awakened the demand for classical music radio, back towards what it had been in the early post-war years, during the operation of the Music Programme, and for a while to ILR.

By the mid-Nineties, more people listened, and for longer. Once the BBC station had become more accessible, it attracted a similar type of audience to that of its commercial rival, albeit in rather lower numbers and a bit older. The total audience figures indicate that there was a consistent, coherent but certainly not wholly homogeneous audience available for a classical music station which provided properly for it. The demographic profiles of Classic FM and Radio 3 by the middle of the Nineties confirm that assertion.

By the end of 1995, therefore, thanks to the binary nature of its provision, classical music radio in the UK provided for the whole range of potential listeners. That was happening because both stations centred their output in the established canonic repertoire, departing from it in different directions to provide for both highbrow and more popular taste. The effect was two complementary audiences, with a reassuringly significant overlap. This represented an important return to the position which had applied in those earlier years when the audiences were best served: in the late Forties, by the range of output on the Home, Third and Light; and in the late Sixties, on a comparable multi-channel platform. It is reasonable to conclude that the situation at the end of 1995, within the context of UK society in the Nineties, came close to being optimum.

Not everyone would have agreed. Birtwistle, Menuhin, Bennett and others<sup>310</sup> regarded Classic FM as the antithesis of valid music radio, and detrimental to culture in society as a whole. Yet Classic FM belongs in that part of the history of classical music radio broadcasting in the UK since the Second World War which was concerned to widen the audience franchise beyond the higher-educated elite who were often the producers of such services. As such, it has a clear place in the continuing tradition. Moreover, Classic FM took the form it did because of the cultural character of the society into which it emerged. Britain in the Nineties was a fluid, packaged and market-driven society, in which the old limitations of class were for a while less significant. Successive Conservative Prime Ministers were first a grocer's daughter, and then the son of a circus performer, rather than old Etonians. Classical music radio was regarded as a proper entitlement of those in their aspiring society: the new classless consumers, the new owner-occupiers, the new mass shareholders. Just as the BBC threw open the doors of Radio 3, so Classic FM demonstrated that everyone could enjoy at least some of the cultural luxuries previously reserved for the few.

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<sup>310</sup> See Chapter 10 pp. 183-4 for example

## **Chapter 11**

### **Classical music radio after 1995**

#### **Coda**

The narrative history for this thesis concludes in 1995, but of course the history of the medium does not. Just as happened with the two previous high points – in the late Forties and the late Sixties – the fortunate multi-channel conjunction of elite and popular output in the mid Nineties did not survive undamaged much beyond the end of the period reviewed in this narrative. Radio 3 continued along the path set for it by Kenyon under his successor, Roger Wright, from 1998. However, continued internal and external pressures about the comparative audience levels between Radio 3 and Classic FM drove the BBC further towards the popular. Kenyon's valedictory, *Sounding the Century*, between February 1997 and December 1999, showed once again what Radio 3 could do in making highbrow material broadly accessible, despite continuing shifts in daytime programming towards more demotic presentation and style.

The audience pressures became steadily greater. In serving the broadly 6 million people who might listen to classical music radio, Radio 3 during the period covered by this narrative had consistently appealed to around 2½ million, and Classic FM to between 4½ and 5 million. By 2000, however, Radio 3's audience had fallen to below 2 million and that of Classic FM was consistently close to 6 million. The balance was much the same in 2005, and it was only after some rather desperate searching after a popular audience that Radio 3 climbed above 2 million listeners in 2010, although it has not always been able to sustain that level thereafter (Table 11.1).<sup>311</sup>

Table 11.1      Weekly audiences for Classic FM and Radio 3 from 1995 onwards

	Radio 3	Classic FM
1995	2,397,000	4,751,000
2000	1,980,000	6,041,000
2005	1,973,000	5,910,000
2010	2,216,000	5,790,000

Classic FM, meanwhile, stepped aside from most of its aspirational output towards the end of the Nineties. That was partly influenced by a change in the legislative environment. The 1996 Broadcasting Act allowed a much greater concentration of ownership than hitherto within the commercial radio industry. One consequence of that was that the GWR group – which had been a leading figure in the setting up of Classic FM, but had not been allowed to operate the station in its own way, having only a minority stake – took over full control of the station (Stoller 2010). GWR had built much of its success on a formulaic approach to radio programming, influenced in particular by Australian commercial radio. That involved getting rid of what they thought of as 'distractions', such as Classic FM's regular opera programme, just as the group had done in the Eighties with its ILR stations. When Bukht ceased to be Programme Controller, the station shifted towards its owners' general wish to deploy formulaic music formats in ILR, and it abandoned much of its earlier ambition. Classic FM's subsequent ownership by first GCap and then Global has confirmed this approach.

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<sup>311</sup> RAJAR/RSL quarter 4 for each year.

[http://www.RAJAR.co.uk/listening/quarterly\\_listening.php](http://www.RAJAR.co.uk/listening/quarterly_listening.php) (accessed 21 August 2014)

The increased audience levels benefitted the station's commercial prospects. However, by abandoning almost all of its aspirational output, Classic FM undermined the multi-channel symbiosis which had served the total classical music radio audience so well. This was not a circumstance unique to classical music radio. A very similar pattern of the abandonment of public service elements by the BBC's commercial competitors was worked through in Channel 4 (Brown 2007) and then with ITV as a whole.

Technology presented a challenge to basic assumptions about radio. However, the quite extensive literature about the growth of the Internet – Brugger (2010), Curran, Fenton and Freedman (2012), for example – touches hardly at all on its implications for radio output, nor indeed all that much on classical music. Dubber (2013) considers radio in a digital age mostly from the perspective of practitioners. Digital content is considered by Gazi (et al. 2011) and its technology and implications by O'Neill (2010). There is also a sense towards the end of this period of "class overtaken by age".<sup>312</sup> Although the UK is by no means a classless society, its cultural preconceptions are arguably now much more segmented by age, a process hastened by the consumer implications of technological change.

As I have written elsewhere (Stoller 2010, Stoller in Mollgard ed., 2012), the facilitation of UK digital radio was the other major impact of the 1996 Broadcasting Act. That permitted the introduction of digital radio into the UK, both for the BBC and in the form of commercially operated multiplexes, all using Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) technology. The BBC had launched its first experimental DAB services, including Radio 3, in September 1995, although receivers did not become generally available even in small quantities until 1999. The first full-scale national commercial services came on air in November 1999, including – as the legislation required – a simulcast of Classic FM. The regional commercial services began coming on air from 2001 (Stoller 2010). Notably, there was no effort to extend the number of classical radio stations, amid the plethora of – often indistinguishable – popular music services.<sup>313</sup>

Institutional factors played their part in these arrangements. By committing to DAB, Classic FM avoided having to re-tender for its licence and the Government avoided what it saw as the electoral disadvantage of being seen to jeopardise the future of a station so popular with its likely voters. A similar inducement was offered to the ILR services (Stoller in Mollgard ed. 2012).

Meanwhile, other more significant challenges were arising. The Internet gives listeners access to classical music radio stations across the world, and also allows the streaming of classical music (Dubber 2013). What has been described in this thesis as 'multi-channel', referring only to conventional radio, has now become 'multi-platform'. The recent portability of the Internet, especially using 4G technology, has overcome the initial restrictions of such access being only on a wired basis. The use of MP3 to play music portably and personally, and the near-ubiquity of Apple's iPods and iPads – together with file sharing options through Napster and others – is having at least as much effect as the original arrival of gramophone records to produce music as the ultimate commodity.

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<sup>312</sup> Interview with Gillian Reynolds 29 October 2014

<sup>313</sup> DAB now appears to be a technological dead-end. The August 2014 *Communications Market Report* from Ofcom shows that although digital listening across multiple platforms is steadily increasing, only 25 per cent of all radio listening is to DAB transmissions, despite extensive promotion and Government support for nearly 20 years.

For radio, the BBC's use of iPlayer since its initial public trial in October 2005, and podcasts from both Radio 3 and Classic FM, potentially mark the beginning of the end of linear radio as we have known it since 1922 – although to date reports of its demise have been much exaggerated. Wright regards the option to 'listen again' to concerts as being "incredibly important", because that is how "the audience naturally expects to take its consumption of material when it want it and how it wants."<sup>314</sup>

This section opened with the observation that the history of classical radio did not end in 1995. But it may be argued that the period when radio stood alone as the provider of this genre of broadcast output did indeed cease soon after 1995, with the intrusion of the Internet, and the arrival of MP3 players in 2000 and BBC iPlayer in 2005. The fifty years when the post-war medium provided access to broadcast classical music were a remarkable cultural and social entity. Its significance is considered in the final Chapter.

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<sup>314</sup> Interview with Roger Wright 10 October 2014

## **SECTION IV CONCLUSIONS**

### **Chapter 12**

#### **Conclusions**

The narrative history of classical music radio in the UK between 1945 and 1995 *is* the primary conclusion of this thesis.

That narrative leads to conclusions about the nature of classical music radio content over these years, and about the size and composition of the audiences for this genre. From this, I also draw wider conclusions. The evolving significance of class in UK society over these years is exemplified in the tension between providing culture for the elite and for the middlebrow majority. The nature of listening is shown to have particular characteristics when it is to classical music radio rather than speech. The significance of individuals within the narrative, when placed in the context of broader social and historical trends, also informs consideration of the relevance of biography in media history. Classical music is an axiomatic part of public service radio broadcasting (PSRB), but this history suggests a wider approach to PSRB than has usually been adopted.

This Chapter will therefore begin by re-stating the definition which the thesis has adopted. It will then set out the main themes of the historical narrative, identifying the most significant learnings about the content of the broadcasts and the audiences listening to them. Following from the narrative summary, this Chapter will offer conclusions about class in UK society; the relationship between the elite and the mass, and the interaction between highbrow and middlebrow culture; the nature of listening; the relevance of biography; the defining characteristics of public service radio; the effectiveness of database methodology; and areas for further study.

#### **12.1 Defining classical music radio**

It is commonly accepted that classical music is a distinct genre. Why else would a radio station be able simply to name itself 'Classic FM', requiring no further explanation of its position in the market? Although for a long period the BBC avoided using the term – preferring the phrase 'serious music' – that does not invalidate common usage, but simply highlights the elitist mindset within the BBC during much of this period that such broadcasting could only be serious. Ever since this type of music first featured in concert performance at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dominated by the First Viennese School of composers, there has been a broadly accepted canonic repertoire. The centre of this has remained constant, but there have been changes at the margins which require any definition of the genre to be reflexive. Part of that comes from the complexities of the taxonomy, with items entering the classical canon from other sub-genres, notably film music.

Reflexivity has been even more important since the arrival of broadcasting, where what those who produce the output treat as classical music, and what those consuming it accept on those terms, *is* the canonic repertoire at any time, irrespective of academic niceties. The consequent definition which this thesis has developed for classical music radio is:

a radio service which broadcasts the corpus of works which at any time comprise the acknowledged classical, light classical and contemporary canonic orchestral, vocal and chamber repertoire, including works entering from other genres, sustained on a reflexive basis, offering the opportunity for intellectual engagement with the music as well as sensory enjoyment.<sup>315</sup>

## 12.2 Conclusions from the historical narrative

Much previous discourse has been conditioned by that element of 'intellectual engagement', demonstrating the highbrow assumptions of most of those engaged with producing and analysing the medium. From Marx onwards, academics have lined up to condemn the increasing commodification and mechanisation of culture – especially, for Adorno (1928/2002) and others, of classical music – and to protect its supposed 'purity' from contamination by that mass appreciation which they suppose only happens in a largely worthless, uneducated way. Like Bourdieu (1984), they have asserted that class and education are revealed by consumption and taste. Yet I conclude that this history demonstrates that the most worthwhile manifestation of classical music radio happens when the highbrow and the middlebrow are offered in parallel and in synthesis; a wide range of output, readily accessible, to be consumed variously at a cerebral and a visceral level, with a clear link between the elite and popular offerings and escalators running up and down between the two. That conclusion recalls agreeably the earliest reaching out by JS Bach into the coffee houses of Leipzig.

The historical narrative is characterised by a series of attempts to achieve that symbiosis, followed by a series of retreats from it, in each instance reflecting that same institutional – and class-based – defensiveness which ensured that successive bouts of political and social radicalism in the UK as a whole would be rapidly followed by resistance and reaction. Just as the radical achievements of the Attlee Government were diminished and partly reversed in the years which followed them, so Haley's efforts to establish a class-mobile pattern of radio broadcasting were in their turn set aside in the Fifties. The British cultural revolution of the Sixties partly ran into the sand in the following decade, just as happened to the BBC's innovation of the Music Programme. And in the same way as Thatcher's 'revolution of the right' fundamentally undermined long-established British institutions, facilitating the triumph of market liberalism, so the initial success of ILR and the eventual failure of such commercially-funded public service radio – together with the unsustainability of elite output from public sector broadcasting – produced a recast Radio 3 and a culturally aspirational Classic FM.

The history of classical music radio qualifies the accepted cultural pattern in the UK as a whole between 1945 and 1995. The notion of a continuing canon was never challenged in classical music in the way that it was in the literary and visual arts. Equally, the 'shock of the new'<sup>316</sup> which so changed popular music was for consumers of classical music merely a side channel running alongside the main stream. *Popular* music was never the same after Elvis, and nor was popular music radio; but *classical* music continued and continues to be dominated by Beethoven and his contemporaries – Messiaen, Boulez and Reich notwithstanding – and classical music radio similarly. In that way, it is a signifier of a more slowly evolving *zeitgeist*, where heritage and

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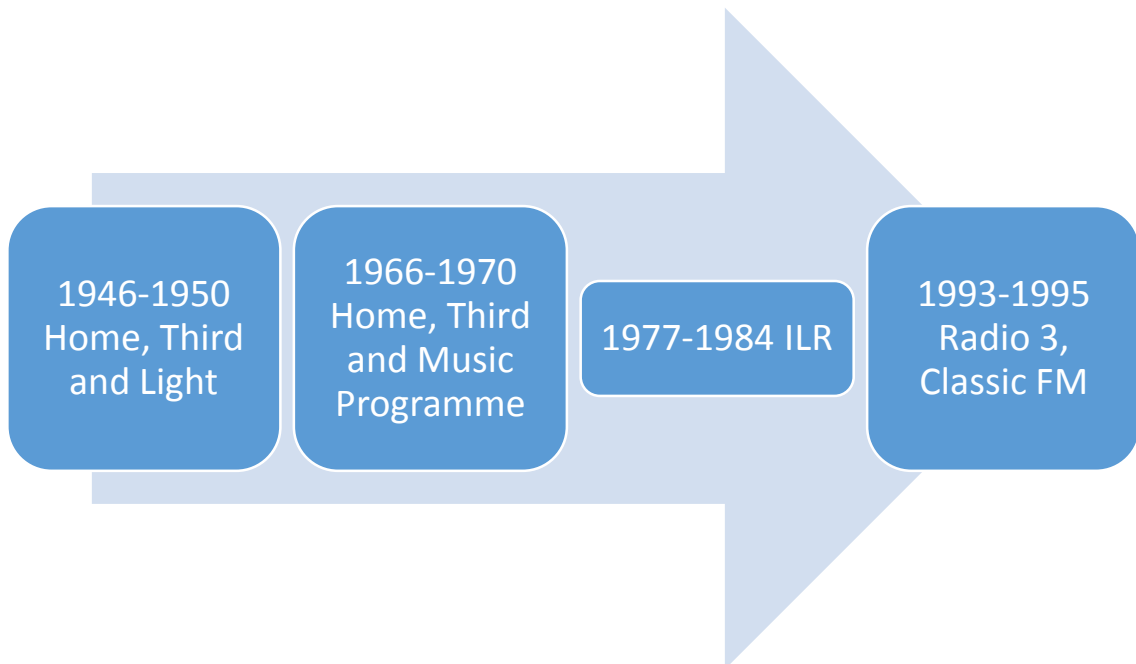
<sup>315</sup> See Chapter 2, page 24

<sup>316</sup> This was the title of Hughes' (1980) examination of the impact of radical innovation in 20<sup>th</sup> century visual arts, but it serves equally well for other cultural forms.



tradition maintain a significant place – just as they do in British society throughout this period.

Chart 12.1 High points for inclusive classical music radio



There were four periods between 1945 and 1995 when the producers of classical music radio successfully challenged the defensive and self-sustaining elite (as Chart 12.1 illustrates). Three of those had an inclusive impact on national radio, setting aside hidebound restrictions on culture and providing classical music radio to a wider audience, and can be regarded as fundamental shifts. The fourth instance – that of ILR – achieved much but only in particular localities.

The first high water mark was in the late Forties, when there was a wide range of music provided on multiple channels, with clear links between the highbrow and the middlebrow. Haley's introduction of the Third Programme as one part of a pyramid of classical music radio provision meant that music from the most recondite to the most recognisable was offered across the BBC's radio output. More than that, there was a conscious intention (on Haley's part at least) to provide a link between the different levels of the pyramid; to repeat his compelling image – the listener might enter at ground level to hear the waltz from *Der Rosenkavalier*, and progress over time to enjoying the full opera at the apex.<sup>317</sup>

There were strong grounds for believing this to be possible. Research in 1946 had indicated that around a third of enthusiasts for the Third were “working class”,<sup>318</sup> a legacy not least of that wartime cultural renaissance in Britain which had been a driving force in establishing the channel in the first place. However, although the elite provision of the Third Programme continued pretty largely unchanged, the conscious abandonment by the BBC of its once-vaunted efforts to bring a wider public to an appreciation of higher culture shows how the interests of class continued to dominate UK society at that time. The Third Programme Defence Society was an archetypal manifestation of the peculiar nature of the British *haute bourgeoisie*. While their

<sup>317</sup> See Chapter 5 pp. 57-8

<sup>318</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 58

interests flourished, the removal of classical music from the Light Programme in daytime disenfranchised a weekly audience of at least a million listeners, who were no longer going to be able to find this output serendipitously in an environment where they felt welcome.

The second period of overall achievement came in the Sixties, amid societal and cultural change across Britain, when the producers of classical music radio came to understand that serving only the elite was unacceptable, although their approach to the demotic was more measured than their pop music counterparts. By providing in the Music Programme “an almost continuous service of good music” during the daytime,<sup>319</sup> as part of a multi-channel approach with the Home Service and the Third Programme, the BBC reached the second high water mark of classical music radio in the UK. For the first time, a listener could tune in to this genre of radio at almost any time across the week, and be exposed to a wide range of composers in an accessible format. Further, this freed up the Third Programme to advance its highbrow efforts while maintaining the links between the four platforms of output (adding in the Study Session broadcasts), enabling listeners if they so wished to progress from one to the other. With almost triple the output, and double the number of composers featured, this represented a genuine cornucopia, and is a key time in this narrative history. The significance of the Music Programme lay not only in what it provided: it was the precursor of the way in which classical music radio was to develop as the century progressed; and foreshadowed genre radio across the BBC as a whole, although in this instance without immuring it in a cultural ghetto.

