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## **0. Introduction**

In this thesis the concept of cultural sustainability, or sustainable culture, is applied to the chamber music sector.

Chamber music is serious music for small ensembles of instrumentalists. If adequately proposed to contemporary audience, it has the potential to reveal an intimate experiential nature, as well as interesting dynamics between performers. I think such potential is the reason why classical chamber music repertoire is more than two centuries old, but is still played and well received.

In such long horizon of time, the society and conditions in which chamber music was born and developed profoundly changed. However, the way to propose this music genre has not evolved so much, and consequently the contemporary spectator looking for involving experiences and active participation perceives barriers in approaching it. For these reasons, it risks losing its audience, social mission and financial sources over time, and its survival is thus in danger.

The research question of this thesis is whether the Italian chamber music sector is currently sustainable.

The first chapter is dedicated to the definition of sustainability of the arts. The main lines of research in this field are briefly analysed before focusing on the meaning that permeates all this thesis: cultural institutions' ability to survive over time, both from a financial point of view, diversifying revenue sources and adopting specific management practices, and from a social perspective, adapting to present needs and at the same time guaranteeing preservation for future generations.

The second chapter defines chamber music and retraces its production and distribution chain, exploring the role of the different actors in the system. It starts from music education, and particularly from conservatories. They are public entities which release diplomas equalised to university degrees to soloists. My analysis highlighted that musicians however start to be appealing for music agents and artistic directors only after having obtained other certifications from private schools. The period between the end of studies and the beginning of career is very delicate for musicians, because they

invest much more than what they earn, and lack of adequate logistic and management support to be visible and attractive for the audience.

Chamber music distributors are agents, concert societies and festivals. Agents' role is communicating and promoting artists' value: they match demand and offer. Concert societies and festivals organize concerts and distribute them to the final audience in two different and complementary ways: the first are more traditional, the second tend to experiment unusual programmes, venues, schedules.

It has been particularly difficult to write this second chapter because the Italian chamber music sector is highly heterogeneous and fragmented; moreover, the management and effectiveness of actions of the players involved has never been inquired in an integrated way. As literature and data on the specific theme are missing, I conducted interviews with several insiders who helped me to build an overall perspective on the mechanisms regulating the sector. The result of my investigation is that the players are not adequately connected one to each other. This makes difficult to face in consistent and interconnected way the main challenges for the sector's sustainability: rejuvenating the audience, being contemporary and pursuing a social mission; finding alternative revenue sources to public funds.

To work all together in the same direction, to increase efficiency and improve skills, the concept of network is crucial. In this perspective, the Italian project "Le Dimore del Quartetto" is presented and analysed in the chapter 3 as a possible solution bridging different actors. The project was born in the summer 2015 from the identification of uncovered needs of historic houses and young string quartets entering the job world. These two different entities are enhanced through a barter: in exchange for free hospitality in a villa, string quartets offer a concert to the landlord. In November 2016, the association "Le Dimore del Quartetto" was founded to guarantee the growth and financial sustainability of the project. I started to work as project coordinator last January and up to now I had the chance to see it expand rapidly, to increasingly connect the players of the chain for what concerns string quartet, to experiment new ways of distribution to the audience. It seemed to me an interesting case study for this thesis, because it took all the above-mentioned challenges the sector is facing. My

attempts to identify new ways to earn money to invest in a further growth of “Le Dimore del Quartetto”, as well as my curricular internship at the Società del Quartetto di Milano, have been a deeply enriching training in the last months. These experiences are at the origin of the research that follows.

## 1. Literature review

### 1.1. Variations on the theme of sustainability

*Sustainability* is a vague, but at the same time trans-disciplinary and evolving concept in the scientific discourse. In this first chapter, its main meanings will be briefly explored. In some way, all of them contribute to develop the issue which is at the heart of this research: how to guarantee the future of chamber music in Italy, from both financial and social perspectives.

In its broader acceptance, it is “the ability to continue a defined behaviour indefinitely”<sup>1</sup>. This implies the preservation of conditions making continuation possible over time. Sustainability is therefore both a process (continuity) and an achievement (the always reconfirmed ability to continue). The term is often used interchangeably with *sustainable development*, defined by Brundtland in 1975 as “the ability to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>2</sup>. It entails a sort of positive legacy that people living in the present should leave to future generations. The traditional model of sustainable development is based on three pillars: ecological protection, social justice, and economic viability. Nowadays it can be

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<sup>1</sup> WHO European Ministerial Conference on the Life-course Approach in the Context of Health 2020 (2015) “Glossary of Life-course Terms” <[www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/289539/Glossary-Life-course-Terms.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/289539/Glossary-Life-course-Terms.pdf)> [accessed on May 6, 2017]

<sup>2</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press <[www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm](http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm)> [accessed on May 7, 2017]

heard about sustainable development very frequently because it is the topic of United Nations agenda for 2030, which aims at improving living conditions and developing a better society in the next 15 years through pursuing 17 goals hinged on the three pillars. In the last decades, the concept of sustainability has also been increasingly applied to culture, and this gave life to three main different lines of research.

The first, most common line aims at providing policy-makers with instruments for integrating culture as a key element of sustainable development. This can be done in three different ways: culture can be added as the fourth pillar of cultural sustainability and exploited as cultural vitality necessary for the human development; it can be considered an intermediary that connects the various dimensions of sustainability in a holistic perspective, in which boundaries between diverse spheres of life become blurred; it can be interpreted as the root of all human decisions and actions, and in this sense culture and sustainability become mutually intertwined, and culture permeates every aspect of sustainable development<sup>3</sup>. A second line refers to the effort to safeguard minorities' cultural diversity, endangered communities, traditions in remote villages, city peripheries or threatened public spaces. In this sense, "the discipline of cultural sustainability is applied wherever valued ways-of-life are at risk"<sup>4</sup>.

The third field in cultural sustainability discourse narrowly refers to culture as to the cultural processes and products, artistic disciplines and institutions dealing with the arts. The research question in this field is: "How can arts and culture be economically, socially (and environmentally) sustainable in the long run?", which means exploring how the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development can be applied to, and

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<sup>3</sup> Dessein, J., Soini, K., Fairclough, G. and Horlings, L. (2015). Report "Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development. Conclusions from the COST Action IS1007 Investigating Cultural Sustainability". University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

<sup>4</sup> Goucher College, Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability <[www.goucher.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability](http://www.goucher.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability)> [accessed on May 10, 2017]; Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage <[www.folklife.si.edu/themes/cultural-sustainability](http://www.folklife.si.edu/themes/cultural-sustainability)> [accessed on May 10, 2017]

can enhance, the arts. In the last years, several scholars and researchers have focused on the application of sustainability to tourism<sup>5</sup>, and particularly to destinations which are popular for their artistic and cultural heritage, or for hosting festivals, summits, and other initiatives on vast scale<sup>6</sup>. Several literature sources face the issue of sustainable tourism, contrarily from what happens for the broader field of “sustainable culture”. Even though it is rather difficult to find books, journals and articles specifically talking of this latter dimension, the theme is increasingly discussed in Italy, a country which historically has a huge and extremely valuable cultural heritage, but is too often deemed<sup>7</sup> to be not able to adequately manage, preserve and enhance it.

## **1.2. Sustainability as arts institutions’ ability to operate efficiently over time and respond to social needs**

In this thesis, from now on, sustainability will indicate the ability of cultural institutions to adopt efficient management practices and pursue higher levels of financial autonomy, in order to support the conditions at which cultural products and processes can continue to be enjoyed over time by future generations, satisfying the needs of the current one. In this sense, sustainability is used as synonymous of “viability”, a basic

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<sup>5</sup> See Cicerchia, A. (2009) *Risorse culturali e turismo sostenibile. Elementi di pianificazione strategica*. Milano: Franco Angeli;

Messina, S. and Santamato, V. R. (2012) *Esperienze e casi di turismo sostenibile*. Milano: Franco Angeli;

Braga, A. (2014) *Lo sviluppo del turismo sostenibile: cambiamenti sociali e acquisizione di competenze*. Roma: Ediesse

<sup>6</sup> See Richards, G. and Palmer, R. (2007) *Eventful cities*. Abingdon: Routledge

Colomb, C. and Novy, J. (2017) *Protest and resistance in the tourist city*. Abingdon: Routledge;

<sup>7</sup> See Perini, V. (2009) “Il patrimonio artistico italiano? Il più grande del mondo e il meno valorizzato”, *Affari Italiani*, 13 maggio <[www.affaritaliani.it/culturaspettacoli/patrimonio\\_artistico\\_italiano120509.html](http://www.affaritaliani.it/culturaspettacoli/patrimonio_artistico_italiano120509.html)> [accessed on June 27, 2017]

Ippolito, R. (2010) *Il Bel Paese maltrattato. Viaggi tra le offese e i tesori d'Italia*. Milano: Bompiani;

ASK Bocconi (2011) Report “La gestione del patrimonio artistico e culturale in Italia: la relazione fra tutela e valorizzazione”

<[www.ask.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/9eee46804cadb848950efd0f7bdc7be0/La+gestione+del+patrimonio+artistico+e+culturale+in+Italia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](http://www.ask.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/9eee46804cadb848950efd0f7bdc7be0/La+gestione+del+patrimonio+artistico+e+culturale+in+Italia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)> [accessed on June 25, 2017]

concept of business administration that is increasingly applied also to the arts sector. Masini (1970), Airoidi, Brunetti and Coda (2005) define viability (in Italian: “economicità”) as the ability of a firm to last over time, without resorting in pathological way to third parties’ resources, and to balance short- and long-term objectives.

In business administration, according to the stakeholder theory of the corporation (Donaldson Preston, 1995), the continuity or sustainability of a firm depends on its ability to find a simultaneous balance between the often contrasting interests of all its stakeholders, not only the primary ones (shareholders, managers, employees, clients, competitors), but more broadly every person or entity that is to some extent involved in the company’s activity, such as the community in which the firm is located, media, government, interest groups. Viability is the basis for the correct functioning of every institution, even if its main purpose is not economic. Conditions for viability (Airoidi, Brunetti, Coda, 2005) are:

- Ability to cover the cost of production factors with the revenues deriving from the selling of products and services: this is often not immediately doable, because of the high costs of initial investments
- Efficiency, as capacity of the institution to maximize the produced output starting from a defined amount of input
- Adequacy of remunerations, in particular of work and capital
- Constant availability of monetary resources and consequent ability to systematically respect payment obligations

When an institution is unable to cover the cost of production factors or to respect payment obligations, it borrows external resources from third parties.

Organizations operating in the arts field, which usually have not-for-profit nature and thus reinvest profits in their core activity and mission, are structurally incapable of generating sufficient wealth to entirely self-finance their own management and often do not adequately remunerate work, that is rewarded in an extremely skewed way. This forces them to raise funds, but relying only or mainly on third parties’ sources means being fragile and difficultly sustainable, unless a long-lasting relationship with



donors and sponsors is created. In the past, attention at pursuing viability, and particularly efficiency, in cultural institutions was rare; nowadays this becomes instead vital, also considering the significant cuts of public funds and the fact that sponsors increasingly ask for transparency in the use of their resources. To be sustainable, it is therefore necessary to guarantee a mix of steady revenues from operating activities and of third parties' sources, if possible both public and private. Moreover, outreach is fundamental for cultural institutions' social relevance: it is a process of community involvement in cultural institutions' actions, and of cultivation of the audience which is lifeblood of such organizations.

Fondazione Cariplo<sup>8</sup>, which is one of the most relevant Italian philanthropic organizations funding projects of social utility in the third sector in Lombardy, has opened a call for supporting new forms of sustainable culture four years ago. According to the website of the foundation, calls to promote the "good management" in cultural field exist since 2007; however, only from 2013 there is reference to the concepts of "sustainability" and "sustainable culture". The first of these calls in 2013 was part of an action plan aimed at promoting the rationalization and renewal of cultural offer, and at recognizing the economic and civic value of culture. This acted as stimulus for cultural institutions to react, and to re-organize themselves, in the increasingly critical economic recession. In the 2013 call, weaknesses and threats of cultural sector in Italy are summarized as follows: "the cultural sector is still too fragmented and fragile: supply is currently insufficient to determine a real market, and the lack of vision about differentiated funding sources and the network of relations necessary for the development, puts at risk the autonomy of artistic choices and imposes to operators the pursue of innovative forms of economic and financial sustainability".

Through this yearly call, Fondazione Cariplo funds a limited number of cultural institutions that demonstrate to reach an acceptable level of economic and financial sustainability. Requirements to participate in the call of the year 2017 are: drawing up

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<sup>8</sup> Fondazione Cariplo, Bando "Cultura Sostenibile", [www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/bandi/index.html](http://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/bandi/index.html) [accessed on August 26, 2017]

the balance sheet according to the Italian guidelines for non-profit institutions<sup>9</sup>; demonstrating a steady activity by stable turnover in the last three years; having generated at least 100,000 euro of yearly revenues in the last two years; employing at least three people with regular contracts, of which at least one specifically devoted to management. After having certified the pursue of these basic legal and financial requirements, institutions are asked to meet at least two of the three following challenges. The first one is compulsory, whereas there is possibility of choice between the second and the third.

- 1.** Sound management of activities: development of strategies aimed to improve managerial and organizational capacities, and adoption of more sustainable activities. This can be done through: efficiency improvement; exploitation of economies of scale through collaboration with other institutions; diversifications of revenues sources, balancing between public, private and its own ones.
- 2.** Audience development: increased sensitivity to audience's needs; extension of the demand for culture, working on a quality offer and experimenting new modes of use, participation and sharing.
- 3.** Renovation of the cultural offer, both traditional and experimental: innovation of products and processes to improve the organization's positioning in the cultural market.

Moreover, generational turnover is promoted, as well as the development of networks and relations with other actors at local, national and international level, not necessarily in the cultural field; the aggregation of services and spaces, in order to fully exploit existing resources; the sobriety of wages and cachets; the consistency and quantitative evolution of activities.

