

New Media and Music Products "Any Place and Any Time"

The Digital Concert Hall in a Media Geographical Perspective

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Creativity at Work:

New media and music products: “Any place and any time”

- The Digital Concert Hall in a media geographical perspective.

By Birgit Stöber

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Abstract

The Internet is often associated with “a placeless world, (...) and a form of reality grounded in technology rather than nature” (Adams 2009, 115). Many commentators argue that the combination of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and cyberspace disrupts a number of factors that underpin traditional forms of cultural and social interaction and thus the relationship between place, community and identity.” (Dodge & Kitchen 2001, 33) Moreover, an argument often heard is that media are not able to reproduce a unique moment tied to a particular site; therefore media (no matter whether they are analog or digital) are not able to transmit cultural events such as a concert without losing its specific “aura” (Benjamin). The case of the Digital Concert Hall (DCH) by Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra challenges these arguments. The DCH is a virtual place and communication platform that offers a “quasi authentic concert experience on a home computer” (Kolbe 2009, 12). However, the DCH is extremely bounded to the concrete place of the concert hall in Berlin mainly due to the technology installed in the hall. In this paper, I will argue that the virtual place of the DCH is a new media initiative from the classical music scene that is not placeless, neither it is weakening the physical place of the concert hall in Berlin. Rather, the virtual platform DCH is strengthening the physical place as well as the brand Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Keyword

music, digital, space, place, Berlin

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New media and music products: “Any place and any time” - The Digital Concert Hall in a media geographical perspective.

By Birgit Stöber

Intro

Dazzling flash light is illuminating a group of people standing on an open air scene in front of a huge jubilating crowd. The group of people is not a new boy group, but members of one of the most respected classical orchestras, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and their conductor, Sir Simon Rattle. The scene is taken from the documentary film “Trip to Asia” produced during the orchestra’s Asia tour in 2005 and stems from a concert in Taipei that was played in the National Concert Hall and at the same time video-transmitted for the people standing in front of the hall. The experience being celebrated as pop stars was overwhelming for the musicians and gave one of them the idea to find new ways of transmitting concerts and reaching audiences. “At that point I thought to myself: there must be a way to reach our fans all over the world more regularly using audio-visual technology.” (Maninger)

Only a few years later, in January 2009, the Digital Concert Hall (DCH) was “opened”, the first virtual concert hall worldwide. Ever since, with the help of state-of-the-art technology funded by Deutsche Bank and installed in the concert hall in Berlin all concerts by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra can be experienced as live streams in the Internet. There are other web portals live streaming concerts, such as the MonteVerdi.tv, a worldwide Internet and digital TV platform for Classical Music, launched in 2008¹. In contrast to such web portal the DCH project focuses on the particular place of the Berlin

¹“MonteVerdi provides a new dimension of music experience for global music communities. From unique TV programs and documentaries to downloadable audio catalogues, worldwide news, reviews, video clips, CDs, DVDs, books, sheet music, and more.”see <http://www.monteverti.tv/about-us.php#MonteVerdi>

concert hall, the particular group of musicians, the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra (and their soloist guests), and the particular life event of a concert. However, the project includes a video archive with the last seasons concerts stored, too.

The DCH has a clear geographical dimension, since it is produced at a particular place in the city of Berlin, and at the same time creates new spaces virtually. This paper starts by briefly presenting the DCH and the initiator's motivation. The following section is a brief discussion anchored in the field of media geography, a rather new field of research within cultural geography (see Döring 2009), and will touch upon the creation of new social spaces, space of interrelated practices and the idea of place versus placelessness. It follows a discussion and some concluding remarks. Finally, in order to open up for further academic engagement a couple of relevant questions will be posed.

Regarding the data collection underlying this paper, interviews were conducted, with the project's initiator Olaf Maninger, who is principal cellist and member of the media board, too, with the creative director, Christophe Franke, and with the director of marketing and communication, Tobias Müller. Furthermore, German and international newspaper articles were collected as well as press releases. One of the most important sources, however, was visiting both the concert hall Philharmonie in Berlin and the DCH several times in person.

