Participating in the Classical Music World:
Four Amateur Organisations and the Perspectives of their Members

* a thesis submitted to Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

by Roger Palmer
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Abstract

This study aims to contribute to scholarly knowledge by understanding some aspects of four amateur classical music groups – two choirs, an orchestra and an instrument oriented organisation – in Wellington, New Zealand. This study pays particular attention to the musicians, their musical life, the values they ascribe to their music-making, and their organisations’ histories, aims and activities, repertoire, audiences, and membership and organisation. In the small body of scholarly literature regarding amateur musicians few studies have been concerned with the singers’ and instrumentalists’ perspectives. This is an exploratory study that uses qualitative methods, including focus groups. It finds that the participants make music primarily for their aesthetic pleasure. Concerts provide a raison d’être for the organisations and a motivating factor for their members to work to their highest attainable standards. The participants indicated that they generally regard the social significance of belonging to a music organisation as less important than their music-making. Although the four organisations do not perform exclusively classical music, they employ conventions of the classical music world to shape the organisational structure of their music making, to determine who has authority to make musical decisions and to determine the skills and talents they value.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every week in Wellington amateur musicians gather in halls, churches, school classrooms and private homes to play or sing classical music and to prepare for public performances. Their lives and responsibilities are arranged in ways that suggest that they have given these choirs, orchestras,consorts and bands very high priority; for many of these musicians family and work responsibilities are only allowed to disrupt their music practice on rare occasions. Many of the musicians’ commitment extends beyond the rehearsals and concerts to attending committee meetings, carrying out administrative and publicity tasks, and accepting organisational and financial responsibilities. What is it about this music that it is so important to them? Does it satisfy some strongly felt need of the individual musicians? Or is it an important part of Wellington’s artistic vitality, bringing the musicians’ recognition and gratitude from their audiences and others? Could this activity, therefore, be in some ways essential to New Zealand culture, contributing to our sense of who we are, reflecting our most important values, or presenting symbols that are essential to how we organise our world?

This study is, then, not so much concerned with music in the sense of what is written in scores, manuscripts and other texts, as what some groups of people do, how they organise themselves and what some of their members have to say about their activities and music. Classical music in this study is not used as in a musicological sense but, like colloquial usage, to very broadly mean Western Art Music in general. It is used to distinguish a kind of music from other musics such as ‘popular music,’ jazz, and music of non-Western cultures. This use of classical music refers to the grand tradition that has a trajectory beginning in mediaeval Europe, passing through Beethoven and
other great composers and is maintained in various forms today.¹ An underlying assumption is that classical music is generally performed in similar ways throughout the world. For example, at concerts the musicians are distinguishable from their audiences, by their location and by their behaviour, which includes deliberate attention to the sounds the musicians produce.² A classical music organisation can not only be recognised by its repertoire, but aspects of its organisation and structure, values and practices conform to conventions commonly used for the production of classical music, and rely upon generally understood concepts of the nature of its music.

I am carrying out this study because I consider myself to be an amateur musician and, as president of the Recorders and Early Music Union (REMU), a leader of amateur musicians. The questions this study addresses are directly relevant to REMU and myself. Recorder playing is a minority interest, involving a tiny proportion of Wellington’s population.³ My questioning REMU’s relevance and social significance in Wellington’s art and classical music scene is part of the background of this study.

This study began with a concern for the value of amateur classical music organisations’ activities in Wellington. It is exploratory and describes examples of classical music-making and the musicians who are actively involved. In its final form it incorporates questions about the unwritten conventions of classical music. This is a study of four organisations: two choirs, an orchestra and an instrument oriented society. It is not a history, focused on the past, nor is it a complete survey of amateur classical music-making in Wellington, but rather the research is centred on the views of the

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² The conventions of classical music are described in Chapter 3. The distinction between audience and musicians, and audience behaviour is described by Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. (Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1998) 39-49.