Looking at culture from sustainability perspective is increasingly urgent. Our country is based on cultural, historic and artistic heritage of immense value, also in economic terms. Culture is in fact strictly linked to tourism: according to the report "Io sono cultura 2016", realized by Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere (the Union of Italian

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<sup>9</sup> Agenzia per il Terzo Settore (2009), "Linee guida e prospetti di bilancio per gli enti non profit"

Chambers of Commerce), the Italian cultural and creative system (composed by cultural and creative industries, historic and artistic heritage, performing and visual arts, and creative-driven productions) in 2015 generated the 6.1% of the Italian gross domestic product: 89.7 billion euro. Moreover, it stimulated additional 160.1 billion wealth in other sectors, reaching the 17% of the national gross domestic product. Tourism is the main beneficiary of culture: in fact, the 37.5% of tourist expenditures are triggered by culture and creativity. Moreover, culture has social value: it creates well-being, cohesion, and sense of belonging, and inspires reflections that go beyond times. Managing the arts in conscious way, balancing between preservation, use and legacy for the future, means increasing the possibility to create such social cohesion, to attract energies, resources and wealth.

According to the lists of beneficiaries of Cariplo's yearly calls about cultural sector's sustainability, in ten years 13 out of 148 awarded organizations based in Lombardy were concert societies, festivals and chamber music ensembles (8,78%). Since some of them got funds more than once, however, it is relevant to consider that only 5 entities<sup>10</sup> dealing with chamber music have been deemed to adequately pursue the sustainability issue over a decade.

Starting from this consideration, and from my personal experience of having studied in a music conservatory and regularly attending concerts, three research hypotheses are tested in the following chapter of this thesis. First, chamber music sector is highly fragmented and competitive: this provokes dispersion of funds among too many players, as well as cannibalization of the artistic offer among hundreds of similar concert seasons. Second, musicians' needs are not adequately satisfied by the current system. Third, the current distribution channels and ways of connecting with the audience are the same that were used 70 years ago, and this creates barriers between chamber music and contemporary audience.

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<sup>10</sup> Società del Quartetto di Milano, Associazione MilanoMusica, Festival Settimane Musicali di Stresa, Divertimento Ensemble, Orchestra da Camera di Mantova

## 2. Conditions for chamber music sustainability in Italy, today

### 2.1. Chamber music: definition and brief history

Chamber music is composed for small ensembles of instrumentalists, conventionally two to ten.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica offers a definition of the term, highlighting in few lines the peculiarities of this genre. “In its original sense chamber music referred to music composed for the home, as opposed to that written for the theatre or church. Since the “home” – whether it be drawing room, reception hall, or palace chamber – may be assumed to be of limited size, chamber music most often permits no more than one player to a part. It usually dispenses with a conductor. An essential characteristic of chamber music results from the limited size of the performing group employed: it is intimate music, suited to the expression of subtle and refined music ideas. Rich displays of varied instrumental colour, and striking effects produced by sheer sonority, play little part in chamber music. In place of those effects are refinement, economy of resources, and flawless acoustical balance”.<sup>11</sup>

“Music composed for the home” may include also pieces for soloists, and therefore the definition of chamber music is sometimes enlarged to include the solo repertoire. However, the most common acceptance exclusively refers to ensembles.

Chamber music was almost unexplored in Italy, the cradle of opera, until the mid XIX century. From the period of the Italian unification (1861), until around 1920, however, the so-called “Quartet Societies” flourished all over the country as groups of associates who boosted the production and promotion of instrumental music. Quartet Societies were products of the bourgeoisie of the time: born from the initiative of single individuals (musicians, intellectuals, entrepreneurs) to gather the exponents of their own social class in the name of music, they were profoundly rooted in the life and

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<sup>11</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica <[www.britannica.com/art/chamber-music](http://www.britannica.com/art/chamber-music)> [accessed on March 25, 2017]

identity of the cities hosting them, each of those was part of a different kingdom until some years before. They shaped the audience's taste and allowed the best musicians to train and improve their skills, both in interpreting and composing chamber music. As indicated by their name, Quartet Societies originally focused on the repertoire for string quartet. In the classic and romantic period, starting from Haydn around 1750, and then with Mozart and Beethoven, string quartet pieces became the most popular chamber music repertoire, and even later they remained the favourite form for composers' experimentations. The genre was particularly appreciated because string quartet plays as a "reduced form of orchestra" in which four instruments dialogue one with each other with the same importance and can reproduce the widest range of music colours. Over time, "Quartet Society" became a label for initiatives aimed at promoting and developing every genre of serious music, without losing a special attention to chamber music.

## **2.2 Sector analysis**

For a deeper understanding of how the chamber music sector works today, it is essential to retrace its education, production and distribution chain.

I faced three main difficulties in this analysis. First, hybrid situations are hard to categorize: some actors deal not only with chamber music but also with choir, orchestras and jazz music; others educate, produce, research and distribute at the same time. Aggregated data on the whole music sector's organization have been collected and analysed by Balestra and Malaguti in "Organizzare Musica" (2005), which provided a strong basis to this thesis despite the difficulty in isolating chamber music from the other genres taken in consideration. Second, several actors (especially ensembles, concert societies and festivals) operate at amateur level and are difficultly classifiable and analysable as "firms". Third, no clear information on organizational structures and balance sheets is available because of the lack of transparency of several players. Moreover, the traditional and mostly performed chamber music

repertoire dates back to XIX-XX centuries. Contemporary chamber music is still written and distributors usually try to include at least few concerts focused on new pieces in every season, but contemporary music is scarcely appealing for the Italian audience and thus it is always secondary to the classic repertoire: the boundary between production and distribution is therefore very blurred in this sector. Ensembles and composers are indeed producers; agents are intermediate distributors; concert societies and festivals are distributors to the extent in which they reach the audience, and producers to the extent in which they organize their season around a specific theme, according to the artistic direction.

Schools, agents, concert societies and festivals that focus most of, or all, their activity on solo and chamber music<sup>12</sup> are relevant for this thesis. Their role, structure, way of functioning and purpose will be analysed to put in light the mechanisms regulating the sector and examine the different players' actual effectiveness and sustainability over time. A special attention is dedicated to the search for bridges between the actors, in a network perspective. In fact, it is true that the players in a production and distribution chain are traditionally presented in linear way to follow a logic time order, but they should constantly be interconnected one to each other to work in integrated way and produce a satisfactory outcome. This is even more relevant in such a fragmented field as chamber music is. To be sustainable over time, the first step would be pooling resources and competences to become stronger.

### **2.2.1 Music education**

Music education, meant as education to both listen and play, is the essential starting point for cultivating talents and audience. It is the origin which lays the foundation for

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<sup>12</sup>The two repertoires, solo and chamber music, are in most cases inseparable for both producers and distributors. For this reason, the broadest meaning of chamber music conventionally includes soloists.

concerts' existence, and therefore for music production. In Italy, education is traditionally public, and for this reason this chapter is focused on public music schools.

Music education usually begins as children. The State regulates and funds education from primary school: music is included within primary and lower secondary schools' curricula, even though it is always considered ancillary and rarely connected to other subjects. In primary and lower secondary schools, children generally listen to songs and play the flute; they do not have the chance to start developing an overall music culture, or just curiosity about the music world, unless they have passionate teachers going beyond established ministerial programs. In high school, music does not even enter school curricula unless you specifically choose music high schools.

It could look like a paradox, but in the country associated to music all over the world, music education, both as listeners and performers, seems not a priority for the State. Children grow up listening to commercial music, to which they are continuously exposed, willing or not. They perceive the other genres as distant from everyday life, unless they chance upon stimulating educators or grow up in families who care about music and complement their children's public education with the private one.

Classical music usually sounds particularly complex because compositions are much longer than songs to which we are currently used to, and it is often not immediate to recognize their themes, that are a sort of equivalent of commercial music songs' refrains. Western music has been composed over years using themes, therefore our ears are "confident" with what is repeated in compositions and remains easily in mind. This has traditionally been developed in classical music, and has then been progressively simplified and brought to pop music. As consequence, our ears currently expect to find this repetition and melody more rapidly, whereas classical music requires listeners to focus to satisfy this expectation. This is the reason why nowadays people particularly need to be educated to listen to classical music and find pleasure in such activity.

As regards education to play, in the last 20 years the training system was reformed to adapt to other European countries' public music schools. In particular, the latest laws

attempted to attribute specific functions to each education level to avoid overlaps, and to tie music schools with the professional world and other cultural institutions, at least formally.

Music upper secondary schools have been institutionalised in 2010<sup>13</sup> after years of trials. Together with music lower secondary schools<sup>14</sup>, they provide children and teenagers with preparatory music education at local level to pass the admission test to Conservatories.

### **2.2.1.1. Conservatories**

Conservatories were born in Italy in the XIV-XV centuries as places in which poor and orphan children were taught a job, and particularly trained to perform, teach, and transmit music. From the XVIII century on, conservatories opened to everybody passing an entry test and expanded their education programs. They flourished all over Italy and their successful education model was reproduced also abroad.

Today they include not only music instrument practice as soloists, ensembles and orchestras, but also music theory, music history, composition, and the recently added aesthetics, anthropology, pedagogy, foreign languages and IT classes necessary for musicians' overall professional development. They release diplomas to soloists. The training as chamber music ensembles usually begins in the last years of conservatory, or immediately after, when musicians reach a certain level of fluency in playing their own instrument that allows them to perform properly together with others.

Conservatories have been equalised to universities by the law n. 508/1999 and are regulated at macro-level by AFAM<sup>15</sup>, which is part of the Italian Ministry of University and Research. AFAM recognizes 55 music conservatories and 18 equalized schools spread all over Italy, in major cities as well as in smaller towns. In total, conservatories count approximately 42000 enrolled students and 5000 graduated students on average

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<sup>13</sup> DPR n. 89 15/03/2010

<sup>14</sup> Institutionalised by the law n. 124 03/05/1999

<sup>15</sup> Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale



every year<sup>16</sup>. There is no information about which instruments they play, even though the most popular are usually piano, violin and guitar. It is also impossible to know how many students found, or work in, music ensembles after graduation.

The article 33 of Italian Constitution states: “Arts and science are free, and free is their teaching. Institutions of high culture (such as conservatories), universities and academies have the right to establish their own autonomous set of rules and organization within State regulations”. Before 1999, however, in absence of specific laws, conservatories remained within the competence of the Ministry of Public Education and did not have their own Statutes. They educated aspiring musicians of every age, in parallel with secondary schools and universities, and the period of training lasted approximately ten years. Education was almost exclusively practical, neglecting the overall cultural development of musicians: who wanted to deepen his or her theoretical knowledge had to enrol to university or to follow conservatories’ autonomous classes that were unbind to the main teachings. This “old system” remained in use along with the new system until 2010, 11 years after the entry into force of the reform; nowadays, students can no more enrol to old system classes, but who enrolled in the last years will finish that path.

The law 508 established institutions of high culture and academies must train students at the highest level like universities, and therefore deal interconnectedly with three spheres: education, research and production. Few private schools and foundations, and specifically the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole (Florence)<sup>17</sup> and the Civica Scuola di Musica di Milano<sup>18</sup>, obtained the State recognition to release diplomas of high music education and were therefore equalised to conservatories.

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<sup>16</sup> This information can be found in the database of the Ministry of University and Research, section Alta Formazione Musicale, sub-section Conservatories, available at [statistica.miur.it/scripts/AFAM/vAFAM1.asp](http://statistica.miur.it/scripts/AFAM/vAFAM1.asp). The average numbers have been calculated by looking at the total numbers of enrolled and graduated students in the period 2011-2016.

<sup>17</sup> The Scuola di Musica di Fiesole focuses on children’s education, releases diplomas of first level and promotes specialization courses. [www.scuolamusicafiesole.it](http://www.scuolamusicafiesole.it)

<sup>18</sup> The Civica Scuola di Musica “Claudio Abbado” in Milan is completely analogue to a conservatory but focuses on the exploration of influences between classical, jazz and contemporary music. [www.fondazionemilano.eu/musica/](http://www.fondazionemilano.eu/musica/)

By the law n.508, conservatories fell under the competence of the Ministry of University and Research, obtained the actual right to have autonomous Statute and organization, began to release diplomas equalised to university degrees (3+2 years completed after gaining the needed number of credits), and to train only students after upper secondary school. The new structure is inspired to universities' model but is autonomous and parallel. It pushes conservatories to focus exclusively on the complete professional education of older and more expert students in a shorter period. Recognized precocious talented musicians can exceptionally access conservatories before finishing upper secondary school, since the path to become professional musicians is not comparable to the one university students follow to learn a job.

Particularly interesting in the law 508 is the clause 8, which disciplines the relation of conservatories with other relevant actors within the professional music and arts field and has been reinforced by the new decree 13/04/2017 n. 60<sup>19</sup>, entered into force the last May 30<sup>th</sup>. Teaching should be designed by evaluating competences required in the job market; the three systems, secondary school, conservatories and university, should be interconnected and not overlapping on local basis; conservatories should sign agreements with universities to develop conjunct educational activities. Moreover, the State promotes the creation of "Arts Polytechnics" which gather different artistic disciplines in the same building and interconnect teachings, and it commits to verify the satisfaction of set requirements and quality standards.

Initially, students could not attend conservatories and universities in parallel. However, the law 240/2010<sup>20</sup> and the Ministry decree 28/09/2011<sup>21</sup> allowed students to enrol to both institutions' classes, as long as one is chosen as part time commitment and both

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<sup>19</sup> [www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/05/16/17G00068/sg](http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/05/16/17G00068/sg) - "Le istituzioni scolastiche organizzate nelle reti di cui all'articolo 7 e nei poli di cui all'articolo 11, le istituzioni dell'alta formazione artistica, musicale e coreutica, le università, gli istituti tecnici superiori, gli istituti del Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, gli istituti italiani di cultura concorrono, nei limiti delle risorse umane, finanziarie e strumentali disponibili a legislazione vigente, a realizzare un sistema coordinato per la promozione e il potenziamento della cultura umanistica e della conoscenza e della pratica delle arti." – The decree reaffirms the specific competences of each level of training and the creation of a coordinated system for enhancing the knowledge and practice of the arts. It promotes programmes to study abroad and develop professional competences.

<sup>20</sup> See art. 29 prov. 21 [www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/10240l.htm](http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/10240l.htm)

<sup>21</sup> [attiministeriali.miur.it/anno-2011/settembre/dm-28092011-%284%29.aspx](http://attiministeriali.miur.it/anno-2011/settembre/dm-28092011-%284%29.aspx)

institutions approve the student's request of double attendance after evaluating compatibility.

