Close Encounters - Chamber Music In Small Venues
The experience of being involved in professional chamber music performance in small community venues

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Abstract

Chamber music originated in the intimate setting of a small room, or chamber, but has in recent times found a large and appreciative audience at performances in mainstream concert halls. In parallel, many artists and promoters are recreating the intimate concert experience in small venues, many of which are community venues away from the mainstream venue circuit. Australia’s Artico Ensemble is a quartet of professional musicians specialising in creating chamber music performances in small community venues such as churches, museums, and private homes in and around Brisbane, Queensland. Their experiences form the basis of this Doctoral research study, in which a mixed-method ethnographic case study of Artico Ensemble investigates the experience of engaging in this type of performance from the viewpoint of the three partners involved: the artists, the audience and the venue administrators. In this dissertation, the four ensemble members provide the artists’ story, and results of an audience survey create a demographical profile of Artico Ensemble’s audience members, an analysis of their listening and concert attending habits and an exploration of their experience of attending the specific case study concert. Personal interviews with venue administrators highlight their experience of and motives for undertaking management of these events. Generated by the study’s second line of enquiry, this dissertation also presents findings regarding the strengths and challenges of this type of music making for all involved. To clarify its context, comparisons are drawn with International and Australian literature investigating arts participation, audience and community engagement, and the chamber music experience. As a member of Artico Ensemble, my position as artist and researcher will provide the lived-in experience of self-reflective and practice-led artistic research. This doctoral study crosses over into practice-based research through the inclusion of two short documentary trailers, which have served to generate data as well as highlight study findings.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself. Selected material drawn from this thesis (that is the original work of the author) has been previously published in conference proceedings throughout the course of completing this research.

Signature:

Date: May 18, 2018

Style Note

This thesis conforms to the stylistic conventions of the APA6 style, and the Australian English spelling is used throughout. Consistent with APA6 convention, the only departure from Australian English spelling is found in quotations which retain the spelling used in the original text.
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Publications and Presentations

The following publications and presentations are partly derived from and influenced by research conducted for the purpose of this thesis:

Conference proceedings


Conference presentations (unpublished)

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My thanks also to the many friends who would innocently ask how my study was progressing and whose impromptu thoughts would often trigger new ideas. Lastly, this doctoral project would not have been possible without the support of my husband Paul, whom I thank with all my heart for his patience and endurance throughout the course of this research.
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 The study setting, and the artist-researcher duality

Chamber music originated in the intimate setting of a small room, or chamber, but has in recent times found a large and appreciative audience at performances in mainstream concert halls. In parallel, many professional artists and concert promoters are recreating the intimate chamber concert experience in small venues, many of which are community venues away from the mainstream concert venue circuit.

I am a founding member of Artico Ensemble, a quartet of professional musicians specializing in creating chamber music performances in small community venues such as churches, museums, and private homes in and around Brisbane, Queensland. The ensemble was formed with the aim to reach a new audience for chamber music by steering away from the traditional, established concert halls in the Metropolitan area, thereby making quality music performances accessible to audiences who may not be able to attend these in mainstream concert halls, and in the process create a wide network of small suburban performance spaces. The audience response to the group and its concept has been positive from the outset, with most venues booking return performances, drawing growing crowds. Through the process of creating these concerts, I have met many skilled and enthusiastic non-professional concert promoters who work tirelessly to make these events happen and have discovered many local performance spaces that lend themselves very well to such performances. These experiences led to the inception of this study.

The ensemble’s journey forms the basis of this Doctoral research, in which a mixed-method ethnographical case study of Artico Ensemble investigates the experience of engaging in this type of performance from the viewpoint of the three partners involved: the artists, the audience, and the administrators\(^1\). Furthermore, this study also highlights the strengths and challenges of this type of music making for all those partners involved. It will discuss the underlying main themes and findings and make connections with International and Australian literature investigating arts participation, audience and community engagement, and the chamber music experience. The findings of this study add to the available (Government-initiated) research in these areas and will, in particular, highlight the Arts sub-field of chamber music.

