Columbia University
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Liberal Studies Master of Arts
American Studies

The Subway Sessions: How technology is changing the way we interact with music in public space and reshaping sociomusical theory

a final paper
by
Kory French

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

May 2011
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments 3

Introduction 4

Music, Art, and Social Indication 9

The Question of Aesthetics, Beauty, and Judgment 14

The Evolution of Recorded Sound 23

Music, Politics, & Social Class 31

The Method 42

The Results 45

Conclusion 56

Appendices 59

References 63
Acknowledgments

My personal interest into the study of music and social behavior reaches much too far back than can be acknowledged in any fair and comprehensive form here. For their continuous support and unwavering encouragement to pursue passion over security in all that I have done, it would be criminal to not thank my parents, Ken and Kathy French, and sister, Kelly Famiglietti, ahead of anyone else.

For musical inspiration, I acknowledge two people: Jim Young, who opened the proverbial gates of sound for me and continues to be a mentor in more ways than one; and Wade “Sal” Ells who has always been as inspiring and loyal a friend as any man could ask for—Judas Priest ‘aint got nothing on an ole pal like that. For his level-headedness, motivation, and incomparable work ethic, I also include Christopher Robyn for continued support and interest in all that I do.

At Columbia University, I would predominantly like to thank Aaron Fox for acting as primary reader to this project as well as Dean Birge and Kristin Balicki for their guidance and inexhaustible ability to patronize me with a feigned interest in my antics. Other professors worthy of acknowledgment are Monica Miller, John Szwed, Robert O’Meally, Hilary Hallett, and Steven Mintz, all of whom were instrumental in arming me with the necessary academic knowledge to pursue such research.

Particular to this project, the following names need be mentioned for their agreement to assist me with participation, information, insight, and patience: Adam Whitlam, Ugonna Igweatu, Sam Griswold, Alex Roche, Matthew DeMello, Kate Trebuss, Jessica Hansel, David Briand, Dan Keyserling, Courtney Garcia, Cecily Craighill, Amy Kaufman, Lindsay Martin, Carly Shields, Zach Prottas, and Mary Logan Barmeyer. A special thanks to Taylor Edwards and Emily Frey for their scrupulous editing.
Introduction

In 2008, there was a television commercial that ran for the Apple iPod and it went something like this: A young hipster rides a city bus during morning rush hour listening to modern punk music on his iPod. He’s grooving, he’s badass, he’s hip. When he reaches his office, he removes his headphones and is instantly transformed into a middle-aged, balding, slightly overweight, life insurance salesman. A voiceover fades in, “Music can make you feel young again.”

Created to tap into our consumerist psyche, the commercial’s message that music has the power to spiritually transport us to a different reality is an obvious one. Music helps us escape, withdraw, remember, and forget who we are and what we have to be for a short-lived illusion of temporal misplacement. But there is also a subliminal reference at play here that is just as important: The iPod has affected the way many people prepare for the daily routine of subordination in a well-oiled economic structure—a design that is founded upon the principles of a market-economy and stabilized by an industrialized wage-labor infrastructure.

For the millions of Americans who use it, the iPod has changed the way we ‘receive’ music. I place an emphasis on receive because it refers to both the consumerist act of ‘purchasing’ and the inherent act of ‘listening’ to sound. Essentially, there are two properties that the iPod and its inexorable cousins of multiple musical trading platforms have brought, or at least accelerated, to music that perpetuate this shift—availability and accessibility.¹ Availability has delimited the boundaries, both physical and cultural, of

¹ I say, “perpetuate” because I don’t believe they were part of the shift’s beginning. As I will later show, with reference particularly to Walter Benjamin, the changes in our relationship with music
what music we can learn of, listen to, and acquaint ourselves with. Accessibility has provided us with hours of recorded material in a device that is, at times, the size of a postage stamp and can cost less than concert tickets.\textsuperscript{2} This has made music a part of everyday life regardless of who one is, what his or her knowledge of music may be, or the social class he or she belongs to. Together, these two properties have allowed recorded music to become as ubiquitous as any other sound of living—natural or industrial, urban or rural.

‘Noise’ is an integral part of any human society and it reinforces the ways we communicate with one another both aurally and visually. In an urban environment, music cannot be separated from the rest of the city beat; that is to say that there is no clear frontier between urban noise and music. Some acoustic events in a city can be considered music or noise by different observers. Most of this ‘music’ is made involuntarily, without motive, and listened to unconsciously and without objection. In other words, music becomes a part of the urban acoustic environment without any conscious aesthetic motivation (Hosokawa, 166). As such, for those living in a modern-day urban society where public space is consistently populated with numerous people, the question must be asked: How has the iPod changed the function of musical sound in the context of a larger cultural relationship between music and people? And what can that relationship tell us about our use of judgment, the application of aesthetics, and the presumed indicators of social class?

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{2} The size and price given here refer to the 2010 2GB iPod Shuffle (4\textsuperscript{th} Generation), which at time of writing has a retail value of $49. Model and price pulled from http://support.apple.com/kb/ht1353 & http://www.apple.com/ipodshuffle/#design respectively.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The sociomusicological questions raised by the iPod are grand and not easy to answer. Furthermore, these considerations only exist as the tip to a much larger proverbial iceberg. Theories about music and function, its relativity to social class, and the semiotics behind the derivatives it propels have been postulated and expounded upon for over a century by numerous decorated anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. As a contemporary study of personal music in urban public space, I aim to contribute to that conversation by examining how availability to all worldwide music, accessibility to recorded sound in public space, and the frequent employment of both serve as vehicles for social withdrawal rather than a conduit of artistic expression in which a value of judgment can be presupposed. This statement ‘presupposes’ a lot in and of itself. Mainly, it asks the reader to accept the notion that music is intended as a form of artistic expression in which the listener (thus, ‘critic’) consciously applies taste and value to that which they hear and unconsciously associates a level of “pleasantness” and/or “beauty” to the form it takes. Yet even allowing for the philosophical branding of aesthetics within this argument, I set out to prove that in an urban setting of advanced technology this is not the only form and function music takes on.

First, I will define music the way it is being defined in today’s musicological terms. Next, I will lay out the informative theories of art’s intended purpose as defined by Howard Becker in *Art Worlds* so we are better informed on music’s perceived functionality in modern society. Following that, I will turn to the historical philosophical work done by Immanuel Kant on the critique of judgment and why some people find great pleasure in objects while others do not. Understanding the basic principles behind aesthetic philosophy will assist in setting the context as to why some people choose
musical harmony over urban noise, and more specifically, how others are abhorred by an ignorance for self-opined musical virtuosity.

Once the language has been set, I will place my study in context by drawing reference to other similar studies of music and taste, particularly a social experiment performed in a Washington, D.C. metro station during the winter of 2007, and the works of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu from the 1960s. Both examples offer strong indicators of how tastes in music and musical ‘use’ are perceived by today’s sociomusical analysts. Finally, I will share the results of my own social study and what can be inferred about current musical function by knowing the modern listening habits of iPod users on New York City’s subway system.

There is no arguing that we are living in a time of considerable change. The last thirty years of the technology boom have changed the ways humans live and interact with one another and their environment in more ways than at any other period of civilization. Music is not exempt from this evolution. The earliest apparatus to come along that warranted sociological study of this evolution was the Walkman. In a pioneering work that first examined this phenomenon (1984), Japanese musicologist Shuhei Hosokawa noted the significance of such an invention: “We can compare this with Kuhn’s argument on the scientific revolutions (the relationship of paradigmatic change and ordinary science). The Walkman constitutes a new paradigm owing to its ‘revolutionary’ effects on the pragmatic—not technical—aspect of urban musical listening, with the result that the technical assumptions come to seem ordinary” (p. 169).

---

3 The main body of work that will be referenced is Bourdieu’s Distinction, which was published in 1984, but whose empirical evidence draws from research performed in the late 1960s.
Insightfully, Hosokawa was right—the iPod is very much an ‘ordinary’ object in today’s urban society. Headphones in public space are as common as sunglasses, wristwatches, handbags, and numerous other accessories modern society’s urban traveler equips himself with. It has also changed the way we associate with our environment—our Flaneurist wander through the city has been forever changed with the overdubbed soundtrack of choice (De Certeau, 1984, p. 92). This makes urban life more and more an imitation of film, confirming Oscar Wilde’s keen observation, “Life imitates art more than art imitates life.”

An ethnomusicologist can look at the iPod user in New York City’s subway system and ask herself the same anthropological questions her contemporary asks about Inuit katajjaq song or Kuarap tribal dance traditions. Predominantly—what effect does the exchange of music have on culture? Again, I go back to Hosokawa’s prescient statements about technology, music, and society: “It is of common opinion that people once lived happily in harmonious contact with nature, but with industrialisation and urbanisation [sic], especially in recent decades, they lost that healthy relationship with the environment, have become alienated and turned into David Riesman’s ‘lonely crowd’, suffering from incommunicability” (p. 165). Not being one for “common opinion”, Hosokawa counters with his own beliefs: “The self is small, but it is not isolated: it is held in a texture of relations which are more complex and more mobile than ever before” (p. 166). The relationship between music, individual, and public space is just one of these infinite interconnectivities.
Music, Art, and Social Indication

Not surprisingly, the definition of music has shifted drastically over the centuries. Samuel Johnson’s 1755 first-ever published dictionary (1799) defined music plainly as, “the science of sounds; harmony” (p. 245). Noah Webster’s first edition American Dictionary of the English Language published in Philadelphia (1828) did show some effort for elaboration by mentioning the relationships between sounds in a third definition of the noun, but it too fell short of the true complexity of the term, lacking reference to the human interpretation of such harmonies: “The science of harmonical sounds, which treats of the principles of harmony, or the properties, dependencies and relations of sounds to each other” (p. 662).