³ I have been a member of recorder consorts in Australia and New Zealand. In Wellington I have played with 440Five, a quintet, since it was formed in 1987. I am an honorary life member of the Recorders and Early Music Union (which is included in this study) and I have been its President since 1989.
organisations’ members who volunteered to participate in this project. Similarly it is not conceived as a study of community music as it focuses on the internal aspects of the four organisations and more narrowly on some of their members’ views, discourses and experiences. Rather than presenting an argument about the value of classical music performances of the four organisations from the writer’s perspective, the views of members of those organisations are put in the foreground in this study.

This study is centred on three groups of questions:

1. What are the salient features of the four organisations’ histories, aims, activities, repertoire, audiences, membership and organisation?

2. What is important to the musicians about their music–making; what notable corollaries of their music-making do they describe; and what are their views of its cultural and other significance?

3. In what ways and to what extent do the organisations use classical music practices?

As noted in the literature review, scholars, critics and others who write about music rarely make the distinction between amateur and professional musicians, implying that they have the same aims and their work is complementary. This study questions such assumptions and shows that the musicians who participated in this study described some features of their music-making that are unlikely to be shared with the majority of professional musicians.

Ruth Finnegan, Robert Stebbins and Antoine Hennion have completed research concerned with amateur musicians in England, North America and France respectively. These studies are introduced in Chapter 2 along with other research and music education papers both from around the world and

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within New Zealand. Ethnographies of classical music institutions comprise another group of relevant studies. They are important to this current study because they provide descriptions of classical music conventions, and contribute to this study’s methodology.

The exploratory components of this study involve questions about what it may contribute to scholarly knowledge of classical music performance in Wellington. This study questions the nature of the selected organisations: who are their members, and what are their views, practices and experiences? It is oriented to the musicians and makes extensive use of their opinions and comments. This study’s third question compares the observations of the four organisations and the focus group participants’ views with some music scholars’ theories. These three groups of questions involve different types of epistemology, some of which are influenced by postmodern musicological and social science scholarship.

Classical music, as it is used here to make a distinction between Western art music and other kinds such as popular music, involves not just the written music but a variety of practices. These practices rely on people adopting roles such as composer, musician, audience, publisher, critic and others. Howard Becker conceived of art worlds as consisting of all the roles required by a particular art form. Finnegan employed this concept to study the classical music world in Milton Keynes. This study uses the concept of the classical music world along with work of other scholars who have described roles, practices, structures, rules, principles and values of institutions of classical music. They provide a basis for the comparison of this study’s findings with conventions of the classical music world.

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5 Howard S. Becker, Art Worlds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 37.
6 Finnegan, The Hidden Musicians. 31. Finnegan applied this concept to the study of seven music worlds including the classical music world.
7 Bruno Nettl, Heartland Excursions; Christopher Small, Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1998). Neither Nettl nor Small claim that their work constitutes a complete or universally applicable model of classical music. However, no other work has been found that is more appropriate for this use. In this study, then, conventions are taken to incorporate roles, practices, structures, rules, principles and values of an art world.
This is a study of four organisations and what some of their members have to say about their music activities rather then the music itself. As such the music is rarely in the foreground, following a trend Jonathon Stock noted in some comparable scholarly work:

“It is probably fair to say that these new ethnomusicological studies [of Western musical traditions] have generally concentrated more on aspects of musical conceptualization and behaviour than on the explanation of the actual sound structures of individual Western pieces or performances.”8

The use of the anthropological concept of *culture* was considered as a possible framework for this description of a segment of classical music practice.9 Although ethnomusicologists, who have influenced this study, have employed the concept of culture in their research of music practices it has not been applied in this Wellington study because no readily adaptable model incorporating both classical music and culture was found.

The term *amateur musician* is also problematic. A definition in economic terms creates anomalies. For example, should a retired professional musician be considered to be an amateur because her income is no longer related to her music-making? Another question concerns whether people in closely related professions, such as music teaching (including university music department staff), should be considered to be professional musicians. The education of a musician is an important consideration but inadequate for distinguishing amateurs and professionals. Similarly, the distinction between musicians and non-musicians is difficult to define. As described in Chapter 2, I found little consensus among scholars on these issues.

The organisations’ leaders and the members who participated in the discussion groups confirmed that they consider their organisations and themselves to be

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amateur. Specific educational and vocational criteria, however, were used to select participants for this study and ensure its integrity (see Chapter 3).