An unwelcome precedent set by the first high water mark of the late Forties, was that the tide did not stay in for long. The second set of 'good years' ended just the same. As a consequence of the BBC's decision to reorganise all of its national services following *Broadcasting in the Seventies* – and not least in response to the counter-insurgency of the elite led by the Campaign for Better Broadcasting – Radio 3 corralled the elements of classical music broadcasting which had been more widely spread before 1970. Those were confined within a citadel which could be defended against mass intrusion by the approach and tone of its presentation, even more than by the selection of music. Radio 3 seemed often to exist in a parallel universe to the rest of society, except when a wider audience was glimpsed, as when economies obliged the BBC to simulcast classical music with Radio 4.

Following the breaking of the radio monopoly in 1973, the ILR stations gradually provided a significant opening-up of classical music radio, although geographically-limited. That these mixed service stations – while essentially pop music-based – could provide and draw substantial audiences to classical music output, reinforces the more general observation that a wide potential audience existed for this genre of output which did not need to be reserved by and preserved for the elite. It is notable that the composition of the ILR audiences differed not only from that of the BBC services but also of the later Classic FM. These were different listeners, younger people unconditioned by the sacralisation of classical music which the BBC hitherto practised.

The two earlier widenings of the classical music radio franchise had fallen foul of the entrenched elite. ILR's offering was undone by the new overwhelming force in British society, the philosophy of the marketplace. In pursuit of commercial opportunity, ILR

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<sup>319</sup> See Chapter 7 p. 99

shucked off its public service obligations, and in doing so discarded what in the Eighties had been a time of real achievement in the provision of classical music radio.

There were new forces ascendant in the UK, and their confrontational attitudes also encouraged the BBC to challenge the MU over the issue of BBC house orchestras, making the Eighties an uncomfortable time for classical music radio on the BBC. Yet one of the side-effects of the Thatcherite assault on British institutions was that the old elite was progressively disempowered. Arguably, international developments in Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall, which ended the pre-eminence of extreme modernism in classical music composition, undermined the elitists also in the UK.

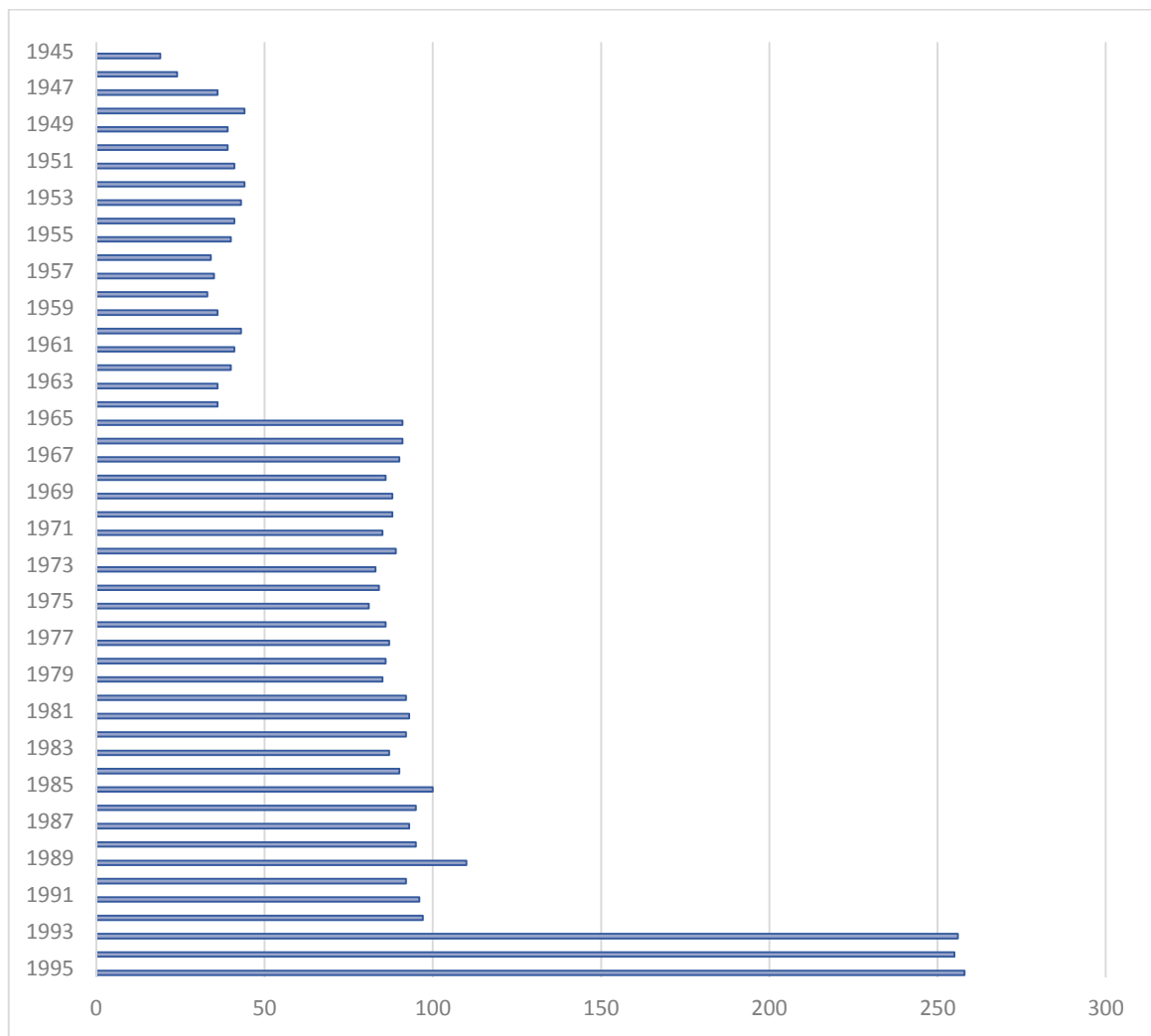
At the start of the Nineties, the BBC set in motion the recasting of Radio 3, ensuring that blend of popular and highbrow programming which represents the medium at its best. Simultaneously, the conscious dismantling of the old structures of Independent Broadcasting made possible the arrival of Classic FM. As this thesis has made clear, the new institutional dispensation did not dictate that, and to a degree it was accidental. Yet it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the social dialectic of the early Nineties strongly indicated – even if it did not require – such an outcome. Since Classic FM arrived amid a resurgence within the BBC, it began with a significant sense of the heritage of UK classical music broadcasting and retained public service-type aspirations for some years.

As a consequence of the conjunction between a recast of Radio 3 and an aspirational Classic FM, the UK enjoyed its third high water mark of classical music radio – multi-channel, serving both high and middlebrow tastes and with educative intent. There was competition of course, often intense. Yet I conclude that Radio 3 and Classic FM, taken together, represented the final benign fusion of the highbrow and the middle brow, the elite and the popular, with – crucially – effective links between those within the stations themselves and *de facto* between the stations as well. The amount of dual listening bears out this last point. When this symbiosis is achieved, it serves to set aside the damaging effects of class, offering the opportunity to expand the horizons of taste for a mass audience, and allowing high culture to enter with comfort into the popular sphere.

### 12.3 Broadcast content

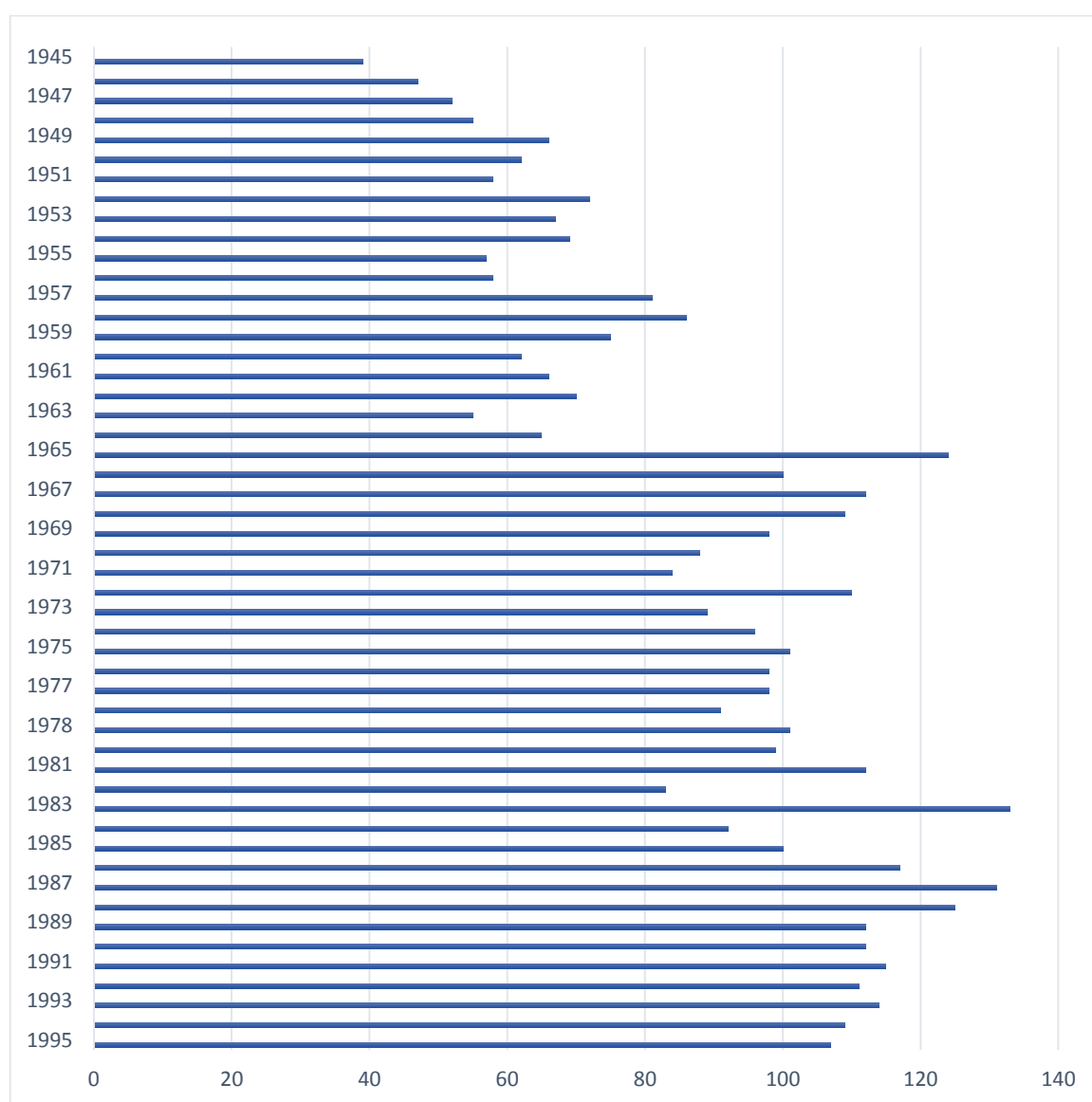
Probably the most notable element of the longitudinal analysis of classical music radio is how its quantity expanded across the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was remarkable for a supposedly minority genre, although in line with the expansion of radio broadcasting services generally. As Chart 12.2 summarises, from just under 20 hours in the sample week in 1945, the provision had grown to 258 hours in the sample week in 1995.

Chart 12.2 Total hours of classical music radio in sample weeks 1945-1995



Equally striking is the consistency of that content over 50 years and across almost a dozen channels at different times. The number of composers featured increased from 39 in 1945 to as high as 133 in 1983, settling at around 110, as Chart 12.3 summarises. Yet the output was consistently dominated by the centre of the radio canonic repertoire. Beethoven was the most played composer in the sample weeks during 22 of the 50 years, Mozart for 18, spread evenly across the period. Between 1945 and 1950, the two most played composers in the sample week were Beethoven on five occasions, Mozart and Haydn on two. Between 1990 and 1995, they were Beethoven on four occasions, Mozart on two. The classical music repertoire expanded, certainly, but its centre of gravity remained unchanged.

Chart 12.3 Number of composers featured in sample weeks 1945-1995



The huge expansion in output was made possible to a large degree by increasing use of commercially recorded gramophone records. For most of this period the BBC's Gramophone Department was confined to producing light music programmes, and when the Music and Gramophone Departments came together in 1982, the decision to appoint the Gramophone Department's Christine Hardwick to head the new arrangement reflected a sea-change in approach. As little as 5 per cent of the musical content of BBC programmes were derived from records in the early Fifties. That rose to getting on for 40 per cent in the Nineties. Benjamin (1936/2008) would have felt that music's auratic quality adhered only to live performances, not to broadcasting, let alone mechanical reproduction. Yet at the end of the period, commercial radio demonstrated the potency of a record-based service, while the BBC had come to appreciate that – in Wright's words – there should be no valid value judgement that live music is necessarily better than a recording, even though on occasions and at its best live music can provide something unique.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>320</sup> Interview with Roger Wright 10 October 2014

## 12.4 Radio audiences

Radio audiences for existing services change only slowly. The historical narrative and longitudinal analysis demonstrate a remarkable consistency of potential audience for this genre of radio throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Across the whole period, a surprisingly diverse audience of 5 to 6 million people was available to listen to accessible classical music radio if that was offered to them, and if it was present on channels which they felt they were allowed to approach. I do not seek to assert that programmes which failed to achieve measurable audiences were axiomatically not worth broadcasting; on the contrary, almost all the radio services reviewed in this thesis understood an obligation to broadcast at times challenging and untried content. But obscurity is not acceptable as a sufficient producer rationale in radio broadcasting.

During the periods when classical music radio was multi-channel and offered a fusion of highbrow and middlebrow output, the number of people listening was much greater and the composition of those audiences more diverse than elitist assumptions would allow. Just as in the late Forties the BBC admitted [*sic*] that one third of the listeners to the Third Programme were working class,<sup>321</sup> so during those years when the Music Programme was operating, for ILR in its public service years, and in the early Nineties, the make-up of the audience was much more gender-neutral, less hidebound by class and at times younger than might be expected. Talkington points out that even for the smallest of ILR stations:

the existence of classical music programmes pervaded the whole output. Because the daytime programmes would trail the specialist programmes, listeners would pick up on things; there was a sense of dialogue between the programmes.<sup>322</sup>

I conclude – along with Goodman’s view of commercial radio in America (2011) – that it is wholly possible for producers and consumers to regard the presence of classical music on radio as normative, when its provision and presentation is not hidebound by elitist practice and assumptions. Far more people were prepared to listen to this genre of radio than were able to engage with it on what highbrow producers believed to be “equal terms”.<sup>323</sup>

## 12.5 Elite and mass culture

Classical music is not in itself elitist, although “there are social and historical circumstances which have led some to regard the consumption of it to be elitist or only for a certain part of society”.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, self-conscious elitism persisted in classical music radio throughout much of this period, demanding protection of the supposed purity of that high culture of which classical music was the outstanding instance. Its influence diminished to a degree, as social class became less rigid and popular taste had the opportunity to be better developed. Equally, the breakdown of the old hierarchies was hastened by the imposition of market liberalism, although to a

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<sup>321</sup> See Chapter 5 p. 58

<sup>322</sup> Interview with Fiona Talkington 8 October 2014

<sup>323</sup> See Chapter 6 p. 75

<sup>324</sup> Interview with Roger Wright 10 October 2014

degree that simply inserted a new elite, with their own similar if slightly different sensitivities.

Those who fret about the commodification of culture have some grounds for sensing a retreat from the most eclectic in classical music radio, but that was driven as much by the exodus of audiences as from financial necessity. I conclude that it was those who set out to stereotype the potential audience for classical music radio, and to cast them in their own image, who have done the genre the greater disservice. Seeking to protect an elite view of, and access to, a particular 'high culture' has meant that its democratisation has been consistently rebuffed throughout this period. It was only when that self-defining elite was side-lined along with so many other national institutions in the Eighties that its influence diminished. As the Establishment reasserts itself in the changing UK political dispensation of the new century, there can be no certainty that such accessibility will be maintained. If and when that happens, it will serve to confirm classical music radio as a remarkably precise signifier of the wider cultural, social and political development of UK society as a whole.

The narrative of classical music radio is dominated by that recurring tension between the elite and the accessible, the highbrow and the middle brow. There is repeated evidence across the half century that when both aspects of the genre were properly represented in radio output, the medium was at its strongest and most relevant, even though sustaining the delicate balance was difficult and rarely long-lasting. Specific UK media scholarship has been distorted, with an undue focus on the Third Programme and Radio 3 obscuring the broader social and cultural significance of the genre. Wider cultural theories have also flourished without taking account of what it means when 'ordinary people' are able to tune in to accessible classical music. Yet it is the approach of Edward Said which wins out: to paraphrase his observation (Said 1994, p. 28): 'Beethoven belongs as much to the mass as he does to the elite, since his music is now part of the human heritage'. It is germane that Beethoven is the most-played composer of all on radio between 1945 and 1995. Not that it is safe to fall like McKibbin into the trap of treating Beethoven – or any other classical master who is also popular with large audiences – as middlebrow; I conclude that such work is at the highest brow, and that it has been the singular achievement of radio producers and consumers to make that high culture popularly accessible.

## 12.6 The nature of listening to classical music radio

Few aspects of this highbrow anxiety have been sharper than the debate over whether it is permissible for classical music to be broadcast with the awareness that it would be for background not foreground listening, being as Britten (1964, p. 16) put it "at the mercy of any loud roomful of cocktail drinkers". Harrison Birtwistle in 2013<sup>325</sup> dubbed such music "aural wallpaper", while Jean Cocteau had called it "musique d'ameublement".<sup>326</sup> A series of self-appointed defenders of the Third Programme and Radio 3 argued that using classical music as a background accompaniment to daily tasks devalued a supreme art. That approach received ready adherence from many

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<sup>325</sup> Richard Morrison. "Sir Harry rides into the fray." *The Times* 1 December 1993: page not specified. *The Times* Digital Archive (accessed 18 July 2013)

<sup>326</sup> *The Times* 15 April 1966 p. 60

elements within the BBC, who regretted that classical music programmes were being broadcast to those “unlikely to be able to meet them on equal terms”.<sup>327</sup>

Class and educational snobbery is at its most extreme in this elevation of music to the status of liturgy. When Bach took his sublime music into those Leipzig coffee-houses, it was not in some way a diminished art; what changed was its accessibility. I conclude with Leo Black that the same person listens to classical music in different ways – foreground or background – according to their immediate wishes and circumstances. He distinguishes “the act of really listening in to and participating in music” which he considers to be “much rarer than people imagine” with just having the radio “on in the background”.<sup>328</sup> Classical music radio is at its best when it provides for both purposes, when it is referenced either to individuals or to groups (but not classes) of listener. That squares with Hendy’s (2010) notion of a ‘hierarchy’ of listening, so long as it is qualified by Lacey’s (2013) concept of listening as a *cultural* practice (her emphasis) which can change over time. ‘Listening in’ to classical music radio as a normative, quotidian activity is enhanced by periodic ‘listening out’ for greater intellectual engagement. Neither need be the separate preserve of an individual listener. Anyone can do both. Equally, classical music radio producers need to offer content which ‘sounds in’ amid routine programming, and also that which ‘sounds out’ to enhance the intellectual potential of the medium.