In a 2008 definition of the word for the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (2008), Aaron Fox commented on the “challenge” a social scientist faces to “summarize a paradigmatic contemporary view of music … as an object of specifically sociological inquiry” (p. 342). That being disclaimed, Fox goes on to attempt the definition somewhat audaciously anyhow, regardless of its aforementioned challenges: “[M]usic is not only, or even primarily, a sonic phenomenon that can be considered apart from human social action. Most modern approaches to music as an object of social inquiry begin with the premise that the object of such inquiry must be what musicologist Christopher Small (1998) calls musicking—that is, the active making of musical sound and interpretation by socially situated agents” (p. 342).

Has so much in the production of and interaction with sound evolved since the eighteenth century as to affect our understanding and recognition of its significance in
everyday life? I highly doubt it. (This does not include the technological re-production of sound, which is more an evolution of science and engineering than it is in our ability to develop and understand harmonies). What has evolved is the complexity in which we navigate such abstract ideas of judgment, political communities, and the symbols thereof. This evolution has led us to more complex understandings of harmonic difference and the interpretations leading to profound developments in musicology and ethnomusicology that have successfully helped redefine our understanding of music. It is within the vast boundaries of this contemporary definition that I base this work.

Fox proceeds to grapple with the definition over another ten paragraphs, concluding that, if anything, the developments of sociomusical theory have had heavy influence on the revision of many deeply entrenched ideologies of musical value and assumptions about music’s essential sociality (p. 344). Fox’s identified “revision” is a pertinent one, as one cannot begin to think about the abstraction of music in our current social environment of advanced technology in the same terms as was thought about during a time when recording was yet imaginable, let alone made possible. Before he arrives at this conclusion however, Fox asks a very important rhetorical question: How does musical practice, understood as comprising sonic, conceptual, and behavioral dimensions, either reflect, or determine, or mediate social life? (p. 345) Contending to include the custom of listening to recorded music as part of its comprehensive practice, this is the essential ‘reflection’, or ‘determination’, or ‘mediation’ I aim to understand. What can a person’s reasons for and relationships with music on the New York City subway system teach us about techno-urban social life? In other words, and in the continued spirit of audacity, allow me to be so bold as to suggest that the Apple iPod on a
New York City subway train provides the perfect example of ‘agency’ to which Fox was referring.

Having placed the word ‘music’ into its contemporary setting, I want to return to discussing the idea of music as a form of art and where that falls in with current theories of related function. In a society that is governed by wage-labor economics and fueled by technology, form must follow function for all things considered (as bleak as that may sound). In borrowing from Howard Becker, there are three post-industrial theories of artistic form and function in an abstract world for the modern day aesthete to consider: the imitative, the expressive, and the institutional. These postmodern theories that rose in the twentieth century differ greatly from those composed during the founding years of aesthetic philosophy, as reference to Kant in the pages ahead will illustrate. Initially, it was conceded that, “works of art could be judged on the basis of which the object was to imitate nature” (Becker, 1982, p. 146). Although a statement intended mostly for the visual arts field, it laid the foundation of aesthetic judgment for all art forms, including music and performance. Following this initial service, Impressionists like Monet forced an expansion in the parameters of critical judgment and new expressive theories developed. No longer focused on imitation, expressionists and impressionists “found the virtues of works [lay in] the ability to communicate and express the emotions, ideas, and personalities of the artists who made them” (ibid., p. 138). Quality art was no longer judged relative to nature, but relative to creator. As such, the power of art lay in the artist’s ability to observe hi/her social world, interpret it, and reflect it back in a way that said something about that exact process. This began a shift in

4 It is interesting to note that Becker goes out of his way here to say; “neither these theories nor their analogues would be able to say anything useful about aleatory music.”
power away from the object being imitated, and towards two unique and separate individuals—creator and observer.

Finally, it was the rise of the Dadaists in the twentieth century who brought on an institutional theory that “placed the artistic character and quality of work outside the physical object itself” (ibid., p. 146). Judgment became based on an object’s relation to the world within which it existed, and to the organization in which it was produced, distributed, appreciated, and discussed, rather than its expressive or imitative qualities. Of the theories Becker comes to identify in all art forms, it is a hybrid of the second and third theories that this study will use as a frame for sociomusical interpretation.

Believing, and asking the reader to accept, that music listened to today is representative of both expression and institution, and understanding music as agency assisting social interpretation, we are now in a position, as musicologists, social scientists, and the general public, to understand such terms and therefore discuss how technology has contributed to, or is affecting, such definitions and theories.

Lastly, it is worth noting that music came to be associated with one further function in the twentieth century. Beginning with theories by Theodor Adorno, some sociologists and musicologists began to look at the political symbols and indicators associated with musical style and taste. Adorno famously asked if there was a concrete relationship between musical form and political history; and then determined there was. Pierre Bourdieu challenged this idea by arguing that music “says nothing and has nothing to say” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 19). Phonically, Bourdieu may have been correct, but that extends the scope of this argument. Both Adorno’s and Bourdieu’s work was

---

5 This differs from the music recorded today, for the power of recording provides us with exactly that distinction.
monumental in shifting the way sociologists and ethnomusicologists considered the
effects social class had on a society’s ability to regard one aesthetic as brilliant and
another as odious. Proving that arts education, and both the access and exposure to such
material, played a significant role in the judgment of taste, Bourdieu was able to show
how ‘cultured’ institutions facilitate a cleavage between a presupposed bourgeoisie
appreciation for greatness and a proletariat ignorance of quality. This finding challenged
the earlier theory about music and social class provided by Adorno. In particular, the one
musical form that proved Bourdieu’s theory dominant over Adorno’s was jazz. The social
success across class boundaries of this African American-born expressionist music
enabled Bourdieu to use its musical brilliance, the creative influence of its genius, and its
‘classlessness’ to disprove Adorno’s opposing hyper-Marxist viewpoint that historical
forces circumscribe the production and reception of musical works that appear in music
in mediated form (Saval, 2011).

What Bourdieu discovered, and what is of interest here, is that certain
relationships and tastes in music say something about social class. Regardless of his own
disinterest in music, this was a truism he could not ignore. I aim to pick up where
Bourdieu left off—that is, to examine the paradigmatic shifts in Bourdieu’s theory since
the rise of two very important influences: technology and Hip-Hop culture. The
combination of these two authorities over all cultures, whether invited or not, has led to
the appropriation of conventional class indicators blurring the lines that once helped
define such parameters.
The Question of Aesthetics, Beauty, and Judgment

What happens when, in a modern-day metro station during morning rush hour, one of the finest classical musicians in the world plays some of the most elegant music ever written on one of the most valuable violins ever made? The answer—not much: “In three-quarters of an hour … seven people stopped … twenty-seven gave money … for a total of $32 and change. That leaves 1,070 people who hurried by, oblivious” (Weingarten, 2007).

In January of 2007, a journalist from the Washington Post teamed with one of the world’s most accomplished violinists, Joshua Bell, to engage in a social experiment that would test the public’s perception of harmonic ‘aesthetics’ in an urban public setting. The journalist, Gene Weingarten, published his observations in an article on April 8th of the same year with a cynical tone: “For many of us, the explosion in technology has perversely limited, not expanded, our exposure to new experiences…. Increasingly, we get our news from sources that think as we already do. And with iPods, we hear what we already know; we program our own playlists” (ibid.).

Weingarten summoned Bell to the Metro station that dull, grey January morning in an attempt to investigate a valid curiosity: “In a banal setting at an inconvenient time, would beauty transcend?” What he expressed in his concluding argument was that technology has not only “perversely limited … our new experiences”, but has also turned us into “ghosts”—what he calls “scurrying rats” lost through space and time and performing “a grim danse macabre to indifference, inertia, and the dingy, gray rush of modernity” (ibid.). This bleak outlook on the vacuity of modern society appears, on the
surface, to be a justified one. In the author’s own words the article was “an experiment in context, perception, and priorities – as well as an unblinking assessment of public taste” (emphasis mine).

I question the accuracy of Weingarten’s observation and have set out to test his conclusions. Does technology play a role in the numbing of our perception? And if so, what does that mean to the modern relationship between music and listener, listener and environment, and environment and culture? Perhaps the most important question to be asked here is, what are the dangers of performing a social experiment that can lead to sanctimonious errors in judgment about aesthetics, taste, and culture such as this one appears to do? Bias and critique are tightly woven threads cut from the same cloth. Even a superlative judgment of aesthetics is not exempt from his/her own cultural exposure.

A subway system during morning rush hour is a banal, quotidian urban setting. While the iPod may be a relatively newer piece of technology, in all things considered personal listening devices have been around for over thirty years (Sony first introduced the Walkman in Japan in the spring of 1980). Pioneer researcher in this field, Shuhei Hosokawa, noted four years after Sony’s game-changing invention, Generation X’ers and those born thereafter have taken personal listening devices as an “encouraging symbol of self-closure and political apathy under a structure of mass control” (p. 165). Accordingly, the experiment played out in the Washington Metro station in 2007 should have offered no real surprises. Recognizing both the urban space as “banal” and the timing as “inconvenient,” one should have expected that Joshua Bell’s playing, even as nonpareil as it was assumed to be, would have been missed by the majority of D.C.’s commuters. It is the gap Weingarten leaps over in his relative assessment that my research considers.
Under the limiting sound of headphones and mundanity of urban routine, is it fair to assume that the passing of a world-renowned violinist signifies ‘inertia’ or a ‘ghostly indifference’ to aesthetics in music?