The Organisations

The two choirs, orchestra, and an instrument oriented society included in this study were selected because they are amateur, classical music organisations.\(^\text{10}\) Cantoris is a choir of approximately twenty-five singers that is known for its period performances of Handel oratorios in the 1980s. However, its concerts have drawn on a much wider repertoire throughout its thirty-six years of performing. The Northern Chorale is a community choir associated with Johnsonville, Khandallah, and other northern suburbs of Wellington.\(^\text{11}\) Its repertoire is dominated by classical music. The Capital Performing Arts Orchestra (CPA Orchestra) involves approximately thirty players, comprising strings, woodwind and brass. The orchestra regularly performs as part of an evening of entertainment in a suburban venue for a loyal audience largely consisting of retired people. The Recorders and Early Music Union (REMU) is an instrument-orientated society providing meetings, workshops and concerts for its members and the Wellington public. It began as a local representation of the Early Music movement. The histories, aims and activities, repertoire and programmes, audiences, membership and organisation of these groups are described in Chapter 4. This selection includes a range of organisations that have salient differences and commonalities.

\(^{10}\) Amateur, classical music organisation is a description that the leaders of the four organisations agreed was applicable to their choir, orchestra or society in the context of this study.

\(^{11}\) The term community choir lacks clear definition. The New Zealand Choral Federation includes a broad range of choirs in its category of community choirs (New Zealand Choral Federation cited 25 May 2005; available from http://www.nzcf-auckland.com). It implies broad repertoires (for example “major classical and baroque choral works, folk songs, traditional music and modern hymns”, Tom Lumb, Festival Singers JT Lumb Resources, 2000; cited 16 April 2005; http://www.festival-singers.org.nz), or it may be used for a choir that identifies with a limited geographic area such as a city suburb. It may also indicate a ‘community of interest’ (for example Brazen Hussies, “feminist community choir”), or an ethnic or national group (for example the Silver Tulip Choir).
**The Musicians**

Fifty-three members of the organisations included in this study provided information about themselves and volunteered to join a discussion group (*focus group*) to talk about their music-making. Three focus groups, involving a total of ten musicians, met between August and September 2004. Their discussions included descriptions of amateur music organisations, many music-making experiences, and the participants’ values and ways of thinking. The analyses of these are presented in Chapter 5 with examples. This study’s representation of the participants is limited by the ethical commitment to the confidentiality of their views and involvement.

**Background**

Contrary to what is commonly implied by the adjectival use of the term, amateurs have not always been regarded as inferior musicians. In sixteenth century Europe there was little distinction between courtiers, many of whom were skilled musicians, and musicians who were employed in the courts. In the nineteenth century, music became too difficult for amateur instrumentalists who now found pleasure in listening to music rather than playing it. Allan Thomas has described how music in Hawera (a provincial town in New Zealand) in the first half of the twentieth century was dependent on amateurs, and how they became less important after the distinction between “high art music of the classical composers and the semi-popular ephemeral music of songs and occasional pieces” became established.

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There are over thirty amateur classical music organisations in Wellington, most of whose members are not paid for music making.\textsuperscript{15} There are orchestras, choirs, operatic organisations and specialist groups. Other musicians may play or sing classical music only for their immediate friends and family, or for their own pleasure. Others have regular lessons but do not belong to any choir, orchestra or other similar organisation. This study does not include them nor church and other religious choirs, nor brass and pipe bands; it focuses on organisations whose aims are primarily artistic.\textsuperscript{16}

Wellington is New Zealand’s capital city and has been the base for the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra since its inception in 1947. The national opera and ballet companies have had their headquarters in Wellington at various times and the New Zealand School of Music is located here. Wellington is also the venue of the \textit{International Festival of the Arts}, a biennial arts festival that includes a variety of classical music performed by international and New Zealand artists and ensembles. This lively arts scene may have some influence on amateur music-making although an assessment of its impact is beyond the scope of this study. Wellington has a rich and dense classical music world that includes the work of many musicians who pay to make music. Just why they do it and its significance to themselves, their communities and to culture and the arts in New Zealand are questions that may only be answerable by any one individual in terms of their personal values, but they indicate something of the direction this study takes.