In theory, the reform of conservatories makes sense because it aims at educating students at more global level and to increase their attractiveness in the professional world, like universities do. In absence of written information about the actual pursuing of the prefixed objectives of the reform, I talked with some students about how the new structure works, asked to an agency<sup>22</sup> and a concert society<sup>23</sup> how is the relation between them and their peers and conservatories, looked at conservatories' websites to analyse their study plans and the opportunities they offer after graduation, sent surveys to all the Italian conservatories' and equalised schools' directors and presidents. In particular, surveys investigated conservatories' revenue sources, education offer, job opportunities for graduated students and relations with other institutions. Their structure can be seen in the appendix (par. 5.1.).

Students think that the new reform devotes too few time to the instrument's practice compared to other theoretical classes, which are indeed important, but should be always functional to the practical study of the main subject. Conservatories' system has been declared autonomous from universities, instead it seems the university model has been merely copied and pasted for reforming conservatories without properly considering the different nature of the two: conservatories necessarily focus on the main subject to which all the other subjects are complementary, whereas in universities all the subjects almost equally concur to the final education.

As regards the surveys I submitted, only 6<sup>24</sup> of 73 institutions completed them, and this figure is in my opinion significative by itself of scarce evaluation and transparency in the field. The answers, combined with observations from conservatories' websites, reveal that the vast majority of conservatories currently do not have offices or employees with career service's function, which is instead one of the most useful

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<sup>22</sup> Resia Artists is an agency focused on classical music soloists and ensembles, based in Milan and active since 1982

<sup>23</sup> Società del Quartetto di Milano

<sup>24</sup> Conservatori di Cremona, Torino, Pavia, Pesaro, Verona, Vicenza responded to the survey

services universities offer. Furthermore, only few of them monitor graduated students' employment but none of the five respondents to the survey were able to indicate the results.

In the last years, conservatories started to sign agreements with universities and cultural institutions to offer innovative classes and professional opportunities<sup>25</sup>. Most conservatories currently take part in Erasmus programmes and other opportunities of study and work abroad<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, around 10% of credits is by law attributed to students for concerts, internships and productions, and this should incentivize the actual connection between conservatories and the job world.

All the respondents highlighted as major difficulty the scarce help, both financial and organizational, from the State in improving conservatories' efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, they have hard time in finding alternative revenue sources, which are instead essential since the students' fees on average cover only the 30% of the total costs faced.

What emerged by this investigation is that, 18 years after the reform of conservatories which on paper attempts to connect them to the other actors of the chain and to the daily life of citizens, they are still too disconnected from the professional world and contemporary society. This is indeed a general consideration. Positive examples exist, and few of them are highlighted in the footnotes, but it was not easy to find information about innovative projects since they are not even adequately communicated. The most interesting conclusion of my study is therefore that aspiring professional musicians must continue to study for years in specialized private schools<sup>27</sup> to attract

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<sup>25</sup>The conservatory and the Politecnico in Turin started a collaboration to launch a new course connecting electronic music and engineering, see [www.politocomunica.polito.it/press\\_room/comunicati/2016/accordo\\_politecnico\\_e\\_conservatorio\\_di\\_torino\\_tutta\\_un\\_altra\\_musica](http://www.politocomunica.polito.it/press_room/comunicati/2016/accordo_politecnico_e_conservatorio_di_torino_tutta_un_altra_musica) [accessed on April 14, 2017]. The conservatory of Messina signed a convention with the theatre and the university of the city to share spaces, resources and favour students' participation and employment in the theatre's activities [www.teatrovittorioemanuele.it/firmato-oggi-un-protocollo-intesa-teatro-messina-universita-messina-conservatorio-corelli/](http://www.teatrovittorioemanuele.it/firmato-oggi-un-protocollo-intesa-teatro-messina-universita-messina-conservatorio-corelli/) [accessed on April 20, 2017]

<sup>26</sup>Some examples of programmes for study abroad: [www.workingwithmusic.net/](http://www.workingwithmusic.net/) [accessed on May 11, 2017] [www.conservatorioverona.it/it/international/omega/](http://www.conservatorioverona.it/it/international/omega/) [www.aec-music.eu/](http://www.aec-music.eu/)

<sup>27</sup> In Italy there are high specialization academies renowned all over Europe: Accademia Stauffer in Cremona, Accademia Chigiana in Siena, Scuola di Musica di Pinerolo (Turin)

agents and artistic directors. The training for entering the job world remains private and this further contributes to fuel the perception of classical music as elitist.

To sum up, conservatories have to face two main challenges to be sustainable.

First, being connected to the city hosting them: this can be done bringing music outside institutional buildings, and taking citizens to schools and conservatories through the connection of music with other disciplines, and with the city identity. Second, offering real professional opportunities to students as soon as they graduate, or even before, through conventions with agents and artistic directors. Both ways are obviously difficult to go, especially in lack of funds. Given the decrease of public resources, the State should firstly help schools to raise funds from private citizens, incentivizing donations through significant tax deductions.

I also wonder whether it is really necessary to have 73 conservatories spread all over Italy, that cannot be adequately funded and are not completely able to introduce their own students to the professional world. Would it not be better to improve middle and high schools to cover local needs, and then to merge smaller conservatories and keep only the ones with the most complete offer, the best bridges to the job market and the greatest number of students?

### **2.2.2 Chamber music ensembles: between the end of studies and the beginning of career**

Conservatories release diplomas to soloists after the completion of specific study plans. Apart from main instrument's classes, such plans include disciplines of chamber music, orchestra and choir, which teach how to coordinate with other musicians. Sometimes professional chamber music ensembles are formed in conservatories, thanks to the support of teachers who recognize ensembles' potential and encourage them to participate in competitions and attend external masterclasses with prestigious teachers. Professional chamber music education therefore starts in the last period of conservatory or after the diploma, and is mostly private.

The years between the end of studies and the beginning of career are very hard for musicians, and entail more expenses than earnings. The path to professional development includes attending masterclasses and specialization masters, winning national and international competitions, performing nationally and abroad, receiving positive judgements from critics, recording CDs. To gain visibility, musicians have to share their music activities through different channels, both online (through a well-structured website, social media and especially a Youtube channel) and offline (radio, television, specialized magazines). All these steps are necessary to attract loyal audience, to appeal to agents and concert societies.

In this delicate period musicians are usually aged 20-27: they teach in schools, in parallel with the concert activity, to self-guarantee a stable income; they usually do not earn enough to pay a manager, therefore have to care also of all the organizational and logistic aspects of their own work.

Musicians are nothing without their own instrument: playing on high-quality instruments therefore helps the development of career too. Since they are usually extremely expensive, attracting the interest of collectors willing to borrow or rent them is essential for musicians.

There is no information about Italian ensembles' total number and duration of activity. String quartets' situation is however significant: traditionally, few quartets are formed in Italy compared to other European countries (UK, Germany, Hungary) and even fewer are able to perform at international level. For instance, the international string quartet competition "Premio Borciani", based in Reggio Emilia and globally-renowned, did not award any prize to Italian quartets in its first nine editions, and in the IX and X did not even admit any Italian ensemble: finally, in the XI edition (2017) the Quartetto Adorno won the third prize. Since international competitions are judged by famous professional musicians, and prizes usually include tours of concerts in important venues, they determine which performers deserve to hit the most prestigious stages.

After having analysed the different steps leading to music production, the next paragraphs are dedicated to distributors. As outlined by Balestra and Malaguti (2005), “the main issue in the arts sector is accepting that a human resource, the artist, is mercified, and that the performance becomes an economic object”<sup>28</sup>. In the classical music field, only in recent times the product-performance started to be targeted in different ways according to different audiences. Marketing chamber music, and the arts in general, is however not negative at all. It means finding ways to propose this genre in the contemporary society, and educating the audience about its value, also the economic one. Music agents, concert societies and festivals carry out this function.

### **2.2.3 Music agents**

Music agents match demand and supply, acting as first music distributors by representing artists before concert societies and festivals.

Through proxies<sup>29</sup> signed by musicians, agents promote their professional music activities and communicate their commercial and non-commercial value enhancing their appeal for the market.

Talent on its own is not guarantee of success. Musicians need adequate visibility to compete with thousands of colleagues all over the world for performing in prestigious concert halls and festivals. Agents represent the entry point to such venues, ensuring musicians’ quality to artistic directors and discographic labels.

In agreement with musicians they negotiate and schedule concerts, define music programmes, take care of artists’ image both online and offline, organize all the administrative and logistic aspects of their career. In some cases, especially when musicians are young and not famous yet, music agents act as consultants in their artistic choices and help them in ideating thematic or experimental music programmes to increase their attractivity for artistic directors.

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<sup>28</sup> Balestra, C. and Malaguti, M. (2005). *Organizzare Musica. Legislazione, produzione, distribuzione, gestione nel sistema italiano*, Milano: Franco Angeli

<sup>29</sup> Tramite rapporto di mandato oneroso tra artista e rappresentante

Agents invest in artists by sustaining costs of all these services. Their return on investment is a percentage (in Italy around 15-20%) of the gross fee artists receive by contracts negotiated by agents.

Musicians usually rely on a general manager who deals with his or her overall promotion, and who contacts local managers when looking for opportunities in foreign countries. For artists, relying on agents means saving time, energy, and money. Musicians would never be able by themselves to care of management, administrative and legal issues in appropriate way. Agents are designated to deal with these tasks, so that musicians can entirely focus on studying and performing. Moreover, the overall cost of services provided by agents, symbolically a share of artists' fees, is lower than the sum of all the distinct services' costs.

Music agents have traditionally had bad reputation in Italy because they deprive musicians of part of their fee and care of commercial aspects of the arts. This limited and obsolete perspective makes Italy the only European country with strong music heritage which still nowadays does not regulate the agents' work, instead fundamental for artistic careers' development.

The foundation of the first professional Italian music agencies in Milan and Bologna dates back to the end of the XVIII and the beginning of the XIX century, when opera and serious music flourished in the country. At that time agencies dealt indiscriminately with all the artistic disciplines, and were vital connections between artists and impresarios. Competition was extremely high and regulation did not exist: more than one agent promoted and "sold" the same artist or competed for the same contract, and often artists had to pay agents' fees twice. The only requirements to work legally as agents were no criminal record and subscription to a dedicated register.

After the World War I, opera and music were given fresh impetus, and this gave also life to new professional roles, such as the artistic director. In that period, the agent was typically a female role. Rich and educated women attending high society events acted as talent scouts: they chose their favourite musicians and boosted their careers chatting with crucial people in the music sector. Originally this was a prestigious hobby



more than an actual job, but it became the nucleus of the first agencies, led by women and dealing with different kinds of performers. Ada Finzi in Milan and Clara Camus in Rome continued to work as agents despite fascist restrictions. After 1945 they privatised their own activities and opened the first two structured music agencies of the country. In the 1950s-70s the economic boom made music agencies flourish.

In 1967, the law n. 800<sup>30</sup> banned every kind of mediation. The ratio behind the law was protecting artists and avoiding that part of their wages finished in agents' hands. By law artists should have been contacted directly by artistic directors, and should have merely subscribed to a dedicated public office to be visible in the music market. Obviously, artists' presence in this list could have never been enough. This mechanism would have never allowed selection either, and would have made impossible to discern artistic quality.

Moreover, that public office actually never came into operation, and above all mediation was banned only in Italy. Foreign music agents could therefore legally continue to work with Italian artists also on the national territory.

Several Italian agencies were forced to close, and the others continued to operate illegally. Since the situation was absurd and artistic directors necessarily kept on relying on music agents despite the ban of mediation, more than ten years later the law n. 800 was declared inapplicable.

The law 08/01/1979 n. 8 introduced the role of artists' representative, which is currently called music agent or music manager. Representatives act as proxies: they cannot sign contracts, but negotiate in place of musicians and provide them with professional engagements. According to what established in 1979, proxy agreements had to be deposited in a dedicated office and there were rigid controls that every musician had only one agent, whose name was indicated on a list in that office.

The law 103/2008 set the repeal of the previous laws regulating the job of artists' representatives. Later, several draft laws have been presented in Parliament to

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<sup>30</sup> [www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1967/09/16/067U0800/sg](http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1967/09/16/067U0800/sg) Titolo IV, art. 48: "è comunque vietata qualsiasi forma di mediazione anche se gratuita"

regulate the sector, but up to now none has entered into force yet. Meanwhile, the trade association ARIACS (Association of Italian representatives of artists and performers) wrote a specific ethical code self-regulating the work of its own members to compensate the current *vacatio legis*.

Agents' work is instead highly recognized and structured in foreign countries such as the United Kingdom, where big holding companies gather all the agents dealing with the entertainment sector, from performing arts to sport disciplines. In Italy, attempts to group all the kinds of agents under the same legislation or in the same trade association have been done, with no results.

Italian agencies focus their activity only on one genre within a specific discipline, therefore instrumental music agents are often not the same people promoting opera singers or orchestra directors, and there is no connection among different entertainment activities. Instrumental music agencies are few, mostly located in Milan and Rome and acting on the overall Italian territory.

Managers' success is based on the high artistic quality of the performers they promote, on trust and reliability, on the promotional channels they use. The best managers are problem solvers and expert communicators, they follow artists on tour, talk extensively with artistic directors, cultivate a network of interesting contacts, are enthusiastic about young musicians and experimentations, and constantly updated on laws, shows and news in the music world. The main indicator of success is the number, and the names, of talented musicians an agent discovers and launches. Promoting musicians who are already well-known and appreciated for their quality performances is easy: the challenge is pushing young names, not commercial yet and therefore riskier for concert societies which are funded according to their ability to fill up the concert halls.<sup>31</sup> The promotion of chamber music ensembles is critical for Italian agencies, because the audience is traditionally more interested in soloists or in orchestras. Conservatories do not particularly incentivize the development of ensembles; the traditional repertoire is

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<sup>31</sup> FUS 2015, criterio del riempimento sale che favorisce ciò che è commerciale e non sostiene i giovani e le sperimentazioni. Ciò inevitabilmente influenza la programmazione e il modo di lavorare degli agenti.

not commonly known and it is hard to promote the contemporary one. The genre is therefore scarcely commercial and not so attractive for distributors. This opens up a reflection on how to make it more appealing, which is a challenge of primary importance for both agents and concert societies.