Studying the use of personal listening devices in public space to comment on the recognition of “culture” (in the ‘intellectual achievement’ sense of the word)\(^6\) is not an easy task. Furthermore, identifying one socially accepted definition of “beauty” is not only challenging, but by its very nature raises some important sociological and ethnomusicological questions. It is my belief that getting to know what people are listening to and observing how people engage with their own individual devices provides a lens into answering such questions about aesthetics, taste, style, and modern-day capitalist and consumerist habits. Just what is the soundtrack to Weingarten’s ‘danse macabre’ and what can it tell us about music’s function in urban culture? What music is being listened to beneath the cloak of anonymity enabled by headphones? Does personal music in public space ‘obstruct’ or ‘transcend’ beauty, or can it do both? How is music being used in public transportation today, and what does this inform about urban society and the changing function of music in Western culture? Finally, what defines and who are the judges of Weingarten’s presupposed cultural aesthetics? An investigation into the use of personal music listening devices in today’s urban environment is an attempt to offer a quantified statement about all the roles music plays as a social agent in public space, on all levels; not just the study of one performance by one virtuoso.

---

\(^6\)The world culture is one of those tricky words in the English language that can mean so many things at once. It is also one of the most difficult words to define. For most of this paper, “culture” is intended to refer to the haughtiness of the term and should be read as such. It is used here as a ‘refined understanding and appreciation of the arts’ rather than as a comparison between ‘the manifestations of collective human intellectual achievement.’ Think: “The Hamiltons had a lot of culture,” rather than, “It is the culture of the Tamil to paint religious scenery directly onto walls.”
One of the fundamental problems with Weingarten’s argument is the relationship he draws between beauty, public space, and culture with reference to only one piece of empirical evidence. The 2007 Washington Metro experiment is an argument based solely on the lack of recognition for one working artist in one unexpected setting without any admission or reference to the author’s, performer’s, or subjects’ own ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 80). It is biased to make general comments about the inability of public perceptibility of aesthetic beauty based on esoteric musical taste, inopportune timing, and unremarkable placement. This is not to say that Weingarten’s assumptions are false, for he in fact may be absolutely correct in his assessment (that being: public commuters wouldn’t know “real beauty” if it was standing four feet away from them), but I question his method. By looking deeper into some other ignored variables, we can then verify exactly what public commuters use their personal listening devices for. This serves as a sociological insight into what is informed about the function of music in today’s hypermodern metropolis.

Any time judgment is placed on an object, whether it is an object of nature or creation, and a judgment of intention or mindfulness, it is done so in relation to the fulfillment of one goal – gratification. The development of this idea and the philosophical identification of its practice began as a way to define and understand the very subjectivity of judgment each one naturally employs on a daily basis. Anyone who listens to music for pleasure cannot avoid the innate psychological assignment of judgment and taste. Originally, this assignment was understood as the relationship between the object and the pleasure or pain one derives from it. Nothing in the object is signified in and of itself, but there is a feeling in the subject that is affected by its representation. Thus, whenever one
interacts with any form of art, whether it is a painting on a wall in a museum, a sculpture in a public space, or music performed to an audience, there is an automatic subconscious interaction between object and subject that immediately triggers such judgment.

Eighteenth century German philosopher Immanuel Kant elaborates in a footnote to his reader in *Critique of Judgment* to ensure this principle is understood as a separate concept to “taste”:

The definition of “taste” which is laid down here is that it is the faculty of judging of the beautiful… The moments to which this judgment has regard in its reflection I have sought in accordance with the guidance of the logical functions of judgment (for in a judgment of taste a reference to the understanding is always involved) (p. 37).

By identifying taste as a logical function of judgment, Kant allows himself to apply a linear reasoning as to why one prefers one form of art to another. “In saying that it is *beautiful* and in showing that I have taste, I am concerned, not with that in which I depend on the existence of the object, but with that which I make out of this representation in myself. Everyone must admit, a judgment about beauty … is very partial and is not a pure judgment of taste” (p. 37). Was Weingarten aware of this trope?

As much as one tries, one cannot apply his/her own measurement of quality or preference to artistic representation without affect. Too much influence ranging from the social class to which one was born into, and the cultural environment by which one is surrounded will have impact as to what objectivity one likes or dislikes over another. That is why, when it comes to listening to music, there exists so much debate over quality. In essence, the discussion of significant beauty in music is impossible to
indubitably argue—one style of music cannot be absolutely dominant over another. It can be argued, however, that greatness in terms of ability can be defined with some degree of calculated precision, but this conclusion is based solely on ability, not method. For example, it is fair to say that Oscar Lopez’s guitar playing is much more beautiful than my own. But this is a result of our compared (*matchless?*) ability, not mellifluous taste. Oscar Lopez is a professional and extremely accomplished guitarist and I am a hack. This separates us on a scale of quality indefinitely, but it has nothing to do with the fact that he plays Spanish flamenco and I play American folk music—both of which are objects of ‘taste’.

It was the work of Bourdieu whose remarkable sociological discovery of cultural capital changed the way social scientists came to understand this human behavior and the interaction between subject and object and the taste therein. Bourdieu set out to find the answers to what appeared as a very simple sociological question: Why do people living in the same city as part of the same culture prefer different foods, art, and music? Through his work, Bourdieu was able to prove that social class has a lot more to do with the answer than first realized. When looking at the interaction between people, their music, and public space, it is crucial to understand the Bourdieuan dynamics behind why one person would choose to stop and listen to Bell performing Bach on the violin while hundreds of others would not. Bach is both beautiful and exceptional music to those who know the complexity of his compositions. Accordingly, in order for one to grasp the incredibility and oddity of Joshua Bell playing Bach in a Washington D.C. subway station for chump change on a Monday morning, one would have to not only be familiar with Bach, but also with Bell, which narrows the outcome exponentially. Yet for all those
not brought up on Bach, who were instead brought up on say, Latino hip-hop, gangster rap, or top forty, what does their ignorance say about their ability for highbrow culture? Should we really expect the average D.C. commuter to apply the same Kantian factors of judgment earlier described as were applied by the experiment’s host during anticipation or reflection? I think not. As Kant himself expressed, judgment of taste cannot be formed indifferently. What is most telling of Kant’s philosophical theory in the 2007 experiment is not the ‘inert’ subjects themselves, but more ironically, the conclusions made by the experiment’s chief observer, Gene Weingarten.

In comparison, New York City’s subway system offers a platform of varied social demographics like no other in the world. It is estimated that “about 5 million people on weekdays and 2 million people on weekends” (MTA Info, 2011) ride the five-boroughs’ subway lines everyday. In addition, “there are more than three hundred nationalities represented, and over eight races and ethnicities [depending on how these terms are defined] that ride in our subways” (ibid.). Furthermore, the Music Under New York project (MUNY), that has been “contributing to the music culture of New York City … since 1985,” reports that “more than one hundred soloists and groups participate in MUNY, providing over one hundred and fifty weekly performances at twenty-five locations throughout the transit system” (MTA MUNY, 2011). Ask any New Yorker with a daily MTA commute and he or she will tell you; there is no shortage in variety of music in our subway system.

Compare this inundation of musical sound with iPod ownership. One market researcher who calls himself LionNathan (Nathan Claree) wondered just how many iPod users there were out there: “It makes you wonder... how many people actually own an
iPod?” After doing some market research himself, Claree sent out Internet surveys to over 6.2 million people all over the world, including the UK, USA, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. “Of the 6.2 million, I only got a response from 4.8 million, and of those 4.8 million, a whopping 4.4 million owned a portable music player, and 2.6 million owned an iPod” (Claree, 2010).

The point being that when you put these two pieces of evidence together, New York City commuters have access to a plethora of music. As a result, the factors that go into determining why someone would be tuned into his or her own music rather than stopping to hear what a world-renowned violinist is playing nearby are greater than first realized. It is not so much that the music being played on one’s iPod is necessarily ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than Joshua Bell’s violin; it is more that we don’t know and are therefore in no position to judge. It also has more to do with the cultural capital and exigent schedule of each commuter who ‘scurried’ by Bell without notice, than it does with a romantic notion of lost culture.

Hopefully by now I have laid the foundation to my argument. What I will demonstrate in the following pages as a result of the findings from my study is that it is not a desire for beautiful music or a seeking for aesthetic pleasure that drives people to employ technology and music while riding the subway (or alternatively, ignore it), it is something much more simple to identify but difficult to derive meaning from. The function of personal music in public space is a seeking out of privacy and withdrawal from that space, and by association, the surrounding social environment. This explains the lack of desire for commuters to stop and listen to Joshua Bell playing Johann Sebastian Bach on a $3.75M Stradivari during a cold January morning rush hour. The
iPod, the commuter/consumer’s choice, gives that commuter/consumer the exact opposite scenario Bell presented. One is a symbol of desired isolation; the other is an act of shared communication. Standing amongst peers to take in a live performance, which involves socialization and engagement, goes against the very state of being the iPod permits one to obtain. Most people don’t tune in; they tune out. On top of that, the music that is being listened to informs us of the glacial paradigmatic shift from Bourdieu’s 1960’s findings. It is becoming more and more difficult to identify the “distinctions” of social class through musical tastes. Sadly, for many, because of increased availability and heightened accessibility, music of all forms has become a ubiquitous urban drone, regardless of how good it may be considered to sound.
The Evolution of Recorded Sound

The Industrial Revolution changed the interaction between object and subject in the art world indefinitely. German sociologist and intellectual Walter Benjamin was one of the pioneering thinkers to study this phenomenon and offered the earliest theories about the effects technology and mass media were having on human interaction with art. Benjamin’s theory of ‘art in the age of its technological reproductability’ crossed over with Kant’s theory of aesthetics, and Benjamin noticed, importantly, how “the function of art [was changing] with the appearance of technology-based art forms” (p. 105). Basing his argument in the expressionist form of cinema during its infant stage, Benjamin cross-fertilized musical recording and print imaging as the primary evidence supporting his claim. While observing the rise of collective judgment and mutual taste, Benjamin noted that artistic beauty was becoming less individualized because mass production leads to mass consideration. The effect of this change on the social considerations for aesthetics led to art no longer being something appreciated by individual contemplation, but rather something received collectively by a mass audience.