\textsuperscript{15} An informal survey of amateur classical music organisations in Wellington produced the following estimates:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organisation type</th>
<th>Number of organisations</th>
<th>Number of musicians (low - high estimates)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orchestras</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>150 - 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choirs (not including religious/worship groups)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>400 - 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera/Musical Theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other organisations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120 – 140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{16} Brass and pipe bands are not included in this study because they have important roles in community and civic events. They may have artistic aims along side those concerned with serving the community, but I decided that my concern in this study with artistic issues could be adequately addressed with fewer types of music organisations and the inclusion of brass and pipe bands unnecessarily complicated it.
Chapter 2

Scholarly Literature

Chapter 1 briefly introduced the work of three scholars, Stebbins, Finnegan and Hennion, who have completed studies of amateur musicians. Their work, which involves divergent approaches and few commonalities, is discussed in the International Literature section of this chapter. The publications of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) are another major source of scholarly literature concerned with amateur musicians. ISME has given amateur music recognition by forming its Commission on Community Music Activity. The New Zealand Society for Music Education (NZSME) hosted the ISME seminar on the interaction between amateur and professional musicians in 1988. Some of the seminar papers are relevant to this study and were published by NZSME. This chapter also introduces four ethnographic studies and one other study of classical music, which do not focus on amateur musicians but are relevant for their analyses of practices of classical music performance and education.

International Literature

Robert A. Stebbins

Robert Stebbins is a North American sociologist who has studied a variety of amateur activities including music-making and particularly Barbershop singing. Stebbins defines amateur “macrosociologically as a member of a professional-amateur-public system of functionally interdependent

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relationships”. In his model, amateurs are portrayed as similar to professionals in creating non-standard products, having a sense of identity with other practitioners and engaging with institutions. Stebbins offers a second definition of amateur in terms of five social-psychological attitudes: “confidence, perseverance, continuance commitment, preparedness and self-conception”. He describes how the first four of these are significantly greater in professionals, and that a musician’s identifying him or herself as an amateur is the most reliable indicator of his or her status.

Stebbins found that amateurs (in general) provide services to sections of the public that the professionals do not reach, that they engage economically and organisationally with professionals, and that amateurs develop knowledge that is relevant but peripheral to professionals’ performance. He notes how people not engaged in the amateurs’ avocation are unlikely to fully appreciate their efforts and that amateurs remain marginal to the professional world, regardless of their efforts to attain professional standards.

Stebbins’ definition of amateurs as part of a functionally interdependent relationship with professionals and the public is not used in this Wellington study because its application is problematic and its construction obscures important ethical implications. This current study’s participants’ relationships with professional musicians is a topic for discussion and the a priori characterisation of those relationships as interdependent is rejected as limiting the discussion. It includes some consideration of social-psychological attitudes comparable with those defined by Stebbins and found that commitment and identity, similar to Stebbins’ continuance commitment and self-conception, are important to the Wellington participants.

20 Ibid. 26.
21 Ibid. 27.
22 Stebbins found that “all respondents strive to meet the standards that the best professionals have established,” but does not give any hypotheses about how the amateurs explain adoption of those standards or how failing to meet those standards impacts on their music-making. Ibid. 264.
**Ruth Finnegan**

Finnegan’s study of local music in Milton Keynes (England, 1980-84) is the only ethnographic study of all music activities in a geographic area, within Western culture, found in the literature. She used participant observation, interviews and documentary sources to gather descriptive data of all the music activities regardless of their styles. Finnegan did not work from a definition of amateur, but approached her subject from an exploratory position: “to uncover the structure of the often-unrecognised practices of local music-making”. Another question she addresses is:

“[W]hat finally, is the significance of local music-making for the way people manage and make modern urban life or, more widely, for our experience as active human beings?”

Finnegan’s *classical music world* in Milton Keynes encompasses four orchestras, and “up to one hundred choirs” (including church choirs), along with instrumental ensembles, other church music, private music lessons and school music including extra-curricula work. Some of the choirs had their origins in the English choral society tradition of the nineteenth century, performing some works that have remained central to their repertoire throughout their history. Chamber groups and niche groups (such as the local branch of the Society of Recorder Players) were numerous but lacked public attention.