In the last 20 years, the job of music agents deeply changed as result of global technological innovation. Previously, agencies were the only interlocutor for who organized concerts. Nowadays, Internet and especially social media allow instant connections between musicians and artistic directors all over the world: artistic directors immediately develop opinions about musicians' artistic quality through Youtube, read curricula and reviews on websites and social media, receive hundreds of e-mails from musicians self-promoting their own activities and asking for engagements.

Distances are shortened, and this obviously entails huge saving of time and money in the exchange of information, but also the risk to lose certified quality.

The role of agents has therefore to evolve and adapt to changing times. They increasingly care of artists' digital communication to be competitive in the technological world and to open spaces for personal communication, which however remains the most effective channel of promotion and guarantee of quality. As Colbert (2012) states: "The distribution channel is not only the fluxus of products (concerts) from producers (musicians) to consumers (audience). It is a social network in which interpersonal relations play a fundamental role in the overall dynamics"

#### **2.2.4 Concert societies**

Concert societies distribute live chamber music to the audience.

They are heirs of the Quartet Societies that flourished all over the country as groups of associates promoting the production and diffusion of instrumental music in the period of Italian unification. Quartet societies' activities were entirely financed by members and reserved to them until 40-50 years ago.

Nowadays, the social context in which they were born, and consequently their structure and purpose, have completely changed.

First, their offer often includes also orchestra, choir and jazz, or explores other artistic disciplines' influences on serious music. In this research, however, only the concert societies which focus on chamber music and soloists will be taken in consideration. It seems impossible to count exactly their number: data are available for the main ones, but there are many other microscopic entities exist which organize few concerts every year. However, to estimate the number of professional organizations, three lists can be compared: the first includes all the entities programming concert and choral activities<sup>32</sup> which benefited of State funds in 2015; the second and third enumerate the members of the two major trade associations, AIAM (Associazione Italiana Attività Musicali) and AIAC (Associazione Italiana Attività Concertistiche).

In 2015 the beneficiaries from FUS amounted to 140, of which about 40 mainly deal with other genres. AIAM<sup>33</sup> counts 69 members and AIAC 13: they group the main organizations, but numerically represent only the 44% of the whole sector of concert societies and instrumental ensembles. From this data, it can be inferred that at least 100 concert societies are currently active. This large number explains why concert societies have hard time in attracting audience beyond local borders and in raising funds: the sector is highly competitive.

These organizations are highly heterogeneous for number of concerts organized a year (min 11 – max 115<sup>34</sup>), average number of spectators for concert (min 89 – max 1217), yearly income (min 61,000 euro – max 1,630,000 euro), dependency on public funds (min 10% - max 90%).

Even though plenty of concert societies operate in Italy and their activity over years is strictly connected to Italian history and society changes, a mapping of the field and an analysis of the offer and management of concert societies had incredibly never been done before 2014. In that year, the 150<sup>th</sup> year of activity of the Società del Quartetto of

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<sup>32</sup> One of the FUS categories, "Programmazione delle attività concertistiche e corali"

<sup>33</sup> Associazione Italiana Attività Musicali

<sup>34</sup> Data collected by Filippo Cavazzoni for its study on concert societies in 2016, based on a sample of 30 organizations. It has never been published for lack of sufficient data.

Milan, which is currently the Italian most ancient concert society still operating, it promoted a study with these purposes. Martha Friel and Filippo Cavazzoni (2014) identified a sample of 25 Italian concert societies<sup>35</sup>, of which 23 took part in the study, and analysed their management forms and performances. The research was based on the last balance sheet approved by organizations (year 2012) and on their responses on a survey realized ad hoc to ask for information on their activities, management, audience composition and structure. 22 concert societies of the sample submitted the filled survey, 14 sent their balance sheet. Six foreign concert societies have been contacted to participate in the research, but only three of this already limited sample responded positively and gave the needed information. This makes the international comparison substantially irrelevant in this study, and leaves the door open for future investigations in the field.

Despite the brevity of the study, due to time constraints and to concert societies' resistance to deepen the research, its results are however significant of the trends and main characteristics of the actors involved.

The study is articulated in two parts: the first analyses information from the survey, and specifically offer, audience and organizational structure; the second comments on management and transparency interpreting data from balance sheets.

As regards the offer, concert societies mainly focus on chamber music, but they often explore also other genres, such as symphonic music (28%), jazz (20%), contemporary music (9%), choral music (9%), folk (9%), ballet and dance (9%), musical theatre (5%) and other (ancient music, music-theatre for children, conferences... 11%). In the season 2012/2013, 830 concerts have been organized. Moreover, concert societies

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<sup>35</sup> Friel and Cavazzoni designed a sample representative of the heterogeneity of the sector: from Trentino to Sicily, including both small and large concert societies but focusing on the main ones for prestige and long history. The 23 participants in the study are: Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Associazione Alessandro Scarlatti (Naples), Associazione Amici della Musica Firenze, Associazione Amici della Musica "Vittorio Cocito" di Novara, Associazione Amici della Musica di Padova, Associazione Amici della Musica "Arcangelo Speranza" (Taranto), Associazione Siciliana Amici della Musica (Palermo), Ente Concerti di Pesaro, Fondazione Perugia Musica Classica, Giovine Orchestra Genovese, Società Amici della Musica "Guido Michelli", Società Amici della Musica di Verona, Società Aquilana dei Concerti "B. Barattelli", Società Catanese Amici della Musica, Società dei Concerti di Bolzano, Società dei Concerti (La Spezia), Società dei Concerti di Trieste, Società del Quartetto di Bergamo, Società del Quartetto di Milano, Società del Quartetto di Vicenza, Società Filarmonica di Trento, Società Veneziana di Concerti, Unione Musicale (Turin).

promote masterclasses for musicians, and educational activities for young and adult audience, such as open rehearsals and education to listening.

Concerning the audience, unfortunately data on its qualitative composition do not exist: concert societies merely evaluate their audience on the basis of number of members and tickets sold. Data about non-members' gender, age, geographical provenance, education level and chamber music consumption habits, which would be useful to better target offer and communication, could be collected only through surveys to fill in immediately before or after the concert. This is however not common practice among concert societies.

Friel and Cavazzoni (2014) calculated that on average the 58% of respondents' members are aged 51 to 70, and the 24,25% are over 70. This figure is rather representative of the overall audience that can be observed when attending concert halls. This is worrying because it shows currently there is not enough generational turnover in audience and members to guarantee institutions' sustainability over time. Many concert societies introduced highly reduced tickets and subscriptions for under 26 or families to counteract this situation. Moreover, the main institutions started proposing open rehearsals for schools, students and families, began involving young people also in the internal organization of concerts (young photographers, students writing commented music programmes, students dealing with new ways of communication and editorial plan...<sup>36</sup>) and experimenting new forms of chamber music decontextualization.

Another interesting point is that 22 of the 23 concert societies responding to Friel and Cavazzoni's study do not own the hall in which they organize concerts. Many of them use conservatories' halls: in Milan the three main concert societies Serate Musicali, Società del Quartetto and Società dei Concerti organize concerts in the same hall of the conservatory respectively on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Obviously, this generates confusion in non-habitual audience, that hardly distinguishes the respective offers. Furthermore, the fact that concert societies also struggle in attracting

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<sup>36</sup> This strategy is currently experimented by the Società del Quartetto di Milano

the same students of the conservatories in whose halls concerts are held should inspire reflections. Concerts' traditional offer, which sees musicians on an austere stage in front of a silent, sat down and passive audience, in a venue with static use of lights, is no more attractive. Supreme quality music is not enough.

The last point of the Cavazzoni and Friel's first section is that all concert societies have lean organizational structures: 7 of the 23 analysed actors have one or none paid employee. The most structured organization, Amici della Musica di Firenze, has 12 workers. The 60% of the sample takes advantage of volunteers. From this data, it can be inferred that concert societies have scarce remuneration capacity. Moreover, an average of 5 employees is probably not enough to develop strong professional functions, and especially to focus on fundraising and audience development, together with the administration and organization of all the ordinary activities.

Cavazzoni and Friel had hard time in analysing and comparing balance sheets since concert societies, as all the non-profit institutions, are not required to adopt a uniform scheme. The State should instead impose the use of the trading companies' model, with pre-set items to simplify the reading and double column to compare years: this model's adoption and publication should then be a compulsory requirement to compete for public funds.

Only 14 out of 23 respondents to the survey submitted their balance sheet. This is a first indicator of lack of transparency, and of the difficulty of studying the field and making comparisons among the players involved.

Revenue sources are diversified, even if balance sheets in most cases show high dependency from public funds: on average, they represent the 41% of concert societies' total income in 2012. However, earnings come also from tickets and subscriptions sold, membership fees, and private donations from individuals, foundations and companies.

Each organization participating in the second part of the study was given a score, based on: use of the scheme adopted by trading companies, clearness in the description of items, comparison between current and previous year of activity. 8 of the

14 analysed concert societies shown an insufficient score (minor or equal to 5 out of 10). This is unacceptable: since all these institutions receive public funds, they should publish balance sheets online to make them available for everyone, and report properly their activity and use of public money. Another relevant consideration is that 8 out of 14 concert societies shown a deficit at the end of the year 2012.

#### **2.2.4.1. Public support: the FUS for concert societies**

State funds for performing arts institutions are currently allocated from the FUS Fondo Unico per lo Spettacolo<sup>37</sup>, established in 1985 to fund opera houses, theatres, concert societies, festivals, dance and cirque. The terms for the allotment were renewed after almost 30 years of activity by the Ministerial Order 07/01/2014, which outlined three main current challenges for the performing arts sector: financial sustainability, audience development and fulfilment of high quality standards.

The FUS allots funds according to specific rules for each sub-sector. Concert societies enter the sub-sector “programming concert and choir activities”. Funds are distributed according to the score obtained by applicants presenting a three-year project divided in annual activity plans. The final score is the result of evaluation of three criteria: artistic quality (30%), indexed quality (30%), and quantity (40%). Every criterion includes the evaluation of different indexes through the measurement of set standards of phenomena. Artistic quality is judged by a commission of experts in the field, whereas indexed quality and quantity evaluation is based on an algorithm. According to the score obtained, beneficiaries have been grouped in three clusters, which determine the maximum amount of funds they can receive. The positioning in a certain cluster cannot be changed for the overall three-year period of the presented plan.

Innovations compared to the previous allotment rules are the requirement to present a three-year plan, the possibility for new applicants to ask for funds, the obligation to

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<sup>37</sup> Fondo Unico per lo Spettacolo means “National Fund for Performing Arts”. It was established in 1985, according to the law n. 163 (l. 163/1985)



apply to only one specific sub-sector, the introduction of penalty rules in case of substantial worsening of performances when reporting expenses, revenues and tickets sold at the end of the year. Moreover, the number of beneficiaries significantly decreased from 185 in 2014 to 136 in 2015, and this incentivizes the natural selection and survival of the fittest in the field. An improvement compared to the past has thus been recorded, but the main issue of the Ministerial Order 07/01/2014 is that there are too many indicators to take in consideration, and some vital aspects end up being neglected. In particular, financial stability is overlooked, because the ability to raise funds different from the State ones does not weight so much in the final calculation of the allotment score. Also, the creation of networks to share both professional skills and costs is not incentivized as it should: this would instead help to improve performances in such fragmented and competitive environment. Moreover, the algorithm used for evaluation is too complex, and make final decisions on allotments not completely transparent and hard to retrace.

Given the several protests coming from the performing arts sector, and particularly that quality weights less than quantity in the attribution of funds, the Ministerial order 07/01/2014 and relative rules of allotment are currently being reviewed. A new legislation will come into force at the end of 2017 for the three-year period 2018-2020.

Up to now quality has been measured by professionals or through numbers, whereas the audience's opinion is not taken in consideration. Obviously subjective quality is hard to measure, but being responsive to the audience's needs and considerations is absolutely vital to be contemporary, to carry out a social mission, to be sustainable over time. Everything can be measured, but it is essential concert societies work together with this purpose, to define and experiment shared indicators not imposed top-down.

The State supports part of concert societies' activity through the FUS, but it does not help them to improve their ability to attract private funds, which is key for sustainability today. In particular, it does not incentivize donations from individuals through tax deductions, contrarily to what happens with the Art Bonus for public cultural heritage

or for opera-symphonic theatres and tradition theatres. The only mechanism currently encouraging private donations to concert societies, as well as to conservatories, is the 5x1000. It is a share of individuals' personal tax income that the Italian State attributes to socially relevant institutions, such as non-profit institutions and scientific research organizations, to support them. Every tax payer can decide to which institution his or her 5x1000 is allocated, and the donation amount changes according to his or her income.

#### **2.2.4.2. Conclusions inspired by Friel and Cavazzoni's study**

The study of Friel and Cavazzoni highlighted concert societies' issues and challenges: audience's ageing and high dependency from public funds make the average behaviour of such actors currently unsustainable. Indeed, concert societies have lean organizations with few employees, and chamber music concerts are cheaper than other genres such as orchestra and opera. However, music societies risk to perish if they do not immediately start to adapt to the present. The audience's tastes and needs have changed, public funds cannot guarantee financial sustainability on their own, and above all it is not right to use public money to support institutions that do not evolve with times and do not publicly report their changes and results.

As consequence of Friel and Cavazzoni's indications, in 2015 a limited number of concert societies<sup>38</sup> created a network called Amur<sup>39</sup> to promote transparency and co-product artistic projects. The participants signed a three-year agreement to exchange information about their own management and administration to define best practices, and to attempt to identify common sponsors. Members' websites are linked one to each other, and members and subscribers of each participant concert society can benefit of discounts to attend concerts of the other participants. This would be a good starting

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<sup>38</sup> Nine concert societies signed the three-year renewable agreement: Società del Quartetto di Milano, Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Associazione Alessandro Scarlatti di Napoli, Associazione Amici della Musica di Padova, Fondazione Musica Insieme di Bologna, Fondazione Perugia Musica Classica, Società dei Concerti di Trieste, Società del Quartetto di Vicenza e Società Veneziana dei Concerti.