The Digital Concert Hall

Standing in the concert hall in Berlin in the daytime you only see the six discrete remote-controlled cameras installed around the scene. According to Maninger, it was of high importance for the whole setup to find a technical solution that is not distracting the musicians or the audience. Linked to the cameras the „real“ technique is hidden in a rather little room, the remote controlled studio, under the concert hall's roof, where some mixing desks and server boxes are positioned. Here a couple of sound engineers are filming, mixing and editing every concert given by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

During the first six months around 200,000 users have visited the DCH, according to the official press releases. 14,000 users were registered with their personal data, which provided information among others about the users' place of residency. Altogether 2,000 season subscriptions were sold (out of that 200 were sold to Deutsche Bank) and 1,000 single concerts². Referring to the analytical tool "google analytics" the DCH website was visited around fifteen minutes per visitor, as director of marketing and communication explained.

A year later, in April 2010, already 25,000 users were registered and more than 500,000 users had visited the virtual concert hall. At that time around 34 percent of the users had logged in from Germany, 14 percent from Japan, 11 percent from the U.S., from Spain 5 percent and Italy 4 percent. Parallel to this digital project the orchestra started its entrance on the social media scene with a facebook entry, twitter account and its presence on the "you tube" channel. With over 139,800 friends/fans on facebook (December 2010) the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra is reaching a high number of people compared to other known orchestras³.

Already in the first months of its existence the project was awarded a gold medal "lead award"⁴, a highly respected award given within the music and advertising industries. According to one of the award ceremony's organizers the DCH „is the way web television of big cultural institutions should look like“. The orchestra was very pleased with the award since it confirmed their idea that (big) art and modern communication channels can cross-fertilize. On the occasion of another award ceremony⁵ in January 2010 when the DCH was awarded being a "landmark" ("ausgewählter Ort") Robert Zimmermann, one of the two DCH's directors emphasised his gratitude, but also

² The price for one single concert is € 9,90, a 30-days-ticket and a 12-month-ticket is also available. See <http://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/tickets>

³ Wiener Philharmoniker 1,611 facebook friends (Dec.2010), London Symphony Orchestra 19,550 facebook friends (Dec. 2010), Chicago Symphony Orchestra around 47,271 facebook friends (Dec. 2010).

⁴ "Die Lead Awards sind Deutschlands führende Auszeichnung für Print- und Online-Medien. Sie werden seit 17 Jahren vergeben und genießen sowohl in der Medienbranche als auch in der Werbewirtschaft hohes Renommee. Die prominent besetzte Hauptjury repräsentiert Medienunternehmen ebenso wie Kunst und Wissenschaft. Über die Vergabe des Online-Preises entschieden in diesem Jahr u.a. Vertreter von Gruner und Jahr, Stern Online, Google Deutschland, der Universität der Künste Berlin und der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien."

⁵ Land der Ideen - the German land of ideas initiative

his ambivalence towards being acknowledged as a “distinguished place”. “To be honest we didn’t want that”, he said kind of coquettish. “We wanted to be a virtual place that is not grounded or located, but a place that is available everytime everywhere worldwide.”

Digitalisation “has challenged much of the traditional thinking and acting within the music industry (...). At the same time it has created new forms of relationship between audiences and producers” as Hesmondhalgh (2009, 58) points out. A strong positive argument regarding digitalisation is that of democratization, saying that the new technology opens up for broader involvement and people’s inclusion than before. This argument will be taken up later again. But digitalisation of music has also caused major problems for the music business over the last decade (see Hesmondhalgh 2009, 57) thinking of legal and financial issues.

On the following pages the DCH’s background such as the initiator’s main motivations and the further implications for the aspect of new social spaces and communities will be presented.

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra - and new media

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra founded in 1882 has a tradition for making use of media and has been present on records since 1913. While the development of new media technology was often followed by harsh critique or at least scepticism among professional classical musicians⁶, the orchestra’s musicians and conductors over time did not seem to have major reservation with technology. Löfgren writes that “every new media technology opens up spaces of hope and anxieties for the rapidly approaching future and reorganizes ideas of hereness and nearness. Some of these are seen as disruptive in their pioneer stage, threatening old orders and hierarchies. This dystopian outlook is matched by the utopian optimism of creating new (and better) forms of networks and alliances. In the optimist version, the new technology should be able to revolutionise and improve the whole world” (Löfgren 2006, 304).

⁶ In the early age of radio transmission “in 1923 the conductor Thomas Beecham predicted that concert halls would soon be deserted” if the wireless authorities are allowed to continue their devilish work” (FT. com April, 21 2009); and conductor Celibidache was calling CD’s “sounding pancakes”.