Finnegan found that the rewards of playing or singing classical music are primarily aesthetic:

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23 Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians*. Finnegan briefly describes the local ‘professional’ chamber orchestra but concentrates her study on the breadth of music making: brass bands, folk music, musical theatre, jazz, country and western, and rock and pop.

24 Ibid. ix.

25 Ibid. 4.

26 Ibid. 40. Finnegan found that church choirs are particularly important in that they often served as an introduction to classical repertoire.


28 “Classical [chamber] groups did not have the same recognised public outlets as rock, jazz or folk groups, they tended to play in private - thus unknown to others.” Ibid. 37.
“[and] included a sense of beauty and fundamental value, of intense and profoundly felt artistic experience which could reach to the depths of one’s nature. … For those steeped in the classical tradition these richly symbolic moments were experienced as somehow implicating the deep core of people’s being.”

However, Finnegan suggests that these deeply felt experiences depended on a model that is socially constructed and maintained. She noted that:

“This ideal classical model was a powerful one, which, however vague at the edges, implicitly moulded people’s views of music and of their own participation in it at the local level. They were taking part, it was assumed, in a high art form validated by an authorised historical tradition and a structure of professional specialisation.”

The theme of the marginality of local music activities is expanded in Finnegan’s conclusion:

“Any given event was the direct personal concern of a relatively small number of people (different in each case), while others either failed to notice them consciously or regarded them just as part of the imposed environment …”

This current study aims to develop some understanding of the meaning and value of participation in the classical music world in Wellington for members of the four organisations. This will include consideration of how the musicians perceive the value of their music-making for their audiences and the larger community to which they belong. Questions of how the musicians’ views are moulded by the historical tradition and professional musicians, to which Finnegan refers, are also considered.

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29 Ibid. 41.
30 Ibid. 43.
31 Ibid. 302.
Antoine Hennion

Antoine Hennion is a French sociologist whose research includes the study of popular, classical and other music-making activities, as well as how his participants use music in various forms such as recordings and radio broadcasts. A basic tenet of Hennion’s work is that research oriented only to scores does not adequately explain the significance of music to the participants. Rather, he explores how the participants use music; for example, what are the circumstances when they play a recording or the piano and what effects do these activities have on their immediate social environments and moods? His work is not concerned with amateurs in terms of their occupation, but with people who have significant relationships with music. His definition of amateur musician is music lover, who is necessarily an active user, regardless of the music’s medium and the amateur’s roles (playing, singing, listening, attending concerts, or collecting recordings).

Although Hennion’s work involves a definition that includes people who may not sing or play an instrument, and others who are economically dependent on their music making, his emphasis on how music is used is relevant to this study.

Hennion sees amateurs as acting independently from the music discourses of other groups when he notes that:

“The amateur is not the original mythical figure of a love of music, led astray by our universe of specialists. He is the end point of a very long story, who has little by little given music its autonomy, after having turned it into an art, having extracted it with difficulty from its magical functions, its role of sending crowds into transports or catalysts of faith”.

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33 Ibid.
Hennion, however, also found that the amateurs do not easily leave the common social discourse of music to talk about what they actually do or their ways of listening and choosing music. Instead, they talk more easily about their likes and dislikes, their categories and the opinions of others.

The emotional dimension of music is very important in Hennion’s work. Music itself is not the end result of a passion for music, but a means of reaching certain states. These states involve being lost in the music, “carried away by the sublime.” Amateurs, Hennion argues, need to be redefined as the users of music, so that professionals, techniques and market forces do not make any sense without them. In addition, he sees the music environment as constructed around amateurs, where they are seen not as the least significant players in the pursuit of the art, but as people who actively listen, seeking personal rewards and making choices on the basis of their preferences.

Hennion employs amateur musician in a very broad sense that includes listeners along with players, singers and possibly the majority of professional musicians. His perspective treats music as mediation and directs attention to current use of music and its meanings for the people involved. Although Hennion has little to say about amateur musicians’ organisations, his challenge to redefine amateur musician and regard music as mediation are relevant to this study.