<sup>39</sup> Associazioni Musicali in Rete, which means Network of Music Associations

point to join forces and pool resources in a highly competitive context. In practice, however, the network is not fully exploited: the concert societies who received the biggest amounts of public funds did not adhere to Amur, up to now only few co-productions have been promoted among the participants and the audience usually does not even know that they can benefit of discounts to attend concerts in other institutions.

The study of Friel and Cavazzoni was presented in several occasions right after its publication, then it did not have chance to be further developed. In 2016 the two researchers of the Istituto Bruno Leoni, supported by AIAM's president, asked for more data to a bigger sample, but only few more than the 24 of 2014 have shown willingness to collaborate. For this reason, it seemed not reasonable to publish it even though some data have been collected.

The issue is that in most cases concert societies' focus is too local, and there is too much competition between close institutions. Where small actors cannibalize, networks should be created. However, collaborating to make fragilities emerge, being open to learn from others and willing to network to pool resources and reduce costs still requires a radical, even though absolutely needed, change in mindset.

Chamber music is structurally fragile because it is commonly perceived as complex and highbrow. Concert societies have difficulties in cultivating the audience of the future because of the barriers that distance non-expert listeners (the vast majority of the population) from this music genre. The bourgeoisie and aristocracy for whom concert societies were born and developed does not exist anymore. Plus, classical music compositions are much longer and less immediately catchy at the first listening than the commercial music songs to which people are nowadays used to. The most developed sense in human beings is sight. Listening is usually combined with other senses, and with sight first. When chamber music is performed in conventional venues, concert halls and theatres, these are usually nice but very static places where performers are distant, and often elevated, from the public. Innovative uses of lights or

attempts to connect musicians and audience are almost never experimented, nor projections that can accompany the listener in the immersion in the heard music. This inevitably makes chamber music out of date, far from what people are nowadays used to in their everyday life. The majority of concerts are still held in conventional venues, even though concert societies have increasingly experimented new forms of involvement in parallel with the traditional offer for few years<sup>40</sup>.

### **2.2.5 Festivals**

Festivals are final distributors as well. Their success and proliferation in the last years is probably connected to their experimental nature. Festivals are in fact extra-ordinary events where chamber music is usually decontextualized and brought outside traditional venues. The atmosphere is less formal than in concert halls, and often listening is connected to wider activities, such as guided tours of the venues hosting concerts, food and wine tastings, connection of music with other artistic disciplines. This favours the destruction of barriers perceived by nonexpert audience and innovates the way to listen to chamber music. The other side of the coin is that performing in non-traditional venues can threaten artistic quality because of bad acoustic conditions.

The first Italian festival, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, was organized in 1933 on the model of previous European experiences (Salzburg and Bayreuth). From that time on, festivals have traditionally been focused on enhancing innovative or neglected repertoires. In 1958, the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto has been the first example of festival strictly connected to a specific city's identity: this model's success, connecting Italian artistic and cultural heritage with music, contributed to the flourishing of festivals focused on different genres all over the country.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, the Società del Quartetto di Milano will propose two innovative concerts in the season 2017/18: first, a concert for piano solo and light projections will be held in a circular theatre where the audience surrounds the pianist; second, a concert where the soundtrack of the movie "Tous les matins du monde" by Alain Corneau (1991) will be performed, and preceded by its show the previous day.

As concerns chamber music, small cities such as Mantova<sup>41</sup> and Cervo<sup>42</sup> were able to link their names to a world-class artistic offer over the years. They grew up as relevant music centres in parallel with the development of their own festivals and included the whole community in their organization.

During festivals, concerts are held in squares, churches, parks, museums, and so on. They attract not only listeners interested in a specific music genre, but also curious people interested in discovering new venues or in living a different experience. In fact, festivals can leverage on the “experience economy” (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) which has been key to attract audience and consumers in the last 20 years. They stimulate more than one sense (at least sight and listening at the same time), provoke a pleasant effect of surprise and unexpected in the listener. Concerts’ duration is usually lower than in concert societies’ seasons, reason why it is easier to remain focused and to keep the excitement high. In few days or special occasions people can attend several concerts in places that they feel “close” or for whom they feel curiosity because they are commonly inaccessible or scarcely used with this function. Through this special formula, the audience becomes active and reactive. The intimacy intrinsic in chamber music, easily highlighted and enhanced through festivals, is catching also for non-habitual listeners. Leveraging on these aspects contributes to cultivate a new audience, which over time develops the potential to attend concert societies as well.

According to Balestra and Malaguti (2003), festivals match properly demand and supply and satisfy the society’s cultural needs of quality, but also of innovation and “perceived proximity” to daily life which are usually neglected by traditional concert societies. Festivals are usually more able to connect the professional music world with schools, universities, cultural industries, tourism, and public institutions in the city. Contrarily to the struggle concert societies face in attracting new and young public, festivals are advantaged by their “event” dimension in targeting fresher audience. First,

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<sup>41</sup> [www.mantovachamber.com/](http://www.mantovachamber.com/)

<sup>42</sup> [www.cervofestival.com/?it/festival-internazionale-di-musica-da-camera-di-cervo/il-festival-internazionale-di-musica-da-camera/&q=qxJ0C1Z6qAhvQPBkqePkHp%2BVpFokQqx3](http://www.cervofestival.com/?it/festival-internazionale-di-musica-da-camera-di-cervo/il-festival-internazionale-di-musica-da-camera/&q=qxJ0C1Z6qAhvQPBkqePkHp%2BVpFokQqx3)

because of the ticket price for attending concerts, which is usually lower if not free. Second, because festivals do not have permanent staff and most tasks during the days of the festivals are carried out by volunteers, which are usually young people.

Festivals have a strong social mission: broadening the audience and complementing the traditional offer which alone is not sufficient. Ticket price policies are defined accordingly. Given the direct connection with the city hosting them, it is common that municipalities, regions and local companies significantly fund festivals.

For festivals' organizers, it is crucial to cultivate the personal relation with musicians, both for strengthening their affection and for saving: in fact, it is not rare that musicians perform for free or at a highly reduced fee just because they like and support the festival. Another stratagem to control costs, especially when dealing with foreign musicians and ensembles, is hiring them in the days off between other concerts they hold in close cities.

Festivals' positive impact on promoting cities and cultivating audience is commonly recognized. However, it is hard to measure such impacts. The number of tickets sold is monitored, audience's characteristics are investigated through surveys. The difficult monitoring of festivals' numbers makes their evaluation complex, and delicate also in the relation with potential sponsors who want to read measurable results of their investments. Qualitative indicators are citizens', institutions' and commercial activities' satisfaction and affection to the festival, as well as comments from the audience. For this reason, organizers should be above all able listeners to identify strengths and weaknesses of their festival.

### **3.The case study “Le Dimore del Quartetto”**

Le Dimore del Quartetto is a project bonding the satisfaction of excellent young string quartets' needs with the enhancement of historic villas' cultural heritage.

It is unique, simply based on an exchange but difficult to copy because founded on a solid network where personal relationships are crucial.

It was born in Italy in the summer 2015, almost as a “game” among few friends, to support string quartets in the delicate period between the end of studies and the beginning of career. Given the rapid growth and success of the project, in November 2016 a non-profit association of the same name was founded to strengthen it and increasingly work on new possibilities and sustainable ways of operating.

As at September 2017, the association does not have structured employees: the president and the artistic director are volunteers; two interns coordinate the project, taking care also of fundraising, communication on website and social media, and institutional relations with all the stakeholders involved; website maintenance, graphic design, video production and accounting are entrusted to external collaborators. Le Dimore del Quartetto involves multiple stakeholders: professionals, arts lovers and curious people, ranging from music to tourism. Given the association’s recent origin, complete novelty, and broad scope of action, it is currently defining precise borders of activity.

### **3.1. A barter: hospitality in exchange for concerts**

The project is a barter whose currencies are hospitality and concerts. String quartets select from the association’s website the villa in which they would like to stay and rehearse; they contact the project’s coordinators asking for the villas’ availability, indicating the period of interest and why they want to go there (concert, masterclass, or period of study in a specific region). Residencies have a duration of maximum 7 nights and they are organized with approximately 2-3 months of notice. Musicians’ accommodations usually include two double rooms, a hall for rehearsing, bathroom, kitchen. At their discretion, landlords can also offer meals to musicians. To thank the landlord for the hospitality, the quartet donates him or her a concert, which can be public or private, yet always free of charge for spectators.

The association receives quartets’ requests and contacts landlords to organize the period of stay and concert. At least one member of Le Dimore del Quartetto’s team

attends each concert, to give the ultimate organizational support to landlords in arranging the venue and welcoming guests, to briefly introduce the project, and above all to cultivate the human relationship with landlords, musicians, and audience.

The two exchanged values are equivalent in monetary terms: the cachet for a young string quartet of high level is usually 2000-3000 euro, which is approximately the same cost of 4 beds for maximum 7 nights in historic houses. However, the final value of this connection is much higher than the sum of the two single values. This is possible because of their mutual enhancement, and of the enriching human experience the members of the network live.

Besides the primary activity of residences and house concerts' organization, the project's innovative structure and novelty open multiple possibilities of development.

### **3.2. Why string quartets?**

Young string quartets have specifically been chosen as beneficiaries of this project because it is very hard for them to get logistic support to their activities, to find adequate venues where to meet and rehearse together, to gain visibility in the start-up phase of their career. The project functions as incubator for quartets: it is a precious help for all the organizational and management aspects of their career in the most delicate period.

Quartet is the most traditional form of chamber music ensemble. Every component has his or her own personality and sensitivity in interpreting a music piece, but their unicity as individuals has to be balanced with the harmony of music ensemble as group. The quartet is like a four-people marriage. There is no director guaranteeing an equilibrium for everybody, as it happens in the orchestra. The final interpretation of every piece is instead the result of a complex mediation between four voices and characters.

Being an ensemble is a brave choice and requires strong commitment of time and



energy. For this reason, taking part in it means neglecting a soloist career.

To gain proficiency, musicians have to perform extensively. String quartet repertoire is however not easily commercial in Italy, where people traditionally prefer opera or soloists. The genre has therefore been neglected over years, and particularly from 2000s on. When public funds for culture were cut, concert societies and consequently music agents invested even less in string quartets. For this reason, in recent times few good Italian string quartets were formed, and this entailed the lack of our country's exponents in the most prestigious competitions and concert halls.

Starting from the recognition of these issues and previously uncovered needs, Francesca Moncada, president of Le Dimore del Quartetto, created a network that currently counts 21 string quartets, and 72 villas spread in 12 regions and 35 provinces of Italy. The artistic director Simone Gramaglia, violist of the Quartetto di Cremona<sup>43</sup>, selects quartets for their quality and approves music programmes for each concert. The selected quartets pay a yearly subscription fee of 200 euro (50 per musician) to enter the circuit: they commit themselves to organize at least 3 residences a year through Le Dimore del Quartetto. For musicians, performing in historic houses several times a year means testing repertoires and improving stage presence. In the intimate atmosphere of house concerts, it is also easier to cultivate a personal relation with spectators and increase the probability of their affection and loyalty over time.

Support to string quartets goes also beyond the organization of residences. Le Dimore del Quartetto collaborates with concert societies and festivals to co-organize house concerts and provide quartets with employments in prestigious seasons. It helps quartets to find sponsors for their tours and to develop crowdfunding campaigns to raise money for CDs' recording, for instance. At the end of 2016 it gave 2000-euro yearly scholarships funded by Terna to the two best quartets.

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<sup>43</sup> It is currently the most renowned Italian string quartet at international level

The project is now exclusively dedicated to string quartets, but in the long run the extension of its services also to other kinds of small ensembles, dealing with chamber music or also different artistic disciplines, is not to exclude.

### **3.3. Historic houses**

Villas are not only functional, with their large rooms and isolation, but also inspiring for quartets for their beauty and rich heritage. Le Dimore del Quartetto's member houses are situated in major Italian cities, such as Milan, Venice, Rome, Bologna and Naples, but above all in small villages, not included in the most common touristic circuits. They are either beautiful private dwellings or accommodations, often not adequately renowned in the territory they are sited in. By hosting concerts, they become cultural centres and gain visibility: landlords act as *mecenati* by supporting musicians and offering high quality concerts to their guests in places where the artistic offer is usually low.

Since the beginning, the project was developed in collaboration with ADSI (Association of Italian Historic Houses), an essential partner in creating a network of villas willing to host musicians. ADSI introduced the project to its members, guaranteeing its quality and highlighting its potential value for villas' owners and managers. Villas can be private houses, but they are mostly tourist accommodations that also organize events, guided tours, wine- and food- tasting. Villas currently do not pay any fee to participate in the network: they only send some pictures and a brief description to the coordinators to be inserted on the project's website, which is a showcase visible to both quartets and online visitors.

Participating in the project does not mean automatically organizing concerts, because requests of residency always start from quartets. In fact, not all the 65 villas of the network are currently active: up to now, 35 hosted concerts. For example, Tuscany is a very popular destination for quartets because they often attend masterclasses at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. On the other hand, Valle d'Aosta and southern Italy are

regions where musicians' activity focuses more rarely. As result, some houses took part in the project in 2015 and have not organized a concert yet. This makes difficult to keep their enthusiasm and engagement high. To mitigate this inconvenient, when quartets are not bond to specific areas, the team of Le Dimore del Quartetto attempts to bring them to less used houses. Furthermore, all the members of the network are constantly invited to concerts and kept updated on the project's development and activities through newsletters.

The project perfectly adapts to Italy, because more than any other country it boasts hidden gems and lots of ancient castles and dwellings. However, in the medium run Le Dimore del Quartetto would like to expand its activity beyond national borders through the European Historic Houses Association's support and through the connection with the Italian Cultural Institutes spread all over Europe.

### **3.4. Audience development**

Le Dimore del Quartetto's concerts have peculiar characteristics, which make them potentially suitable to develop new audience for string quartet music. In fact, it has been observed that their audience is varied and mainly includes non-expert and non-habitual listeners. The venue itself, usually inaccessible, stimulates curiosity and becomes attractive for segments that commonly feel excluded by the chamber music genre, either because living far from a music hall or because intimated by institutional venues.

