

Increases in Composer Success Based On Musical Genres

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ABSTRACT

This was a secondary analysis of the study "Taking Note: A Study of Composers and New Music Activity in the U.S.", conducted in 2008 by J. Jeffri. The researchers used logistic regression analysis to estimate differences in the odds of composers increasing their activities (e.g., royalties, performances) based on composer genre (e.g., classical, rock), while controlling for composer demographics. We used odds ratios and significant predictors of the odds of increased activity to determine which traits and genres determine a certain level of success, which was reported by the respondents. This was done by manually categorizing each of the composers into a category of genres, looking at the first genre that each respondent said that they composed in. We found that in general, younger composers tend to have more success than older composers, as the odds for an increase in commissions, performances, recordings and locations decrease for each year of age. We also found that successes for composers in the electronic genre are lagging behind not only the classical genre, but most of the other genres as well. In the future, we would like to see composers distribute their music to a more broad audience, along with artists and their teams reaching out to various music festivals and clubs to try to target more locations for performances, enabling for a larger audience.

Background

The research literature on royalties is largely silent on the specific subject of composer royalties and the studies that exist tend to focus on inequalities with other types of entertainers (e.g., musicians). For example, Pitt (2010) studied royalties in a performing rights organization and discovered that only a select few members of the organization (usually performers) earn a large sum of money, even though all of the members' songs are played in a variety of places. Further, Laing (1999) studied the European music industry, and found that musicians earn the most royalties, while composers earn less. Homan (2010) found that royalty rates are improving for composers but the reasons for the improvement are not clear.

This prior work sets the stage by suggesting a more equitable royalty distribution for composers in the future, one that favors composers more than in present practice. However, this prior work does not examine whether the upward trend in composer royalties transcends musical genres or indicates what other positive outcomes might be concurrently improving for composers.

Study Purpose

In this study, we explored the upward trend in composer royalties by disaggregating those trends by musical genre and by simultaneously exploring whether any trend differences by genre also apply to other positive outcomes. Specifically, we will analyze survey responses to the survey *Taking Note: A Study of Composers and*

New Music Activity in the U.S. (2008), where composers indicated the prevalence of increases in activity in the following dimensions: commissions, royalties, publishing, performances, recording, and locations.

Research Question

This study will be guided by the following overarching research question that emerges from the study purpose:

1. *To what extent are reported increases in composers' activity* associated with their musical genre, controlling for the composers' age, gender, and race?*

*This question was pursued separately for the seven different types of activity for which respondents were asked to rate increases (commissions, royalties, publishing, performances, recordings, locations, and other increases).

Method

Design

This study used a correlational/observational design as we merely estimated associations among variables without any manipulation of the independent variables.

Study Participants

This study involved a non-random sample of respondents to the questionnaire *Taking Note: A Study of Composers and New Music Activity in the U.S.* (Jeffri, 2016), and 1,347 composers responded throughout 2008. Of the respondents, 80% were male, and 20% were female. 85% were White, 3% were Hispanic or Latino, 3% were African American, 2% were Asian, 0.4% were American Indian, and 6% had a different race. According to the study, which had an age span of 18 to 97, the average age was 45.

The Survey

The *Taking Note: A Study of Composers and New Music Activity in the U.S.* survey has 44 items, including those that ask respondents about changes in their musical activities, as well as key demographic questions.

Coding of Variables

In Table 1, we provide the coding of all independent and dependent variables plus the survey question numbers for each variable. Note that multicategory (3+) categorical independent variables were binary indicators coded (1/0) for inclusion in the analysis.

Table 1. Coding of Variables

Variable Type	Variable Name (survey question)	Coding Scheme (1 = yes, 0 = no)	Reference Group of Indicator Codes
Dependent	Commissions (Q9_1)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A

Dependent	Royalties (Q9_2)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A
Dependent	Publishing (Q9_3)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A
Dependent	Performances (Q9_4)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A
Dependent	Recordings (Q9_5)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A
Dependent	Locations (Q9_6)	Reported an increase in activity	N/A
Independent	Genre: Classical (Q4A)	Whether a given composer composes in the genre	Classical
Independent	Genre: Jazz (Q4A)	Whether a given composer composes in the genre	Classical
Independent	Genre: Electronic (Q4A)	Whether a given composer composes in the genre	Classical
Independent	Genre: Rock (Q4A)	Whether a given composer composes in the genre	Classical
Independent	Genre: Other, Mixed (Q4A)	Whether a given composer composes in the genre	Classical
Independent	Gender	Whether a given composer is female	Male
Independent	Race: White	Whether a given composer is White	White
Independent	Race: American Indian	Whether a given composer is American Indian or an Alaska native	White
Independent	Race: Asian	Whether a given composer is Asian	White
Independent	Race: African American	Whether a given composer is African American	White
Independent	Race: Latino	Whether a given composer is Latino or Hispanic	White
Independent	Race: Other	Whether a given composer has a race that is not listed	White