**International Papers**

The ISME Commission on Community Music draws attention to amateur music making, particularly in the Society’s 1978 Year Book. It includes papers written with national perspectives, a theoretical paper concerned with the democratisation of music, and a paper about community art educators employed in several European countries. There is some statistical data to

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36 Ibid. 3.
support arguments that amateur music-making is popular in France and Germany, but comparisons are not possible because divergent definitions are employed.  

There are other papers that concern musicians regarded by the authors as amateur, which are published in a variety of contexts. In her paper about string players, Sylvia Arnett discusses adult participation in community orchestras. She says it “is often the focus, if not the sole use, of the hard-won skills achieved some years earlier,” a point that is true for some Wellington musicians. A theme in Edward Rothstein and Tharald Borgir’s historically oriented articles concerns amateur music-making as having limited value for entertainment in a world where music is readily available anywhere, at any time, through the electronic media. In a separate article, Rothstein notes that amateur music is largely outside the professional/consumer relationship. In a study concerned with leisure, Juniu, Tedrick and Boyd found amateur musicians are less likely to view rehearsals as work and are more intrinsically motivated than professional musicians. Their results, however, show little difference with regard to performance; the amateurs reporting higher levels of extrinsic motivation for concerts compared to their motivation to rehearse. In her paper, which draws on psychological theories, Catherine Ellis discusses


differences between amateur and professional music making, and how only experienced professional musicians can create ecstatic experiences.\textsuperscript{43}

Finnegan’s Milton Keynes study is acknowledged by other scholars but no work that develops or replicates Finnegan’s work, in any comprehensive way, has been found for this Wellington study.\textsuperscript{44} In his general model of amateurs, that includes musicians, Stebbins uses definitions that are not readily adapted for research practice. Carefully designed instruments are needed to measure social-psychological attitudes and thresholds have an element of arbitrariness and have to be determined just as they do if economic and educational criteria are used. Stebbins notes that amateurs employ professionals to educate and direct performances, and to perform with them at times.\textsuperscript{45} This current study finds that the participating organisations rely on professional musicians and considers some of the implications of this relationship for the nature of their activities and their use of some of the classical music world’s conventions. Similarly, Stebbins notes that amateurs’ work is a leisure activity, and this current study describes some ways in which the participants’ music-making is recreational.\textsuperscript{46}

Finnegan, like Stebbins, sees local music-making as marginal in that the musicians themselves, audiences and other people are unaware of the commitments musicians make and the extent of their work in preparing and presenting concerts. Finnegan describes classical music activities in Milton Keynes but does not analyse the structures, practices or symbols specific to the style. Nonetheless, her understanding of the importance of the works classical musicians perform has similarities with the way that the participants in this current study portray their music-making. Hennion’s work directs attention to the meaning of music for \textit{amateurs}, or \textit{music lovers} as he defines them, and particularly how they use music to modify or enhance moods and emotional

\textsuperscript{43} Catherine J. Ellis, \textit{The Musician, the University and the Community: Conflict or Concord?} (Armidale, N.S.W: University of New England, 1986).
\textsuperscript{45} Stebbins, Robert A. \textit{Amateurs on the Margins Between Work and Leisure}, 26.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid. 40ff.
states. His approach, involving detailed descriptions of how music lovers use music, informs some aspects of this study and his emphasis on the amateurs’ agency is also relevant.

Other international scholarship, both educationally orientated work and scholarship in other disciplines, ranges from empirical studies to articles reporting experiences and practical knowledge, and to arguments based on a variety of theories. While some others’ work observes national limitations, much of it assumes a universal perspective.

**New Zealand Literature**

In 1988 the International Society for Music Education (ISME) held a weeklong seminar on “Community Music: the Interaction Between Amateurs and Professionals” in New Zealand. Seven papers from that conference are relevant to this study. The NZSME 1989 conference, “Music in the Community,” had one workshop that included themes to which participants in this study alluded. In the search of New Zealand literature one article, not associated with the conferences but oriented to music education, was found. Simon Tipping has studied some classical music organisations in New Zealand and his research of the Orpheus Choir is briefly presented in this section.