Shifting technology for the personal consumption of classical music is also starting to change the nature of listening. From the Sony Walkman, to MP3, to Napster and to iPlayer, consumers are now able to select to a very substantial degree what they listen to and when they listen to it. In Wright’s words,

there is no dress code, there is no pass, there is no limit on where you do it, how much you do it, who is with you.<sup>329</sup>

Outside the concert halls – and very largely within them as well – sacralisation is a concept of a past world. As a consequence, the nature of listening to classical music radio is likely to alter fundamentally; arguably, it has done so already. Once again, the genre is a signifier of past cultural practice and current change.

### 12.7 The relevance of biography

Hendy (2013) has stressed the place of individual biography in broadcasting history. Its importance is evident in the history of classical music radio, where the oft-quoted names of Haley, Glock, Keller, Singer, Drummond and Kenyon were no more significant than Marriott at the BBC and Thompson at the IBA behind the scenes. However, it is open to debate whether the nature of classical music radio would have changed fundamentally in the absence of any one of them. I consider that each encapsulated the mood of their era and implemented what the wider social dialectic indicated.

Of all the seminal figures in classical music radio, Glock is arguably the most instructive in considering the relevance of individual biography to media history. Under his

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<sup>327</sup> The Third Programme, the size and character of its public. Listener Research Report (BBC WAC R9/13/99, May 1953). See Chapter 6 p. 75

<sup>328</sup> Interview with Leo Black 14 September 2013 and personal communication 12 December 2014

<sup>329</sup> Interview with Roger Wright 10 October 2014



stewardship of BBC music, listeners were given the opportunity to move from the fusty atmosphere of late Fifties Britain into the more open, freer but unpredictable climate of the Sixties. Yet that was no more than was happening in society and culture at large, and the narrative and content analysis makes clear that his impact on radio output – as distinct from concert output – was less pronounced than his reputation suggests. Similarly, Singer, for all the *ad personam* attention he generated at the time and subsequently, was arguably just another manifestation of the polarising forces which generated Thatcherism, even in his brutal approach to the issue. I conclude that these and the other men (for it was almost always men) were a product of the society in which they lived, just as were the different manifestations of classical music radio. Where they have enhanced importance for the media historian is as signifiers, paradigms for the times they characterise.

## 12.8 The nature of public service radio broadcasting

Classical music may be characterised as an archetypal element of public service radio broadcasting (PSRB).<sup>330</sup> It is widely regarded as a highly worthwhile art and cultural form, so its provision on radio may be considered a significant public good. Hitherto, the Third Programme and Radio 3 have been regarded as the most conspicuous producers of this aspect of PSRB. However, the narrative history demonstrates much wider provision. While much of that has been done within the institution of the BBC, a significant amount since 1973 has been provided by the small ILR companies; and then by the overtly commercial Classic FM. This challenges the view that PSRB can only be provided by “broadcasting run neither by the state nor by private commercial interests, but by large public bodies working in what they have thought of as the public interest” (Hendy 2013, p. 2). It suggests instead that alongside an institutional definition of PSRB there needs to be an acceptance that aspirational production can engage a wide range of consumers with material which – picking up on the definition of classical music established for this thesis – offers “*the opportunity for intellectual engagement with the music as well as sensory enjoyment*”.<sup>331</sup> Where prior assumptions of class, intelligence and educational attainment can be set aside, different broadcasting aesthetics can be equally authentic and equally valid in offering access to a transcendent culture.

But might the output of ILR and to an extent Classic FM be regarded merely as regulatory artefacts? Certainly, classical music was effectively mandated on the local stations, but this thesis has shown that the enthusiasm with which those obligations were embraced and expanded upon demonstrated genuine public service inclination. Equally, Classic FM was a self-generating phenomenon, not a regulatory imposition, and the aspirational nature of its broadcasting during its early years came about without any formal contractual requirement. Those involved with classical music (and no doubt with all art forms) possess an enthusiasm for it to be heard in its best manifestations by as many and as diverse people as can be found. The great popularisers of classical music radio – William Haley, John Manduell and Nicholas Kenyon for the BBC, Michael Bukht, Ralph Bernard and Robin Ray in private radio –

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<sup>330</sup> ‘Public service radio broadcasting’ is abbreviated in this thesis to ‘PSRB’ to distinguish it from the common usage of ‘PSB’, which also covers television

<sup>331</sup> See Chapter 2 p. 25

wanted to reach out to the audience they knew was there, without cheapening what they wished to offer.

Seaton (2015, p. 89) argues that music "was part of the BBC's unstated duty to sustaining a 'common culture', in which high culture and the everyday "were interrelated positively". I have concluded similarly that such a symbiosis represented classical music radio at its best. That also illuminates the nature of PSRB, as a quality which is not exclusive to the BBC. For a time at least, that interrelationship was achieved by ILR and Classic FM, which were better at reaching the everyday than Radio 3 could ever hope to do. Similarly, the pedagogic role of radio has changed. It is no longer about formalised education, but about providing opportunities for learning. As a consequence, even if the triptych of information, education and entertainment is still the defining role of PSRB, radio stations no longer need a great institutional panoply to be able to fulfil the educative function.

I conclude that there are multiple institutional options for providing PSRB. These can be funded in a variety of ways – by the state, commercially or through philanthropy – and exist independent of the scale of their providers. They are validated, once again, by a reflexive complicity between the producer and consumer of radio around a particular content and style of provision. This history of classical music radio repeatedly bears out that assertion, at least during those periods when elitist educational and class assumptions were set aside.

### 12.9 Methodology: the use of original databases

This thesis is grounded in the exposition and analysis of the content of the broadcasts, and of the audiences to those broadcasts. Institutional history is treated as the context rather than the main subject. That has enabled relatively objective, quantitative-based analysis to be set alongside qualitative observations. The result in several important instances challenges prior assumptions: the respective importance of different radio channels; the reality of programme output as against the assertions of the contemporary commentariat; and the prevalence of the central canonic repertoire, in contrast with the amount of critical and academic attention accorded to more eclectic works. The data-based approach also reveals the extent to which the consumer was able to hear different radio services from those which the BBC's intellectuals claimed to be providing, claims which at times have been taken at face-value in media histories. Although the databases were compiled on a sample basis only, and from listings information (therefore not capturing in the main the content of unspecified sequence programmes), the consistency of the data confirms their validity.

The related audience database is also an important underpinning to the narrative. For most of the period under review, it is possible to identify the actual audience levels of individual programmes. That is central to evaluating their importance, even while accepting the impact of a few programmes with relatively small or unmeasurable audiences. Audience trends over time show the contrasting fortunes of classical music radio across this period, which was not an entropic decline but rather a series of fluctuations within a consistent potential audience level.

However, a formula for converting average or median audience data into patronage figures has proved elusive and insufficiently reliable to include in this thesis. Patronage and reach data are therefore available only on a patchy basis. The lack of audience data for ILR, and of daily BBC audience figures for the period between 1990 and 1993,

is also a limitation. Those apart, the audience research methodology has proved a valid and robust way of underpinning a broadcasting history narrative.

#### 12.10 Further research

The BBC's restriction on access to archive material after 1979 has been partly overcome by the helpfulness of staff at the Written Archives Centre, but much material is still withheld, nor does one come across material that one is not looking for specifically. When more post-1979 files are released, it is likely that there will be other relevant material. Current study is hampered by the BBC's restrictive policy towards release of interviews conducted within its Oral History project (even those interviews conducted by 'official' historians whose work has subsequently been published), and these restrictions ought to be relaxed over time. This thesis has also relied upon sample weeks of data which may valuably be checked by further research, although pilot sampling has indicated that this is not a major limitation on the reliability of the information. The absence of listings for unspecified sequence programming might also be alleviated by future research.

Six specific areas for further study are indicated by the current research. Gender issues – including the selection and broadcasting of composers and performers of classical music, the impact of an overwhelmingly male BBC music management cadre,<sup>332</sup> and the frequent ignoring of female listeners to such programming – deserve extensive further research. White European dominance of this genre of radio exceeded even the situation for classical music as a whole, and suggests that racial and post-imperial questions deserve further exploration. The educative aspect of the broadcasting of classical music is another valuable research area, as is the nature and diversity introduced by the regional output of the Home Service and of the associated national and regional BBC orchestras. The EBU programme sharing scheme is an interesting subject for a research study, and more work could valuably be done on post-war music selection on radio. In each of these research areas, classical music radio will be interesting in itself, and serve also as a signifier of the society in which it operated.

#### 12.11 A story worth the telling

The thesis has set out the first comprehensive, longitudinal, narrative history of classical music broadcast on UK radio in the second half of the 20th century, relating that to the changing political, social and economic circumstances of those decades. Beginning before the launch of the BBC Third Programme, and continuing until after the launch of the commercial station Classic FM, it describes and analyses the wide range of services which offered this style of music, describing a far broader spectrum than previous discourse had identified.

These 50 years were characterised by a series of high points, when classical music services were broadcast across a number of different channels, offered highbrow and middlebrow content, provided links between elite and popular output, and were accessible to a broad range of potential listeners. Each of those then provoked a reaction from the self-appointed intellectual elite, concerned at the diminishing of what

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<sup>332</sup> See Appendix D page 296n

they regarded as 'high art' in the interest of mass appeal, and reflecting the class-based assumptions of British society during these years.

This account broadens out from the previous narrow preconception of what this genre of broadcasting comprised, which itself reflected educational and class assumptions. Almost all previous academic and popular discourse has addressed classical music on UK radio as comprising merely the output of the Third Programme, and subsequently of Radio 3, and has therefore assumed it to be the preserve of the well-educated, higher-class elite. As this thesis has demonstrated, for much of this period there was a richer, multi-channel offering of surprisingly broad appeal. In the years before 1970, the Third Programme was never the majority provider of this type of radio; the Home Service, the Light Programme and then the Music Programme were much more significant in terms of quantity of output and audiences. In the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Radio 3 offering was added by classical music provision on ILR; and eventually radically augmented by the success of Classic FM from 1992 onwards.

The story of classical music radio is a powerful paradigm for the nature and development of the UK in the second half of the 20th century. It has a different significance from the pop music radio revolution, being at once more subtle and less linear. While popular music was about the impact of an invasive and classless youth culture, the varied lines of development of classical music radio speak to the shifting nature of tradition and institutions in Britain – mediated by the influence of class – and how culture was only periodically opened up to a broader audience. But it is not just an academic signifier; it is primarily a compelling new story, adding to the understanding of broadcasting history in the UK, and of post-war British society as a whole.

Tony Stoller

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- (ii) References in the main text to the BBC Daily Barometer, JICRAR and RAJAR, and other research data, are cited in Appendix A.
- (iii) References in this list to the *Radio Times* are for specific features rather than programme listings (which are covered in Appendix B).
- (iv) References in this list to online material in *The Times Digital Archive* and *The Listener Digital Archive* are available from  
[http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/dispatchBasicSearch.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=bu\\_uk](http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/dispatchBasicSearch.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=bu_uk)

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Content database**

##### **Introduction**

Chapter 4 has discussed the relevance of content analysis to this narrative history, in order to establish what was offered by way of classical music on UK radio across this period. When linked with the audience database (in Appendix B) that can identify actual audience behaviour, rather than assumptions about audiences taste and patronage. Perhaps the foremost example of the collective value of such analysis is to offset the over-emphasis in some existing discourse on contemporary composers, or on those of the Second Viennese School, which has tended to dominate previous histories. Among many other more detailed points, the content database shows the absolute dominance of the First Viennese School right across the 50 years of this study.

##### *a) Radio Times listings*

*Radio Times* listings, available for every day for the whole of this period, are the major accessible source for BBC radio programmes. Regional variations in Home Service broadcasts between 1945 and 1969 are not reflected in this database. They could valuably be the subject of a separate study, but the additional complexity would have made the analytical task for this thesis hugely more difficult, without adding materially to understanding the broad flow of the historical narrative. The research for this thesis was completed just before the BBC released its online archive of *Radio Times* listings ([genome.ch.bbc.co.uk](http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk)), and has therefore been compiled from archive copies of the magazine itself, except where indicated in the text.

##### *b) pilot study*

The volume of *Radio Times* listing data is daunting. However, pilot analysis of three separate weeks in each of four years – 1950, 1965, 1980 and 1993 – showed that routine output changes only slowly, except for various 'specials' which can be dealt with outside the dataset. The programme content database developed for this thesis therefore addresses radio output in week 19 (either the first or second week in May) every year from 1945 until 1995. This week was chosen after pilot testing, being outside main holiday periods, major music festivals or significant variations from the norm. Such 'variations' are sometimes important for the narrative, but they can be reviewed on a qualitative basis – which I have done where that is appropriate. Both the *Radio Times* listings and the audience data in the Daily Listening Barometer initially began the broadcast week on a Sunday, changing in 1961 to a Saturday. This content database (and the audience database) follow that approach.

##### *c) Notes on content analysis*

This database identifies and aggregates the total duration of programmes which contain classical music broadcast on BBC radio and Classic FM. Chapter 2 has considered the taxonomy of classical music for the purposes of this study, meaning that in general works composed before the baroque period are not included, nor is

liturgical music and therefore the majority of organ recitals. Film music is usually excluded, except where it has clearly entered the canonic repertoire.

In listing the number of 'plays' which each composer receives, multiple songs included in a single recital are scored as one single play. Major works – notably operas and oratorios – are also scored a single plays, and therefore in this sense at least have equivalence with a single sonata. However, they are usually identified separately in the narrative text.

### Database summary

The database comprises an analysis of the output on all BBC national radio services and Classic FM for every day in the sample week 19 across the years 1945 to 1996. The summary presented here shows the total hours of broadcast programmes, how much of those were derived from commercial records ("gramophone records") rather than live broadcasts or original recordings, and the quantity of music feature material – the last defined as programmes which are predominantly speech but address issues relating to classical music. From 1970 onwards, the total hours of 'sequence programming' is also recorded, where 'sequence programming' is understood as a series of works without any conscious link between them and not within a concert setting.

One further caution is needed in considering these data. The source of them is the *Radio Times*, and some of the sequence programmes from around the mid Sixties onwards do not have any listings. These are referred to as 'unspecified sequence programmes'. That is particularly the case in the later years with programmes such as *In Tune* and *Mainly for Pleasure*. For Classic FM, the majority of programmes are unspecified sequences and therefore no detailed listings are available. The data are therefore more valid as comparative than as absolute figures.

Four summaries of the full database are set out in this Appendix:

1. A longitudinal summary of total hours of classical music radio broadcast and the use of commercially recorded music by the BBC
2. A summary of the output classical music radio on each national station
3. BBC featured composers, as *This Week's Composer* or *Composer of the Week*, by decades
4. A longitudinal summary of composers most featured in BBC output

The totals do not include ILR station output, which was in separate and limited localities.

Database A.1 Total classical music programmes broadcast 1945-1995.  
(total hours and minutes of classical music in programmes in each sample week)

	BBC radio			Classic FM	All radio
Year sampled	Total hours	Records	Records as % of total hours	Total hours	Total hours
1945	19'40	4'40	22.9%		19'40
1946	24'10	5'30	22.7%		24'10
1947	36'00	5'05	15.2%		36'00
1948	44'40	3'45	8.4%		44'40
1949	39'45	1'30	3.8%		39'45
1950	39'05	3'20	8.4%		39'50
1951	41'25	1'55	4.6%		41'25
1952	44'15	2'05	4.7%		44'15
1953	43'05	2'30	5.8%		43'05
1954	41'15	3'05	7.5%		41'25
1955	40'25	6'00	14.8%		40'25
1956	34'25	3'40	10.6%		34'25
1957	35'20	3'25	9.8%		35'20
1958	33'10	3'10	9.5%		33'10
1959	36'15	7'00	19.3%		36'15
1960	43'45	3'05	7.1%		43'45
1961	41'50	7'20	17.5%		41'50
1962	40'40	3'55	9.7%		40'40
1963	36'30	4'00	10.9%		36'30
1964	36'10	4'40	12.9%		36'10
1965	91'50	31'05	33.9%		91'50
1966	91'30	31'25	34.4%		91'30
1967	90'10	31'20	34.8%		90'10
1968	86'35	25'50	29.8%		86'35
1969	88'40	24'55	28.1%		88'40
1970	88'50	30'15	34.0%		88'50
1971	85'35	21'15	24.8%		85'35
1972	89'20	27'00	30.2%		89'20
1973	83'50	22'35	26.9%		83'50
1974	84'45	27'50	32.8%		84'45
1975	81'05	27'30	33.9%		81'05
1976	86'55	24'35	28.2%		86'55
1977	87'45	31'10	35.5%		87'45
1978	86'10	24'10	28.0%		86'10
1979	85'40	34'05	39.8%		85'40
1980	92'55	38'35	41.5%		92'55
1981	93'10	37'10	39.9%		93'10
1982	92'00	34'50	37.9%		92'00
1983	87'40	27'25	31.3%		87'40
1984	90'40	35'55	39.7%		90'40
1985	100'40	31'00	30.9%		100'40
1986	95'10	31'15	32.8%		95'10
1987	93'35	34'45	37.1%		93'35
1988	95'40	40'30	42.3%		95'40
1989	110'40	29'05	26.3%		110'40
1990	92'30	32'40	35.3%		92'30
1991	96'25	41'05	42.6%		96'25
1992	97'20	36'35	37.5%		97'20
1993	95'50	45'35	47.5%	161'00	256'50
1994	99'45	35'00	35.1%	166'00	255'45
1995	101'05	31'00	30.7%	157'00	258'05

Database A.2 Summary of each station's output 1945-1996  
(total hours and minutes of classical music in programmes in each sample week)