House concerts are instead held in an intimate atmosphere: musicians explain the music programme, help audience to contextualise it and to focus on main themes; the duration is around 50-60 minutes; seats are not lined up in rows, they embrace musicians and are usually put in semicircle. Musicians sit at the same level of the audience, and very close: this allows spectators to catch the dialogue between four different voices, musicians' gazes and breaths. Refreshments offered by landlords

usually follow the concert, and this is the occasion for the audience to chat with musicians and feel them even closer. Barriers between spectators and chamber music fall down. As Francesca Moncada says, “Chamber music is not old. The traditional way of proposing it, it is.”

Concerts donated to landlords are usually quartets’ dress rehearsals. Le Dimore del Quartetto brings high quality music also in villages where concerts are commonly not held: on one side, this means inhabitants do not have to move to benefit of a prestigious artistic offer; on the other, people from major cities or other villages have a reason to discover the beauty and attractiveness of a place that however they would have probably never seen.

Le Dimore del Quartetto therefore leverages on the experience of chamber music like festivals do. However, it is not a special event, it is ordinary activity of concert organization and potential audience involvement all over the year, with an average of 1,54 concerts a week. It promotes a different kind of listening and attending concerts, aiming at making it conventional. The real opening to everybody however bumps first into bureaucratic issues, and second into structural characteristics of the venues hosting concerts.

Concerts are the gift given to the quartet to the owner, therefore the owner decides whether the concert is private and reserved to his or her own guests only by invitation, or open to the public and more broadly communicated. Currently about 25-30 out of 80 concerts a year are public.

Organizing a public concert entails obtaining authorizations certifying the venue’s respect of safety standards<sup>44</sup>, registering the venue and its seat capacity at the SIAE office of the area, notifying the concert, its music programme and performers, paying copyrights if needed<sup>45</sup>. This discourages landlords to open their houses to the public. Up to now, most public concerts have been organized in collaboration with concert

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<sup>44</sup> Permessi di agibilità della sala, previa supervisione di vigili del fuoco e dichiarazione di capienza della sala attestata da periti. Italian bureaucracy establishes that halls’ seat capacity has to be judged through experts’ inspections and deposited at SIAE (the Italian Society for Authors and Editors protecting copyrights).

<sup>45</sup> Copyrights are due to authors if they are alive or died less than 70 years ago.

societies on the basis of regional competence: they took care of all the legal aspects, prepared documents, and paid copyrights when needed. However, in the perspective of increasing the number of concerts and favouring its opening to really make audience development all over Italy, the support of concert societies will not be sufficient. Moreover, even when concerts are public a certain number of seats is rightly reserved to landlords' guests: since most houses have a maximum capacity of 30-40 seats, is it fair to speak of audience development? How many people with no connection with either the landlord or the association have the real possibility to participate? For these reasons, audience development is a controversial issue for Le Dimore del Quartetto and it is constantly debated.

Further attempts of outreach are currently done also through the production of video-portraits narrating the project: four episodes sketch in 25 minutes what Le Dimore del Quartetto is, highlighting the link between music, talent, and beauty of the Italian territory. Sky Arte manifested interest for such videos, so they could be broadcasted on the TV channel in the next few months. The video dimension can multiply the visibility of the project and trigger the curiosity of people who do not know neither it nor the music genre. In the near future, the association should also invest in professional photographs and videos of the concerts to enrich its social media (especially Youtube) and to intensify and lengthen the experience's pleasure and memories for its audience.

### **3.5. The crucial role in the chain through collaborations**

The major strength of Le Dimore del Quartetto is its ability to connect the different actors of chamber music production and distribution chain, as it has never been done in the past. Musicians, academies, music prizes, festivals and concert societies are tied and enhanced by adding the layer of territory and tourism promotion, through hospitality and concerts in historic houses. Collaborations improve the project's prestige and reliability. Music institutions from their side benefit of logistic support and are finally helped in boosting string quartets.

The association currently collaborates with several Italian concert societies: Società del Quartetto di Milano<sup>46</sup>, Associazione Musica Insieme di Bologna, Fondazione Perugia Musica Classica ONLUS, Associazione Scarlatti di Napoli, and Filarmonica Laudamo di Messina. The concerts held in villas located in the regions of competence of such concert societies are organized as follows: Le Dimore del Quartetto's coordinators care of all the logistic aspects, ranging from the coordination of quartets' and villas' requests and needs, to the draft of music programmes and communication on the association's website and social media; concert societies care of all the documents needed by law. In this way, the association is legally protected, and concert societies include concerts in villas in their plan and report for obtaining FUS funds. Their score for the allotment in fact rises whether they hire young musicians, diversify the offer through concerts in non-traditional venues, increase the number of concerts per year. Moreover, concert societies commit to hire at least one quartet of the network in their season, paying a regular wage to musicians but benefiting of the logistic infrastructure of Le Dimore del Quartetto. The hospitality of musicians in the villas significantly reduces concert societies' costs. The Quartets on their side have the possibility to perform in well-known venues, and this represents a crucial boost to their career.

First steps have been moved to partner also with prestigious string quartet academies (European String Quartet Academy in Fiesole and Accademia Walter Stauffer in Cremona) and international competitions (Premio Paolo Borciani, Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, Wigmore Hall Competition). The idea is that the best students of academies and winners of international competitions would automatically enter the project without the artistic director's selection. This would allow Le Dimore del Quartetto to keep the quality of participants very high and to rapidly increase its visibility in the music world and over national borders. On the other hand, the collaboration would add significant value to competitions' prizes, because Le

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<sup>46</sup> The president of Società del Quartetto di Milano, Antonio Magnocavallo, is one of the founding partners of Le Dimore del Quartetto. Given this strong connection between the two institutions, Società del Quartetto proposes for the season 2017/18 a series of six concerts at Villa Necchi Campiglio, called "Quartetti d'Italia" and held by six excellent Italian string quartets taking part in Le Dimore del Quartetto network and selected by Simone Gramaglia.

Dimore del Quartetto offers highly-needed services to excellent emerging string quartets.

Le Dimore del Quartetto is collaborating with Teatro alla Scala, Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Società del Quartetto di Milano and Comitato Laura Dubini, in the initiative “Quartetti per Laura”. It is a series of six concerts in memory of the music and fashion journalist Laura Dubini. Concerts are free for the public by booking seats, and they are held in unconventional and charming venues such as the showroom of the Sardinian stylist Antonio Marras, the Basilica di San Marco in Milan, and two private studies of architects. Le Dimore del Quartetto has the role of artistic director since it selects performers among the participants in its network.

The association also selected two quartets which performed in a series of concerts held at the Florence Academy of Art.

Taking part in such initiatives means experimenting new locations and contaminations with other disciplines, as well as attracting journalists and catching cross audience.

All the current collaborations between Le Dimore del Quartetto and other institutions are up to now only verbal, and possible through the great personal network of the president of the association. They should however be formalised as soon as possible to be unquestionable and transparent, as well as to increase the association’s appeal for potential sponsors and further partners. The only partnership currently fixed on paper is the one with ADSI, stating: “The two associations collaborate in identifying historic houses that could be interested in taking part in the project. Knowing villas’ peculiarities and landlords’ artistic sensibility, ADSI offers fundamental support to Le Dimore del Quartetto for building a network spread all over the Italian territory. The president Gaddo della Gherardesca, as president of ADSI, is member of the council of Le Dimore del Quartetto to guarantee a strong collaboration between the entities and the partnership’s continuity with no limits of time”. All the partnerships that will be formally signed in future should clarify the commitment of the two actors in the project.

Moreover, I believe collaborations are crucial for the project’s sustainability and they should start generating revenues for Le Dimore del Quartetto: academies and

competitions' organizers should pay a yearly lump sum to the association to cover secretarial expenses for organizing logistics; concert societies and festivals should pay directly musicians for performances in their seasons, and the association should earn a percentage of cachets for the concerts it provides, according to the music agencies' model.

### **3.6. Evaluation of the project and conditions of sustainability**

The project is a positive model for all the players of the chamber music production and distribution chain. It should be taken as example for its capacity to satisfy delicate and previously uncovered needs in the music world by exploiting the power of networks, by collaborating instead than competing. Through cultivating personal relationships, the team of Le Dimore del Quartetto has been able to give life to something useful, and at the same time very inspiring and having strong emotional impact on the audience. Project's evolution is monitored through surveys filled out by landlords and quartets after each residency and concert. Surveys are the litmus test of the project, they help identifying issues and test participants' satisfaction. Surveys are always complementary to conversations one-to-one, between the team and musicians, and between the team and landlords.

People participating in the project are enthusiastic, primarily because of the human dimension of the experience they live. Landlords, quartets and audience are the best ambassadors of Le Dimore del Quartetto. The project developed so rapidly through word-of-mouth: for each concert the association organizes, new houses ask to enter the network. Moreover, in the last months several articles have been written about Le Dimore del Quartetto in newspapers, specialized magazines such as *Amadeus* and *Classic Voice*, women's magazines in the section dedicated to tourism and trips, luxury magazines.



As at December 2016, 11 string quartets and 28 villas took part in the project, 37 concerts have been organized in 17 months<sup>47</sup>. As at September 2017, 21 string quartets and 72 villas compose the network, and the yearly calendar includes 80 concerts. The project is successful and rises fast. The question about how to ensure its financial stability and continuity over time is therefore increasingly urgent to guarantee its healthy growth.

Revenue sources are currently not sufficient to cover costs. This year Le Dimore del Quartetto gains 4000 euro of quartets' subscription fees, 7500 euro of membership fees from companies and institutions (2500 each, from Società del Quartetto di Milano<sup>48</sup>, Itsright<sup>49</sup> and Fondazione Hruby<sup>50</sup>), 1000 of membership fees from individuals (500 each, from two instrument collectors). Moreover, it collected around 10000 euro through a crowdfunding campaign. Total current revenues are therefore 22500 euro: the number could slightly rise before the end of 2017, but it can clearly not even pay two wages for administration and coordination, without considering website's, videos and travelling expenses.

The ordinary activity of concerts' organization cannot be profitable because concerts are completely free for the audience. This is indeed admirable, but I think voluntary donations should be asked to spectators with no embarrassment: considering the value of the experience they live attending house concerts, and the fact that they clearly recognize it as emerged during several conversations after concerts, I am sure most of them would be happy to contribute. Up to now, the IBAN code of the

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<sup>47</sup> Numbers are calculated from the beginning of the project, July 2015, to December 2016. Starting from January 2017, the association Le Dimore del Quartetto became more active and committed to explore sustainable ways of operating.

<sup>48</sup> The Società del Quartetto di Milano has been the first concert society to pay a yearly lump sum to benefit of the network of houses and quartets for its season.

<sup>49</sup> ITSRIGHT is a collective management organisation founded in 2010 to manage, in Italy and abroad, neighbouring rights' revenues due for any kind of public use of recorded music, in compliance with the Italian Copyright Law. Their mission is to ensure a global, competent and transparent way of collecting and distributing compensations due to performers, orchestra and chorus conductors, solo and orchestra musicians, artistic producers, record companies.

<sup>50</sup> The Foundation takes its name from Enzo Hruby, the founder and current President of HESA S.p.A., who in the second half of the Sixties first introduced electronic security in Italy.

The Enzo Hruby Foundation's aim is "promoting a security culture conceived as the protection and security of public and private properties in particular with respect to the artistic, monumental, historical and countryside heritage by the use of appropriate technologies". The Enzo Hruby Foundation assumes the costs of the installation of the security systems of some major cultural heritage landmarks.

association is written on printed music programmes and brochures explaining the project. Few donations were made through bank transfer, but it is not common that spectators come back home after a concert and pay: in this case the intention to donate should be very strong, and the sum should be medium-high (at least 50 euro) to justify the bank fees.

Since donations would not be sufficient by themselves in any case, I believe Le Dimore del Quartetto's main revenues could derive from following the steps of music agencies. Steady and formal collaborations would further increase the association's visibility, reliability, and quality perceived by musicians, music professionals and audience. Plus, they will be perfectly consistent with the association's mission since they really allow to launch string quartets in the job world. Collaborations are win-win solutions for both the actors signing them, therefore in agreement with musicians and concert societies Le Dimore del Quartetto should start gaining percentages on the cachets artists receive thanks to the association's support. In order to legally act as music agents, Le Dimore del Quartetto should register to VAT to practice commercial activity, if possible consistently with its non-profit nature considering the association's mission, otherwise changing legal status. Moreover, musicians should sign a proxy stating that Le Dimore del Quartetto will find employment for them, and as return it will gain a percentage on their cachets. This should be the main direction to take, alongside the organization of increasingly public concerts in villas to favour musicians' rehearsals with no costs and develop new audience.

Since the project has two souls, quartets and villas, another possible way to increase revenues would be organizing unusual touristic itineraries bonding minor villages to famous cities in the name of music, and earn from this activity. In this case, tourists could sleep in historic houses' accommodations, participate to their activities and attend house concerts in the intimacy of beautiful venues. This would indeed attract also foreign tourists in search of unknown Italian gems.

Since cultural institutions for their nature struggle to reach the break-even point, apart from revenues from primary activities it is wise to look for sources from third parties. In

the last months, the association committed to ask for funds to foundations supporting cultural institutions through specific sponsorship programmes. However, fundraising from such foundations did not have success because of several reasons. First, foundations usually support projects in their region of competence: Le Dimore del Quartetto has its headquarters in Milan, but it operates all over Italy with no specific focus. Usually 4-6 months occur from the moment the project is presented to foundations, to the moment it is accepted and funded or rejected. Since quartets request residences only two or three months in advance, consistently with the scheduling of their calendar of concerts, it is however impossible to plan activities per region consistently with sponsorship programmes' timelines. The second issue is that foundations usually support associations which present balance sheets from the last two or three years of activity: Le Dimore del Quartetto is hence too young, its first budget has been drafted only last March and none balance sheet has been approved yet. Last but not least, sponsorship programmes are usually focused on a specific topic or challenge: cultural participation, tourism enhancement in a specific region, support to poorer artists, involvement of marginal segments of audience, and so on. Le Dimore del Quartetto deals with some of these topics, but it has not taken any precise direction yet, therefore it is hard to compete for funds with more focused institutions. I believe concerts are still too private and can be attended by so few people that foundations do not have any interest in funding the association with thousands of euro.