I distinctly remember a Colloquium meeting for Griffith University research students and lecturers, very early on in my doctoral research journey. One of the

\(^1\) The term administrators will be used throughout this thesis to describe a range of people who organise performances in and for the case study venues.
lecturers, re-interpreting the old Indian parable of the blind men and the elephant, mentioned that it is very common that at the end of a research project one is left with an acute awareness that one is only really looking at “the foot of the elephant”. Another lecturer agreed wholeheartedly, adding “whereas it is of course obviously the trunk that is the most interesting!” At the time I enjoyed the insightfulness of the comment, but it is only now, at the end of this Doctoral project, that I can really feel it to be true.

There is a lot that this research is not, and some may think that certain elements and aspects missing from this dissertation would have been obviously the most interesting ones! In research one does, however, primarily uncover answers to the questions asked, and the material presented in this dissertation, gathered through interviews and questionnaires with study participants during a contained period in time, is most definitely not the whole elephant.

What this dissertation does present is a snapshot of the experience of performing chamber music in small community venues, with artist discussions about specific venues, venue ambience and acoustics and their effects on the performance experience, elements of group dynamics in a chamber music ensemble, and discussions about the challenges of establishing and running a long-standing chamber group. It also looks at these concerts through the eyes of the audience members of these concerts, profiling their demographic and providing insights into their attendance habits, and voicing their reasons for and experience of attending concerts in these venues. This study will also include the voice of the concert organisers, discussing their reasons for wanting to present chamber music concerts to their community, and giving a run-down on all that is involved in making it happen.

I am aware that being a member of Artico Ensemble as well as the researcher might suggest a risk of researcher bias. However, I would argue that my intimate knowledge of the subject has in fact helped to better read the data. This was most evident in the analysis of the more qualitative components of this study, where answers to open questions needed to be summarized under a more general terminology or distilled into their underlying meaning. As Barrett (2007) states, “data analysis is rarely formulaic, relying instead on the researcher’s abilities to perceive and describe obvious patterns and themes, as well as subtleties, perplexities, contradictions, and nuances in the data” (p. 419). Having a deeper existing understanding, an expert’s intuition regarding the subtleties and nuances of the study topic can be considered a strength in (predominantly) qualitative research such as this. In addition, my position as artist and
researcher offered an opportunity to enhance the research by being able to include the lived-in experience of self-reflective and practice-led artistic research.

There certainly was a strong possibility that during interview sessions my position as artist and researcher would create respondent bias, by consciously or subconsciously causing interview participants to give the answers or impressions they thought I would want to hear (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Robson, 2002, p.172). Measures to bypass such bias were incorporated into the research design, which will be explained in more detail in chapter three of this dissertation.

1.2 The main research question

The focus of this research is to answer the following main research question:

As seen from the viewpoint of the artists, the audience and the administration, what is the experience of creating professional chamber music performance in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds, and what are the strengths and challenges of this type of music making for all involved?

1.3 A definition of ‘Chamber Music’ as used in this study

In 1969, Fiske released his book *Chamber Music*, which served as an accompaniment to a BBC radio series of the same name. Tracing the origins of the term ‘chamber music’ in order to explain how it should be understood, he mentions that “not much satisfaction can be got from attempts to define Chamber Music” (1969, p. 6). Instead, he opts to provide the search criteria and practical parameters applied to his research. Baron (1998) devotes an entire chapter of his book *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* to following the evolution of the idea of chamber music, as the term has had various meanings since the middle of the 16th century (1998, p. xii).

Italian composer and music theorist Nicola Vicentino (1511 – c.1576) was the first to use the exact term ‘chamber music’ in his scholarly work *L’Antica Musica Ridotta alla Moderna Pratica* (1555), to distinguish between soft vocal ensemble music performed in a nobleman’s palace and full or loud vocal ensemble music performed in church. He wrote that chamber music had subtleties of musical expression avoided in church music (as cited in Baron, 1998, p. 1). At the time, most of the printed chamber music was vocal music. Instrumentalists could join singers by substituting one of the vocal parts with an instrumental line, or re-arrange the whole work to suit their instruments, and some works were published as “apt for voices or viols” (Fiske, 1969, p. 7). During the next century, with instruments becoming technically more advanced
and players’ skills reaching an increasingly higher standard, the written repertoire became more instrument-specific, gradually replacing the earlier multi-purpose music. This new, intricate chamber music was still, however, predominantly used in the private homes of the nobility, played and enjoyed by amateur music lovers.