	Home	Records	Third	Records	Gen. Forces	Records		
1945	13'25	4'10			5'00	6'15		
					<b>Light</b>			
1946	17'30	5'30			6'40	-		
1947	16'20	5'05	13'10	-	6'30	-		
1948	16'50	3'15	20'35	0'30	7'15	-		
1949	15'30	1'10	17'00	0'20	7'15	-		
1950	13'10	1'55	20'55	1'25	5'00	-		
1951	18'00	1'15	18'30	0'40	6'55	-		
1952	17'30	1'15	19'00	0'50	8'45	-		
1953	16'00	1'00	21'20	0'30	5'45	0'30		
1954	15'42	1'50	19.45	1'45	5'45	-		
1955	18'30	4'15	16'40	1'45	5'15	-		
1956	15'15	1'40	16'00	2'00	3'10	-		
1957	15'00	2'00	16'30	1'25	3'50	-		
							<b>Network 3</b>	Features
1958	18'47	1'55	13'35	0'30	-	-	0'45	
1959	17'25	3'55	17'25	1'30	-	-	1'35	0'30
1960	22'45	3'05	16'35	-	-		2'40	0'45
1961	21'10	5'05	16'55	0'15	2'00	-	1'00	0'30
1962	23'35	2'40	14'00	1'15	1'00	-	1'45	1'00
1963	21'15	3'20	13'00	0'40	-		2'15	1'15
1964	20'30	2'50	12'45	1'50	1'40		1'30	1'00
	<b>Radio 4</b>				<b>Music Programme</b>	Records		<b>Study session</b>
1965	13'00	2'30	15'35	0'30	63'25	28'05		-
1966	11'45	2'20	13'30	-	65'45	29'05		0'30
1967	10'55	-	16'55	3'20	60'50	28'00		0'30
1968	14'35	3'05	12'20	0'40	59'40	22'05		
1969	12'00	2'55	16'35	-	60'05	22'00		
	<b>Radio 3</b>	Records	Features	Seq. progs	<b>Radio 4</b>	Features		
1970	88'50	30'15	4'45	12'25				
1971	85'35	21'15	3'00	9'00				
1972	89'20	27'00	6'05	12'45				
1973	83'50	22'35	3'10	13'50				
1974	84'45	27'50	2'45	14'50				
1975	81'05	27'30	2'50	18'10				
1976	80'45	24'35	3'50	16'15				
1977	84'35	31'10	2'25	15'45				
1978	82'10	24'10	2'25	14'45	4'00			
1979	85'40	34'05	2'00	14'35				
1980	86'05	31'45	2'50	19'05	6'50	0'45		
1981	90'05	37'10	3'20	22'35	2'50			
1982	89'40	34'50	1'40	22'00	2'20			
1983	87'40	27'25	2'00	17'55				
1984	90'40	35'55	1'40	16'30				
1985	100'40	31'00	2'30	17'30				
1986	95'10	31'15	3'40	20'10				
1987	93'35	34'45	3'00	17'35				
1988	95'40	40'30	1'30	18'25				
1989	110'40	29'05	5'00	17'30				
1990	92'30	32'40	-	22'00				
1991	96'25	41'50	4'35	28'40				
1992	97'20	36'35	2'30	26'30				
					<b>Classic FM</b>	Features	Non-seq.	
1993	95'50	43'35	1'40	34'30	161'00	5'00	21'00	
1994	99'45	35'00	3'00	39'30	166'00	7'00	22'00	
1995	101'05	31'00	3'50	38'15	157'00	7'00	20'00	
1996	137'20	58'00	6'40	60'10	162'00	3'00	24'30	

Database A.3 Composers featured as either *This Week's Composer* or *Composer of the Week* in each sample week 1945-1995

	This Week's Composer/Composer of the Week
1945	Fauré
1946	Vaughan Williams, Bax
1947	Elgar
1948	Tchaikovsky
1949-1960	None
1961	Berlioz
1962-4	None
1965	Fauré
1966	Handel
1967	Handel
1968	Rawsthorne and Warlock
1969	Holst and Tippett
1970	Liszt
1971	Rawsthorne, Walton
1972	Vaughan Williams
1973	Nielsen
1974	Tchaikovsky
1975	Domenico Scarlatti, Boccherini
1976	Josquin des Prez
1977	Chopin
1978	Purcell
1979	Brahms
1980	Greig
1981	Monteverdi
1982	Greig
1983	Lennox Berkeley
1984	Smetana
1985	Dvořák
1986	Ockeghem
1987	Rachmaninov
1988	Goldmark
1989	"Mozart's Rivals", Ravel
1990	Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn
1991	Poulenc, Gesualdo, Victoria
1992	Beethoven, Barber
1993	Handel
1994	Dvořák, Fauré
1995	Fauré, Brahms

The final table (Database A.4) has a minimum of 4 plays for inclusion. The symbol = indicates an equal number of plays with the composer in the next column. One caution is needed in considering these data. The source of them is the *Radio Times*, and some of the sequence programmes – notably *In Tune*– do not have any listings. The information is therefore more valid as comparative than as absolute figures.

Database A.4 Most played composers in BBC output in each sample week 1945-1995

Year sampled	Total Composers	Most	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4th
1945	39	Beethoven	Tchaikovsky	Mozart	Bach
1946	47	Beethoven	Mozart	Brahms	Tchaikovsky/Handel/Purcell
1947	52	Bach	Mozart	Schubert	Tchaikovsky
1948	55	Beethoven	Haydn	Liszt	Chopin
1949	66	Dvořák	Beethoven	Debussy =	Chopin/Stanford
1950	62	Beethoven	Haydn	Mozart =	Schumann/Schubert
1951	56	Haydn	Brahms	Beethoven	Mozart
1952	72	Mozart	Haydn	Schubert	Teleman
1953	67	Beethoven	Mozart	Haydn =	Liszt/Handel/Mendelssohn/ Stravinsky
1954	69	Beethoven	Mozart	Haydn =	Bach
1955	57	Beethoven	Bach	Brahms	
1956	58	Mozart	Handel	Debussy =	Beethoven
1957	81	Bach	Beethoven	Schubert	Schumann
1958	66	Bach	Mozart	Sibelius	Haydn
1959	75	Beethoven	Mozart =	Elgar =	Bach/Rachmaninov
1960	62	Mozart	Haydn	Bach =	Schumann/Brahms
1961	66	Beethoven	Mozart	Tchaikovsky	
1962	70	Bach	Beethoven	Bach	Haydn/Schumann
1963	55	Beethoven	Mozart	Stravinsky	Britten
1964	65	Beethoven	Mozart	Debussy	Dvořák
1965	124	Beethoven	Bach	Haydn	Mozart/Brahms/ Tchaikovsky
1966	100	Mozart	Beethoven	Bach	Brahms/Schubert
1967	112	Bach	Mozart	Beethoven	Schubert
1968	109	Mozart	Beethoven	Bach	Haydn/Dvořák
1969	98	Beethoven	Brahms =	Mozart =	Schubert
1970	88	Beethoven	Mozart	Bach	Haydn
1971	84	Beethoven	Mozart	Schubert	Haydn
1972	110	Beethoven	Mozart	Brahms	Haydn
1973	89	Mozart	Schubert	Beethoven	Brahms
1974	96	Haydn	Mozart	Brahms	Beethoven
1975	101	Mozart	Bach	Haydn	Beethoven
1976	98	Mozart	Brahms	Beethoven	Bach
1977	98	Beethoven	Mozart	Haydn	Schubert
1978	101	Mozart =	Schubert	Haydn	Brahms
1979	91	Mozart	Bach	Debussy	Mendelssohn
1980	99	Brahms	Beethoven	Mozart =	Schumann
1981	112	Mozart	Haydn =	Beethoven	Schubert
1982	83	Beethoven	Mozart	Dvořák =	Schubert
1983	133	Mozart	Brahms	Beethoven	Handel
1984	92	Mozart	Haydn =	Beethoven	Brahms
1985	100	Beethoven	Schumann	Mozart	Haydn
1986	117	Mozart	Schubert	Beethoven	Fauré
1987	131	Mozart	Mendelssohn	Haydn	Ravel/Brahms/ Schubert/ Britten/Schumann
1988	125	Beethoven	Mozart	Schubert =	Dvořák
1989	112	Mozart	Beethoven	Schubert =	Mendelssohn
1990	112	Beethoven	Bach	Mozart =	Debussy
1991	115	Beethoven	Chopin	Brahms	Dvořák
1992	111	Mozart	Beethoven	Haydn	Bach/Stravinsky/ Maxwell Davies
1993	114	Mozart	Schubert	Haydn	Brahms
1994	109	Dvořák	Beethoven	Bach	
1995	107	Brahms	Britten	Debussy	Ravel

## **Appendix B**

### **Audience databases**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 4 has set out the importance of objective and quantitative data, to benchmark and validate qualitative value judgements about audience responses to classical music radio output. As for content, this thesis deploys two original databases of listening to this genre of output:

1. a comprehensive dataset of maximum and median audience is for individual programmes across the entire period from 1945 until 1995;
2. and a longitudinal series of patronage and reach data

It includes, in addition, a compilation of data about the nature and composition of the radio audiences for classical music radio.

The background to the availability of audience research data – and its often contradictory nature, depending on differing sources – needs a brief explanation before coming to the figures themselves. This Appendix therefore begins with an historical summary of the origins of different and at times competing sets of listening data. It then explains how the database were developed, and then examines available data about the nature and composition of the radio audiences for classical music radio.

#### **The development of radio audience research in the UK**

The BBC came very late to audience research. Briggs has noted Reith's aversion to having programmes influenced by what the audience thought it wanted "The BBC must lead, not follow, its listeners" (Briggs 1965, p 261) and much of that Reithian tradition continued within the BBC well after the war. At times, and among some producers, the number of people listening was considered an irrelevance. Black recalls that the purpose of *Music in Our Time*

was to introduce things that had not been heard, and that people might even not want to hear, for the moment... Glock used to say, "I aim to give the public now what it will like next year.

adding that

once we got the real zealots of 'Music in our Time' in place, probably they didn't even want to hear it next year or any year.<sup>333</sup>

Even the creator of BBC audience research, Robert Silvey, (Silvey 1974, p.15) was fond of quoting Frank Muir's *aperçu*, that

audience research...is a bad master...the fate of the battleship Potemkin shows what happens when the ratings take over.

Nevertheless, once Reith had departed,<sup>334</sup> Silvey introduced in 1939 a regular daily survey – the Continuous Survey of Radio Listening – which deployed 800 daily

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<sup>333</sup> Interview with Leo Black 14 September 2013

<sup>334</sup> He was succeeded by Sir Frederick Ogilvie in June 1938

interview to provide a 'barometer' of audience sizes for individual programmes (Silvey 1974, pp. 88, 99) which continued as the prime BBC data source until 1992 (O'Neill 2004).<sup>335</sup> The wartime pattern of daily surveys supplemented by special reports survived long into the postwar period. The number of daily interviews expanded from 800 to 3,600 from August 1946, in time for the re-organisation of BBC radio services and to measure both regional output and the new Third Programme. The resulting Radio Listening Barometer continued until August 1981, providing qualitative data. It was succeeded from 1981 until the end of 1984 by Radio Monthly Reports. The quantitative data was compiled and summarised in the weekly Audience Research Bulletin from 1953 to 1979, the Radio Weekly Bulletin from 1979 to 1992 and the Radio Monthly Summary from 1992 until 1994.

The BBC's monopoly over radio audience research was broken, along with its sound broadcasting monopoly, by the arrival of ILR in 1973. Independent research for the commercial companies via the Joint Industry Committee for Radio Audience Research (JICRAR), used self-completion diaries placed with a random sample of the population, initially within local station survey areas. This produced significant antagonism between the BBC and ILR. James Gordon for ILR wrote to *The Times* challenging the BBC to substantiate their claims<sup>336</sup> and there was even threat of legal action (Stoller 2010, pp. 85-6). JICRAR produced results for the UK as a whole from the final quarter of 1977. Perhaps coincidentally, in 1974 the BBC began to make public its own findings on a reasonably systematic basis.<sup>337</sup> These provide benchmarks against which to check the JICRAR estimates, although the method adopted by BBC audience research to measure the amount of listening was based on 'aided-recall'.

By the time the BBC faced national, full-time competition in classical music radio, joint audience research for both radio sectors had been agreed upon. The Radio Industry Joint Audience Research (RAJAR) specification came into operation for the final quarter of 1992. It used an improved version of the seven-day diary pioneered by JICRAR (Stoller 2010, p. 92). For the first time, there was a common currency to measure radio audiences. Starkey (2005, p. 45) observes that "...because of the broad

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<sup>335</sup> Interviewers opened their interviews with the words "I am working for the BBC...", and although Silvey defended this approach right into the years after the end of the BBC's monopolies (Silvey 1974, p. 92), they introduced a distortion which his previous employers at the London Press Exchange would never have contemplated – unless the research was intended to produce data for promotional purposes.

<sup>336</sup> *The Times* 5 November 1974

<sup>337</sup> Writing in the first of the Annual Reviews, Peter Meneer, who was to become the BBC's Head of Audience Research in 1970, described the three strands of the work of the Department in respect of radio. "The Department conducts over 2000 face-to-face interviews throughout the United Kingdom every day of the year in which carefully trained team of interviewers ask representative samples of the population, aged five and over, which programs they listen to on the radio and viewed on television *yesterday*.... This continuous survey yields our estimates of audience size. In a quite separate operation, 6000 listeners and viewers are each week sent brief questionnaires about a wide range of programmes. They complete the questionnaires in respect of those programmes that they happen to see or hear in the course of their normal listening and viewing... This operation provides a continuous feedback from listeners and viewers to the programme makers. The third strand of research activity comprises a great variety of special enquiries about the impact of broadcasting." Annual Review of BBC Audience Research Findings, number one, 1974, p. 5 BBC WAC R9/1155/1



consensus around its findings, the data produced has enjoyed the status of a ‘gold standard’”.

### Database B.1 Maximum and median audiences

By analysing the BBC’s daily audience barometer reports, and subsequently independent JICRAR and RAJAR data, I have compiled a complete set of maximum and median audience data for each year in the period for every station which broadcast classical music. The value of the maximum figure is obvious; the median figure provides an indication of the overall success of each station in audience terms. In the absence of reach data for the years before 1977 (as discussed below) it provides a comparative indicator of patronage over time.

Database B.1 Maximum and median audiences (‘000s) for individual classical music programmes in each sample week

			Home Service		Gen Forces Programme			
	Maximum ‘000s	Median ‘000s	Max. ‘000s	Median ‘000s	Maximum ‘000s	Median ‘000s		
1945 (i)			1,900	1,100	1,350	570		
					Light Programme			
1946			2,800	700	2,800	1,400		
	Third Programme							
1947	1,050	700	2,100	1,250	3,850	1,750		
1948	360	180	2,160	1,080	3,240	900		
1949	210	108	1,080	540	1,080	720		
1950	146	73	1,460	365	5,475	365		
1951	292	109	4,745	730	5,110	730		
1952	182	109	1,095	730	1,095	730		
1953	146	73	730	365	730	365		
1954	150	75	1,128	376	376	376		
1955	112	75	752	376	752	564		
1956	225	75	752	376	752	376		
1957	75	37	756	378	378	378		
							Network 3	
							Maximum ‘000s	Median ‘000s
1958	151	75	756	378			37	37
1959	151	75	567	264			75	37
1960	94	47	429	190			94	47
1961	95	47	524	238	286	286	* (ii)	*
1962	195	97	438	243	341	341	48	48
1963	98	49	588	196			98	49
1964	98	49	441	196	490	490	49	*
	Third Programme		Home Service		Music Programme		Study Prog.	
					Maximum ‘000s	Median ‘000s	Maximum ‘000s	Median ‘000s
1965	129	49	297	139	232	139	*	*
1966	200	100	450	200	300	150	*	*
1967	200	100	400	200	150	100	*	*
1968	200	100	450	250	250	150		
1969	150	50	300	150	200	100		

	Radio 3		Radio 4					
	Maximum '000s	Median '000s	Max. '000s	Median '000s				
1970	353	151						
1971	202	101						
1972	303	151						
1973	303	151						
1974	252	101						
1975	404	202						
1976	454	151	353	202				
1977	555	151	555	(iii)				
1978	353	151	151	101				
1979	313	156						
1980	261	130	313	208				
1981	250	100	150	100				
1982	200	100	(iv)	(iv)				
1983	150	75						
1984	200	100						
1985 to 1991	data not recorded							
	Radio 3						Classic FM	
	(v)						Maximum '000s	Median '000s (v)
1992	214	80					428	120
1993	232	69					467	108
1994	168	56					510	95
1995	200	62					485	122

Sources: 1945-1991 BBC Daily Barometer week 19  
1992-1995 RAJAR quarter 4

Notes:

- (i) excluding the unscheduled VE day concert, simulcast on the Home and General Forces Services to an audience of 3.3 million
- (ii) \* audience too small to measure
- (iii) median inappropriate for just two programmes attracting respectively 1.1 and 0.1 per cent of total audience
- (iv) data not available
- (v) based on Sunday listening

## Database B2. Reach/patronage of classical music radio

BBC audience research across most of this period reports only the average audience for individual programmes. It is customary in radio audience research worldwide to establish a 'weekly reach' figure, the number of adults tuning into a station at any given time. 'Reach' roughly equates to 'patronage', a term which BBC audience research deployed consistently up until the late Seventies. From that point onwards, proper 'reach' data are available from independent research.

### Database B2.1 Weekly reach for classical music radio 1977-1995

	Weekly reach for Radio 3 (JICRAR/RAJAR)	Weekly reach for Radio 3 (BBC data)	Weekly reach for ILR (est. from JICRAR)	Weekly reach For Classic FM (RAJAR)
	Radio 3		ILR combined	
1977	2,702,000		750,000	
1978	2,613,000		750,000	
1979	2,350,000		750,000	
1980	2,210,000		750,000,	
1981	2,590,000		750,000	
1982	2,684,000		1,000,000	
1983	n/a		1,000,000	
1984	2,695,000		1,000,000	
1985	n/a		1,000,000	
1986	3,109,000		1,000,000	
1987	3,653,000		1,000,000	
1988	3,410,000		1,000,000	
1989	2,750,000	2,690,000 *	1,000,000	
1990	3,943,000		broadcasts ceased	
1991	2,695,000			
				Classic FM
1992	2,500,000			4,255,000
1993	2,736,000			4,494,000
1994	2,380,000			4,587,000
1995	2,397,000			4,751,000

Sources:

JICRAR until 1992

RAJAR from quarter 4 1992

\*BBC audience report 1989

Until the establishment of joint audience research in 1992, as discussed above listening figures produced by two rival systems were often contentious. For the purpose of this database, however, the JICRAR data can be benchmarked against a number of BBC studies which broadly validate the JICRAR figures:

- July 1985 continuous service report estimating that the patronage for Radio 3 – by that stage virtually the only purveyor of classical music – was around ½ million listeners each day, and an average of 10 minutes listening per head of the population each week.<sup>338</sup>
- JICRAR analysis in May 1980, at the point where consistent independent reach information is available to set alongside the final years of the BBC's daily audience barometer average programme figures.

<sup>338</sup> Continuous Service Report – radio listening trends 1972-1984, July 1985 BBC WAC R9/979/1

- Daily patronage figures in the Radio Weekly Bulletins for 1980, 1981 and 1982.<sup>339</sup>
- 1989 BBC internal Information Services report identified a weekly reach for Radio 3 of around 5 per cent of the UK adult population, equating to 2.75 million people.<sup>340</sup>
- BBC audience research data average for April 1991 to March 1992 indicates a weekly reach for Radio 3 of 5 per cent (quoted by Starkey 2002, p. 48).
- RAJAR for the final quarter of 1991 shows a weekly cumulative audience for Radio 3 of 2.69 million.

To establish a longitudinal dataset for the years before 1977, it would be attractive to derive a reach/patronage formula from median audience figures. There are indications from other BBC data that in general there is a relationship between median listening and patronage whereby 0.1% of median average programme audience equates across the week to a patronage figure of around 100,000 listeners. However, this is no better than a rough rule of thumb, produces some obvious outliers and is not statistically robust. The best that can be done is to list the relevant findings for a qualitative rather than quantitative assessment.