On the other hand, the project could be very attractive for companies who want to strengthen their corporate image by supporting something very refined, unusual, and culturally relevant, or by companies and banks having specific interests in entering a circuit of musicians and rich landlords, sensible to music and arts. Fondazione Hruby, Itsright, Società del Quartetto di Milano and instrument collectors have such interest because of the affinity between their primary activities and the project.

In this perspective, Le Dimore del Quartetto presented a proposal to Trenitalia in agreement with ADSI, which in turn has already signed a partnership with the company. The association asked Trenitalia, "which, as Le Dimore del Quartetto, leads

people to the discovery of Italian gems”, to consider two kinds of collaboration. First, bringing string quartets on trains to produce potentially viral videos to be used by both institutions for promotional activities: the idea is to organize one or more brief flash mobs in which musicians unexpectedly perform for passengers and are filmed. Second, organizing a series of free concerts in the halls reserved to “Cartafreccia” clients, the company’s top users. In case Trenitalia agrees, it should support the project through the donation of train tickets for the association and musicians when travelling for residences and concerts in the villas. This donation would significantly reduce the association’s costs.

Also, the production of video-portraits is costly, and the association currently does not have money to fully pay them. It is therefore urgent to find sponsors, that could be coffee producers or similar companies, willing to fund the production in exchange for product placement in the video: the team thought of coffee, and therefore up to now contacted Illy and Lavazza, because their placement in the videos would not be so invasive.

Le Dimore del Quartetto is a wonderful project having huge potential of development. Most of all, it is an essential support for musicians. Up to now, however, it is not sustainable: in fact, going back to the definition of “economicità”, it is neither able to cover primary activity’s costs with revenues, nor adequately remunerates work. When total current revenues of 22500 will end, it will therefore go on thanks to the financial support of its founder and president, if new directions are not taken. From the last January, however, many aspects have indeed been improved and now the conditions for the project’s sustainability are clearer. Creating and promoting touristic circuits is a good idea, but I believe in the first years of activity it would be more consistent and easy to focus on musicians: this is what has been done up to now but there is still a long way. In few years, whether the organizational structure will be steadier and include more workers, it would be worthy to extend activities to tourism. Now, the ordinary activity of the association would be sustainable through a mix of percentages on cachets of artists performing in prestigious seasons through the association’s

collaborations, percentages on cachet of artists holding private concerts for top guests and clients of companies supporting the project, donations from the audience, donations in kind from companies such as Trenitalia or similar. For special projects such as the production of video-portraits, it would be instead necessary to find specific companies willing to sponsor.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In this thesis the definition of cultural sustainability, meant as the ability of cultural institutions to adopt efficient management practices to ensure continuity for future generations, satisfying the needs of the current one, has been applied to the chamber music sector in Italy. The chain of chamber music's education, production and distribution has been retraced to clarify which actors operate in the field, which function they have, how they currently work.

In particular, three hypotheses have been tested and verified: the sector's high fragmentation and competitiveness, the non-adequate satisfaction of musicians' needs, the use of obsolete distribution channels.

The result of my analysis is in fact that the Italian chamber music sector is highly fragmented, composed by small entities usually quite disconnected one from each other. This characteristic makes them fragile and in most cases barely sustainable, or even unsustainable. As regards musicians' education, Italy counts 73 conservatories and equalised schools that train potentially excellent musicians without helping them to enter the job world after the diploma. The qualifications to be attractive for music agents and artistic directors always come from private schools, where musicians have necessarily to enrol if they want to be visible. Conservatories are mostly publicly funded, but the current situation is this money is not sufficient to improve their performance and the State does not even incentive private donations through tax deductions. Moreover, conservatories are still testing a reform which came into force 18 years ago, and which was probably not able to enhance their peculiarities compared

to universities.

Agencies have hard time in promoting young names and contemporary repertoires because they are not easily commercial. Concert societies are publicly funded through FUS, and an important criterion for allotment is the ability to fill halls' capacity: therefore, they are always careful with experimentations, even though other criteria are the employment of young musicians and the promotion of innovative proposals. Classical music agents could learn from other entertainment sectors' agents whether all kinds of agencies would be unified under same legislation, trade associations and even companies, as in the UK and US.

Concert societies were born as exclusive clubs for a social class that does not exist anymore; now they struggle to be inclusive and adapt to contemporary tastes and needs. Being members is not considered prestigious as it was 50 years ago, therefore revenues from selling single tickets have to increase. How to be more attractive for younger generations? New venues, scheduling, contaminations with other artistic disciplines, use of lights should be experimented, drawing inspiration by festivals. Obviously experiments always require long time before producing results, but it is essential to begin, and many concert societies understood it. It is essential to involve the listeners: they love to feel active, the atmosphere should be less formal while maintaining excellent quality. Musicians should personally explain repertoires to the audience, and it would be useful to provide listeners with landmarks: repeated themes, thematic connections with well-known books, films and other works of art.

In a situation of lack of adequate State support and scarce inclusion of chamber music in people's ordinary life, instead than competing and becoming fossilized, the actors of the chain should collaborate, be transparent about their own management and learn one from each other. By pooling respective skills, resources and values they can be stronger. Moreover, transparency and collaboration should be primary requirements to access also public funds.

In this perspective, Le Dimore del Quartetto has been brought as example of powerful network, able to respond to essential and previously uncovered needs of musicians and potentially interesting experimentation site for audience development. The

association Le Dimore del Quartetto is a brand-new association, but it is growing rapidly and it is necessary to identify the conditions for its sustainability since the beginning. Possible solutions have been analysed in the last chapter of this thesis and will be tested in the next months, in order to pursue stability and further growth of such a useful, innovative and exciting project.

The main limit of this thesis is that it is almost completely qualitative. The lack of quantitative data about managerial performances, costs and revenues, audience, make the objective comparison between different actors weak. Not all conservatories and concert societies publish their balance sheets and performance indicators online despite they receive public funds, and only a slight percentage of them responded to surveys sent to make research, analysis and comparisons in the field. Given the impossibility to access this data, most information has been collected from observations, and from interviews, discussions, chats with people working in the sector, music students, expert and non-expert audience. The participation to the round table “Concert societies and music system: the current state of the art” with chamber music operators in occasion of the festival Trame Sonore 2017 in Mantova was a precious source too.

It was also difficult to isolate chamber music from the other classical music genres: existent published data are usually aggregated for the whole classical music sector, and the same players often deal with various genres.

A possible future development of this study could be adding international comparisons. It would have been useful to analyse how the chamber music sector differs at least in other European countries, such as Germany, United Kingdom and Netherlands, where classical music culture is indeed more rooted in citizens' life. In particular, it would have been interesting to analyse how the production and distribution chain works, and how education system, public policies and ticket prices impact on cultural participation in these countries. This could have given further suggestions on how to face the issue of sustainability in such a delicate field.

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1. Survey for conservatories

#### INFORMAZIONI GENERALI

1. Nome dell'ente:
2. Città in cui ha sede:
3. Anno di fondazione:

#### FONTI DI RICAVO E FINANZIAMENTO

1. Evidenziare le fonti di ricavo dell'ente:  
Quote di iscrizione degli studenti - Finanziamenti statali – Finanziamenti di altri enti pubblici – Sponsorizzazioni da aziende – Sponsorizzazioni da fondazioni – Donazioni da privati - 5x1000 – altre \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fondi statali erogati all'ente negli ultimi tre anni (indicare cifra e anno di riferimento):  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Quale % dei costi sostenuti è stata coperta dalle quote di iscrizione degli studenti negli ultimi tre anni?

#### OFFERTA FORMATIVA E SBOCCHI PROFESSIONALI

1. Indicare il corso e/o progetto più innovativo proposto (nome e breve descrizione):  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. L'ente svolge attività di ricerca? Si - No
3. L'ente aderisce al programma Erasmus? Si - No
4. L'ente aderisce al programma Working with Music +? Si - No
5. Indicare eventualmente altri programmi legati allo studio all'estero e/o all'attivazione di tirocini ai quali l'ente aderisce \_\_\_\_\_
6. Gli studenti compilano dei questionari di valutazione della didattica? Si – No
7. Esiste un dipendente o un ufficio con funzione di career service? Si - No
8. Verificate il successivo impiego dei vostri studenti? Si – No
9. Se sì, come? Quali sono i risultati?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### RAPPORTI CON ALTRE ISTITUZIONI

1. L'ente ha attivato convenzioni con qualche università? Si - No
2. Quali iniziative dell'ente vengono svolte in sedi esterne? Indicare il luogo e una breve descrizione  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. L'ente ospita concerti o iniziative organizzate da altre istituzioni? Si - no
4. Società concertistiche e festival vi contattano per reclutare musicisti per le loro iniziative? Si - no

#### CONCLUSIONI

1. Qual è il maggior punto di forza del vostro conservatorio?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



2. Qual è la maggiore difficoltà con cui vi confrontate?

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Il questionario è stato compilato da (nome, cognome e ruolo):

## 5.2. Survey for concert societies (by Cavazzoni and Friel, 2012)

- Nome dell'ente:
- Città in cui ha sede:
- Anno di fondazione:
- Dall'anno di nascita ha svolto l'attività con continuità?
  - A) sì
  - B) no
- Se ci sono state interruzione nell'attività, in quali anni?
- Forma giuridica:
- Riconoscimento personalità giuridica:
  - A) sì
  - B) no
- Iscrizione anagrafe ONLUS:
  - A) sì
  - B) no
- Spazi utilizzati per lo svolgimento dell'attività concertistica:
  - A) di proprietà
  - B) in concessione gratuita
  - C) in affitto a titolo oneroso
- Per quanto riguarda la tipologia di musica proposta, l'ente organizza solamente concerti di musica da camera?
  - A) sì
  - B) no
- Se no, quali altre proposte musicali offre?
- In quale percentuale, rispetto alla musica da camera?
- L'ente svolge anche attività di formazione?
  - A) sì
  - B) no
- Numero di spettacoli organizzati nella stagione 2012/2013 e 2011/2012:
- Numero di spettacoli di formazioni cameristiche (trii, quartetti ed altre) nella stagione 2013/2012 e 2011/2012:
- Canali di raccolta fondi utilizzati:
  - A) vendita abbonamenti
  - B) vendita biglietti
  - C) quote associative
  - D) contributi pubblici
  - E) contributi privati (donazioni, sponsorizzazioni, ecc.)
  - F) cinque per mille
- Numero di soci al 31/12/2012 e al 31/12/2011:
- Tipologie di soci previste e relative quote per l'anno 2012 e 2011:

- Et  dei soci per l'anno 2012 e 2011 (in percentuale rispetto al totale dei soci):  
 Inferiore ai 25 anni: \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Tra i 25 e i 35: \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Tra i 36 e i 50: \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Tra i 51 e i 70: \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Oltre i 70: \_\_\_\_\_%
- Numero di abbonati nella stagione concertistica 2012/2013 e 2011/2012:
- Tipologie e prezzi di abbonamento nella stagione 2012/2013 e 2011/2012:
- Numero di biglietti complessivi venduti nella stagione 2012/2013 e 2011/2012:
-   previsto un abbonamento per i giovani?  
 A) s   
 B) no
- Se s , quale fascia d'et  comprende?
- Percentuale di abbonamenti giovani sul totale degli abbonamenti sottoscritti nella stagione 2012/2013 e 2011/2012:
- Numero di persone dipendenti dell'ente (con contratto di lavoro a tempo indeterminato, determinato, ecc) e retribuite:
- Numero di persone retribuite con altre forme contrattuali (contratti a progetto, co.co.co, di collaborazione autonoma, ecc)
- L'ente si avvale di personale volontario?  
 A) s   
 B) no
- % dell'attivit  svolta dal personale volontario sul totale:
- Canali di comunicazione utilizzati:  
 A) sito internet dell'ente  
 B) social network  
 C) canale Youtube  
 D) comunicazioni via email alla propria mailing list  
 E) acquisto di spazi pubblicitari su web, stampa, radio, tv
- Nominativo e contatti del referente dell'ente:

### 5.3. Interviews

#### 5.3.1. Filippo Cavazzoni, direttore editoriale dell'Istituto Bruno Leoni, ricercatore, autore della ricerca "Le societ  concertistiche: attivit  e gestione" (2012)

AB. Come   nata l'idea dello studio "Le societ  concertistiche: attivit  e gestione"?

FC. Nel 2014, in occasione dei 150 anni dalla nascita della Societ  del Quartetto di Milano, sono entrato in contatto con il presidente Antonio Magnocavallo, che ha espresso il desiderio di analizzare lo stato dell'arte del settore per evidenziarne punti di forza e di debolezza, per far parlare di musica da camera e delle problematiche connesse. Seguendo i suoi suggerimenti, io e Martha Friel abbiamo selezionato un campione distribuito geograficamente in tutta Italia, andando a coprire un po' tutte le regioni, e prendendo in considerazione le istituzioni principali per dimensione, prestigio, storia.

AB. Quante sono le societ  concertistiche e come sono distribuite sul territorio italiano?

FC. Contarle è praticamente impossibile. 140 istituzioni hanno beneficiato dell'ultimo contributo FUS assegnato nel 2014. Tra queste però ci sono anche società che propongono prevalentemente jazz. Un altro criterio da utilizzare per il conteggio potrebbe essere consultare le liste degli iscritti alle due principali associazioni di categoria, AIAM con 70 soci, e AIAC. Queste però includono anche festival o realtà ibride come l'Orchestra da Camera di Mantova. È veramente molto difficile fare un censimento, e anche il modo in cui è organizzato il settore non aiuta a fare ordine.

AB. Nel vostro studio, a pag. 11 (paragrafo dedicato al pubblico delle società concertistiche), si prendono in considerazione i soci, perché non il pubblico in generale?

FC. Non esistono dati sul pubblico, è difficile ricavarli, bisognerebbe sottoporre dei questionari ma non è pratica comune delle società concertistiche, che invece hanno tutti i dati dei soci. Come avrai visto dallo studio e come saprai se frequenti le sale da concerto, comunque, i risultati sono piuttosto significativi della composizione generale.

AB. Qual è stata la maggior difficoltà nell'analisi dei dati che avevate a disposizione?