By the late 18th century it was possible to identify a few specific genres of chamber music based on their instrumentation, such as the string quartet and string trio, and the piano trio and quartet. European Masters such as Haydn and Beethoven created a wealth of repertoire, and the first professional string quartets started performing these complex works in concert, taking chamber music from the realm of the amateur into that of the professional musician. Due to their widespread popularity, these musical genres now became synonymous with their name, ‘chamber music’, and early in the 19th century, music for the chamber was replaced by chamber music based on the scoring of the music, rather than where the music was performed (Baron, p. 3, italics added).

To many, the term chamber music would imply a concert played by a string quartet or the performed work itself, as the term can signify both a genre of music and the act of playing it. Even now when the term chamber music is mentioned, many people will associate it with string instruments; as an example, the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition is only open to string quartets and piano-string trios (Chamber Music Australia, 2011). However, throughout the past century Romantic and Contemporary composers have created an extensive repertoire of chamber works for ensembles that include winds or voice, so it will be important to clarify how the term chamber music should be interpreted throughout the course of this particular research. This should not be seen as an attempt to re-define what chamber music is, but rather to specify the research boundaries – what will be included in this research, and what will not. To this end, I have drawn on various (additional) reference works on chamber music.

Starting with ensemble size, works composed for two musicians will here be classified as chamber music, as long as one of the parts is not functioning merely as an accompaniment, noticeably subservient to the other. Establishing a maximum ensemble size limit raised several questions. For example, if eight were the maximum number of players, as is suggested in many reference books, where does Martinu’s Nonet fit in? Or Mozart’s Serenade KV 361 ‘Gran Partita’, for 13 individual wind and string players? Perhaps it can suffice to say that a large ensemble will be called a chamber music ensemble (and the piece they perform a chamber music work) if it features one
player per part, up to the point where it fits better under the banner of (chamber) orchestra.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, *chamber music* will read as meaning all of the following:

- Music performed by a small ensemble consisting of between two and approximately 12 players;
- Music performed generally without a conductor, featuring one player per part;
- Repertoire consisting of Western Art Music, ranging from Early Music to modern day compositions;
- ‘Classical music’, i.e. as opposed to folk, jazz or world music;
- Music performed on acoustic instruments as well as voice;
- Notated music, as opposed to improvised music.

As part of this research, the case study artists, audience members and concert administrators were asked to provide a personal definition of chamber music. Their opinions and reflections have been combined with those of musicians, authors and academics past and present, to show that in people’s minds, chamber music is much more than these six dot-points. The concept of chamber music is broad, perhaps slightly mystifying, and at times full of emotional connotations, and a full palette of ideas about chamber music can be found in Chapter 8, pages 219 - 234.

**1.4 An introduction to Artico Ensemble.**

Case study subject Artico Ensemble is a quartet of professionally trained classical musicians, consisting of soprano Shelli Hulcombe, bass clarinettist and composer/arranger Paul Kopetz, pianist Brieley Cutting and myself, clarinettist Rianne Wilschut. The group performs existing chamber music repertoire from the canon of traditional Western Art music for any combination of these instruments, as well as original pieces written for the ensemble and arrangements of light classics and musical theatre pieces. Concert programmes comprise short works in a variety of styles, with all musicians taking turns in introducing the music. Repertoire choices are made with the aim to highlight the ensemble’s unusual instrumentation and the wide range of chamber music available to an ensemble such as this. Many first-time audience members expect to see string players in a chamber music quartet and are surprised to see winds and

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One of the aims of Artico Ensemble is to broaden the audience perception of what chamber music is in the 21st century and rejuvenate the genre.

Artico Ensemble’s operational model for chamber music performance in community venues is unconventional; management of the group and all programme planning is shared by the ensemble members, but the marketing of the concerts is outsourced to the host venues. Every year the ensemble sends out letters to community venues in the wider Brisbane area, inviting them to join the group’s network of performance venues. Once a venue expresses interest, the ensemble will liaise with a contact person or administrator at the venue, to discuss and advise on the detailed planning of the event. Most frequently, these administrators are part of an events committee, fellowship group, or church or museum council at the host venue, or have created one such committee especially for the occasion. Artico Ensemble’s operational structure is such that the ensuing marketing and advertising of the concert is handed over to the host community, who attract an audience by advertising the event amongst their community members, through any means they deem most suitable. Community members often bring friends and family to the concert, thus allowing the ensemble to tap into an existing, ready-made audience.

