Populist Inclinations in Classical Music: a Farewell to Elitism

In recent years, there has been a global move towards populism in classical music. Classical orchestras are increasingly transforming their programs to include popular works that would draw more audience, soloists are being marketed similarly to pop music stars, and classical music performances are moving from concert halls to public spaces.

Although many of these changes are done with a money-oriented mindset in an attempt to create more funds, in a way, they also serve a potentially beneficial role in breaking the elitist barrier of classical music and bringing it closer to the common man. On the other hand, with the increasing number of concerts and concern to please masses, a decline in quality and innovation is inevitable.

This paper reveals observations on populist inclinations in classical music in different cultures, and varying views of the intellects on the topic in an attempt to find an answer to the question “Where do we find the balance in creating a new marketing model for classical music, while keeping it fearlessly innovative and yet popular enough to stay alive?”