Being a German philosopher who was writing in the period just after the collapse of the German empire and just before Hitler’s rise to power, it is not difficult to identify and sympathize with the Marxist tilt Benjamin applied to his modern form of aesthetic philosophy. Regardless of the social and political zeitgeist of the day, Benjamin’s notion that mass reproductability was robbing art from its traditional function in a bourgeois capital economy nevertheless holds true. This Marxist theory of art delves deeper than mere aesthetics and moves us to consider the overall political effects of mass media and
mass production upon something once considered as “sacred, expressionist, and individualistic.” Benjamin argued that as the traditional function of art faded, it shaped “a new form of political participation” (ibid.). Historically, art has been traced from the magical and cultic treatment of objects, through the development of sanctifying such objects for religious worship, and into the secularization of a sacred function, to the cultivation of beauty for beauty’s sake alone. In the end, this has established a contemporary understanding of art as having meaning that is tied to its function during any specific historical period (Ferris, 2002, p. 105). This profound notion is crucial when discussing the iPod as a transporter of phonic expression in today’s “grey race against modernity.” In other words, if we apply Benjamite thinking, then we must think of music today in terms of its relation to the technology that delivers it. Because of our inexorable techno-consumerist political environment, music through an iPod has a greater social significance today than a performance of live Bach does, regardless of a compared judgment in beauty.

There are a defined set of values, laid out by Benjamin, that must be considered when applying such difficult comparisons between origin and reproduction: uniqueness, distance from its original form, individuality, contemplation by the listener, and authenticity are some of the more important ones. In particular, the question of authenticity is especially cumbersome. In Benjamin’s use of the term, authenticity is succinctly defined as the “here and now” of any artistic object. That is to say, authenticity refers to an object’s “uniqueness and inability to be in more than one place at the same time” (p. 21). Plainly, authenticity is restricted to the original form of an artwork. By demonstrating how the same piece of music can be played or displayed in many different
places at the same time, Benjamin emphasized the notion that “the whole sphere of authenticity eludes technological … reproductability” (ibid.).

For example, think of Rodin’s “The Thinker” on the front lawn of Columbia University’s Philosophy Hall. Has this re-produced copy of the statue caused it to lose authenticity and, by association, its ability to impress? The answer is one for debate. Adding to the complexity of this conundrum, think of this: What if a commuter who walked by Bell that January morning was actually listening to Bell play Bach on the very iPod she was listening to as she walked by! Has the oblivion to Bell’s playing live in person affected the ‘authenticity’ and therefore ‘greatness’ of whatever was being heard through the individual’s set of headphones during that moment? To Benjamin, and to many who agree with him, any form of art that is reproducible holds less truth in comparison with that which is defined as a work in its original form because of its failed authenticity. Yet this thought was conceived at a time when availability and accessibility were a fraction of what they are today. The reification and speed of which this ideology is advancing is shifting these judgments of aesthetics.

The perception of what art is also changed in the technological reproducibility revolution because its definition of authenticity changed. Benjamin admits that, “[i]n principle, the work of art has always been reproducible. Objects by humans could always be copied by humans” (p. 107). However, the technological reproduction of art that is so prevalent today has emphasized and perfected this practice at an alarming pace. It has also placed the copy of the original in a situation which the original itself cannot attain. It enables the original to meet the recipient halfway. Technology has allowed one to hear music in places and in ways that would be impossible in original form. The subway
commuter listening to her iPod on shuffle does not witness The Shins, Belle and Sebastian, Broken Social Scene, and My Morning Jacket come, set up, play, and leave, with the arrival of every new station as part of her morning ride. This unbinding freedom lies at the center of today’s cultural perception of art and its purpose or perceived greatness.

Free to be explored in such places as a busy subway car during a New York City morning rush hour, music, in whatever context or form, takes on a new perceptibility by mass culture. In Benjamin’s essay, he likens this experience to architecture and the way in which more than one person can perceive the same building at the exact same time. Personal music in public space has similar parables, but also some rudimentary and very important differences. This most obvious fundamental difference between Benjamin’s idea of art being ‘received collectively by a mass audience’ and the use of iPods that must be addressed is the idea of ‘personalization’. On one hand, we have an example of a singular artistic object directed at many (for example, a film in a theater or a symphony in an auditorium performed to a crowd). On the other hand, we have a large number of individuals all receiving different forms of art in the same manner and in a socially gathered place, but on a personalized scale (for example, multiple paintings in a large, populated gallery with each person assigned to look at one particular painting; or a crowded subway car with each person listening to a different piece of music). While in each case the artistic work is being perceived in the company of public society, it remains personalized through space and medium, and in the case of music, this was a technological advancement not yet possible at the time of Benjamin’s writing as “musical mobilis” (Hosokawa, 1984) was not yet made possible. On the opposing side, the
possibility of ubiquity of the sound remains; meaning—as a result of its reproductability there is nothing to say that the same music is not being played ten thousand times over, in ten thousand different environments, at the same time, all across the world. This presents the critique of both the art and the social context in which the art is perceived with the following paradox: Technological reproduction of music and technological production of the apparatus delivering the music has enabled the sound to be both exclusively individual and absolutely universal both at the same time.

This newly integrated, albeit socially unaware, paradox is not necessarily limiting our experiences with art; it is rather subconsciously shifting our perceptions of the function of art. Just as the entire mode of existence changes over long historical periods, so too does their mode of perception. The way in which human perception is organized—the medium in which it occurs—is conditioned not only by nature, but also by history (Ballantine, 1986). This fundamental and organic conditioning seems to have slipped Weingarten when analyzing the social behaviors surrounding Bell’s D.C. Metro performance. The human relationship with music has shifted drastically over the last thirty years as a result of the tech boom, just as it did a century and a half ago with the engineering developments that occurred during the industrial revolution. Due to advancements in technology and the ability to access information and artistic reproduction, and be mobile with it, people’s awareness and tastes have changed drastically and are continuing to do so exponentially. As already pointed out, for many, music is as much a part of an urban social environment as is the unnoticeable drone of electricity. Christopher Ballantine, in *Music and Its Social Meanings* (1986), points out this phenomenon in what he calls, “a newly entered partnership with ideology”:
Mass produced and turned into a commodity like everything else, music now serves a very special function: it is the perfumed balm to tranquilize and lubricate a system geared to profits. In this gutted and predigested form we meet music everywhere: it is the gentle ooze that welcomes us in supermarkets, anaesthetized frayed nerves in offices and factories, exhaled over us in lifts and aeroplanes, screams at us from ice-cream vans, sings radio and TV commercials at us with mind-deadening regularity and leaves us humming to the tune of Coca-Cola, American cigarettes and beauty soap. And although this applies most obviously to what we call ‘popular’ musical styles, there is hardly a sphere of contemporary music or of the ‘classical’ music of the past that is immune to this sort of expropriation (p. 9).

Perhaps the strongest example to compare Ballantine’s acute observation of the “tranquilizing” effect consumerism has had on music is the reproducible image.

“We live in an image-saturated world. According to some estimates, the average American will see some 50,000 images everyday. Indeed, most Americans see more images in a day than read words. Yet while every student is taught to read critically, few learn how to analyze visual images” (Mintz, 2010). Advancements in understanding the psychology behind marketing and consumerism along with the ability to reproduce en masse for cheap has inundated our social environment with high-quality snapshots of lowbrow images that reflect the world in which we live. This is especially true since the development of the Internet and its universal use. Constant exposure to expression through image, whether it is artistic or market-inspired, has numbed the larger audience’s appreciation for visual representation. It is fair to assume that a painting removed from
the walls of the Met and placed into the underground pathway between the ACE and 123 lines at Times Square would not attract the same undivided attention as it would while on display in the museum. Furthermore, what if it was a replica of said painting? When Andy Warhol shifted the art world’s attention to the aesthetics that can be found as part of mass production culture, “he brought forth the idea of aesthetic choice to bear on procedures that seemed a refutation of aesthetics, and on paintings that mocked the art of painting” (Indiana, 2010, p. 85). This mid-century American pop-culture concept pushed back against the “highbrow-lowbrow” of artistic judgment. “Mockery and mimicry were suddenly fused,” writes Gary Indiana in *The Soup Can that Sold the World*, “and most significantly, the reproduction and the original were inextricably mixed together” (p. 85).