Traditionally, ensembles attract audiences for their concerts by inviting their family and friends, as well as maintaining databases and advertising their event in local (social) media. In that conventional operational model, all invitees have a direct line to the artists: either by being related or having read advertising material created by the artists. By outsourcing the event marketing and thus connecting one existing network to another unrelated network, it is possible to reach audiences that have no direct line to the artists. In time this new network can become part of the ensemble’s regular network, ‘the audience one didn’t know’ beforehand, which can be an effective way of audience building.

By performing in the host community’s own venue and outsourcing most of the marketing to the hosts, Artico Ensemble has reduced overhead costs and has been able to keep its performance fees at a level that remains accessible to the host venue. The host venues agree to pay the ensemble a flat, upfront performance fee. The venue’s events committee determines their concert ticket prices depending on what they think their community members can carry, and together with the other factors this means the ensemble’s concerts can be presented with accessible ticket prices.

If a host venue is able to attract a lot of audience to the event (more than they need to cover Artico’s performance fee), any surplus funds go to the venue and can be
used for fundraising; several of the group’s performance venues have organized their concerts as fund raisers with great success. Some venues have been able to attract a very large concert audience by linking up with other organizations within their circle to collaborate for the marketing, planning and organizing of the event, and some venues have even expanded their initial one-off musical events into well-attended ongoing concert series, creating local community hubs of culture in and around Brisbane.

To summarize Artico Ensemble’s objectives, the group aims to:

- Enhance cultural engagement within local communities by presenting professional standard concerts of chamber music at the highest artistic level possible;
- Provide community service by bringing musical events to small community venues, reaching audiences who may not be able to experience it elsewhere;
- Recognize and reach the existing audiences for chamber music in the suburbs;
- Provide accessible and engaging musical entertainment at affordable costs;
- Grow the profile of chamber music in the wider Brisbane area;
- Enhance organisational engagement by sharing the management of events with local host communities;
- Encourage the establishment of local community centres as vibrant hubs of culture.

Artico Ensemble was formed in 2000 when Paul and I lived and worked in Melbourne. Melbourne was a very large, widespread city even then, and residents who lived an hour outside the city centre would not necessarily drive into the city to attend a concert in the established concert venues. By us travelling to different suburbs and presenting our chamber music to local audiences in their own suburban venue, we realised that it would be possible to repeat one concert programme and most likely reach a different audience in each venue, and potentially reach those people who would not normally attend chamber music events. Although our individual performance fee for each concert was quite low, by performing the same programme in several different venues without the need for further rehearsal we felt adequately remunerated.

The concert series was slow to start. We contacted many suburban churches, galleries and museums, but in that initial year only six venues responded positively to
our mail-out. Most of these venues were interested in having us perform again the following year, however, and booking numbers increased from then onwards. After testing several time-slots we discovered that early to mid-Sunday afternoon was the best concert time, and that providing afternoon refreshments created the most festive and successful atmosphere, enhancing the community spirit of the event.

Once we started to grow as an ensemble we were able to create very high quality chamber music concerts, on par with what was on offer in the small, mainstream Metropolitan venues. The entrepreneurial side of managing the ensemble and making our own decisions about where and what to play was satisfying and provided greater autonomy as an ensemble. It was very exciting to discover new venues, some of which were architecturally beautiful with wonderful acoustics, perfectly suited to chamber music performances. Establishing a personal connection with the enthusiastic and skilled administrators of these suburban venues contributed to the success of the series, as they were taking care of advertising and recruiting our audiences. Most importantly, the ensemble felt that going to the audience rather than expecting them to come to us was the key component of our ensemble concept.

By 2003 we had expanded our local Melbourne concert series to fifteen concerts, and organised our first concert tour to Brisbane, encompassing nine concerts over a two-week block. The following year (2004) we recorded and produced our first CD and added Perth to our National Tour, creating a total concert calendar of 29 performances for the year. In 2006 Paul and I relocated to Brisbane. We initially continued our performance dates in Melbourne but a year later our Melbourne colleagues’ circumstances changed as well and we collectively decided to disband the ensemble. We used this as an opportunity to restart our ensemble with local, Queensland musicians.