- December 1946 BBC special analysis of the data derived from the daily barometer an average audience of 1.7%, which it equated with a figure for those who "ever listen to the third programme" of 5.7%. Thus during this period, an average audience of 700,000 adults equated to a patronage figure of 2,350,000 adults.<sup>341</sup>
- In 1952, BBC's Audience Research Department study of a random sample of just under 5,000 adults specifically to examine the market for the Third Programme. The results, published in *The BBC Quarterly*, indicated a weekly reach of 4.8% of the adult (i.e. 21+) population, or 1.6 million, with a further 4.8 million occasional listeners.<sup>342</sup>
- May 1953 research into the third programme, the size and character of its public, suggests a weekly reach of 1,600,000 adults and monthly reach of 2,800,000 adults.<sup>343</sup>
- November 1956 patronage report, which omitted any mention of the Third Programme, gave patronage figures for evening listening on the Home Service

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<sup>339</sup> For the years from 1977 onwards, in addition to the weekly patronage/reach results produced by JICRAR and then RAJAR, there are formal patronage models. Statistician Mike Dinsdale developed a model for JICRAR, while in 1992 Research Surveys Ltd conducted a four-week diary study to develop and validate a major reach and frequency model. These provide a further check for the pre-1977 patronage formula, as well as monthly reach figures for Radio 3 and Classic FM from 1992 onwards. It is in current use as Gold Standards for RAJAR: The Reach and Frequency Model, Calculation Procedures, RSMB TV Research Ltd, May 1998. Personal communication from Jane O'Hara, former Chief Executive, RAJAR, 18 August 2013

<sup>340</sup> Information Services Report – Radio 3 listeners and their use of radio services, 1989 BBC WAC R9/1013/1

<sup>341</sup> The Third Programme - a listener research report BBC WAC R9/9/11. Undated, but reporting on a study into audience and appreciation data for October to December 1946

<sup>342</sup> The Third Programme and its Market, Robert Silvey, in *The BBC Quarterly* Vol VIII, no 3, Autumn 1953

<sup>343</sup> The Third Programme, the size and character of its public Listener Research Report, BBC WAC R9/13/99, May 1953

and Light Programme of 17.2% and 28.9% of adults respectively for the evening of Thursday 11 October.<sup>344</sup>

- March 1966 cumulative audience data for the Music Programme element within Radio 3.<sup>345</sup>
- Spring 1967 report on the patronage levels for Radio 3 in its hybrid format asserted that the music, speech, sport and cultural elements together attracted a 'patronage' of around 8.5 million.<sup>346</sup>
- 1969 BBC Annual Report claims that "something of the order of five million people listen to it at one time or another and the more popular programmes can nowadays expect to enjoy an audience of approaching a quarter of a million".<sup>347</sup>
- July 1979, an Audience Research report using Daily Survey data showed a weekly patronage for Radio 3 of 5.1 per cent of the total adult population, or 2.35 million.<sup>348</sup>

Known data for third programme weekly patronage are therefore as follows:

Database B2.2 Known patronage data for the Third Programme before 1970

	Third programme
1946	2,350,000
1952	1,600,000
1953	1,600,000

The total market for classical music radio can be established for the early years from specific BBC research and in the later years from reliable independent RAJAR data. The 1952 BBC research suggested a total market of 6.2 million listeners, which indicates the broad level of classical music radio listening in the early Fifties. Reliable data for Radio Three and Classic FM from 1992 show that between those two stations there is an overlap of around one million listeners, which therefore meant an audience for classical music radio in the Nineties of somewhere around 5½ million listeners a week.<sup>349</sup> It is reasonable to conclude therefore that an audience of between 5 and 6 million listeners was available for this genre of radio throughout the period covered by this thesis.

### The nature and composition of the radio audiences

There are three different cohorts of data about the composition of the audiences for classical music radio. From 1946 until around 1977, this is mostly anecdotal; from 1977 onwards there are some quantitative data, but not on a consistent basis; and from 1992 there is a sounder quantitative dataset. This section will consider each in turn, establishing links between them where possible.

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<sup>344</sup> The Patronage of Broadcasting Services, 5 November 1956 BBC WAC R34/1022/3 – LR/56/1748

<sup>345</sup> Audience Research report – The Music Programme, March 1966, BBC WAC R9/9/30 – LR/66/267

<sup>346</sup> The Patronage of Radio 3 BBC WAC R9/0/33 – LR/69/205

<sup>347</sup> BBC Annual report 1969, p. 56

<sup>348</sup> Audience Research report – Use of Radio Services 1979, July 1979 BBC WAC R9/902 – LR79/231

<sup>349</sup> The Third Programme and its Market, Robert Silvey, in The BBC Quarterly Vol VIII, no 3, Autumn 1953

#### a) anecdotal data 1945-1977

For the earlier period there is a further difficulty, in that BBC audience research analysis and special reports are very largely concerned with the Third Programme, never during most of this period the majority provider of that genre of music. As a consequence, many of the reports are essentially self-fulfilling; they start from an assumption that the classical music audience is somehow higher brow but the radio audience as a whole, examine those who are attracted to the Third Programme, and then demonstrate that classical music – as defined by what is provided by the Third Programme – is essentially a highbrow matter. The size of audiences for classical music programmes on the Home Service and the Light Programme suggest that it is inconceivable these could be as predominantly upper-class as those for the Third, and that is borne out in the post-1977 data.

As has been outline above,<sup>350</sup> from the first, BBC research was built around stereotypical assumptions of the nature of the audience for the Third Programme. Research in 1946<sup>351</sup> found that "the section of the population which holds the Third Programme in real affection did not grow between October and June, despite the fact that during these months many people tried this programme for the first time." It draws the conclusion that "the Third Programme's public – those who are in sympathy with its aims and to whom its broadcasts frequently appeal – is about eight percent of the listening public, or roughly 2,600,000."

A 1953 study<sup>352</sup> fairly firmly nailed its colours to the elitist mast:

The level of sophistication of the Third Programme is such that its 'market' is inevitably limited. Two percent of the population might be regarded as, according to a consensus of judgements, 'good prospects' for the Third Programme, i.e. to be at home with its level of sophistication, and a further six percent as 'fair prospects'.

It goes on to say that:

Although the Third Programme reaches a much higher proportion of its 'primary market' (good and fair prospects) than the rest of the population, yet it remains true that no less than three quarters of its patrons are drawn from outside this primary market.... It seems clear that a very large proportion of Third Programme patrons are what has been called 'aspirants' – listeners who like to hear Third Programme broadcasts *even though they are unlikely to be able to meet them on equal terms* (my emphasis).

To round off the stereotyping, the report continues that:

The average educational and *intelligence* levels of the Third Programme patrons are, *as might be expected* considerably higher than those of the population (my emphases).

Silvey then offers specific observations on what makes people suitable 'prospects' for the Third Programme – educational level; intelligence level; degree of interest in a

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<sup>350</sup> See Chapter 6 p. 73

<sup>351</sup> A year of the Third Programme, BBC Audience Research special report, BBC WAC R9/9/11, 6 November 1947

<sup>352</sup> The Third Programme, the size and character of its public Listener Research Report, BBC WAC R9/13/99, May 1953

specified range of subjects or activities with which the Third Programme frequently deals; and "the reading of periodicals of a level of sophistication similar to that of the Third Programme".<sup>353</sup>

A series of audience research reports in the mid Sixties are the main source of data about those who listened to classical music on BBC radio. We find here virtually the first acknowledgement of Home Service listening as significant in the debate about audience appreciation of classical music. A report in January 1963 notes that the level of appreciation of Third Programme panel members who listened to Home Service concerts was of "much the same order as those they awarded to concerts in the Third Programme". However, while they

derive substantial satisfaction from listening to the broadcasts which they select whichever service these may be in, the chance that they will either derive exceptional pleasure or feel exceptional disappointment is less when they listen to the Home Service than when they listen to the Third.<sup>354</sup>

In March 1963, probably as part of the preparation for the Music Programme, the BBC carried out a major study into the musical tastes, interests and behaviour of the adult population.<sup>355</sup> This was dominated by the concept of a "highbrow/low-brow continuum" and used respondents' views about 48 different pieces of music – ranging from Schoenberg quartets to what the BBC described as 'easy beat' – to place them on this continuum, grading them A1 to D.

The A1 group consisted of people whose top choices were for such works as a Schoenberg quartet, Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No 3 or Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. A2 top choices were Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Walton's *Façade*. Bs (20 per cent of the sample) might opt for Gilbert and Sullivan or the Enigma variations, Cs (19 per cent of the sample) for the blue Danube or Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, and Es (20 per cent of the sample) from *My Fair Lady* or Bing Crosby.

Having established this approach to segmenting the potential audience, the research proceeded to analyse it by demographic group. It concluded that height of brow was related to age, so that the older the individual the more highbrow his taste was likely to be, but that it was not significantly related to gender. The most striking correlation was with social level: "*as might be expected...* the higher the individual's status the higher his brow" (my emphasis again).

What the data actually show is that listening to classical music radio was not exclusively determined by class. Of those who listened to the Home Service *Music Magazine* on a Sunday morning, more than half came from the B and C groupings. It was the evening concerts on the Home Service and the Third Programme which were most obviously dominated by the A1 group, but that surely reflects the pervasiveness of television for the majority of the audiences. The class point is that the total audience was made up of four wide range of taste groups, and it was only the self-defined specialist programmes – broadcast when the mass audience was tuned to television – that appear to show a highbrow rather than predominantly middlebrow audience. This

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<sup>353</sup> *BBC Quarterly*, volume 8, number three, autumn 1953, pp. 164-168

<sup>354</sup> The Home Service Listening of 'Third Programme Listeners'. Audience Research Report, BBC WAC R9/9/27, January 1963

<sup>355</sup> A study of the musical tastes, interests and behaviour of the adult population. Audience Research Report. R9/9/27, March 1963

is further substantiated in that 46 per cent of the patrons of *Music Magazine* also listened to the very middlebrow *Saturday Club*, while 39 per cent of the patrons of *Music Magazine* also watched *Top of the Pops* on television.

These results were borne out by a study at the end of the year into the kind of programmes which listeners most liked.<sup>356</sup> The audience for 'serious music' was mostly equally divided between men and women, and across age groups. It was only when measured against the age when full-time education ceased that those who had continued education beyond the age of 18 were more likely to listen to serious music than others.

Another major study was undertaken the following year.<sup>357</sup> This considered the musical training and knowledge, tastes and interests of the public to serious music, and examined their listening habits. Its central observation bears out the importance of radio to classical music in the UK:

By far the largest part of the musical diet of people in this country is provided by broadcasting, principally the radio. Whereas orchestral concerts are attended by the very most 17 per cent, and record players used at all frequently by no more than 33 per cent, orchestral concerts [*sic*] on the radio or television are listened to at least occasionally by over 50 per cent.

The group defined as consuming the most serious music (two and a half hours or more a week) was found to be "middle aged... And overwhelmingly middle-class... More than one fifth were found to have had some form of higher education". That last figure, indicating that some four fifths of those who were the largest consumers of serious music had not 'enjoyed' the benefits of higher education passed unremarked by the writers of the research report. They did however note that one third of this high-consumption group "were drawn from the large section of the community who admitted [*sic*] to knowing very little about music". Once again, the researchers had adopted a class-based segmentation, grouping listeners from 1 down [*sic*] to 5. However, even though group 1 listeners were more supportive of Third Programme, reasons given for not listening were that the music was too highbrow, too dull or "not the sort of music you can sit back and relax to".<sup>358</sup>

A study in 1973, based on 1971 data, notes that those who read highbrow papers, and or held professional or managerial jobs, "constituted less than half of the total Radio 3 public", once more disproving the notion that only 'selected' listeners would appreciate serious classical music radio. That report also raises the issue of 'taste'.

There can be little doubt that the missing factor that would go a long way to explain why some people's listening behaviour differs radically from that of others of similar age, sex and educational background is 'taste'. There is no

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<sup>356</sup> Programme preferences and outside interests. Audience Research report R9/9/28, December 1963

<sup>357</sup> The public for 'serious music'. R9/9/28, 1964 (no more precise dating)

<sup>358</sup> Completing the set of Sixties BBC audience research is *The patronage of Radio 3. An audience research benchmark paper*. BBC WAC R9/9/33, March 1969. The report is problematic. In its retrospective analysis, it conflates Radio 3 with Network Three, seemingly unaware of the role of the Music Programme or the distinction between the different parts of what was later to become Radio 3. This research bases itself upon an implausibly high patronage figure for the Network Three of 8,500,000 the spring of 1967 and has been set aside for the purpose of this thesis



reason at all, why a manual worker with limited education and his newspaper reading is restricted to the tabloids should not enjoy serious music, even though it is a well-established fact that an appetite for traditional "high culture" is most likely to be found in those with a university education.<sup>359</sup>

#### b) audience demographics, 1977-1992

Once into the second period of data availability, for the years after 1977, the researcher can deploy relatively objective data, although the old approach persists in the BBC's own research. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the audience is quite marked. A 1978 report<sup>360</sup> claims that:

The typical Radio 3 listener is middle-aged, but ages somewhat at the weekend [*sic*], upper-middle-class, reads 'middle-highbrow' newspapers and is male, but during the day at the weekend, female listeners predominated. Strikingly, 23 per cent of those who patronise Radio 3 also listen to Radio 2, and fully 16 per cent to ILR.

This persisted through the decade. A 1989 report<sup>361</sup> noted that 27 per cent of those who listen to Radio 3 also listen to ILR, and that audience is notably younger and more socially diverse. One may speculate these could be listeners attracted to Radio 3 by the classical efforts of ILR in the Eighties.

There are some useful longitudinal data sets for Radio 3 demographics in the Eighties, before joint RAJAR research is available.<sup>362</sup> Shown in chart form on the following pages, and compared with data drawn from the later years of the JICRAR studies, they show how little the composition of audiences for classical music radio changed over the decade.

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<sup>359</sup> The Public's Use of Broadcasting in 1971, an audience research report. BBC WAC R9/863/1, 1973

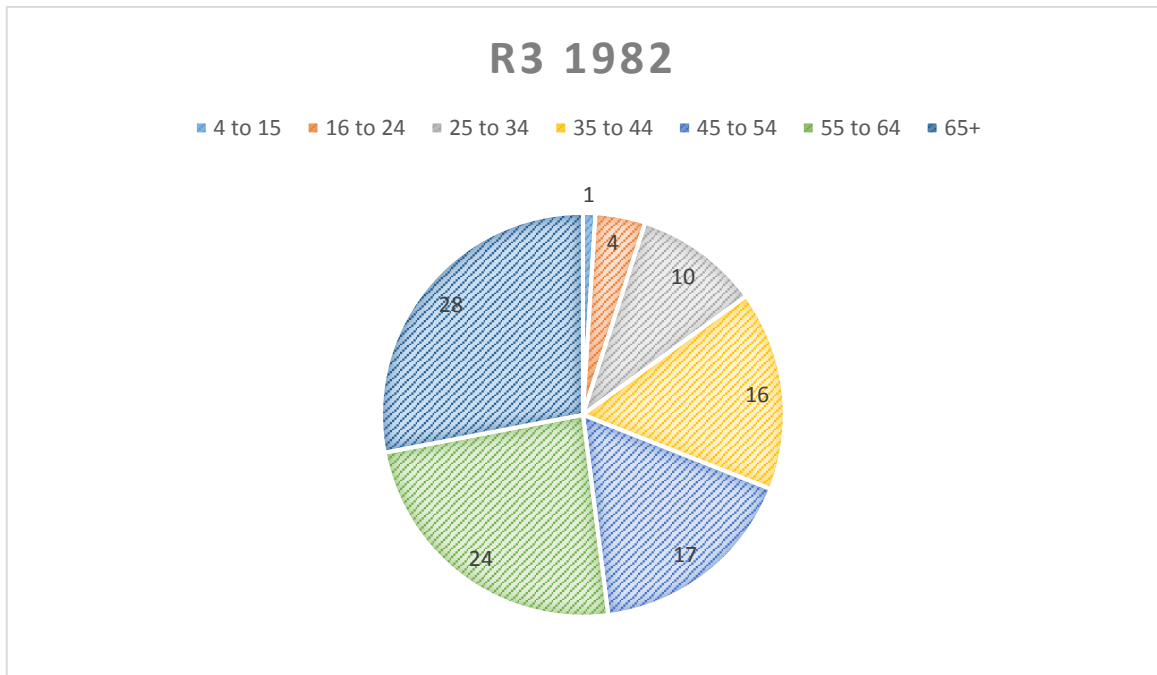
<sup>360</sup> Radio Audiences: a statistical profile BBC WAC R9/899/1, 25 September 1978

<sup>361</sup> How segmented is a radio audience? Information services report. BBC WAC R9/1011/1, 10 August 1992.

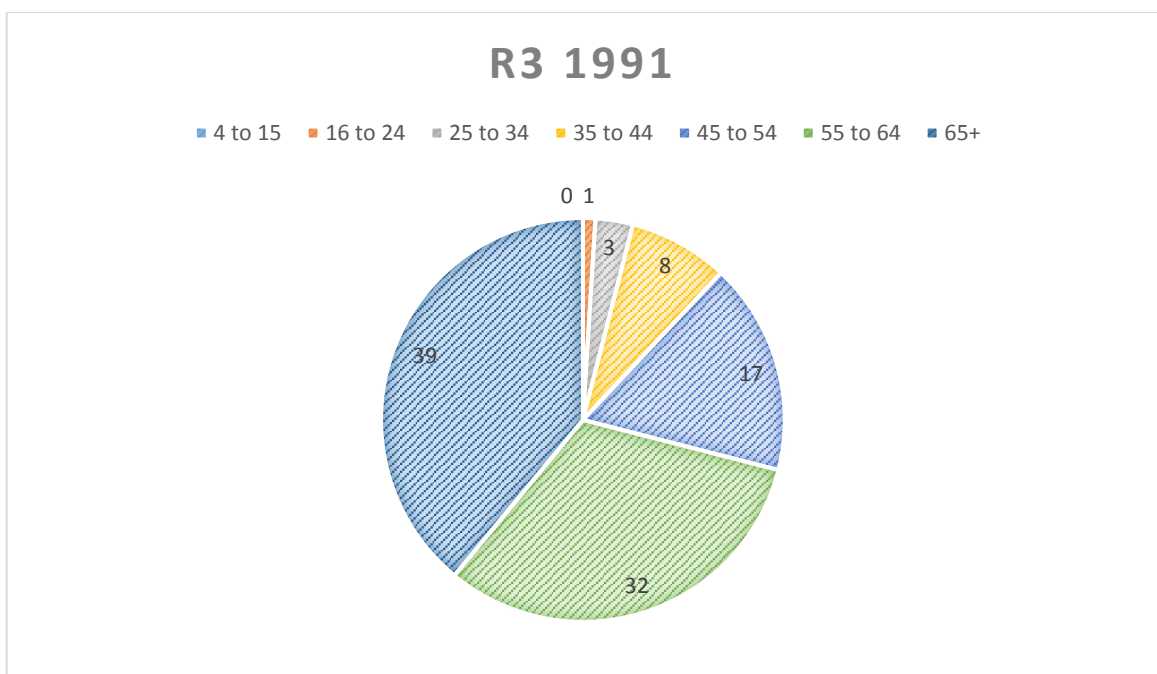
<sup>362</sup> BBC Annual Reviews of Research Findings, 1974-92. The demographic segmentation changes after 1980, up until when the BBC had used non-standard groupings. These charts therefore begin with the 1982 data, with one exception noted below

The age data show a marked ageing in the Radio 3 profile: in 1982 52 per cent of the audience was aged 55 or above; by 1991 that had risen to 71 per cent.