Benjamin’s theory and Warhol’s success prove how the technological reproductability of any art form, musical or visual, has changed the relationship between mass audience and contemporary art (or, in our case—sound). As already illustrated through reference to Kant, any progressive attitude towards judgment in aesthetics is characterized by an immediate, intimate fusion of pleasure—pleasure in listening and experiencing—with an attitude of expert appraisal. Such a fusion becomes an important social index, and “the more reduced the social impact of an art form, the more widely criticism and enjoyment of it diverge in the public” (Benjamin, 1996, p. 36). It is precisely these *divergences* I am addressing in this paper: criticism and enjoyment, individual expert and social index. Has the iPod greatly contributed to the reduction of the social impact of music? It certainly appears that way in Weingarten’s article. What it also does is provide us with the perfect lens into the “expert” versus “index” discussion.
The notion that ties all this together is once again found in the writings of Walter Benjamin. Benjamin observed in 1935—long before Andy Warhol’s Soup Cans and Apple’s iPod—that the indoctrination of technological reproductability, for the first time in the history of artistic expression, had the power to emancipate the work of art from what he referred to as a “parasitic subservience to ritual” (that is, the artwork’s “auratic mode of existence” as a function of service—one that was at first magical, then religious). Benjamin extended his observation to theorize how, “the work reproduced becomes the reproduction of a work designed for reproducibility” (p. 24). It is an acute observation that removed the question of authenticity from the discussion board altogether and in doing so, revolutionized the social function of art by way of its production and reception. To Benjamin, instead of being founded on ritual, art and culture became based on a different practice altogether: socioeconomic politics (p. 25).
Music, Politics, & Social Class

In the post-Industrial Revolution paradigmatic shift, thinking about music was no longer a mathematical or technical pursuit. The social and cultural significances of music had been recognized and were about to be dissected with philo-surgical precision. Precisely, sociologists began to wonder about how the music we listen to represents the social class within which we live, and how great of an affect that has on the social change we either instigate or embrace.

Technological reproductability and the mass distribution and consumerism of the iPod have greatly contributed to the Benjamite social matrix that argues quantity can be inferred as quality. Additionally, because an increased number of participants produces a different kind of participation, the collective judgment of the aesthetic shifts. The end result is a widening between popular opinion and esoteric elitism. The masses (our iPod listeners) are criticized for seeking distraction in the work of art, whereas the art lover (Weingarten) approaches it with concentration. In the case of mass culture, artwork is seen as a means of consumerist entertainment. In the case of the art connoisseur, it is considered an object of devotion. Distraction and concentration form an antithesis—a fissure between popularity and virtuosity.

“A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it; he enters into the work…. By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. Their waves lap around it; they encompass it with their tide” (Bourdieu, 40). In order to understand the social makeup between these two poles and how they independently learn to appreciate music through different lenses, I again turn to Bourdieu, who concluded,
“that judgments of taste reinforce forms of social inequality, as individuals imagine themselves to possess superior or inferior spirit and perceptiveness, when really they just like what their class inheritance has taught them to like” (Saval, 2010).

When thinking on function it is crucial to separate and differentiate between the individual and the social function of the same tool. Individual usage gives the object its purpose, while social usage provides it with its symbolic power. A perfect example of this duality is the hammer and sickle. A hammer is a fundamental tool used by any craftsman looking to bend, shape, or ply his material to a desired form. Designed only to be used by one person at any given time, and employed in the solitude of labor, the hammer serves only one specific purpose to one individualized worker at any given moment. The same thing can be said about a sickle for the farmer who uses it to reap his crops. However, when presented together as an image to a community of people, these two tools take on a very different social function. Suddenly their importance becomes less about intended usage and more about meaning. The symbol of hammer and sickle together mean communism, a symbolic representation of the industrial proletariat in power. The same thing can be said about music and it therefore must be thought of in these terms. Music serves one purpose when played for one person individually, and carries meaning when listened to by a community of people.

Pierre Bourdieu was fundamentally interested with the way taste represents class. Never committing himself to the idea that music could be responsible for any form of complete social zeitgeist—because that presupposes the idea that each individual’s role in understanding music is formed from the same educational caste, which it is not—
Bourdieu sought to prove (and he did it successfully) just how much distinctive difference in social class predicates the function of music:

Thus, for an adequate interpretation of the differences found between the classes or within the same class as regards their relation to the various legitimate arts, painting, music, theatre, literature etc., one would have to analyse [sic] fully the social uses, legitimate or illegitimate, to which each of the arts, genres, works or institutions considered lends itself. For example, nothing more clearly affirms one’s ‘class’, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music. This is of course because, by virtue of the rarity of the conditions for acquiring the corresponding dispositions, there is no more ‘classificatory’ practice than concert-going or playing a ‘noble’ instrument (activities which, other things being equal, are less widespread than theatre-going, museum-going or even visits to modern-art galleries) (p. 18).

Once Bourdieu had determined how specific market decisions are influenced by and indicators of social class and the cultural capital of one’s social development, he was then able to expand his argument to show how what is regarded as ‘taste’ is based in relativity more than aesthetics. For this study, I was more concerned with the notion of awareness, than I was about social class—that is, how many are even aware of the Bourdeauian cultural capital they possess and the indicators thereof? More interested as to whether or not subjects who had selected personal music over urban noise were aware of their own selective process, the question in my survey that asked, “What are you listening to?” was a dummy point of interest. What I found was, the function of music today (in the context of personal music in public space) is limiting the Bourdieuan ability
to classify taste through music. Listening to an iPod is an affirmation of taste for music, but not a ‘classificatory’ practice. I will say however, that even though it was not my initial point of interest, the data collected still points to some interesting confirmations of Bourdieu’s “distinction” argument. The results of my study did somewhat confirm Bourdieu’s 1960s findings that musical tastes are consistent through certain metrics, although I found it was more consistent through similarities in age than social class or race.  

In the immediate years following Bourdieu’s publishing of *Distinction*, two very important institutions began to rise in Western culture have come to challenge his contention that taste reaffirms social class. In the age of Bourdieu’s writing, what was deemed virtuosic was monitored by exposure and access more than by aesthetics. The institutions that are changing this assumption are Hip-Hop and technology. Among the many things Hip-Hop has unintentionally showed the world about cultural ‘distinction’ is the idea that appropriation can have just as much sway in a collective subconsciousness over a judgment in aesthetics as can intention. Unarmed with Bourdieu’s identified bourgeoisie *habitus* for a taste in excellence, young people of lower economic class and marginal groups of society were still able to recognize the brilliance behind specific appreciated art forms. Unable to afford the means to which they could become a member of such a social class, urban youth appropriated what tools they did have access to and empowered them with ownership of a new derivative form. Specifically, marginalized youth in New York City could not afford the instruments, education, time, or space to

---

7 I say assumed because it was not part of my method, nor did I attempt to control for determining socioeconomic placement. I merely make this statement as a pure scientific observation on the different social classes riding the subway (lower to middle class commuter) and the music to which they listened.
properly learn the techniques of a classical instrument the way upper class society had been doing for centuries. Nor could they afford the equipment and budget to form a rock and roll band and take it on the road the way middle class white kids had done in the 1960s and ‘70s. What they could afford was the cheap turntable and mixing equipment on sale at community garage sales, discount warehouses, or the local radio shack, and the access to public playgrounds, community centers, or street corners to use as a mock concert hall. By using the cheap and easy musical technology available to them, Hip-Hop artists began to create and sample music that was designed for a different environment and listener (function) and claim ownership of it in a new fashion unique to their own time and space (appropriation, i.e. re-form). As a result, the culture of Hip-Hop has extended the boundaries of music indefinitely. This appropriation of musical form was not only true to sound, but also reached out to fashion, dance, and visual art. For example, the way Hip-Hop cultural paragons began to dress in Polo shirts and Tommy Hilfiger sweaters in a style that was never intended by their designers and distributors, how street dancers would model classical dance steps to include improvised street bravado, or the way urban artists would make art on concrete out of spray paint and location-specific context (Z. Prottas, personal communication, March 10, 2011). The Hip-Hop generation discovered new ways to mimic the cultures around them by taking on the cultural indicators from within one structure and making their own music outside of that structure.

So what does this all have to do with iPods and music on the subway? The development of Hip-Hop and the specific way it has borrowed from surrounding cultures in an urban environment began a blurring of ‘distinct’ culture signifiers that have for
centuries existed between social classes. This is not to say there is no separation between lower and upper class society today, because the author admits there is. However, the indicators that could once be relied on are becoming less substantial as they once were. Affluent white kids in upper class neighborhoods enjoy the sounds of Hip-Hop just as much as the Hip-Hop artists familiarize themselves with the sounds of classical music. Together, availability and access make up an unfamiliar habitus inventory. This shift away from traditional, substantial indicators of taste in social class becomes heightened with technology. Free access is the dominant vehicle in a self-educated society, and this is redefining a modern social schemata.

Let us go back to the Weingarten/Bell example as a case in point. Weingarten passed judgment on the “grim, grey masses” of the tuned-out commuters because in his mind they were unable to recognize or appreciate the artistic value of a specific aesthetic before them. When he does this, he presupposes that the values in which both ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ music forms are judged come from the same source. Bourdieu, however, has already proven this not to be true. Here, I am reminded of a condescending statement made by Simon Frith as a cheeky introduction to a 1986 essay titled, *Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music:* “Serious music matters because it transcends social forces; popular music is aesthetically worthless because it is determined by them (because it is ‘useful’ or ‘utilitarian’)” (p. 133). The reader quickly identifies Frith’s irony that suggests as long as musicologists and sociologists continue to think in these terms we will restrict the possibility to intelligently respond to the differences between critical taste and consumer choice.
But Frith does not stop there. He takes his point one step further by stating that the sociological approach to popular music does not rule out an aesthetic theory, but, on the contrary, makes one possible (p. 133). To properly understand the function of both classical and popular music, it is imperative that “we … uncover the social forces concealed in the talk of these ‘transcendent’ values” (p. 134). In other words, popular music must be analyzed under the same social characteristics as all music, and we must begin to take serious the values that are assumed to be missing from the social function of such musical form.