Our first task was to find a suitable vocalist, a singer who would enjoy performing chamber music, a difficult task as many singers don't perform chamber music frequently. Their education and career paths usually include opera and/or choral singing, and many aim to become concert soloists. It was therefore not easy to find a soprano with the experience, skill and sensitivity required for chamber music, someone with a real understanding of the medium. After having met Shelli Hulcombe, we launched our first concert series in South-East Queensland in 2009, under the name of The Australian Chamber Musicians. We worked with several pianists until Brieley Cutting joined on a permanent basis. Recently renamed ‘Artico Ensemble’, the group has been together for three years.
Artico Ensemble was formed with the view to reach a new audience for chamber music and develop a wide network of suburban concert spaces. There was room for an additional layer of music performances in Australia, without interfering with the established concert scene in mainstream metropolitan venues by siphoning their audiences away; as will be revealed in the study, many of our audience go to the mainstream concert hall performances as well as to Artico events. Artico has also been able to make this type of music accessible to chamber music novices by offering varied programmes containing a mix of well-known classical and popular works. New audiences less experienced with chamber music can, through us, access music in a relaxed, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. We hope that these concerts will increase the audience numbers for all types of chamber music performance in community venues as well as established concert halls.

Artico Ensemble was also formed to provide its artists, a group of four musicians with a love of chamber music, with performance opportunities without having to wait for the phone to ring. Our collective experience since graduating from various Conservatoria has been as concerto soloists, opera members, educators, composers and casual orchestral players - all employment areas that rely mainly on others to provide you with work. Although the spark to become involved in chamber music as independent operators was present in all four artists from the start, the entrepreneurial skill of running an ensemble such as ours took time to develop. It has taken a number of years of persistent work to design the right collaborative method for all partners involved, and the model is still being fine-tuned. Artico’s programming and repertoire selection has also been refined throughout the years in order to be interesting to chamber music experts, accessible to novices and suited to a community setting, but many established chamber works or newly created pieces have ended up on the rehearsal floor after initially thought suitable.

After initially again starting out with only a few performance venues in South-East Queensland, the ensemble’s list of host venues has grown through the years, showing a high retention rate. With enthusiasm and good management, this connected network of venues has become a vibrant and enduring local chamber music circuit, offering performance opportunities for musicians. There are many creative and sustainable operational models through which musicians can have a rewarding career in chamber music, and Artico Ensemble’s operational model may not work for others, or in all places. However, a partnership model between players, audiences, and venues which is personal and direct has more growth potential in our day and age than a large
umbrella model, where booking agents and ticketing organisations create high overhead costs and more distance between participants. The partnership model demonstrated in this study can potentially be expanded to include business or government partners where suitable, without losing the all-important personal connection.

Artico Ensemble’s operational model highlighted in this study is one of many successful ones, and this dissertation aims to add to the discussion of how we can identify and harness chamber music’s strengths, utilise opportunities, and stay connected with a music loving audience. For, as Abram Loft, Professor Emeritus of Chamber Music at the Eastman School of Music, and former second violinist with the American Fine Arts Quartet, has suggested:

In chamber music, intelligently performed and presented, lies a major hope for the health of serious music in our future. Small ensembles, affordably maintained, can become a constant element in the cultural life of the cities and towns in which we live. Such restoration of truly competent performance in the local setting will balance the centralization of high-level music-making around our major metropolitan areas that has taken place in the course of the last century (Loft, 2003, pp. 9-10).

Further literature regarding the notion of chamber music, chamber music performance, the local setting and the many other aspects relevant to this study’s topic will be reviewed in chapter two of this thesis. The research method and design will be explained in chapter three. A full research report will be presented in chapters four, five and six, in keeping with the three-fold viewpoint of the artists, audience and administrators. A discussion presenting this study’s main themes and findings can be found in chapter seven, which concludes with a visual representation of said findings in the form of mind maps. Chapter eight, “What is chamber music”, provides a kaleidoscopic view on the idea of chamber music by collating contributions from study participants, academics and practitioners in the field. This research’s final conclusion follows in chapter nine.
Chapter 2. Rationale and Literature Review