Chart B.1 Radio 3 audience by age 1982 and 1991  
(% of Radio 3 audience)



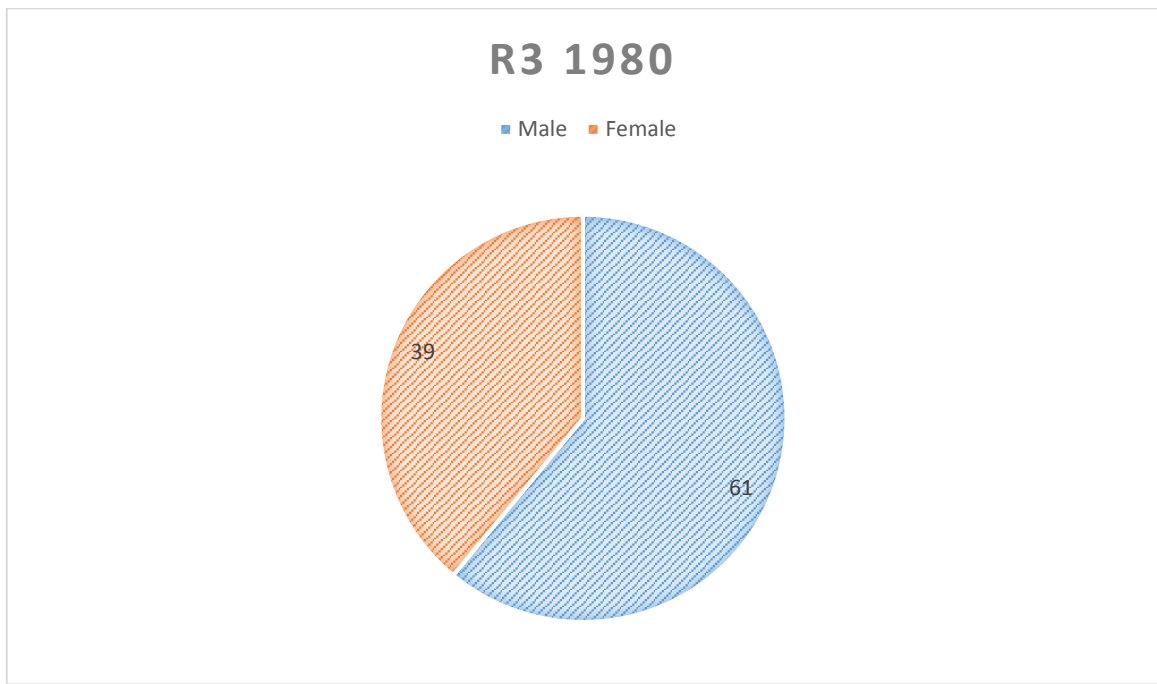
Source: BBC Annual Review of Research Findings 1982



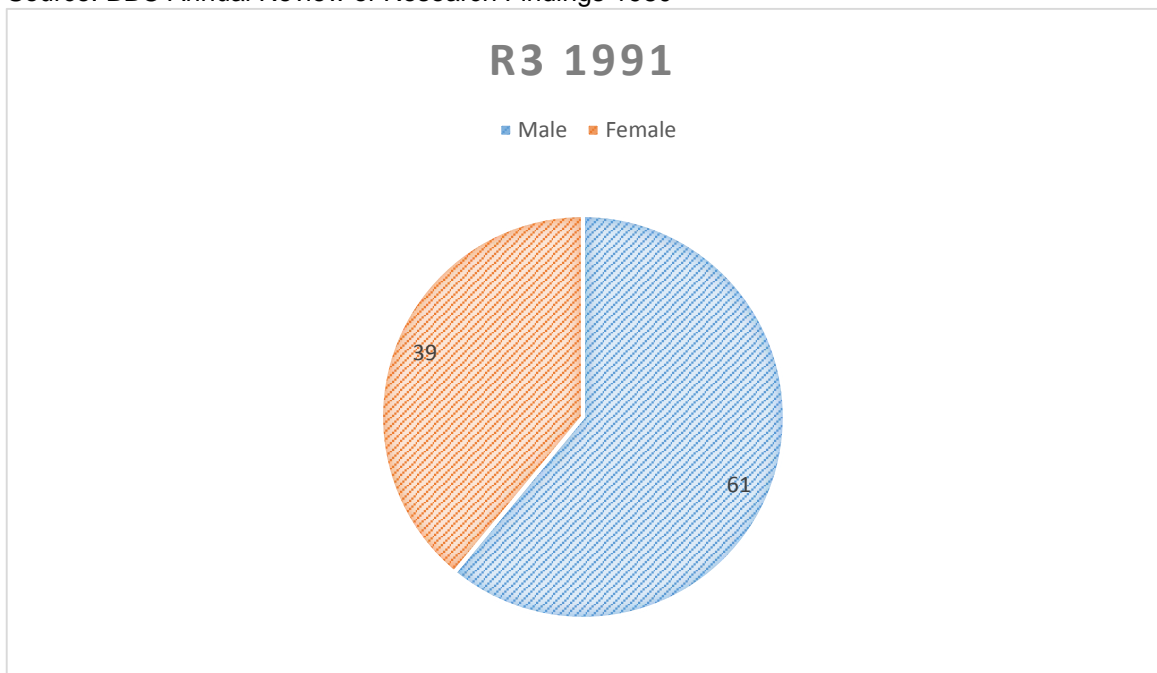
Source: JICRAR 1991

The gender balance on the other hand was unchanged:

Chart B.2 Radio 3 audience by gender 1980 and 1991  
(% of Radio 3 audience)



Source: BBC Annual Review of Research Findings 1980<sup>363</sup>



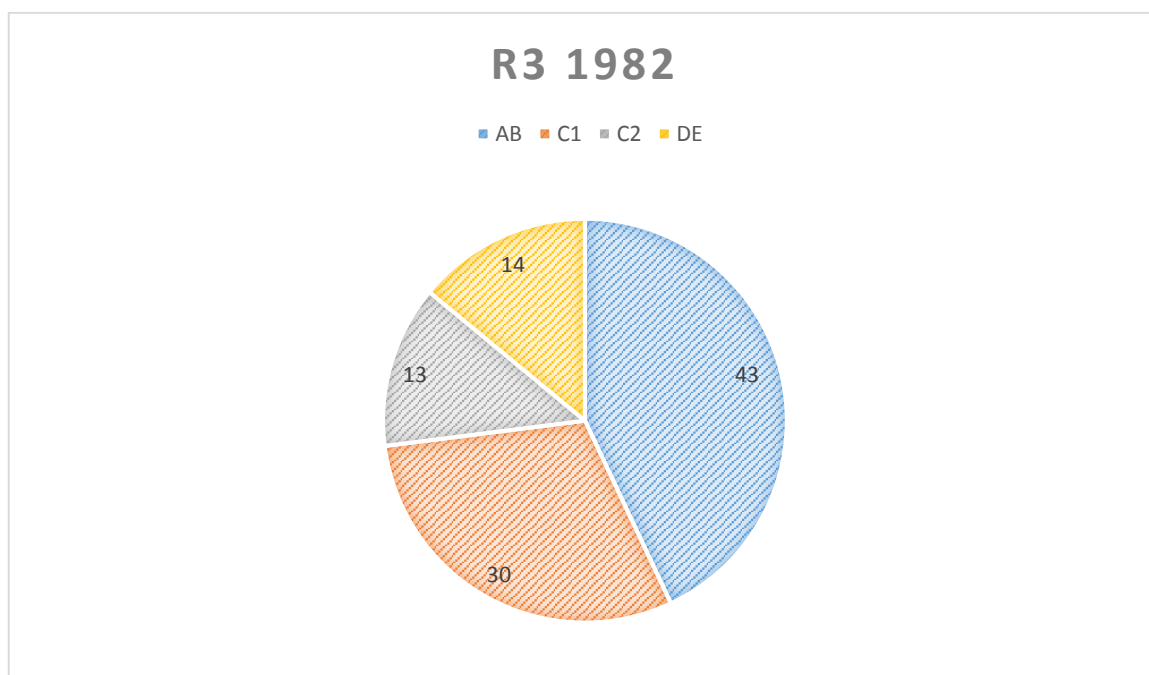
Source: JICRAR 1991

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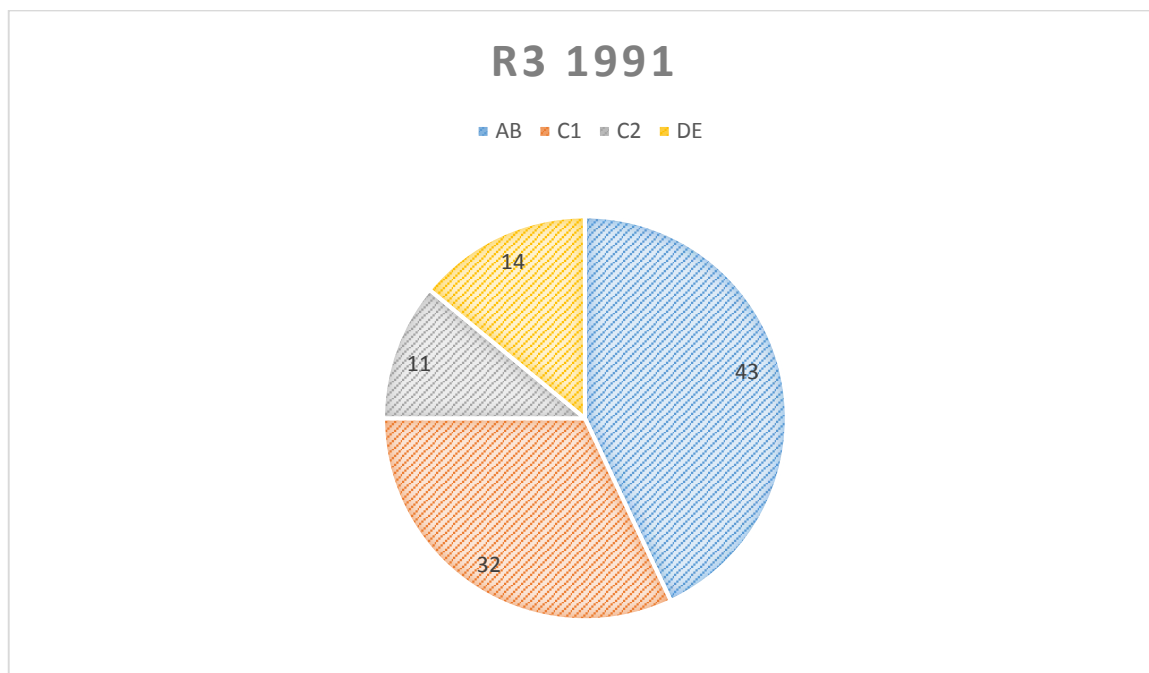
<sup>363</sup> The gender split for 1982 is 55/45, but this is entirely atypical of the Eighties data for no discernible reason, so the first gender chart uses 1980 data

The class distribution was virtually the same at the end of the decade as at its start.

Chart B.3 Radio 3 audience by class 1982 and 1991  
(% of Radio 3 audience)



Source: BBC Annual Review of Research Findings 1982



Source: JICRAR 1991

The general conclusion can be drawn that nature of the audiences for classical music radio do not change quickly, any more than do the absolute listening numbers.

c) RAJAR data, 1992 onwards

The arrival of Classic FM in September 1992 re-awoke a mass audience for classical music radio. More people listened, and for longer. As well as its much larger total audience, Classic FM listeners tuned in for nearly twice as long each week as those to Radio 3. It also won more *solus* loyalty, listeners tuning in to only one station: Radio 3 took 12.6 per cent of its listeners' weekly radio patronage, with 9.3 per cent of that going to Classic FM; Classic FM on the other hand took 24.3 per cent of its listeners' patronage, with only 3.4 per cent of that going to Radio 3.<sup>364</sup>

However, as the demographic charts for Radio 3 and Classic FM for 1995 on the following pages demonstrate, all the conventional demographics are surprisingly similar. Classic FM's audience is slightly younger, slightly less ABC1 and slightly less male; but if any of the charts were viewed casually on their own and unlabelled, the audience patterns might be allocated to either station. The composition of the audience for classical music in the Nineties was remarkably consistent, on whichever of the two stations.

What does that signify? It may be that the arrival of Classic FM totally changed the nature of the audience for classical music radio. That seems unlikely. The *total* potential classical radio audience stayed comparable right through the period from 1945 to 1995. As shown above, when there was adequate middlebrow provision, the middle market listened. The more likely explanation is that the BBC's stereotyping of the classical audience – the "prospect" – was blinded by class assumptions, and failed to spot the continuing broader middlebrow consumer.

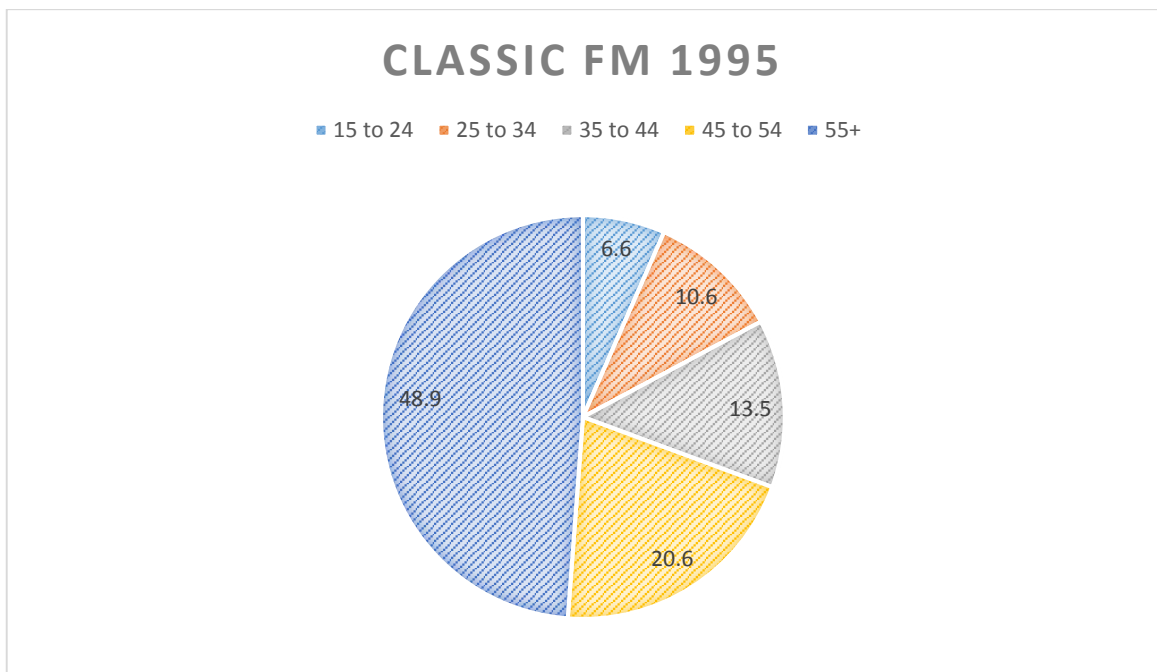
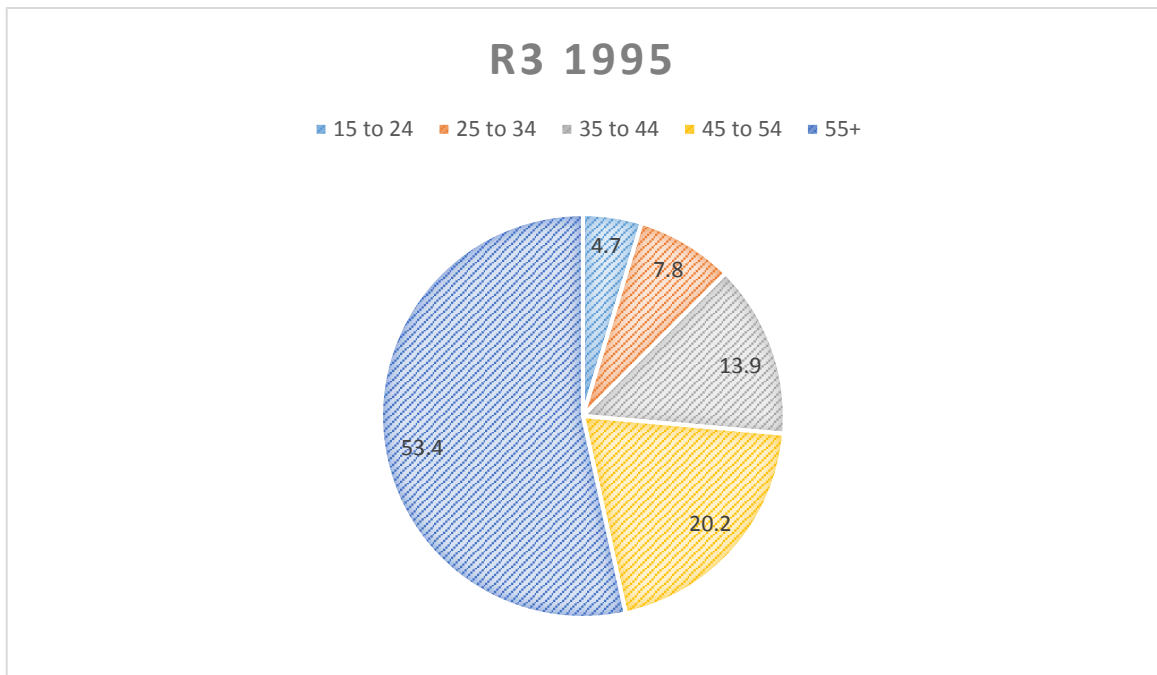
Comparing the demographic profiles of Classic FM and Radio 3 by the middle of the Nineties appears to confirm that assertion. Once the BBC station had become more accessible in style and presentation, it attracted a pretty similar type of audience to that of its commercial rival, albeit in rather lower numbers and a bit older. The charts on the following pages are more remarkable for the similarity between the demographic profiles of radio 3 and Classic FM than for any slight differences.

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<sup>364</sup> Broadcasting Research Report 95/108C - Radio 3 Audibility, May 1995 BBC WAC R9/2163/1

Classic FM's audience is closer to the normal national age distribution, but still shows almost as many listeners aged over 54 than in all the other age groups. Although these charts show clear differences when read together, seen separately either might apply to either station.