What really is at play here is the fundamental difference between ‘successful sounds’ in a consumerist market and ‘musical talent’ in an artistic world. In a social discussion over music’s ability to have affect or convey aesthetic brilliance, these two terms are often confused as being interchangeable in a non-academic lexicon. Being successful does not mean the same thing as being great, and vice versa. Ever since the commercialization of popular music in the twentieth century, pop charts have played a significant role in a collective social judgment of any one song’s value within its respected society. And now, with the introduction of Mp3 files, online file-sharing Web sites, individualized song purchasing, online media players like Grooveshark, Mojo, Spotify, BandCamp, and Pandora, social media networks like MySpace, Twitter, and Facebook, and the massive influence of YouTube, album charts and Top 40 listings have become completely obsolete. Not only do charts and official radio airplay or album purchasing no longer paint an accurate picture of a song or artists ‘musical talent’ (and arguably they never have), they no longer even represent the song’s or artist’s ‘success’.
This further complicates an already complex arrangement. Allow me to use a very recent viral phenomenon to illustrate the difference between sound success and prodigal talent.

In the spring months of 2011, as I was preparing this paper, two significant events in music took place that paint a clear picture of the twenty-first century difference between ‘musical virtuosity’ and ‘commercial success’. On the one-hand, “the world’s most prominent Japanese violinist,” a virtuoso by the name of Midori Goto (aka, “Midori”), accompanied a small cast of International conductors to perform at New York City’s legendary Carnegie Hall as part of the city’s JapanNYC Festival. The concert ran on March 23, 2011 and held particular importance as the intended celebration of Japanese culture was heavily overshadowed by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that struck the Pacific island only two-weeks prior. Regardless of this untimely timing, and perhaps a little inspired under its circumstance, Midori went ahead with her performance anyway and played to exceptional reviews. The New York Times later commended Midori for capturing perfectly composer Hosokawa’s intention to characterize the music as “Japanese calligraphy, … with the violin acting as the brush that spreads its ink over the canvas created by the piano” (Kozinn, 2011).

For anyone who is familiar with her music, Midori’s mastery over the violin places her in a class of musical excellence where only a small elite has earned the right to exist (appropriately, Joshua Bell among them). Here is what one seasoned reviewer had to say about Midori’s talents at Carnegie Hall:

Midori's prodigious prowess lies not only in her ability to make the most herculean pieces sound easy, but make them sound musical. We can try to forget about all the pyrotechnics; rather than marvel at her unprecedented instrumental
mastery, we can immerse ourselves in the wonderfully beautiful music, and savour [sic] the bountiful nuances… Midori has nearly reached the pinnacle of violin art. Every rational, experienced and impartial person who had the privilege to witness this unforgettable concert will have to concede that, at least in expressive and virtuosic music, Midori is already a nonpareil (Midori Review, 2011, emphasis mine).

On February 10th of the same year, a thirteen year-old girl named Rebecca Black from Orange County, California uploaded to YouTube a low budget home-commissioned video of herself singing a song she wrote titled, “Friday.” During the first two weeks on the Web, the video received but a few thousand hits. After getting plugged on the heavily followed social buzz blog Tosh.O, the video went viral. Within one week, the YouTube sensation had 30 million views. At the time this paper went to printing, that number was up to 109 million, and before the end of March had even arrived, references to Rebecca Black had been made in the Wall Street Journal, Fox News, CNN, The New York Times, “Late Night with Conan O’Brien”, Forbes.com, Rolling Stone, and Billboard.com (as well as many other notable sources). Additionally, Black had also sold 37,000 digital copies of the song in a little under a month, and the revenue is still growing. Finally, Rebecca Black received verbal/quoted support from musical pop icons such as Justin Bieber, Simon Cowell, and most importantly, Facebook “friend” leader Lady Gaga who came out to defend the thirteen year-old girl by calling her “genius.” What makes this sensation so particularly fascinating is not the effect of her immediate rise to fame, but its cause – it is how bad the music is that has made it so popular.
Out of further comparative interest, I just checked Midori’s most popular YouTube video. It is a video titled “Nocturne in C-sharp Minor.op.posth” and was uploaded on November 19, 2007 and its view count at the time of writing was 130,650. Simply assuming a straight-line basis, on the one hand Midori represents a slope of 104.8 views per day (130,650 / 1246). And on the other hand, Rebecca Black represents 1,628,152.2 views per day (109,086,199/67). That is a rate of change of 15,535.8 percent. When placed in mathematical terms, the difference in exposure is obviously incredible—fifteen thousand percent!

Another social query Bourdieu set out to investigate was how consistent the relationship between social class and taste in music is throughout Western culture and how motivated it is by the economic concept of cultural profit. He likens this scenario of taste to a marketplace, highlighting the “relationships between groups maintaining different, even antagonistic, relations to culture, depending on the conditions in which they acquired their cultural capital and the markets in which they can derive most profit from it.” At first glance, Weingarten corroborates Bourdieu’s theory by drawing attention to the fact that when middle-class workers in Washington do not recognize the value of Bell playing Bach, they confirm a notion of cultural capital—that is they lack the educational capital, scholastic inculcation, and social origin to ‘hear’ Bell’s greatness. But, because of the location, even this is a stretch. The District of Columbia is home to the highest percentage of Bachelor of Arts degrees in the nation and the average per capita household income is almost twice that of the national average (Census, 2009).\footnote{The U.S. Census Data from 2009 reported that 47 percent of Washington D.C. residents had an education level with a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher. The same census data reports the national average at 28 percent. Also, D.C. residents have a $40,846 income per capita, while the national benchmark is $27,041.}
Pierre Bourdieu was on to something when he theorized that a person’s taste in certain objects (cheese, milk, music, etc.) represents a range in value and is a strong indicator of an individual’s social class. Yet the study I have performed over the last year in New York City’s subway system pushes back against this notion. One of my interviewees irately pointed out when I read him an excerpt from Weingarten’s article how, “he is really missing the forest for complaining about one tree” (Interviewee No. 7, 2011). It is important to keep in mind that Bourdieu’s data set was collected in the 1960s when the availability to both hear and own music, as well as the freedom (technologically speaking, not politically) to listen to music was on a grossly more limited scale. The boom in technology, which has enabled an unprecedented and previously unimaginable access to music, is slowly disproving Bourdieu’s argument. Unlike Weingarten, who missed the point by only ‘focusing on one tree,’ this study attempts to take a bird’s eye view of the entire forest by asking not, “what are you all missing?” but instead, “just how tuned in are you?”

As you will see in detail below, the results showed two things: 1) Variety is on the rise making it more difficult to ascribe Bourdieu’s theory of distinction; and 2) Most people’s awareness of the ‘who’ or ‘what’ surrounding them aesthetically is limited anyhow. The appearance of an obscure classical musician playing in a Metro station during morning rush hour does not perpetuate that inertia.
The Method

The social study conducted was a three-part study. Part one consisted of a ten-question survey distributed randomly through online media and social networking sites as well as in-person question and answer. In order to avoid limited and biased response, I hired research assistance for distribution. The idea was to gather as diversified a respondent-set as possible. Using my own personal network would have limited the respondents to “music-heads” and therefore ran the risk of skewing the results. I was attempting to control for the variable of not surveying only people who use their iPods extremely frequently, have a vast knowledge and appreciation for music, and who were already aware of my study and hypothesis.

Part two involved seventeen hour-long detailed interviews with a select, smaller focus group. The interview format was one-on-one, facilitated by me, and had seven base-questions to keep the conversation directional and progressive. However, the intention of these interviews was to allow for more of a free-forming conversation about listening to personal music in public space. Again, the requests for interviews were posted on Craigslist and much was done to get as diverse an interviewee list as possible. The goal here was to discuss the function of music on the subway with people from a range of professional sectors, ages, social class, and race, and with whom had all different levels of music knowledge and backgrounds. Outstanding remarks and insightful observations were used as aids to my analysis of the final and most crucial part of my empirical research.
Part three was done over six months in New York City’s subway system and involved a combination of observation and survey. Different from part one, which focused on what one’s self-perception of his/her own listening habits were while not engaged in the act of riding the subway, this section was to observe whether or not iPod users were actually aware of their music when listening. The method used was to approach every person observed wearing headphones, non-selectively, and request they fill out a four-question survey that asked primarily what song and artist they were listening to. As stated earlier, the interest in musical taste was not of immediate concern, although the results did allow for a deeper, secondary analysis (of the Bourdieuan kind) about youth, social class, and musical taste (I briefly discuss this in the results section of the paper). What was really at play here was how many respondents were consciously aware of the music that was playing exclusively for them. By noting which respondents had to check their media player before completing the survey that asked them to list “Artist” and “Song”, I was able to make key conclusion-leading observations about the level of engagement people hold while listening to personal music in public space.

Other data points of interest to the reader were age, race, time of day, and subway line. Taking for granted, and asking the reader to do so as well in my Introduction, the suggestion that New York City’s subway system offers the most diverse public transportation platform in the nation, this study sought to take advantage of that diversification by riding different trains in different neighborhoods and at different times of day. Recording the music “list” to assist in confirming the level of diversification of listeners in this study, but was not enough to argue music preference as an indicator of social class. That theory has already been addressed by reference to Bourdieu in earlier
sections of this paper. However, the contention that popular music is a signifier of both 
age and identity (as opposed to social class) plays a key role in the study’s findings and 
conclusion, and has been supported theoretically through reference to Simon Frith and 
Christopher Ballantine.
The Results

The primary finding of the study: For the majority of iPod users in public space, the awareness of music regardless of aesthetic value or the cultural capital of the critic or listener, is greatly limited in a public setting. Individualized music in public space serves a function of withdrawal, not engagement, and therefore cannot be used to make qualified judgments about aesthetics, value, or social class.