The main research question stems from experiences encountered in my own professional practice. Several years of creating and performing chamber music concerts in small suburban community venues in Melbourne and Brisbane has nurtured an affinity with this type of music making within myself and confirmed an enduring interest in chamber music amongst audiences. Comments from audience members after a performance by my ensemble would frequently focus on the intimate size of the concert space and the informal atmosphere, which was said to enhance the concert experience. Similarly, the fact that the ensemble would come to their local suburban community venue, but nonetheless provide the high quality, professional performance usually only associated with the mainstream concert halls was often mentioned as very positive. These points, the size and informality of the venue and its suburban locality, and its relation to the concert experience for both audience and artists, will feature heavily in this research. In this chapter I will explore literature surrounding my research question, with a particular emphasis on small performance spaces, acoustics and (other) technical specifications of performance spaces, performance partners and the network of relationships which form part of these performances, and the full audience experience and social aspects of live listening. I will also discuss other Australian research, including studies investigating arts participation and attitudes towards the arts, and explore the potential role of the community venue as an additional (accessible) place for art. The final segment of this Literature Review will further expand the notion of chamber music.

2.1 Small performance spaces

Available current literature reveals a change of direction in the chamber music scene towards smaller performance spaces, steering away from the large concert hall venues. In Melbourne, the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall in the Melbourne Recital Centre was opened in 2009 to enhance the experience of live acoustic music performance and “to promote intimate communication between the players and to allow the audience to share the intensity and dynamics of the performance” (Melbourne Recital Centre, 2011). In the 2011 Melbourne Festival, the city hosted the Quartetthaus, a purpose-built portable venue. This small hall containing only 52 seats, each with a perfect view of the players, was built to re-emphasise the ‘chamber’ in chamber music, to highlight “the intimacy, the squeaks and knocks of musicians’ hands on strings and wood, and the intercepted glances … that get lost in the corporate expanse of the Melbourne Concert Hall” (Matthew Hoy, cited in Cosic, 2011, p. 5).
The interest in smaller venues such as the Quartetthaus should be seen as a sign of the times, with even smaller venues becoming popular for hosting concerts. In suburban Wynnum, Queensland, Avon and Helen Phillips have transformed one of the rooms in their house into The Imperial Room, hosting concerts inspired by the parlour concerts of times gone by (Cranitch, 2012). North of the Brisbane city centre, The Gallery Room in Windsor is home to an intimate concert series in the music room-cum-art gallery of a private house, which has seating room for a maximum audience of 50. Established in 2010, the series attracts recurring visitors, many of whom enthusiastically comment on the intimate atmosphere, expressing their joy in having the chance to watch the musicians up close (The Gallery Music Room, 2011). One of several well-established house concert series in Victoria is situated in Mount Macedon, where Lowland Farm hosts internationally acclaimed ensembles in the intimacy of a room which seats 90 people, overlooking the surrounding countryside. The organisation’s website mentions that Macedon Music offers a unique experience: “While Australia’s finest chamber musicians enjoy the intimacy of the performance space, the audience is able to feel in touch with the music” (Macedon Music, 2012).

On an international level, The Monument House Concert Series in Utrecht (The Netherlands) is a similar initiative. It was launched in 2006 as a private venue “to introduce art music involving either the piano or the guitar in an intimate and relaxed setting to audiences in the Netherlands” (Bekkers, 2011, para. 1). In the US, Groupmuse is a relatively new start-up company managed by 25-year-old CEO Sam Bodkin. It is the company’s aim to introduce young audiences to classical music by taking it out of the concert hall and directly into their homes; classical music in a house-party atmosphere (Phaneuf, 2015). “The reality is these concert parties have been happening for 500 years, but I decided that this is the way young people should be introduced to classical music” Bodkin says (pp. 51-52). The Groupmuse company has launched concerts in many cities throughout the US and Europe and is another example of a significant international trend of performers and music companies creating intimate chamber music experiences. Denver, in the state of Colorado, is home to Hausmusik, an organisation which was started with the aim to perform chamber music in the intimate setting for which it was conceived, or, to put it boldly, “chamber music done exactly as it should be done” (Arnest, 1997).

There are other thriving house concert initiatives such as The European House Concert Hub run by Rob Ellen (http://houseconcerthub.ning.com), Fran Snyder’s Concerts In Your Home (http://www.concertsinyourhome.com) in the US, and
Australia’s own House Concerts Australia, founded by Lisa Aston (http://www.houseconcertsaustralia.com). These highly successful ventures mainly comprise folk/indie/roots artists but were also designed “to experience music in a warm and intimate environment” (Aston, 2011, p. 1).