FC. È stato molto complesso analizzare i bilanci. Non esiste uno schema di bilancio uniforme per tutte le non profit. Alcuni si basano sul modello delle società commerciali, altri delle onlus... sono molto diversi e ciò rende difficile confrontare le varie voci. Il Ministero dovrebbe indicare uno schema uguale per tutti, richiedere di utilizzarlo e di pubblicarlo online per legge, per facilitarne la comprensione e comparazione. Alcuni già lo fanno, ma non tutti... Alcune società concertistiche che ricevono fondi statali anche molto importanti non ce lo hanno inviato quando lo abbiamo chiesto ai fini di ricerca con elaborazione anonima dei dati.

AB. In occasione della tavola rotonda a Mantova è stato fatto un accenno a un vostro studio successivo, "Una fragile armonia"? Di cosa si tratta?

FC. È una sorta di manuale che analizza i punti di forza e di debolezza del nuovo decreto per le performing arts del 2015, che ha cambiato le regole di attribuzione di fondi statali alle istituzioni che operano nel settore. Dopo varie critiche, prima tra tutti quella di privilegiare la quantità piuttosto che la qualità dei concerti, il decreto è attualmente in fase di riforma, a fine 2017 dovrebbe essere pronto un nuovo Codice dello Spettacolo.

Nel 2016 abbiamo poi tentato di riprendere e approfondire il primo studio (Le società concertistiche: attività e gestione) ampliando il campione. Purtroppo, pur essendo sostenuti dalle associazioni di categoria, il campione è aumentato di ben poco. Abbiamo raccolto informazioni da 30 istituzioni, ma lo studio non è mai stato pubblicato perché abbiamo pensato che non aggiungesse poi così tanto a quanto già detto. Ci aspettavamo una partecipazione maggiore, il primo era stato presentato in varie conferenze e tavole rotonde del settore, ed era stato accolto apparentemente con grande interesse. Peccato che poi manchi la trasparenza... Credo sia molto importante rendicontare i propri risultati se si beneficia di soldi pubblici!

AB. Anche se questo tentativo di ampliamento della mappatura delle società concertistiche non è andato a buon fine, potrebbe indicarmi i risultati più significativi?

FC. Come ti dicevo, tornano un po' gli stessi temi su cui poniamo l'accento nello studio che hai letto tu. Ti leggo alcuni numeri che ho qui sotto mano. Sono molto esplicativi di alcuni temi fondamentali, che dovrebbero far riflettere. L'esiguità del personale: in media, le società concertistiche impiegano 5 dipendenti, forse un po' poco per sviluppare delle professionalità... Ad esempio bisognerebbe puntare molto di più sul fundraising. Il numero di concerti svolti: i dati del 2015 dicono che si va da un massimo di 110-115 concerti all'anno, a un minimo di 11-13. C'è una bella differenza! Gli spettatori per concerto:

massimo 1217, minimo 89. Totale entrate annue: massimo 1.630.000 euro, minimo 61.000 euro. Infine, dipendenza dai contributi pubblici: esistono realtà virtuose i cui fondi pubblici pesano solo l'8-13%, e si arriva poi a situazioni preoccupanti, con un picco di 76% e addirittura 90%! Come vedi, questi numeri rendono bene l'idea di un campo molto frammentato, con grande eterogeneità, innanzitutto dimensionale. C'è grande dispersione. Tieni conto che il numero dei concerti è un po' drogato dai criteri FUS, bisognerebbe vedere se un aumento del numero di concerti corrisponde ad un aumento del numero di spettatori.

### **5.3.2. Luisa Panarello, manager musicale per Resia Artists**

AB. In che cosa consiste il Suo lavoro? Qual è la differenza, se esiste, tra agenti e manager musicali?

LP. Non c'è differenza, i due termini sono sinonimi qui da noi. In Italia la figura dell'intermediario non esiste: gli agenti o manager musicali rappresentano gli artisti presso società concertistiche e festival. Diciamo che sono i corrispondenti musicali dei procuratori di calcio. Agiscono per mandato degli artisti, procurano ingaggi ma i contratti sono sempre firmati dagli artisti stessi. Solitamente non si tratta di liberi professionisti, la maggior parte sono dipendenti di agenzie.

Negli anni, ci sono stati vari tentativi di regolare il ruolo degli agenti, vedi la legge del '79, e anche di unire tutti gli agenti delle varie discipline artistiche. È stato un fallimento... ognuno faceva il suo. Gli agenti di musica classica non costituiscono una fetta importante del popolo artistico, non spostano grandi capitali. Si tratta di una realtà molto frammentata: ci sono agenzie che si occupano di cantanti, altre di strumentisti. E tra quelle degli strumentisti, c'è chi si dedica ai solisti e agli ensemble, e chi ai direttori d'orchestra e alle orchestre.

Gli agenti hanno il ruolo di informazione e di promozione dei giovani. Per i grandi nomi alla fine si fanno più che altro lavori di segreteria: prenotare alberghi e biglietti aerei, ad esempio. La parte divertente è fare in modo che suonino i giovani, e dà enorme soddisfazione vedere che poi diventano affermati anche grazie al nostro lavoro!

Resia Artists è nata a Milano nel 1982: la nostra fondatrice Patrizia Garrasi ha un'esperienza di oltre 40 anni nel settore. Ha conosciuto e lavorato per le prime agenzie nazionali: per Ada Finzi, e poi sempre in contatto con Clara Camus, negli anni '70. Poi a Milano c'è stata Oria di Emi Erede. La musica classica ha avuto uno sviluppo incredibile negli anni '80 e '90. In Italia, e anche in Germania, c'era un'offerta musicale unica al mondo. E tieni presente che in quegli anni l'agenzia era l'unico interlocutore di chi organizzava concerti. Oggi c'è internet, ci sono i social media e Youtube. Hanno un ruolo di informazione fondamentale, da lì i direttori artistici recuperano innumerevoli informazioni... ma spesso la qualità non passa. Per essere garantiti sulla qualità c'era, e c'è ancora, bisogno di un agente. Ma oggi le società concertistiche ricevono una tale marea di mail di proposte di concerti dagli stessi musicisti... molti non si affidano più agli agenti, si autopromuovono per risparmiare.

AB. Come scegliete gli artisti? Li selezionate voi o vi contattano?

LP. Entrambe le cose

AB. Gli artisti hanno agenti per ogni Paese in cui suonano?

LP. Solitamente gli artisti hanno un general manager, a cui si affidano per "centralizzare" tutte le attività. Il general manager ha poi i contatti con vari local manager, che si occupano dei dettagli organizzativi nei vari paesi toccati dal musicista durante una tournée.

AB. Tramite quali canali si promuovono gli artisti?

LP. Si viaggia molto, si parla con i direttori artistici, si seguono le tournèe, bisogna sensibilizzare i direttori d'orchestra verso i solisti. I direttori d'orchestra hanno un potere enorme in campo musicale, sono loro che scelgono con chi suonare. Per promuovere nomi nuovi devi muoverti tu e trasmettere un entusiasmo travolgente. In più, bisogna costantemente coltivare i rapporti con teatri e società già fidelizzati, sono poi quelli che si fidano di più quando proponi qualcosa di nuovo. Direi che le due doti fondamentali per un agente musicale sono credibilità e autorevolezza.

AB. È difficile promuovere i quartetti in Italia, oggi?

LP. Molto. I quartetti hanno meno impatto mediatico e meno presa sul pubblico rispetto ai solisti. Il quartetto va visto da vicino per capirne la dinamica, è meraviglioso vedere come quattro voci si parlano. Le sale tradizionalmente usate per i concerti, ad esempio qui a Milano, non consentono vicinanza. La Sala Verdi del Conservatorio ha 1600 posti, cosa si può cogliere? Assolutamente nulla è in grado di catturare un pubblico che non sia già appassionato di suo. Eppure Milano ha delle sale che si presterebbero bene, penso già solo alla Sala Puccini piuttosto che alla Sala Verdi. O al Teatro Elfo Puccini, o all'Auditorium San Fedele. Questi spazi sono utilizzati dal Festival MiTo, ad esempio. Ma, Conservatorio a parte, non sono spazi a cui il pubblico è abituato, e anche questo va tenuto in conto. Ecco, hai presente l'Auditorium Arvedi a Cremona, con il pubblico disposto in modo circolare intorno ai musicisti? Quello è perfetto per la musica da camera, coinvolge gli ascoltatori e ha anche un'acustica fantastica.

AB. Quale rapporto avete con i conservatori?

LP. Non c'è rapporto. Manca completamente l'osmosi tra i conservatori e le società concertistiche.

AB. Ho visto che il vostro sito web include una sezione "progetti". Di cosa si tratta?

LP. I progetti sono un modo per rendere più attrattivi i musicisti giovani o poco conosciuti. Tentiamo di inserirli nelle stagioni ideando repertori tematici particolari. Ad esempio, abbiamo unito i Quadri da un'esposizione di Mussorgsky alle videoproiezioni di opere di Kandinsky; abbiamo promosso un concerto con un repertorio totalmente contemporaneo sul tema dello specchio, cinque brani di compositori italiani contemporanei ispirati ai Miroirs di Ravel ed eseguiti in prima assoluta. I progetti nascono da proposte nostre o degli artisti, nascono da ore e ore di chiacchiere e approfondimenti della loro personalità peculiare. Nascono dalla constatazione della mancanza di un certo tipo di programmi, che invece noi riteniamo interessanti e proviamo a far circolare. Sono esperimenti, e devo dire che spesso ci danno soddisfazione.

AB. A proposito di musica contemporanea, è molto difficile oggi farla suonare, farla conoscere?

LP. Sì. Manca completamente la preparazione del pubblico agli artisti contemporanei. Il ministero per altro non premia la novità e lo sforzo produttivo diversi dalla distribuzione commerciale, e come avrai capito mi riferisco al parametro del riempimento sale. Le società concertistiche vogliono sentirsi al sicuro, si aprono poco. Quando lo fanno, spesso uniscono in un programma da concerto brani più noti e amati con brani contemporanei, questo è una buona idea. Ancor meglio quando i musicisti spiegano tali brani al pubblico e aiutano a contestualizzarli in un percorso tematico che può includere anche la tradizione, ben venga. Un po' quello che fate voi con Le Dimore del Quartetto.

AB. Le agenzie guadagnano soltanto sui cachet dei musicisti?

LP. L'artista ci riconosce una percentuale a contratto eseguito. Per tutto il lavoro preliminare all'ingaggio che noi facciamo, non chiediamo nulla: la promozione è il nostro investimento.

#### **5.4. Le Dimore del Quartetto: excerpts from surveys' responses**

Di seguito alcuni commenti tratti dalle risposte di musicisti e padroni di casa ai questionari di valutazione compilati alla fine di ogni soggiorno. Questi estratti, in particolare, permettono di comprendere il valore prezioso del progetto per coloro che ne fanno parte.

*"L'esperienza delle Dimore, per noi, è la possibilità di portare il quartetto d'archi in una dimensione molto intima. La possibilità di usufruire di un alloggio ci permette di lavorare serenamente, e permette ai padroni di casa di assistere al dietro le quinte della preparazione di un concerto. In questo modo, e con il passare dei giorni insieme, le sensazioni, gli stati d'animo e lo studio diventano un'esperienza che attraversa tutte le persone coinvolte e veste la dimora di energie nuove"*

Francesca Turcato, viola del Quartetto Indaco | Agosto 2017

*"Come quartetto siamo orgogliosi di far parte del progetto e di aver contribuito anche se in piccola parte alla sua rapidissima affermazione sul territorio italiano e adesso anche all'estero. Per noi costituisce un'iniziativa lodevole che permette in primis di diffondere la cultura del quartetto d'archi in un Paese che fino ad oggi ha avuto difficoltà ad accoglierla, sia per una mancanza di una vera e propria tradizione che per l'esistenza di convinzioni ataviche che frenano il cambiamento. In secondo luogo il progetto è riuscito a riscoprire l'enorme valore storico e architettonico che si cela all'interno di strutture che fin ad ora sono rimaste ignote alla maggioranza della popolazione e che si prestano magnificamente ad accogliere i quartetti e la loro musica. Un ulteriore aspetto altrettanto importante è quello umano. I concerti nelle Dimore avvengono in un contesto prettamente da camera che permette a noi artisti di avere un contatto diretto sia con i proprietari che col pubblico, ciò permette di abbattere la barriera che spesso si staglia nelle grandi sale da concerto tra la platea e il palcoscenico. Le Dimore del Quartetto sono dunque un progetto unico nel suo genere che con le sue caratteristiche contribuisce fattivamente alla rinascita culturale."*

Alberto Franchin, secondo violino del Quartetto Noûs | Luglio 2017

*"Le Dimore del Quartetto è un progetto al quale siamo onorati di partecipare, che riporta la musica da camera nei suoi luoghi di elezione, e che a noi dà l'opportunità di approfondire lo studio del repertorio in spazi che, oltre a darci ospitalità, sono di ispirazione grazie alla loro bellezza."*

Leonardo Cella, primo violino del Quartetto Fauves | Luglio 2017

*"Abbiamo condiviso un'esperienza molto bella. Per me è stato bellissimo vedere questi ragazzi in ogni angolo e sentire musica a tutte le ore del giorno. I pasti erano l'occasione del relax e delle chiacchiere quasi sempre sui temi musicali e con tono leggero. Un privilegio per un proprietario di bella casa vivere queste giornate"*

Carlo Arnò, Villa Arnò | Giugno 2017

*"Esperienza unica, emozionante e coinvolgente. Poter ospitare i musicisti è un'opportunità che permette di apprezzare in modo completo il lavoro che svolgono insieme con fatica e passione. Abbiamo ricevuto grandi complimenti per la possibilità di ascoltare la musica da camera proprio nel luogo più idoneo. Da ripetere al più presto!"*

Federica Zanchi, proprietaria del Castello di Lurano | Marzo 2017

*"Trovo che l'idea alla base del progetto sia veramente geniale, perchè restituisce a tutti i partecipanti molto più delle modeste risorse impiegate per la sua realizzazione."*

Selma Mandelli Maggioni, proprietaria di Villa Gariboldi Vittadini | Aprile 2016

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