Secondary finding: The consistencies in musical taste reveal more about identity development and maturity than they do about social class.

Think of a passenger in a bus or car flipping through a magazine en route. The magazine would be filled with any high number of images, and, depending on the quality of the magazine, could range from cheap, lowbrow photography of famous people getting out of cars or sun tanning on beaches, to high quality prints of up-scale models presenting some of the world’s most avant-garde design products. While some images may be “art for art’s sake”, it is fair to assume that most were printed in order to sell the reader a product. When our fictional passenger-reader arrives at his or her destination, would we expect them to toss the magazine aside to stop and look at a Pollock that may be hanging on a graffitied wall? I would argue not. Our passenger is no longer subject to a confined public space (subway), and has entered a mode of transit of which he/she can control (walking). The images in the magazine have not enhanced or restricted his/her ability to derive pleasure from other images displayed en route; they have simply passed the time while waiting. Music on the subway serves the same purpose as the prints in the
magazine: ‘get me to where I am going and shut the rest of the world out while you’re at it.’

Of the people surveyed in New York City’s subway system between November 2010 and March 2011, 959 percent of those questioned who were listening to music did so without predetermining what to listen to. This is an interesting figure. Noting that almost two-thirds of iPod listeners choose to do so in “Shuffle” mode suggests that the purpose of personal music in public space is less about conscious engagement with sound as it is withdrawal from society. It appears that the mere act of putting on headphones before heading out into public says something about an individual’s choice to engage with music over socializing with environment. This, I found to be true.

Choosing recorded music over the heavy-breathing man beside you or the shrieking breaks of a subway train is indicative of a conscious decision to favor pleasant harmonies over urban cacophonies. However, the fact that those harmonies are not chosen with intent tells us something different, but just as important, about people’s listening habits. A good metaphor for this is food. There is eating to survive, eating to get by, and eating to savor, and again the difference between these comes down to access and availability. In this case, Orsino may consider suggesting, “If music be the food of life, play on” (Shakespeare 2, 1997). The iPod has created a context in which all the people can access all the ‘foods’ all the time. If cultural tastes and flavors from around the world were made available to all of us indefinitely, how long would it take before each one of us didn’t care or realize what was constantly available for eating? (Ironically, this is also true of New Yorkers as sushi and pho are as obtainable as Fukuyama Masaharu and Luu

---

9 See appendices for full results and analysis.
Huu Phuoc). The music on one’s iPod provides this door to another place, and for most, it doesn’t matter what that door looks like or how that place sounds.

A result from the survey that the author found to be more fascinating than the fact that majority of listeners did not control what they listen to, was that 63 percent of people surveyed didn’t even know what they were listening to! When asked what song and artist people had playing, only 27 percent were confident enough to write it down without checking—and this is from a musical library they themselves had built! If one is not even aware of his or her own purchased (or acquired) music as it plays for them, how can we ever expect people to recognize or want to listen to music he or she has never heard or had an interest in before?

A variable within this portion of my study for which I could not account was ‘assuredness’. How many people looked, I wonder, because of the oddity of my request? When a stranger approaches you on the subway and asks you to write down what song and artist you are listening to, a study of human behavior may indicate that people will look at their iPod regardless of their confidence in already knowing the answer. In the same way that one checks a watch when a stranger on the street asks for the time (and he/she is pretty confident in the answer) or the way one glances over a menu before ordering at a favorite restaurant even though he/she already knows exactly what is desired, there is nothing to say that of those surveyed, most of them thought they knew, but were checking with their iPod just to be safe. I am aware of this flaw in my research and should I set out to extend this research further, I will do my best to account for its defect. However, the results stand as they are, and whether it was out of reassurance or not, the fact that 63 percent of iPod listeners needed to check who and what song they
had playing at the time of question informs us quite a bit about the level of awareness people have for music while travelling through public space.¹⁰

Let me digress for a minute and go back to the theory that started this entire investigation in the first place, the one found in The Walkman Effect. An interesting analysis into this phenomenon that Hosokawa attempts to explain in his work was the surprise people had when they saw the Walkman for the first time in their cities. Suddenly, there was an evident fact that everyone could know whether the Walkman user was listening to something, but not what he was listening to. Something was there, but it did not appear: it was secret. Until the appearance of the Walkman, people had not witnessed a scene in which a passer-by ‘confessed’ that he had a secret in such a distinct and obvious way” (p. 177). Even if the iPod is not in plain view itself (and from my observations, majority of the time it most certainly was not), the applied headphones signal to the rest of the public that: a) one is engaged in an activity of sound, but b) no one else is allowed to know exactly what that activity sounds like.

The communication of revealing a secret is a two-part process: first, it must be revealed that there is a secret to be shared; second, the act of sharing its contents negate it from being a secret any longer. What Hosokawa draws his reader’s attention to, is that the act of wearing headphones and listening to music in public space is the conscious decision to exist mysteriously between these two occurrences. The iPod user lets others know that she is listening to something, but at the same time communicates they are not

¹⁰ In terms of listing the actual music that is listened to in the New York City subway system at any given time on any given day and nearest any given station, the task would be fruitless. There is very little to conclude from the actual song or artist list I received other than to say, I was familiar with only about half of the music people listen to (which did not come as a surprise). The range of music, however, is worth marveling at as it reached from Beethoven to Underground Rap and from Swedish House Music to Rabbi Lectures.
allowed to be a part of it, and by doing so she neither refuses communication from them nor is isolated from the reality in which she stands. Instead, she continues enunciating the existence of her secret in a simple way, wavering between an isolated world of privacy and a social world of public interaction (p. 177). What this could mean then, is that the iPod is an article of “fashion for secrecy” more than it is a vehicle for artistic expression.

This suggestion is further supported when we look at the demographic nature of iPod listeners and their specific ‘age’. Of all the people approached, 66 percent of the iPod listeners on the subway were under the age of twenty-nine and only 2 percent over the age of fifty (only one person approached checked the >60 field, and at that, she put that she was sixty years old exactly). These results should not come as a surprise—technology accommodates and Apple aggressively target-markets youth culture. What it does show is how the iPod has become an accessory of fashion and a symbol of youth society more then it is a device meant for musical interpretation. Knowing that two-thirds of the listeners are less than twenty-nine years old and roughly the same amount had to check to see what they were listening to, tells us a lot about the awareness youth have for their own music. A brave analytical leap would be to say that the iPod is more fashion statement or symbol of wealth, stature, and position in society than it is about music. Not to say that iPods are expensive, as almost anyone these days can afford at least one model of iPod, but this does plant the notion that it is important to youth culture to have access to music as a display of hipness, even if that access falls on deaf ears. And for anyone reading this who has already survived puberty, it should already be realized that nothing separates hip teenagers from their untrendy parents as effectively as a secret.
The solitary knowledge of the music being played to the secret holder empowers the listener with a sense of superiority, autonomy, edge, and fringe over her fellow passengers. It is also enabling of a distinct communication between other iPod listeners (that is, similar age-group hipsters), regardless of musical taste. This is what Hosokawa calls “a visa for the secret garden of the Walkman in which people communicate with one another through the form—not the content—of the secret” (p. 178). The open communication of secret-ownership is what is at stake, not the secret itself. This could help explain why so many people are unaware of the contents of their own agency to hipness. Exactly what is being listened to does not matter. The music coming out of the iPod becomes enmeshed in the reality of the situation, and can therefore only come to human consciousness by way of a code which simultaneously serves to encode and decode such reality (Barthes, 1982, p. 221).

For anyone looking to plant any sort of race-theory to this study, it is an uphill climb. All but 8 percent were comfortable sharing their racial demographic with my study and it was pretty balanced between White (36 percent), Black (27 percent), and Latino (23 percent). Asians represented 6 percent of the respondents. These numbers are fairly representative of US Census Data (2011) for population in New York City, which does not account for tourism.

As for the online and handed out portion of the study, the demographic numbers again reflect Census data consistently. 58 percent of survey respondents were male, 50 percent White, 17 percent Black, and 26 percent Latino. Again, with more than half of the respondents (54 percent) in the 20-29 year-old age bracket, there is a specific spike in what can be considered the ‘youth sector’.
Importantly, 94 percent of the online/hand-out respondents were residents of New York City. When asked if they own an iPod, or some form of listening device, 96 percent responded in the positive. Another 55 percent admitted to using the subway at least twice a day (i.e. “commuters”), and less than 1 percent claim to “never” use it. These are important numbers to pair—of all the people surveyed I was able to get a strong sample-set of people who frequently use the subway system and own an iPod. Finally, 42 percent of this group admitted to listening to their iPod “all the time” and another 44 percent answered “frequently” or “sometimes” when asked how often they use it. In total, 86 percent of the people stated that they do listen to an iPod while riding public transportation.

Typically, people think they are more aware of the music being played than is actually true. When asked about musical awareness, 66 percent responded that they do “listen” but they also “pay attention to other things.” However, as I have already stated, when actually approached and asked what someone is listening to, only 27 percent of the people could tell me without looking. And finally, out of curiosity for Gene Weingarten and Joshua Bell’s sake, the survey asked how many “remove their headphones to listen to live music” when they come across a performer in public space. 43 percent stated they “never” do while only 10 percent answered “every time.”