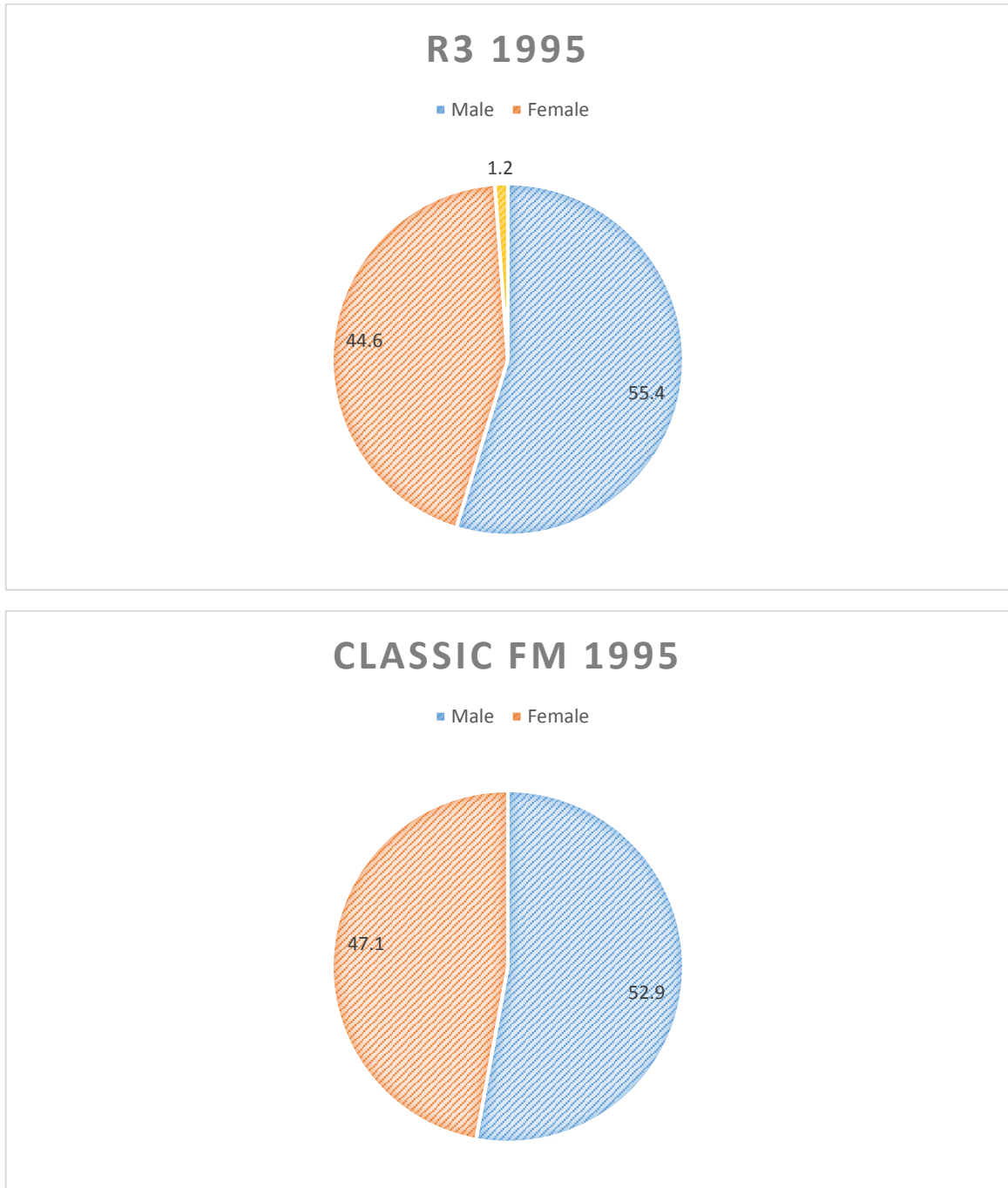
Chart B.4 Classic FM and Radio 3 audience by age 1995  
(% of total audience)



Source: RAJAR 1995

Gender balance is a little more equal for Classic FM than Radio 3, but actually the two are notably similar. It can be argued therefore – as the total audience figures indicate – that there is a consistent, coherent but certainly not wholly homogeneous audience available for classical music radio which provides properly for it.

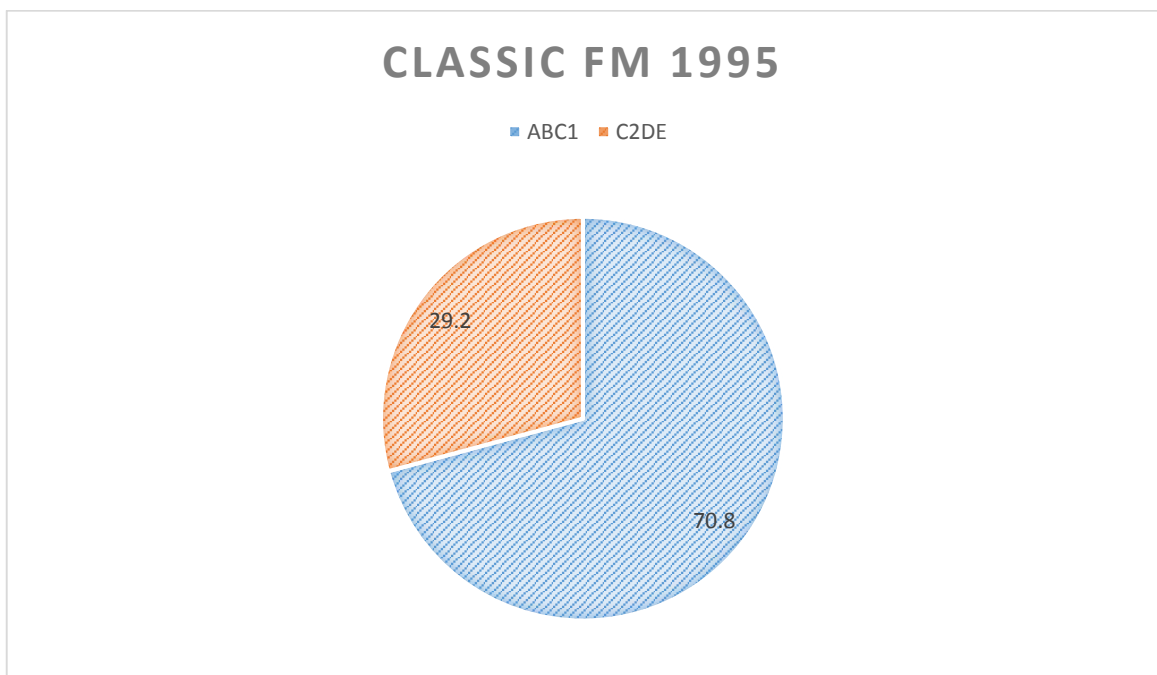
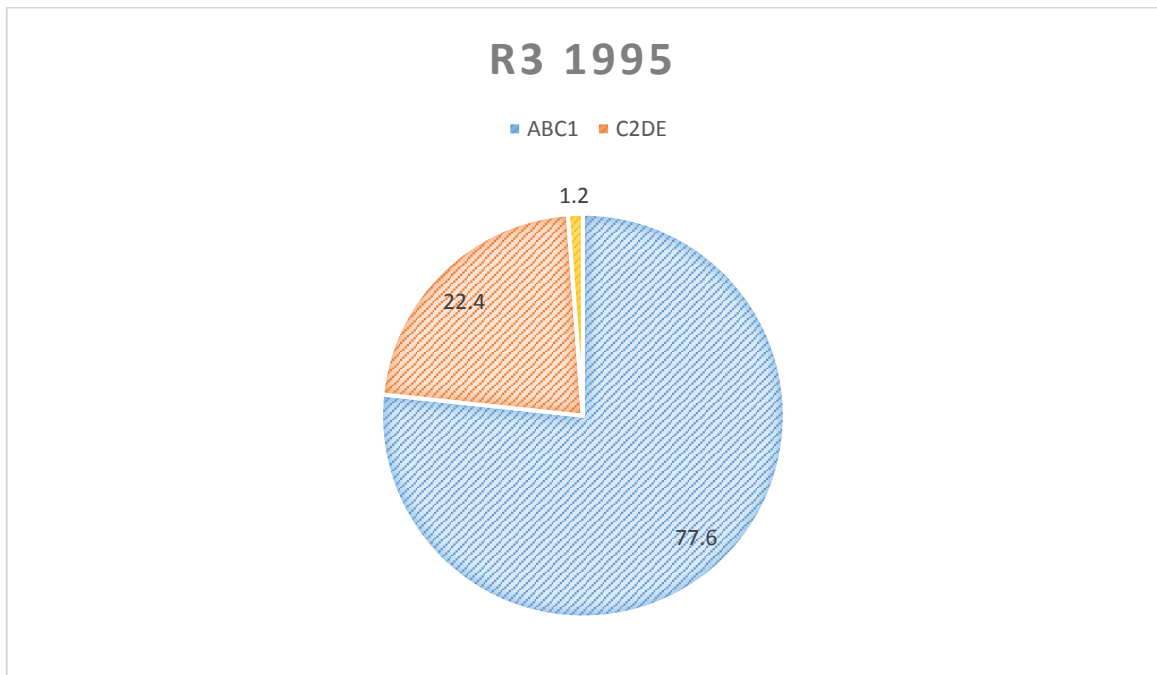
Chart B.5 Classic FM and Radio 3 audience by gender 1995  
(% of total audience)



Source: RAJAR 1995

Classic FM's audience was also a little more open to those in the C2DE class group, but the pattern as distinct from the specific split still suggests the dominant place for the middle class (and therefore middle brow?) listener to both stations.

Chart B.6 Classic FM and Radio 3 audience by class 1995  
(% of total audience)



Source: RAJAR 1995



## **Appendix C**

### **Timeline**

#### **1920**

Nellie Melba broadcasts on Marconi's Chelmsford station (15 June).

#### **1923**

First opera outside broadcast *Magic Flute* from Covent Garden (January).

#### **1927**

BBC takes over the running of the Henry Wood Prom series.

#### **1930**

BBC Symphony Orchestra (BBCSO) formed; J C Stobart, head of BBC Education Department, floats the idea of a cultural network, the 'Minerva' programme.

#### **1931**

Adrian Boult appointed Chief Conductor of BBCSO (until 1950).

#### **1937**

Theodore Adorno sails to New York (June).

#### **1939**

Outbreak of war (September); BBCSO evacuated to Bristol (September).

#### **1940**

Royal Philharmonic Society takes over the running of the Proms; German troops overrun Northern Europe, silencing the UK-aimed commercial radio stations apart from Radio Luxembourg (May); Walter Benjamin commits suicide (September).

#### **1941**

Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* performed in Stalag VIIIA prisoner-of-war camp, starting the avant-garde era for classical music (15 January); Queen's Hall destroyed by bombing (10 May); BBCSO moves to Bedford (July, until September 1945); Operation Barbarossa, Germany invades USSR (June); Japan attacks USA naval base at Pearl Harbour (December).

#### **1942**

Proms move to the Royal Albert Hall and the BBC resumes running the series; Arthur Bliss becomes Director of Music (until 1944); Royal Liverpool Philharmonic becomes a full time permanent orchestra; Shostakovich Seventh Symphony premiere (March), performed amid the siege of Leningrad (9 August).

#### **1943**

Hallé Orchestra becomes a full time permanent orchestra; Sibelius burns the completed manuscript of his Eighth Symphony.

#### **1944**

Sir Henry Wood dies; Butler Education Act; William Haley becomes BBC Director General (DG); Basil Nicholls becomes Senior Controller then Director of Sound Broadcasting (until 1952); Victor Hely-Hutchinson becomes Director of Music (until 1946); *Music Magazine* begins on the Home Service (24 May); Krása's opera *Brundibar* performed in Theresienstadt for the Red Cross visit, then all those involved

deported to Auschwitz (16 October); Haley makes first public announcement of a new cultural network (24 November); City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra reforms.

#### 1945

George Barnes appointed as head of third network until 1948 (3 May); VE day, Germany surrenders (8 May); Britten's *Peter Grimes* premiered at Sadlers Wells (June); UK General Election returns Labour Government (July); Home Service and Light Programme begin broadcasting in post-war formats (29 July); atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August); Anton Webern shot in Mittersill, Austria (September); Sadlers Wells Opera re-opens, Sadler Wells Ballet goes to Royal Opera House opening with *Sleeping Beauty*, Covent Garden.

#### 1946

Cabinet approval given for "the institution of the third programme" (January); official terms of reference approved (14 January); Bank of England nationalised (March) and coal industry (July); *BBC Quarterly* first published (16 April); BBC television transmissions resume (7 June); Arts Council founded (August); New Towns Act (August); launch of the Third Programme (6pm, Sunday 26 September); National Health Service Act (November); Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestra re-established as self-governing institutions; first *Darmstadt Ferienspiele*.

#### 1947

BBC Charter and Licence renewed for 5 years (1 January); Covent Garden Opera gives first post-war performance, *Carmen* (January); 'big freeze' hits Britain; fuel crisis – Third Programme and Light Programme closed at 11pm, Home Service at 11.03 (9 Feb); Third Programme and television service suspended (10 Feb); Third Programme resumed (26 Feb); Exeter transmitter opened to improve medium wave reception of the Third Programme (26 Feb); Indian independence announced (February); first Edinburgh International Festival; BBC Director of Music, Victor Hely-Hutchinson dies suddenly, Kenneth Wright becomes Acting Director of Music; US announces Marshall Plan (June); *Last Night of the Proms* first televised (13 September); transistor devised by Bardeen, Brattain and Shockley.

#### 1948

Railways nationalised (January); Light and Third Programmes resume broadcasting until midnight (11 April); Marshall Plan funds to Britain (April); *Empire Windrush* arrives at Tilbury (April); bread rationing ends (July); British Nationality Act (July); Harman Grisewood becomes Controller, Third (until 1952); Sir Steuart Wilson BBC Head of Music (until 1950); first Aldeburgh and Bath Festivals; TS Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, FR Leavis, *The Great Tradition* and Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics* published; first long playing record; Haley commissions reports into music on the Home, Third and Light (November).

#### 1949

Clothes rationing ends (March); Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at Waldorf-Astoria attended by Shostakovich and Copland (March); NATO established (April); sterling devalued against US dollar (19 September); Prix Italia inaugurated (25 September); Billy Cotton band show begins on Light Programme; George Orwell's *1984* published; music reports completed (summer/autumn).

## 1950

European Broadcasting Union formed (12 February); Copenhagen frequency plan implemented (15 March); Herbert Murrill becomes Head of Music (until 1952); Sir Malcolm Sargent becomes Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1957); Third Programme moves to new AM frequencies (15 March); Korean War begins (June); BBC Music Division becomes the Music Department, headed by Herbert Murrill (August); Scottish Orchestra re-organised into the permanent Scottish National Orchestra; Heinrich Strobel, Music Director of Südwestrundfunk, re-launches the Donaueschingen Festival in West Germany

## 1951

BBC experiments with VHF (January); European Coal and Steel Community founded (April); new Conservative Government under Churchill (October); Festival of Britain; BBC stages *Festival of Britain Proms*; Hallé Orchestra returns to the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

## 1952

Accession of Elizabeth II (February); Funeral of George VI (15 February); BBC Charter and Licence renewed for 10 years (1 July); Cage's work *4'33"* first performed (29 August); Haley resigns as BBC DG to become editor of *The Times* (30 September); Ian Jacob becomes DG (1 December); Lindsay Wellington becomes Director of Sound Broadcasting (until 1963), Richard Howgill, Controller, Music (until 1959); first production of the contraceptive pill; first British atomic bomb test (October); first 45rpm single released; *New Musical Express* begins a hit singles chart.

## 1953

John Morris becomes Controller, Third (until 1958); sugar and sweet rationing ends (5 February); death of Stalin (March); Copland appears before the House Un-American Activities Committee (25 May); Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (2 June); armistice in Korea (July); Sunday broadcasting starts on Third Programme (27 September); Messiaen's *Réveil des Oiseaux* first performed at the Donaueschingen Festival; Press Council established.

## 1954

*Talking about Music* with Anthony Hopkins begins (13 January); *Under Milk Wood* broadcast premiere (January); Toscanini's last concert (5 April); Proms Diamond Jubilee; Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Charles Groves expands to become full time; Independent Television Authority established; food rationing ends (July); JRR Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* published in three volumes from July until October 1955.

## 1955

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* first performed (January); First VHF transmitter opened at Wrotham supplying BBC Home, Light and Third to London and the South East (2 May); ITV transmissions begin for London (21 September); Network 3 begins (30 September); Eden succeeds Churchill (April) winning General Election (May).

## 1956

John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* opens (May); first Marriott Working Party established (early November); Third Programme's tenth birthday marked by Otto Klemperer conducting Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at Royal Festival Hall (29 September); Stockhausen's *Gesänge der Jüngelinge* given its premiere in Cologne; Suez crisis (July-December); USSR suppresses Hungarian revolution (November); UK

loan from IMF (December); ITV extends beyond London; Bill Haley and the Comets *Rock Around the Clock*, Elvis Presley, *Heartbreak Hotel* issued.

### 1957

Working Party reports to BBC Governors (January); Macmillan becomes Prime Minister (January); Peter Laslett and others launch the Third Programme Defence Society (24 March); Rudolph Schwarz Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1962); Common Market established (March); first UK hydrogen bomb test (May); Third's frequencies carry Test match commentary during daytime for the first time (June); La Monte Young ushers in minimalism with *for Brass* (June); new pattern of broadcasting on the Third frequencies commences (30 September); Third's nightly broadcasting hours reduced by one third (1 October); skiffle craze peaks; Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, John Braine, *Room at the Top* published.

### 1958

Combined TV and radio licences (8 million) exceeded radio licences (6½ million); ITV broadcast nationwide; Committee for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) established (February); first Aldermaston march (April); Howard Newby becomes Controller, Third (until 1971); Home Service begins *Music at Night* programme, with *Market Trends* moving to the Third (Autumn); Notting Hill race riots (August/September); stereophonic gramophone records first available.

### 1959

William Glock becomes Controller, Music (until 1972); Glock replaces the Proms Committee with concerts being planned by BBC Music Division; Vaughan Williams dies (26 August); report under Marriott urges using the three national networks "to their full capacity"; Keller's series *Functional Analysis* broadcast; UK's first motorway, M1; Macmillan wins 'never had it so good' election (October); Colin MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners*, Nabokov, *Lolita*, published in UK.

### 1960

Hugh Carleton-Greene becomes DG (1 January); Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting established (13 July); *Beyond the Fringe* first performed in Edinburgh (conceived by Robert Pensonby); Glock's first Prom season; first commissioned BBC work at a Prom; Shostakovich and Britten meet for the first time (September); Saturday afternoon music broadcasts begin on Network 3 (8 October); *Lady Chatterley* trial (October/November); 20 BBC VHF stations in operation, covering 97 per cent of the population (31 December).