It was rather the latter approach that motivated the orchestra's legendary principal conductor from 1954 to 1989, Herbert von Karajan who "was known for his obsession with technology" (Guardian December 19, 2009⁷). Under his direction the first orchestral stereo record in the world was produced in 1961 and one of "the first classical CD, the Alpine Symphony by Richard Strauss, in 1980" (ibid). Hence, the newspaper Guardian calls the DCH a "natural continuation of work" that begun by von Karajan. Or with the words of the project's main sponsors, Deutsche Bank: "from the very beginning the Berliner Philharmoniker have contributed to the future of music, exploring new repertoire as well as advances in sound recording"⁸.

But there must be other motivations and reason for such an engagement. It can not only be the vanity of individual musicians or the orchestra's tradition of being on the forefront.

The project's motivations are according to Maninger also a reaction on the decline of CD sale in the last couple of years, but also a reaction to the fact, that many of the orchestra's concerts in the Berlin concert hall are often sold out and therefore difficult to visit. So, in order to enhance the concert's accessibility the new web platform enables the creation of new audience communities, which can be seen as a central issue within the commercial process of the music industry, namely the creation of (new) audiences and markets (see Jones 2000).

A study carried out by Bonner Zentrum für Kulturforschung informed that orchestras in the foreseeable future would have to play in front of old man (see Haffner 2007:309). Moreover, the study showed that the earlier the initiation age the easier one sticks to classical music⁹. Hence, many people responsible for orchestra management working these days hard for fostering and increasing their audience and organising different activities such as open day arrangements, concerts for children, seminars, etc.. The DCH can be seen as such an investment project for the orchestra's future. According to chef conductor, Simon Rattle, the DCH project not only allows "a new concert-going

⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/dec/19/berlin-philharmonic-internet>

⁸ http://www.db.com/csr/en/content/berliner_philharmoniker.html

⁹ "Eine Studie des Bonner Zentrums für Kulturforschung stellt fest, dass die Orchester in absehbarer Zeit nur noch vor Greisen spielen werden, aber auch, dass man umso leichter bei der klassischen Musik bleibt, je früher das Einstiegsalter liegt." (Haffner 2007:309)

experience" (Financial Times, March 7), but also the possibility to increase "access to the orchestra, and to music in general" (ibid).

And with the words of director of marketing and communication, Tobias Müller: "Even though the digital concert hall is a media innovation that we are (a little) proud of, our focus is on the experience of music and not that much on the experience of a new medium. Therefore, we communicate our project as the "virtual concert hall of the Berlin Philharmonics" using and animating elements of the real philharmonic hall in the graphical presentation. Our aim is to lean the experience of the DCH strongly towards to the experience of a real concert here in Berlin." (Tobias Möller, April 8, 2010)¹⁰ The target group of this complex activity rather is young and technical affine, two characteristics that not immediately fit to the more traditional, present audience.

Additionally, with help of this project the orchestra strengthens further it's already strong brand "Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra" and the importance of the place "Philharmonie", since all live streaming exclusively happens at/from the concert hall. Sir Simon Rattle calls the DCH "another type of touring" and assumes that this project can be a "prototype in the future" (see interview with C. Spahn). A clear indication for its deep-rooted connection to the physical place in Berlin is the fact that there are no livestreams during the time when the orchestra is on concert tours such as traditionally at Easter in Austrian Salzburg or other places.

The projects motivations seem to be many: being on the forefront regarding media technology, improvement of orchestra marketing, new mediation of music, reaching and fostering new audiences. However, in this paper focus lies on the DCH and its implications for the creation of new social spaces and communities within the frame of media geography. As Hudson writes: "There is no doubt that music - in both its

¹⁰ "Auch wenn die Digital Concert Hall eine mediale Innovation ist, auf die wir sogar ein bisschen stolz sind, soll an ihr nicht so sehr das Erlebnis eines neuen Mediums, sondern das Erlebnis der Musik im Vordergrund stehen. Wir kommunizieren unsere Plattform daher auch als den "virtuellen Konzertsaal der Berliner Philharmoniker", der in seiner graphischen Präsentation Elemente der realen Philharmonie aufgreift und animiert. Unser Ziel ist es dabei, das Erlebnis der Digital Concert Hall möglichst stark an das Erlebnis eines wirklichen Konzerts hier in Berlin anzulehnen. Insofern ist die DCH wohl eher ein Musikprodukt als ein Medienprodukt." mail correspondence Tobias Möller 8.4.2010

production and consumption – can be an important influence in shaping the typically hybrid identities of people and places, of engendering a sense of place and deep attachment to place.” (Hudson 2006, 633)

Reflections on place and placelessness

Not only among geographers the Internet is often associated with the term “a placeless world, a product of and for the postindustrial economy (...) and a form of reality grounded in technology rather than nature” (Adams 2009, 115). The presentation and discussion of the particular case of the Digital Concert Hall challenges that argument.