For a lot of New Yorkers, and Washingtonians for that matter, the subway system, especially during morning and afternoon commuter hours, is not a social environment meant for cultural reflection or aesthetic appreciation. If anything it would be more likely to take place on the actual train, where people are forced to sit and wait in contemplation, than in the halls of the underground pathways. The fact that in the station people are
hustling to get to where they are going, and that Bell did not play in one of the subway cars but on a station platform instead, increased the probability that commuters would not take notice of him, regardless of how well he played. The combination of subway platform (‘location’) and Monday morning rush hour (‘timing’) were variables in Weingarten’s experiment that could have been more anticipated and therefore better controlled. Joshua Bell could just as easily have played on a train, where people are forced to immobility, than the top of an escalator where people are but sheep on a conveyor belt. Even the platform at the end of the day as opposed to the beginning, increases the probability that commuters would stop and listen. Here is what one interview respondent had to say about when and how he listens to subway musicians:

There are so many talented musicians in the subway that I ignore because when I’m in a rush (more often than not) I’m too distracted to care. The only time I stop to enjoy subway music is at 2am when all the trains are running local and I’m stuck waiting an hour for one to arrive. In those moments, I really have no choice but to acknowledge the “Stevie Wonder” that-never-was playing the keyboard on a milk crate (Interviewee No. 3, 2011).

A suggested follow-up study would be to test whether musicians earn more money in those stations that are a part of a residential neighborhood at the end of a day than those in the downtown core at the beginning of the day.

Weingarten and Bell set themselves up for failure. Whether this was intentional or not, I do not know. Perhaps Gene Weingarten wanted to expose the people in his experiment of not being as culturally inept as he thinks he is. One subject I interviewed
brought up an insightful observation when I read him the same excerpt from the Post’s article that was quoted at the beginning of this paper:

What [Weingarten] has done is, he has predetermined what a standard of excellence is. He decided that the standard of excellence is Mozart played by the highest, in demand classical musician who plays for an established class. Those are his standards of excellence. Well, if those are your standards of excellence you have already predetermined what a great aesthetic is. Look, to say [people not understanding or appreciating Bell or Bach] is the reason why they didn’t stop that morning is because they all have a different understanding of aesthetics … then [Gene Weingarten] has a very limited understanding of what types of aesthetics are available to people, or the complications involved…. My problem with his statement is that he thinks people don’t know greatness when they hear it. Excuse me? He can’t prove that. He thinks he’s proved that by having people walk by something specific. I wonder if there isn’t a set of things that he wouldn’t walk by; not only walk by, but also judge… The people who don’t apply to that aesthetic he is talking about? They walk past it; but they don’t criticize it (Interviewee No. 11, 2011).

Gene Weingarten, Joshua Bell, and each Washington DC subway commuter is not without his or her own cultural capital; like it or not. Nor am I; nor are you; and nor were those people I interviewed at length, observed on the subway, took my survey online or in the park, and approached on the train. The effect modern technology has had on each one of these subjects’ own cultural capital, and the exponential effects it will continue to have long into the twenty first century when this study has become obsolete, is a giant
impact on Bourdieu’s findings and Weingarten’s understandings of aesthetics. What has been identified as Weingarten’s major error is his misuse of Bourdieu’s idea of *aesthetic disposition*, that is, “the capacity to operate the arbitrary classification which, within the universe of worked upon objects, distinguishes the objects socially designated as deserving and demanding an aesthetic approach that can recognize and constitute them as works of art” (p. 39). Asking the reader to accept without evaluation or argument that music, in any form, is one of those “objects socially designated as deserving and demanding an aesthetic approach,” I ask that we focus on what has been identified as Weingarten’s own “capacity to operate an arbitrary classification.”

Notice how it is “the grey rush of modernity” Weingarten assigns as the evil blindfold in artistic realization. It as if to say that technology and the “scurrying rat race” is the cause of a universal “dumbing down” of cultural appreciation happening today in society. The data collected in this study proves this is not the case. “Culture is culture,” as one interviewee put it to me (who, it is interesting to note, was a young twenty-something employee at Google Inc.—technology’s Zeus and modernity’s chariot incarnate). To presuppose that in “his comparison, [the] counterparts, before technology allowed us to be mobile with our music, were hyper-engaged culturally literate humans is preposterous.” The interviewee makes a great observation, and one that deserves further attention. After seeking “permission to rant because of how disturbed [he was] by the claim”, he went on:

I don’t remember the fifties being a time where everyone was super-culturally literate and had access to the world’s catalogue of music and media at their fingertips. I think that some people who are nostalgic for a time where people
aren’t wearing headphones in the subway don’t really know what they’re asking for. Even if it’s not highbrow, intellectual fodder—culture is culture. Even a kid’s ability to experience a new type of music, or watch a TV show, or watch a movie on the subway, we kind of sneer at that because it’s pop culture and commercial. But that’s still a portal to different types of culture that kids have never had before. I think that enriches our experiment more than it diminishes it. Fifty years ago, the only way to listen to a virtuoso violinist was either afford the ticket to see him or you happen to discover a record accidentally and go home and put it on the turntable and listen. But you were then confined to the one room while you listen, and the one album. Now, you can tell me, on the subway, as a stranger, “Hey—I know about this violinist in Sweden who never performs,” and within an hour I can have his entire catalogue and I can listen to it whether I am in California, Sweden, or New York. And I can even listen to it underground. What’s restricting or grey about that? (Interviewee No. 7, 2011)
Conclusion

In a terribly tacky book written in 2006 titled, Guaranteed Solutions: For Sex, Worry, Fear, Jealousy, Attention-need, Ego, Discontent, author Swarni Nithyananda cleverly observed: “The problem is, life doesn’t have background music! When you watch the love stories on television, they all come with background music and so you easily enter into a fantasy world. Music has the power to melt you and take you to a vulnerable state. All the scenes that you see, especially the love scenes, come with background music. You enjoy it so much because of the background music. You are completely mesmerized by the atmosphere created in the television box” (p. 257). As trite as the observation may be now, I was reminded of it when I set out to begin my research. Is that what people are in search of—background music to accompany their walk through life?

“All the world’s a stage,” remarks Jacques in As You Like It, and there is a feeling out there that the iPod is the device to finally provide dramatic effect for the performance of our lifetime. Music has become a personalized form for that unnoticed drone of muzak that is heard through the grey halls of an American outlet mall. Yes, there are moments during an iPod in New York experience where a song acts as the perfect aesthetic accompaniment to a self-designed social reality, but these are few and far between. Just like in the production of cinema, most of the background music in a film is just that—“background”. There are numerous scores of unnoticeable music layered throughout “Rocky” that the viewer never notices. But who doesn’t hear the military call of the trumpet at the beginning of Rocky’s training montage?
As I was walking through the pathway between Times Square subway station and Port Authority Bus Terminal today, a number of acoustic events took place, back-to-back, in a matter of seconds (I was not wearing my iPod). First, a choral barbershop quartet broke into Gospel Music as I came out of the train, and when they did, everyone within eyesight continued walking by un-phased. As the crowd bottlenecked at the first door, a homeless man was holding one of the doors open for passers-by with his hand extended. He was shouting in rhyme and rhythm, request for change. No one paid him any attention. Upon entering the Port Authority, I could make out Chopin being played over decade-old, tinny speakers. I wondered to myself if this was a ‘soundscape’ tactic used by New York’s Port Authority commissioners to assist in calming the evening rush-hour crowd. I was certain no one but me was listening. Louder than the Chopin, there was a Rihanna track coming from one of the clothing stores in the underground plaza; its pop beat dominating the sound of the meek Port Authority’s attempt at soothing classical piano. I knew this to be a marketing tactic used to entice the consumer-commuters to step into the world of youth and fashion. Not one person entered the store. Finally, as I placed my front foot onto the escalator after waiting patiently my turn in the cattle-rustle, the MTA Intercom coughed on to announce delays on the LIRR. The announcement went unheeded. I looked around and observed about half the people within view wearing headphones. I also concluded, almost immediately, that I was the only one who just heard everything from the barbershop quartet to the Rihanna, and from the Chopin to the service announcement. This is not because of any sort of culture I had—only because of my decision to consciously listen to it all.
“No wonder so many people choose to tune into their own music,” I thought.

“Actually, that’s not it all. No wonder so many people choose to tune out.”
Appendices

What is your race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Latino
- White

How old are you?

- 0 - 19 yrs
- 20 - 30 yrs
- 30 - 40 yrs
- 40 - 50 yrs
- 50 - 60 yrs
- 60+
How frequently do you use the subway system in New York City?

Do you listen to your iPod/PLD while riding the subway?

- All the time
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Never
- I don't own an iPod
When listening to music in public space, I MOST OFTEN will:

- Intentionally pre-select my music each time (10)
- Listen to a playlist I have already made (30)
- Listen to it on “shuffle” (70)
- There is no real “MOST OFTEN,” I frequently switch it up (20)
- I don’t listen to music in public space (5)

When listening to your iPod in public space and coming across a live musician performing for change, how often do you remove your earphones to listen to the live music?

- Never (60)
- Sometimes (40)
- Often (20)
- Every time (10)
- I don’t listen to music in public space (5)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shuffle</th>
<th>Pre-Select</th>
<th>Checked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day 1</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day 2</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day 3</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day 4</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>121</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>37%</strong></td>
<td><strong>63%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


University Press.


Midori - Live At Carnegie Hall. Author unknown. [Customer Review of the Concert]


— — —. Twelfth Night, Act I, scene I, lines 1-3. (pp. 437-77).