### 1961

Glock floats the idea of what was to become the Music Programme to the Pilkington Committee (February); first *Sunday Times* colour supplement published (February); first manned space flight (April); *Private Eye* begins; Establishment Club opens (October); Glyndebourne Festival Opera bring *Don Giovanni* to the Proms for the first time.

### 1962

Britten's *War Requiem* given its first performance in the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral (30 May); Pilkington Committee reports (June); BBC dispute with Musicians' Union over Music Programme begins; BBC Charter and Licence extended to July 1964 (1 July); BBC starts experimental stereo broadcasts (28 July); Cuban missile crisis (October); first Beatles' hit single issued *Love Me Do* (October); television debut of *That Was The Week That Was* (November).

### 1963

Frank Gillard becomes Director of Sound Broadcasting, then Managing Director (MD) Radio (until 1970); BBC television broadcasts Ken Russell's *Elgar* (May); Antal Doráti appointed Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1966); assassination of President Kennedy (November); Profumo scandal; National Theatre opens; John Robinson *Honest to God*, E P Thompson *Making of the English Working Class*, published.

### 1964

Radio Caroline begins broadcasting (28 March); *Children's Hour* ends; BBC2 television begins broadcasting for London (20 April); BBC reaches agreement with the Musicians' Union (summer) for Music Programme using the Network 3 frequencies during the daytime; Music Programme begins broadcasting on Sunday from 8am to 5pm (30 August); Third starts earlier at 7.30pm, Music Programme extends (December); Lou Reed founds The Primitives, later to become the Velvet Underground; Harold Wilson narrowly wins General Election; *Top of the Pops* begins.

### 1965

Music Programme on full hours (March); Peter Maxwell-Davies's *Revelation and Fall*; Steve Reich stumbles upon the tape-recorder phenomenon which produces *It's Gonna Rain* (January); Race Relations Act; Vietnam war escalates; 'Swinging London' coined; Early Bird communications satellite launched.

### 1966

BBC introduces permanent stereo broadcasts for some programmes; introduction of colour television (3 March); Labour wins working majority at General Election (March); Open University proposed; England wins the World Cup (30 July); Aberfan disaster (October); *Cathy Come Home* screened.

### 1967

Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* links with the Darmstadt experiments (1 June); Marine &c., Broadcasting (Offences) Act (August); *Face the Music* first televised (3 August); Third Programme and its associated services grouped under the label of 'Radio 3'; Home becomes Radio 4; Light Programme becomes Radio 2; Radio 1 launches (30 September); Colin Davis Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1971); BBC2 starts broadcasting in colour (1 July); Pierre Boulez conducts Stockhausen's *Gruppen* at the Proms; Malcolm Sargent appears at the *Last Night of the Proms* (16 September), dying 17 days later (3 October); Frank Gillard establishes a Working Group under Marriott (December).

### 1968

Charles Hill invites McKinsey to examine BBC Radio (April), producing an interim report in September and a final report in February 1969; Martin Luther King assassinated (4 April); Marriott group replaced by Policy Study Group chaired by Gerard Mansell; USSR invades Czechoslovakia on the same day as the USSR State Orchestra plays at the Proms (20 August); *Die Meistersinger* broadcast from the Coliseum in a collaboration between the Third and the Music Programme (recorded 18 September, broadcast 2 February 1969); abolition of theatre censorship (September); Kubrick's film *2001, a Space Odyssey* released.

### 1969

Civil rights protests start the Northern Ireland 'troubles' (January); *Broadcasting in the Seventies* published (10 July); Charles Curran becomes DG; *Campaign for Better Broadcasting* launched (September); BBC1 and ITV broadcasting in colour (15

November); Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and Harrison Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy* first performed; Phillip Glass completes a series of minimalist compositions including *Music in Fifths* and *Music in Contrary Motion*; moon landing (July); *Monty Python* and *Civilisation* both begin; Rupert Murdoch buys *The Sun*.

#### 1970

New radio schedules come into operation, with Radio 3 fully operational in its new form (4 April) and Radio 4 shedding all regular music programmes (for the time being); Ian Trethowan becomes Managing Director, Radio (until 1975); first late night Prom; all Proms broadcasts on Radio 3; *Concert Hall* series on Radio 3; voting age reduced to 18; Edward Heath wins General Election (June); Ken Russell *The Music Lovers* released.

#### 1971

First Open University broadcast (3 January); radio-only licence abolished (1 February); *An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting* White Paper published (29 March); David Munrow's *Pied Piper* series piloted (May); death of John Reith (16 June); Pierre Boulez Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1975); Richard Hoggart delivers the *Reith Lectures*; BBC adds full stereo capability to Radio 3; premiere of Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*; Brian Eno attends the London concert of the Philip Glass ensemble playing *Music with Changing Parts*; internment introduced in Northern Ireland; Stanley Kubrick *A Clockwork Orange* released.

#### 1972

'Bloody Sunday' (30 January); Sound Broadcasting Act (12 July); Independent Television Authority becomes Independent Broadcasting Authority; Stephen Hearst become Controller, Third (until 1978); Robert Ponsonby becomes Controller, Music (until 1986); BBC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is the first concert simulcast by BBC2 and Radio 3 (11 November); *Jesus Christ Superstar* opens; home video recorders on sale.

#### 1973

UK joins the European Economic Community (Common Market); first ILR stations begin broadcasting LBC (8 October), Capital Radio (13 October), Radio Clyde (31 December); Radio 4 launches *Kaleidoscope*; schools programming restricted to Radio 4 VHF; Reich's *Four Organs* played at Carnegie Hall in the last of the great scandal concerts of the century; school leaving age raised to 16; Arab-Israeli war and ensuing oil crisis (October).

#### 1974

Three Day Week (1 January-7 March); two General Elections: Harold Wilson forms a minority Government (February), then wins overall majority (October); Annan Committee established (10 April); BBC starts occasional quadraphonic broadcasts; Robert Ponsonby succeeds Glock as Proms director; President Nixon resigns (August); IRA Birmingham bombings (November).

#### 1975

Rudolph Kempe becomes Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1976); Parliamentary Broadcasting experiment; Capital Radio launches *Collection*; Radio Clyde relays the Cleveland Quartet and the Scottish Proms; *lieder* recitals on Radio City; Radio 3 and Radio 4 share programming.

## 1976

Howard Newby becomes MD, Radio (until 1978); Ian McIntyre becomes Controller Radio 4 (until 1978); ILR secondary rental £25,000 funding for 11 programmes of classical music on Radio Clyde; 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Third celebrated on air and in *Radio Times* (September/October); Apple Corporation founded; first portable computers; Rudolph Kempe dies (May); David Munrow commits suicide (May); Wren Orchestra first performance (8 August).

## 1977

Ian Trethowan becomes DG; Annan Report published (23 March); Sex Pistols' release *God Save the Queen* (27 May); Queen's Silver Jubilee; *Abigail's Party* broadcast.

## 1978

Aubrey Singer becomes MD, Radio (until 1982); Ian McIntyre becomes Controller, Third (until 1987); Gennady Rozhdestvensky becomes Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1981); ILR secondary rental £1million funding *inter alia* Capital Radio concert series *Great Orchestras of the World*; first AIRC Copyright Tribunal reference (October); Radio 3 moves to Radio 1's old AM frequency (23 November); regular broadcasting from Parliament begins.

## 1979

First BBC radio programmes recorded digitally; Ian McIntyre announces new schedules for Radio 3 (July); ILR secondary rental £1.9million; *Play it Again* starts on Saturday afternoons on Radio 3 (29 September); Independent Television strike (August-October); Margaret Thatcher wins General Election (May); *Monty Python's Life of Brian* begins; Seamus Heaney *Fieldwork* published; commercialisation of the Internet begins; scandal over the 'forgery' of Shostakovich's memoirs (November).

## 1980

BBC cancels all live opera relays as economy measure; *Mainly for Pleasure* replaces *Homeward Bound* as 'continuous stream programming on the early evenings (2 January); Musicians' Union strike (May-August); Proms concerts cancelled (July and August); orchestras including the BBC Symphony play in alternative Wembley Conference Centre Proms; Arnold Goodman brokers a settlement to the strike (7 August); ILR secondary rental £2.7 million, funding classical music concerts in London, at the Snape Maltings and in Aberdeen, Sheffield and Belfast.

## 1981

ILR secondary rental £1.3million; Greenham Common peace camp established (January) Deptford fire, Toxteth and Moss Side riots (July); launch of MTV; Salman Rushdie *Midnight's Children*; Rupert Murdoch acquires *The Times*.

## 1982

Alasdair Milne becomes DG; Gramophone Department and Music Division combined into Radio 3 Music Department (Autumn); Richard Francis appointed MD Radio (until 1986); *3: The Radio 3 Magazine* appears (October); John Pritchard becomes Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 1989); ILR secondary rental £794,000; Falklands War.

## 1983

*Voice of the Listener* pressure group formed; Brodsky Quartet wins the EBU International String Quartet Days in Cambridge; Messiaen completes his opera *St Francis of Assisi*; Harrods' car bomb (December); major growth in CD sales commences.

## **1984**

IBA first moots national commercial radio; Heathrow Conference (23 June); miners' strike; Orgreave Colliery confrontations (May, June); IRA Brighton hotel bombing (12 October); start of privatisation with flotation of British Telecom.

## **1985**

Further BBC radio economies, and the scaling back of VHF transmitter programme; ILR secondary rental down to £168,000; Peacock Committee established (March); Brixton, Handsworth and Broadwater Farm riots; Heysel stadium disaster (April); first Live Aid concert.

## **1986**

Brian Wenham becomes MD Radio (until 1987); Michael Parkinson presents *Desert Island Discs* following the death in 1985 of Roy Plomley; Chernobyl nuclear disaster (April); Peacock Committee reports (July); revised ruling from the first Copyright Tribunal (23 October); 'Big Bang' deregulates City of London financial sector.

## **1987**

BBC Governors sack Alasdair Milne; Michael Checkland becomes DG (until 2002), David Hatch MD, Radio (until 1993); BBC Music Division disbanded, replaced by a Radio 3 Music Department (autumn); John Drummond takes over from Ian McIntyre and is Controller of Music, Proms Director and Controller, Radio 3 (1 June); Green Paper on Broadcasting (25 February); Richard Park at Capital Radio launches UK contemporary hits radio (28 September); John Adams' *Nixon in China* first performance at the Houston Grand Opera (22 October); Wapping strikes.

## **1988**

Sue Lawley takes over *Desert Island Discs* from Michael Parkinson, and the programme transfers from the Gramophone Department to Magazine Programmes; secondary rental effectively abolished (September); Copyright Act 1988 (November); Brunel Radio in Bristol/Bath/Swindon splits frequencies to carry a 2½ hour early evening show of classical music every weekday; IBA advertises 'incremental' ILR licences (13 November); Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report into music licensing (7 December).

## **1989**

Hillsborough disaster (15 April); first transatlantic fibre optic cable; Tiananmen Square massacre (4 June); Andrew Davis becomes Chief Conductor BBC Symphony (until 2000); Berlin Wall breached (9 November); Daniel Barenboim conducts performances of Beethoven 9<sup>th</sup> symphony on both sides of the Berlin Wall (November); end of needletime indicated by Government response to MMC report (20 December); Leonard Bernstein conducts Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* in Berlin (25 December).

## **1990**

First DAB trials at Crystal Palace (January); David Mellor appointed Arts Minister; Broadcasting Bill goes through Parliament, with the "thump, thump, thump" debate (5 June); decision at Committee stage differentiating music content of licences (October); controversy over Gulf War leads to Mark Elder being replaced as conductor of Last Night of the Proms; Broadcasting Act (November); Shadow Radio Authority established; BSkyB formed by the merger of BSB and Sky; BBC Radio Orchestra disbanded (spring); Major succeeds Thatcher as Prime Minister (November).



## **1991**

Radio Authority comes into existence (1 January); John Birt becomes BBC DG designate; first national commercial radio licence advertised to be non-pop music on FM (11 January); Showtime group is highest bidder (22 May) but fails to raise its capital finance and is replaced by Classic FM (30 September); end of the USSR; 'Desert Storm' in Kuwait (January); Maastricht treaty signed.

## **1992**

Drummond leaves Radio 3 to be replaced by Nicholas Kenyon (28 February); Radio 3 ceases broadcasting on AM (29 February) with the frequency being transferred for eventual use by Virgin Radio; David Mellor becomes Secretary of State for National Heritage (10 April); second AIRC Copyright Tribunal reference (2 June); Birt becomes DG; Radio 3 launches *On Air*, *In Tune* and *Brian Kay's Sunday Morning* (July); Classic FM begins broadcasting (7 September); David Mellor resigns (24 September); Peter Ackroyd *English Music* published.

## **1993**

Future of BBC orchestras once again an issue (spring); Liz Forgan becomes MD, Radio (until 1996); judgement of the second AIRC Copyright Tribunal (26 February); UK leaves ERM (May); Rachel Whiteread *House* completed.

## **1994**

*Gardeners Question Time* team 'defect' to Classic FM; Tony Blair becomes Labour Party leader (May); IRA ceasefire (August); Netscape founded; *Three Tenors* concert and CD release.

## **1995**

*Fairest Isle*; *BBC Radio 3's Year of British Music and Culture*; *Morning Collection* presented by Paul Gambaccini (August); Proms centenary; on Drummond's retirement, Kenyon takes over in addition as Proms Director; BBC DAB multiplex launches (September); schools broadcasting moves out of daytime hours (November); merger of CNN and Time Warner.

## **1996**

BBC Radio staff split into Broadcast and Production divisions (7 June); Matthew Bannister becomes MD, Radio (until 1998); Broadcasting Act introduces UK digital radio (24 July 1996); GWR takes full control of Classic FM; Ralph Bernard becomes GWR executive chairman; first *Prom in the Park*.

## **Appendix D**

### **Senior personnel in classical music radio**<sup>365</sup>

#### **BBC**

##### **Chairman**<sup>366</sup>

1938-1939	Frederick Ogilvie
1939-46	Allan Powell
1947	Philip Inman
1947-52	Ernest Simon
1952-7	Alexander Cadogan
1957-64	Arthur fforde
1964	James Duff
1964-7	Norman Brook
1967-73	Charles Hill
1973-80	Michael Swann
1980-83	George Howard
1983-86	Stuart Young
1986-96	Marmaduke Hussey
1996-2001	Christopher Bland

##### **BBC radio senior management**

###### Director General

1927-38	John Reith
1938-42	Frederick Ogilvie
1942-3	Cecil Graves
1942-4	Robert Foot
1944-52	William Haley
1952-9	Ian Jacob
1960-9	Hugh Greene
1969-77	Charles Curran
1977-82	Ian Trethowan
1982-87	Alasdair Milne
1987-92	Michael Checkland
1992-2000	John Birt

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<sup>365</sup> The list of BBC *dramatis personae* draws on those given by Kenyon (1981, pp. 439-41) and Hendy (2007, pp. 405-6) significantly updated and in a few instances corrected with reference where possible to BBC WAC personnel lists. To avoid lengthening and potentially overburdening an already long list, only those people playing a senior part in the events of 1945-1995 or their antecedents are listed.

<sup>366</sup> Titles and honorifics are omitted, as they often apply to only part of the period in question. It is of note that only six women (three of whom twice) appear on this list of 101 post-holders. All BBC Chairmen and Directors General have been male, as have all bosses of BBC Radio until 1993. Ethnic diversity is unknown to the entire list of 102 posts.

#### Controller (Programmes)

1938-44	Basil Nicholls
1944-5	Lindsay Wellington

#### Senior Controller

1944-8	Basil Nicholls
1952-63	Lindsay Wellington
1963-8	Frank Gillard

#### Managing Director, Radio

1969-70	Frank Gillard
1970-5	Ian Trethowan
1976-8	Howard Newby
1978-82	Aubrey Singer
1982-86	Richard Francis
1986-7	Brian Wenham
1987-93	David Hatch
1993-6	Liz Forgan

#### Director of Programmes, Radio (Deputy Managing Director, Radio)

1959-70	Richard Marriott
1970-1	Gerard Mansell
1971-5	Howard Newby
1975-80	Douglas Muggeridge
1980-3	Charles McLelland
1983-6	Monica Sims
1986-7	David Hatch
1993-6	Michael Green

#### Controller, Third Programme

1946-8	George Barnes
1948-52	Harman Grisewood
1953-8	John Morris
1958-71	Howard Newby (Radio 3 from 1970)
1972-78	Stephen Hearst
1978-87	Ian McIntyre
1987-92	John Drummond (merged post with Controller, Music)
1992-8	Nicholas Kenyon
1998-2014	Roger Wright

#### Controller, Home Service

1942-52	Lindsay Wellington
1953-7	Andrew Stewart
1960-5	Ronald Lewin
1965-9	Gerard Mansell
1969-75	Anthony Whitby
1975-6	Clare Lawson Dick
1976-8	Monica Sims

## **Music department<sup>367</sup>**

### Director of Music

1930-42	Adrian Boult
1942-44	Arthur Bliss
1944-6	Victor Hely-Hutchinson
1946-8	Kenneth Wright (acting)

### Head of Music

1948-50	Steuart Wilson
1950-2	Herbert Murrill

### Controller, Music

1952-9	Richard Howgill
1959-72	William Glock
1972-86	Robert Ponsonby (final year in tandem with Drummond)
1985-92	John Drummond (Music Department abolished in June 1987)
1992-8	Nicholas Kenyon

## **Gramophone Department**

### Head of Gramophone Department

1945-8	Gerald Abraham
1948-72	Anna Instone
1972-5	John Lade
1976	Anna Instone
1977-82	Christine Hardwick
1982-9	Christine Hardwick (as Head of Radio 3 Music Department)

## **BBCSO**

### Chief Conductor

1931-50	Adrian Boult
1950-7	Malcolm Sargent
1957-62	Rudolf Schwartz
1963-6	Antal Dorati
1967-71	Colin Davis
1971-5	Pierre Boulez
1975-6	Rudolf Kempe
1978-81	Gennady Rozhdestvensky
1989-2000	Colin Davis

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<sup>367</sup> Further details of other than senior posts in the Music Department/Division are listed in Kenyon (1980, pp. 440-441), including Chief Assistant posts some of which are mentioned in the narrative of this thesis. Reproducing the whole of Kenyon's list seems otiose.

## **CLASSIC FM**

### Chairman

1992-1996      Peter Michael

### Chief Executive

1991-2          Ralph Bernard (Executive Chairman from 1996 until 2008)

### Managing Director

1992-6          John Spearman

### Programme Controller

1992-7          Michael Bukht

## **IBA**

### Director General

1954-70          Robert Fraser

1970-81          Brian Young

1981-87          John Whitney

1987-90          Shirley Littler

### Director of Radio

1972-87          John Thompson

1987-90          Peter Baldwin

## **RADIO AUTHORITY**

### Chief Executive

1991-5          Peter Baldwin (of Shadow Radio Authority from 1990)

1995-2003      Tony Stoller