In his book *Place and placelessness* Relph aims "to explore place as a phenomenon of the geography of the lived-world of our everyday experiences" (Relph 1976:7) and, hence, attempts to inquire into different kinds of experienced geographies. He does so explicitly in the spirit of phenomenology, which conceptualises places not as abstractions, but as directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world full of diversity, meaning and ongoing activities. Relph considers first-hand experiences decisive for the creation and maintenance of significant and diverse places. In this context, he draws attention to mass media as a tool for transportation or transmission of ideas that has "reduced the need for face-to-face contact, freed communities from their geographical constraints, and hence reduced the significance of place-based communities" (Relph 1976:92). Moreover, Relph concludes, that in contrast to the lived-world full of first-hand experiences, media offers only second-hand experiences. Thus, media are associated with placelessness (see Stöber 2006). The notion that “media and communication technologies are partly ‘responsible’ for increased placelessness and the loss of a sense of place is fundamentally built on an ontology that claims that space and place are ‘here’, media and information technologies are ‘there’, and that space and place (here) are shaped by the influence of media and information technologies (there). This is an ontology that does not harmonise with the relational space paradigm.” (Ek 2006, 56)

Additionally, Relph's thoughts are based on the assumption of an inactive audience that is easy to manipulate by the media. Relph was not the only geographer assuming an

“inactive audience at the mercy of powerful mass media” (Stöber 2006, 34). Swedish geographer Hägerstrand shares that position when he in the late 1980s bemoans “how broadcasting has isolated people from each other by eroding location-based contacts” (ibid) and emphasizes the superior significance of face-to-face contact. Parts of their rather pessimist view on mass media might be seen as out of date due to the technological development. But then we can find scholars such as Burgess who in the beginning of the 1990’s - still before the Internet era - pointed to the importance of focusing “more closely on the personal, social and cultural contexts in which different audiences make sense of the different media texts (Burgess 1990, 147). That she emphasized by writing “none of us are passive dupes of the mass media, advertising agencies and propagandists” (Burgess 1990, 147). Or as Adams puts it - some twenty years later: “people are not unwitting dupes of media and communication technologies” (Adams 2009, 109).

However, Relph’s thoughts are an important input for the discussion of experiencing places and belonging to places. But in the context of the DCH, his arguments can be challenged and his reservations towards media can be resolved. I argue that through the use of digital media the particular place of the concert hall attracts special attention and hence gets strengthened and not weakened. One of the project’s aims is clearly to connect the virtual audience more closely to the particular place in Berlin. In this connection one of the ulterior motives is clearly to win the virtual audience as actual audience in Berlin once they stay in the city. Hence, by means of the media the place does not become placeless, but rather strengthened.

Of course, the coincidental meeting with friends during the break will not happen in the DCH. Rather, the digital experience opens up for other set ups such as being present at two places, sitting in the living room or in front of a working desk and being virtually in Berlin in the concert hall. With Scannel (1996) we can call this experience a “doubling of place”. “Public events now occur, simultaneously, in two different places: the place of the event itself and that in which it is watched and heard. Broadcasting mediates between these two sites.” (Scannell 1996:76) Here I will add, “several places”, since there are many places where people watch and listen. In that context, we can identify different kinds of

participation: at least two extremes can be mentioned: watching a live concert alone at home dressed in a morning gown or together with friends celebrating the event dressed up in fine clothes with a glass of wine. "In its own context (its own time and place) any event creates and sustains its own being, its own world. In its extended, relayed, mediated form it simultaneously enters into other worlds and their ways of being. The event is thus "doubled": there is the event-in-situ, and (at the same time) the event-as-broadcast, the former being embedded in the latter." (Scanell 1996)

Drawing on literature from urban geography, we can see that the process of globalisation do not make the local and historical obsolete, instead, what we are seeing is a re-writing of city spaces (see Dodge & Kitchen 2001). Applied to the DCH case, we can see an emphasis on and a re-discovery of the particular place of the concert hall. Hence, "what emerges is a complex interplay between the local and the global; the authentic and the inauthentic, between place and placelessness" (Dodge & Kitchen 2001, 35).