In his paper presented at the ISME conference, John Drummond compares amateur and professional musicians by reviewing four characteristics: (1) amateurs’ love of music-making and professionals following a vocation (but not denying a professional’s love of their art); (2) professionals are seen as having complete dedication while amateurs are *partially* dedicated and *occasionally committed*; (3) amateur standards are characterised as relatively low and professionals as relatively high; and (4) the rewards for amateurs are “pastime/recreation for its own reward (hobby)” as distinct from professionals who work for gain and their livelihood. Furthermore, Drummond characterises
amateur status as low ("dilettante") and professional as high. In a second paper Drummond discusses aspects of government arts funding in New Zealand and argues that professionalism has been encouraged at the expense of community music.

The seminar included some description of Maori music making. While this study is concerned with one style of music-making – classical music -- Maori music is important in understanding the plurality of styles of music performed in Wellington.

Two papers did not focus on a distinction between professional and amateur musicians but included descriptions of organisations and events that involved a wide range of musicians. Anthony Ritchie and Graeme Willis described music in Christchurch in the 1980s, and Morva Croxon discussed aspects of community involvement in four commissioned compositions and their performances.

Helen Willberg and Elaine Sharman presented a paper that emphasised the importance of amateur teachers, primarily parents, supporting and encouraging their children to make music. A sociological approach to community music

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51 Helen Willberg and Elaine Sharman. "Who Does the Modelling? - Parents as Teachers." in Contact, Interaction, Symbiosis, Amateur and Professional Music Makers in the Community,
is favoured by Allan Thomas who states that most communities look after their own musical needs and that university music students should be sensitive to the values and procedures of community music.  

In a journal article not associated with any conference, Kate Divett reviews some theories of motivation to participate in adult education through her observation of a New Zealand community music education programme. This an example of study of adult music making with an educational perspective; a perspective which casts motivation to make music for reasons such as relaxation and aesthetic satisfaction outside the work’s frame of reference. Simon Tipping has presented much of his description and analysis of the Orpheus Choir, a large Wellington choir, as Community Music research. He states that “the choir provides cultural enrichment and entertainment for the community, and an outlet for individual artistic activity” among other provisions for the community. He notes that the choir has had little success in recruiting new members, particularly younger singers (born after 1963), and that singers and audience are “no longer willing to accept as a matter of course the relevance of bible stories, masses and other sacred texts” so sacred music has questionable relevance to New Zealand society.

In general, the papers presented at the NZSME 1989 conference rarely raised questions concerning the musicians in the community, who they are or why they are involved in music-making. Notes from one workshop advocate four focus areas: teaching adults to rediscover instrumental skills learned in

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56 Morva Croxson, Guy Donaldson, and Graham Parsons, Music 89; Music in the Community (Palmerston North, New Zealand society for Music Education, 1989).
childhood; attention to group processes in teaching music (for example, how are the individuals involved or discouraged); running short courses on improvisation for adults; and ensuring adult music-making is pleasurable.\(^5^7\)

The literature concerning amateur and community music in New Zealand is varied and includes conceptual discussions, descriptive papers and pedagogy. The descriptive material and journals such as *Canzona*, the New Zealand Composers’ Association journal and *Music in New Zealand*, which regularly report local activities, rarely describe musicians as amateurs or consider the views of musicians such as the participants in this study. Drummond focuses on the distinction between amateur and professional, so any characteristic not significant to their differentiation is outside the scope of his study. An implication of not distinguishing amateurs and professionals is that judgements of quality and how performances may be understood are taken as independent of the musicians who perform the music. The literature search for this study has found only one work, among New Zealand or other studies of classical music practices, that is orientated to musicians’ views: Stephen Cottrell’s *Professional Music-Making in London*.\(^5^8\) This study is discussed in the next section along with some ethnomusicological studies of classical music practice.