Although the trend towards smaller concert spaces and less formal performance settings can be currently felt quite strongly, the idea itself is not new. In 1979, English pianist Susan Tomes (2004) and colleagues formed chamber music ensemble *Domus*, a touring ensemble performing chamber music to audiences in a personal and informal setting. She writes that they all felt that music possesses strong communicative powers, but that their experiences playing in traditional concert halls did not reflect this. “We were united by the feeling that formal concerts often inhibit both players and listeners” (Tomes, 2004, p. 3). Tomes continues:

> We realised all along that this music could touch people’s lives, and by taking away the ‘scary’ and alienating aspects of formal concerts, we sought to remove the obstacles to the audience’s bonding with the music. In other words, we wanted people to get close to the music we loved, and we tried to make that easy for them. (Tomes, 2004, p. 8)

*Domus* derived its name from the small, portable concert venue the group carried with them on tour, which enabled them to bring chamber music to their audiences, and Tomes mentions that her ensemble was one of the first groups to include spoken informal introductions to the works performed, in an effort to further enhance the communication. Interestingly, she writes that this channel of communication had a positive effect on the quality of the ensemble’s playing as well (p. 16).

### 2.2 Acoustics, and technical specifications of performance spaces

Clearly, many believe that performing chamber music in small venues enhances the experience for both the artists and their audiences, but the reasons behind this rationale are worth further investigation. It also raises the question whether it is the intimacy and informality of these types of performances and venues that have such a positive effect on the audience experience, or whether it is simply a matter of size. In addition, one wonders whether it may be possible to pinpoint the exact venue parameters that generate the best audience experience.

Van de Heyning discussed the acoustic conditioning of the Aula Magna of the Faculty of law of the University of València (Van de Heyning, 2015). This hall is used for lectures as well as chamber music performances, and the research study aimed to
discover those technical specifications of this hall that could provide the best experience for an audience to listen to chamber music. Van de Heyning introduces the reader to the sound quality parameters of an auditorium space dedicated to musical performance:

In a musical performance, the music is obviously important. But the space where the performance takes place is as or even of more vital importance. From the instrument to the ear, the sound moves through the space: it is reflected, absorbed and dispersed. Therefore it is essential that the material and shape of the surfaces are well-designed. To rate the acoustic quality different parameters can be defined. These parameters are known as quality parameters. (p. 8)

Parameters such as reverberation time and liveness, warmth, brilliance, loudness, clarity and intimacy are discussed, among others. “Intimacy is used to determine a space where there is a perception that music is being played in a small room. […] Intimacy is regarded as one of the most important parameters for musical acoustics” (Van de Heyning, 2015, p. 12). The study further suggests that reverberation time is the most important parameter to modify in a multiple-use hall such as the Aula Magna, in order to make it more suitable to chamber music performance. Reverberation time should be short for lectures (so speakers can be heard clearly) but longer for music performance, to avoid dead acoustics.

Eminent acoustics expert Dr Leo Beranek has dedicated 40 years of his life to the study of acoustics and has participated in the design and evaluation of numerous concert halls and opera houses. In his article ‘Acoustics and Musical Qualities’ (Beranek, 1996), Dr Beranek mentions intimacy as one of the important indicators of acoustical quality:

Acoustical ‘intimacy’ suggests to the listener the size of the space in which it is performed. Different styles of music sound best in a hall with the appropriate degree of acoustical intimacy. It is not necessary that the room have a particular size, but only that it sound as though the size is appropriate. […] …the composer conceives of each musical work with a particular degree of intimacy in mind. If the work is performed in a hall whose intimacy is not scaled to it, the listener is quickly aware of the inappropriateness of the acoustic environment. (p. 2650)