Another point of critique regarding the role of media is the often heard argument that media are not able to reproduce art or a unique moment tied to a particular site; therefore media (no matter whether they are analog or digital) are not able to transmit cultural events such as a concert without losing its specific "aura" (Benjamin). According to Walter Benjamin "aura" can not be reproduced, let alone broadcasted, hence the quality of the any art work's presence is always depreciated (see Benjamin 1935). So, following Benjamin, a virtual visit in the concert hall will always be loss-making in relation to a real visit. Since "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be." (Benjamin 1935, 3) To Frank this discussion is rooted in an unproductive art and culture theory approach that refuses any kind of technology and new media. Hence, he states rather short (and polemic): "in the contemporary discourse of art theory the concept of "aura" plays the same role as the stork in gynecological research" (Frank 2009, 18).

However, Hannerz (1996) also picks up the aspect of incompleteness when he writes about media and the real/unreal experience: "People often make a distinction between a "real" experience and what they have only read about, or seen on television. So what is

“unreal” about these latter kinds of experience?” (Hannerz 1996:27) He points to the obvious importance of touch, smell and taste and notes that “there is a feeling of immediacy, even immersion, of being surrounded” (ibid). Certainly, listening to a live concert at the DCH does not include the senses of touch, smell or taste, but offers a very strong audio-visual experience that allows the opportunity of immersion. To Leppert it is precisely “the visual experience of its production (that) is crucial to both musicians and audiences alike for locating and communicating the place of music and musical sound within society and culture” (Leppert 2003, 21). Hence, he argues that “sight and sound together produce the force of sociality that music encodes” (Leppert 2003, 21).

I will argue, that the DCH offers a new dimension of the lived-world, a new kind of aura or another kind of reality. Of course, the pictures are taken by different cameras and selected by technicians; hence, the whole live stream is edited, which makes the DCH a second-hand experience. On the other hand, that experience can become a close and personal experience, since the DCH visitor gets visually very close to the (selected) musicians both during the concerts and the intermissions when interviews with soloists, composers, guest conductors or other relevant people are transmitted.

While the previous part focused rather on the personal level, the following part will enter in the discussion of the aspect of community. Here it is argued that “cyberspace potentially weakens geographic communities by providing a focus centred on interest at the expense of geographic neighbours” (Dodge & Kitchen 2001, 35). This argument will be scrutinized in the following.

The aspect of social space and community

Reading the orchestra’s press releases the aspect of the community does play an important role, too. As for instance Olaf Maninger is quoted: “We are looking forward to

share many exciting concert experiences with our friends all over the world for the coming season, too"¹¹.

According to Tönnies communities share a geographical territory, a history, a system of values etc. In the context of the DCH, the shared territory is the concert hall in Berlin, and the system of values might be that of an interest in classical music. The particular concert experience creates a community that exists two hours or so connected to each other. Within the Berlin concert hall there might happen encounters among the audience during the break or during the concert with the direct neighbours. Of course, the coincidental meeting with friends during the break will not happen in the DCH. Instead of, by posting and reading comments on the facebook or youtube entry new spaces for exchange of information and views on classical music can arise as well as new communities. "Many commentators argue that the combination of ICTs and cyberspace disrupts a number of factors that underpin traditional forms of cultural and social interaction and thus the relationship between place, community and identity" (Dodge & Kitchen (2001, 33). However, drawing on Benedikt Andersons influential book *Imagined Communities* (1983) you could argue for new "musically-imagined communities" (Born, 1993 - Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000:35) with a strong focus on the particular place of the Berlin concert hall. Beyond the face-to-face community there can be a feeling of belonging to a DCH community, too, mostly fostered by the social media engagement.

On the other hand, "musical meanings and therefore musical immediacies are intimately and inextricably bound into the spatial formations, practices, and processes by which music is performed" (Revill 2000:605). In other words, interactions between the musicians and the audience do affect the music production. "Indeed, music is a communicative endeavour, and the changes in communication technology brought about by network technologies have affected social relations greatly." (Jones 2000, 228) As Maninger said, playing a concert while being aware of the fact that there are a lot more people listening and watching than being physically present in the Berlin concert hall gives "an extra kick" and motivates eminently. It is clear, that some orchestra members

¹¹ Wir freuen uns darauf, auch in der kommenden Spielzeit viele spannende Konzerterlebnisse mit unseren Freunden in aller Welt zu teilen.

get an extra exposition depending on the piece of music and their entrances. At this point, it is only the author's speculation that this kind of audio-visual documentation can be used by the musicians themselves in different contexts, be it for critical self reflection, control or self-affirmation. Another possibility is that some musicians might be rather indifferent to the project since the present audience might be seen as the "real" public being able to give direct feedback in terms of applause, jeers etc.