**Ethnomusicological studies**

The ethnomusicological study of classical music-making has precedents in Henry Kingsbury’s study of an American conservatory, Bruno Nettl’s ethnography of Midwestern schools of music, and Kay Kaufman Shelemay’s ethnography of Early Music in Boston.\(^5^9\) In addition, Stephen Cottrell’s study

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of professional musicians in London is a recent ethnographic work that investigates some issues similar to questions addressed by this current study.\textsuperscript{60} Kingsbury used participant observation to study concepts such as talent and music as they were used and given meaning in an American conservatory.\textsuperscript{61} He was concerned not just with what was said but with:

\begin{quote}
“matters of power and authority, with actors’ perceptions of social power and authority, and with perceptions of differential social knowledge among actors - all of which are closely related to each other.”\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

This study is particularly concerned with the social knowledge of focus group participants, the concepts that they use in the discourse surrounding their music-making, and the power and authority that maintains the currency of the classical music concepts they employ.

Nettl’s work relates “schools of music and the complex structures and ideas that govern them to the modern Western culture of which they are part.”\textsuperscript{63} He uses ethnography at home to describe music schools as societies “ruled by deities [the great composers] with sacred texts, rituals, ceremonial numbers and a priesthood.”\textsuperscript{64} He analyses the schools of music from three perspectives: the relationships formed by instrumentalists, singers and conductors; the many different styles of music that meet in music schools; and the classical canon and symbolism that is implicit in its use in music schools.\textsuperscript{65}

Christopher Small does not present his work as research or ethnomusicology, but rather as a theory of musicking: the action of taking part in a musical performance in any capacity (composer, musician, audience, administrator or

60 Cottrell, \textit{Professional Music-Making in London}
62 Ibid. 30-1.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
other music industry employee). He develops an interpretation of the symphonic concert which includes concert hall buildings, how concerts are organised, the relationships of audience, musicians and conductor, the myth of the great composers, how the score is central to the concert ritual, and the symphonic work itself. Small’s descriptions of the organisation and his analysis of authority that shapes symphonic concerts are used in this study to aid the analysis of the four organisations. Discussion of the extent of the organisations conforming to conventions of classical music use Small and Nettl’s work for descriptions of those conventions.

Stephen Cottrell used his own experience along with ethnographic fieldwork to describe and analyse aspects of the work and lives of classically trained musicians. Cottrell discusses musicality and identity, issues arising from his observations of how London musicians relate to one another, creativity of the musicians, myths and humour, and concerts (particularly in terms of theatre and ritual). Cottrell’s work emphasises the importance of understanding the musicians’ views and experiences, as does this study.

Kay Kaufman Shelemay used ethnography to study the contemporary practice of Early Music in Boston and particularly to “explore more deeply the social and cultural factors that have rendered ‘early music’ a living tradition in the twentieth century.” Shelemay observes that the ethnographer is inevitably implicated in constructing his or her subject, an issue that relates to the problems of defining amateur musician for this current study. Shelemay also notes that the Boston Early Music movement “had its root in the world of musical amateurs,” similar to the way in which Wellington’s Early Music Union (which later became REMU) was influential in promotion of authentic performance in this city.

66 Small, Musicking, 9.
68 Shelemay, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement."
69 Ibid. 7.
70 Ibid. 9.
Scholarly studies of musicians in Western cultures employ diverse definitions and characterisations of amateurs. Finnegan, Hennion, Cottrell, and some conference papers such as Willberg and Sharman, draw attention to their subjects without comparison to other musicians. A community music approach offers yet more perspectives from which amateur music making may be studied. However, the aims of these studies rarely converge. As such the current study utilises discussion of issues found within the various scholarly works.

Hennion’s definition of amateur musician is unhelpful to this study. However, his emphasis on the use of music has informed its discussion of the meaning of music to individual musicians’ and their social and psychological uses of music. Stebbins’ sociological models draw attention to the marginality of amateurs’ work and the interdependence of amateurs and professionals, two issues which are relevant to this study. Finnegan’s description of the classical music world in Milton Keynes has many features that are comparable with aspects of classical music performance in Wellington.

Writing about music education, community music and amateur music often reflects the values and goals of the music teaching profession. This study considers how education is important to the musicians, but their music-making is not primarily an educational activity. The last section of this chapter has briefly introduced scholarly studies of current classical music practice which contribute to the next chapter’s discussion of research methods and theoretical issues.