Analysis Technique

We used a binary logistic regression to estimate the relationship between composers' genre and the odds of increased success (activity), controlling for their gender, age, and race. Specifically, the following model was used for each dependent variable:

$$\ln(p/1-p) = B_0 + B_1(\text{Jazz}) + B_2(\text{Electronic}) + B_3(\text{Acoustic}) + B_4(\text{Rock}) + B_5(\text{Other/Mixed}) + B_6(\text{Age}) + B_7(\text{Gender}) + B_8(\text{American Indian}) + B_9(\text{Asian}) + B_{10}(\text{African American}) + B_{11}(\text{Latino}) + B_{12}(\text{Other}) + e,$$

where:

p = the probability that a composer would report an increase in activity for each of the outcome activity types (see dependent variables in Table X), and

B_{1-5} compares the average log odds of an increase in composer activity for the indicator group to that of the reference genre group of *Classical*,

B_6 is the change in log odds of an increase in composer activity for every one-year increase in age, and

B_{7-12} compares the average log odds of an increase in composer activity for the indicator group to that of the reference race group of *White*.

Note: Each coefficient was exponentiated to produce an odds ratio for interpretation. Specifically, $e^B = \text{OR}$.

Results

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the results of the analysis. In Table 2, we report the proportion of composers in each genre reporting increased outcomes in each outcome category. Initial inspection of this table shows a few notable patterns. For instance, on average, rock composers tend to have the least success, and composers tend to have the most success in performances. Also, acoustic composers have the most variation in success, at over 55%. However, as the comparisons across genres in Table 2 are not controlled for potential confounds, we present statistically controlled comparisons in Table 3. Specifically, Table 3 reports the odds ratios, statistical significance, and 95% confidence intervals for each statistically significant predictor of increased activity, across all seven outcome types (dependent variables). Full logistic regression results are in the Appendix.

Table 2. Proportion of Composers Reporting Increased Activity

Outcomes	Classical	Jazz	Electronic	Acoustic	Rock	Mixed/Other
Commissions	46.24%	40.35%	23.68%	41.18%	12.5%	42.2%
Royalties	33.73%	24.56%	18.42%	35.29%	0%	25.1%
Publishing	24.45%	21.05%	10.53%	25.49%	12.5%	19.07%
Performances	62.3%	64.91%	39.47%	74.51%	37.5%	59.34%
Recordings	39.62%	54.39%	36.84%	43.14%	37.5%	41.83%
Locations	53.9%	43.86%	31.58%	58.82%	25%	46.69%
Other	14.43%	12.28%	7.89%	17.65%	0%	14.79%

Table 3. Odds Ratios for Statistically Significant Predictors

DV	IV	OR	P	95% CI
Q9_1	Electronic	0.352	0.008	[0.154, 0.736]
	Age	0.981	<.001	[0.972, 0.989]
Q9_2	Other/Mixed	0.681	0.004	[0.525, 0.882]
Q9_4	Electronic	0.345	0.003	[0.167, 0.692]
	Age	0.960	<.001	[0.952, 0.969]
Q9_5	Age	0.990	0.020	[0.982, 0.998]
	African American	2.322	0.025	[1.126, 4.976]
Q9_6	Electronic	0.383	0.009	[0.181, 0.768]
	Other/Mixed	0.690	0.002	[0.543, 0.875]
	Age	0.976	<.001	[0.968, 0.985]
Q9_7	Male	0.667	0.026	[0.470, 0.959]

The odds for an electronic music composer to report a commission increase is 65% less than a classical composer, and for each year of age, there is a 2% decrease in the odds of a composer reporting a commission increase. Furthermore, the odds for an electronic music composer to report a publishing increase is 65% less than a classical composer, and for each year of age, there is a 4% decrease in the odds of a composer reporting a performance increase and a 1% decrease in the odds of a composer reporting an increase in publishing. The odds of an African American composer reporting an increase in publishing is 2.32 times greater than for a White composer. In addition, the odds for an electronic composer to report a location increase is 62% less than a classical composer, and for each year of age, there is a 2.4% decrease in the odds that someone reports a location increase. Finally, the odds for a male composer to report an increase in another activity is 33% less than a female composer's odds.

Discussion

In general, younger composers tend to have more success than older composers, as the odds for an increase in commissions, performances, recordings, and locations decrease for each year of age. When comparing most genres to the classical genre, the results show that successes for composers in the electronic genre are lagging behind not only the classical genre, but most of the other genres as well. We are also encouraged by the increased odds of publishing success reported by African American composers.

In the future, we would like to see composers distribute their music to a broader audience, rather than just having one main group of people to which they distribute their music. This would enable more people to hear a given composer's music, and especially for classical compositions. We would also recommend that artists and their teams reach out to various music festivals and clubs to try to target more locations for performances, enabling for a larger audience. As for education, we suggest that composers, in all genres, invest in their future career outcomes, by studying marketing while in college/higher education to ensure that their music is heard by more people. Such a recommendation implies that university music programs require or strongly encourage coursework relating to marketing, in an attempt to improve composer success.

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