However, in order to support the aspect of community building, the orchestra is using actively social media such as youtube and facebook. But this engagement has to be seen as marketing activity for the DCH, too. As Tobias Möller explains, the primary concern is to lead people to the DCH and at best to acquire them as customers. Moreover, a growing online presence of the orchestra in general is pleasing too as well as the possibility to learn how web communication works and how the younger generation approaches classical music. When looking at the impressive high number of the around 140,000 fans of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on facebook (December 2010) we should have in mind that this is not the number of the DCH's customers, but a number of people who have a general interest in the orchestra. Jones points out that "the practice of fandom is mediated by network technologies along with music, as is business practice" (Jones 2000, 218). On these grounds, he recommends that it "will also be necessary to untangle fandom from marketing" (Jones 2000, 229).

Discussion

Without a doubt, the DCH offers a "pluralization of place and relationships" (Moore 2004:27) and might help the orchestra "to shake off its elitist appeal" (Financial Times). Already earlier projects such the education programme Zukunft@BPhil - existing since 2002 - offer "different links by means of music-related projects: between the Philharmonie and various Berlin districts and social groups as well as between the generations."¹² The often mentioned "bourgeois concert hall" (s. Leyshon et al. 1995) is clearly challenged. Although, the DCH seems to be a project that marks the further

¹² <http://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/education/> (Sept. 8, 2010)

democratization of classical music, it is important to remember that a visit at the DCH requires a computer, access to the internet and at least € 9.90 “entrance fee” for one concert. “Wealthier and time-richer audiences are undoubtedly able to access great diversity”, as Hesmondhalgh (2009, 70) writes. But in his view, “the rise of digitalization is unlikely in the medium and long term to lead to any profound democratization of musical creativity and innovation without transformation of broader economic and social conditions” (Hesmondhalgh 2009, 58). In a broader context, that leads to the so-called “digital divide”, a term that “indicates the exclusion of certain people from the ICT environment. The term serves variously to indicate gaps in computer ownership levels, use of the Internet, amount of time spent online, or the ability to navigate the Internet.” (Adams 2009, 101) Moreover, Zook et al. point out that “the way in which places and people become “wired” (or remain “unwired”) still depends upon historically layered patterns of financial constraint and cultural and social variation. The geographic and technological evolution of this digital infrastructure can therefore be understood as a process of social construction of new (and often personal) digital geographies.” (Zook et al. 2004, 156) So, theoretically, the claim to be “any place and any time”, is justified, but it is still unlikely that people living very remote (both geographically and mentally) will find their way to the DCH.

Brief summary and outlook

The aim of this paper has been to present and discuss a new media initiative from the classical music scene within a media geographical context. With focus on the project DCH is has been discussed whether digital technology contributes to the strengthening or weakening of the particular place of the Berlin concert hall. As presented in the examination by means of the media the particular place does not become placeless, but rather strengthened. Moreover, the virtual platform not only strengthens the orchestra’s brand and place in Berlin, rather it opens up for new spaces and communities – not only within the community of the virtual audience, but also among the musicians and the audience in Berlin.

All in all, the DCH is not a substitute for a visit in the concert hall in Berlin rather it is a new way of experiencing music and a new music-media product. That exactly is prompting criticism among some classical music experts, who are concerned about the trend of *eventization*, saying that the very content, the music and its live experience, becomes less important while the strong focus on the visual and the mediation with its exposure of particular cut-outs of individual musicians becomes dominant. Here it could be referred to Unseld (2011), who claims that old and new concert styles should establish a symbiotic relationship, inspire each other and benefit from each other.

However, the project of the DCH is still a rather new endeavour and will allow more in-depth examination and discussions in the future than touched on in this paper. Among relevant questions for further examination could be the following one with particular focus on the audience: "In what ways will the experience of hearing and listening to music change as audiences are dispersed and diasporic (...)" (Jones 2000, 225). Another relevant issue to study could be the organisational set-up of a semi-public-private cultural activity under the heading of corporate cultural responsibility.

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