Hidaka and Nishihara also deal with specific acoustical properties of chamber music halls (Hidaka & Nishihara, 2004). The article’s abstract lists various acoustical
parameters similar to those found in Van de Heyning’s study (such as reverberation time and clarity), which have been used to study and compare nine highly reputed chamber halls of traditional design in Europe and nine of contemporary design in Japan. The authors suggest that “there is no assurance whether existing data or design guidelines for large symphony halls are also suitable for smaller-sized spaces” (p. 357). The paper discusses various qualities peculiar to chamber music halls, with the aim to present general design guidelines for a chamber music hall. The study investigated 18 halls, in Amsterdam, Berlin, Prague, Salzburg, Vienna, Zurich, Tokyo, Kanagawa and Kirishima, and these halls were chosen because objective measurements for these halls were readily available. The article opens with descriptions of all the halls in technical, but understandable, detail; hall shape and size in meters cubed, building materials used on floors and walls, decorations on walls or ceilings, and upholstery material on seats. The remainder of the article provides quite complex figures and equations relating to acoustics. Although important, due to their specialised and highly scientific nature further discussions regarding these technical aspects of concert hall acoustics fall outside the scope of this research. And also, although it was very informative to read which exact specifications ought to create the most ideal listening conditions in a chamber music hall, I could not help but think that these were technical specs only; that the feel, or the atmosphere of a hall will equally affect the experience of a chamber music concert.

2.3 Performance partners and a network of relationships

Most available literature or research highlighting the experience of being involved in chamber music investigates only one participant in the event. It is my experience, however, that there are at least three strong partners (the artists, the audience and the administrators) who together ‘create’ a chamber music performance and influence its outcome, and that this is especially evident when performing in small community venues, where the levels of interaction are very direct. Howard Becker labels these partnerships the art world, “the network of people whose cooperative activity … produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for” (Becker, 1982, p. x). Christopher Small (1998) continues that rationale when describing the processes involved in creating and performing music, establishing the term musicking (p. 11). His premise is that “music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do” (p. 2), and that there are many more engaged parties during a performance than purely the artist playing a work. This thought has been mirrored in many publications since, and it is for this reason that all three partners are included in this study.
In subsequent articles, Small expands the thought of musicking, posing that in this participation, in the musicking, lies the meaning of music, rather than in the musical work itself. As Small explains:

When any musical performance takes place there is created within the performance space a complex web of human relationships. At the center of the web are the sounds that the performers are bringing into existence and the relationships that they create between them. Radiating out from these, and feeding back to them, are the relationships among the performers, between the performers and the listeners, among the listeners and anyone who may be present, and even between those who are present and those who are not. It is in those relationships, so rich and complex that they cannot be articulated in words, that the meaning of a musical performance lies. (2001, pp. 344-345)

Small also argues that chamber music appeals to people who identify with the cultural values associated with this type of music and the participating in it and adds that “the setting where the performance is taking place will impose relationships between the participants and create meanings even before a note of music has been sounded” (2001, p. 344). Both these thoughts resonate strongly with this Brisbane study.

2.4 The audience experience and social aspects of live listening

Pitts’ study conducted in Sheffield, England (Pitts, 2005) aimed to investigate the audience experience at the Music in the Round chamber music festival, which gets its name from the venue where it takes place:

… an intimate ‘in the round’ setting (seating up to 400), where the audience occupies raised seating around a small stage area. Audience members attributed much of the intimacy and informality of the event to the fact that the spaces occupied by performers and audience were less clearly delineated than in traditional concert halls, enjoying the feeling of being able to read the music over their shoulders almost. (p. 259)

This study is a good example of an investigation into the impact of a small and intimate venue on an audience’s experience. As such it is very relevant to my own research, and I have drawn on parts of its methodology for my local study. It also highlighted ways in which musical and social enjoyment interact to generate a sense of involvement in the event (p. 269), an additional strong theme in this research study.
After the initial Music In The Round study, Pitts (in partnership with Christopher Spencer) continued her research by undertaking a survey of the long-term festival attendees, with questionnaires and follow-up interviews with audience members, and results were published in 2008. They side with Small in noting that music is so often studied as an artefact, rather than an activity, and point out that there is in particular “an absence of research considering the effects of audience members on one another, and the nature of the communities and friendships that can arise as a result of sharing in collective musical experiences” (Pitts & Spencer, 2008, p. 229). They continue:

The psychological, financial, and social factors affecting concert attendance may seem to be something of a diversion from the musical considerations that are at the heart of the listening experience. They offer, however, a broad framework within which the behaviour and experience of audience members can be interpreted, and provide a context for the interaction of social, musical, and personal factors in which concert enjoyment can be understood. (p. 230)

The authors suggest that the sense of belonging and community that arises from pursuing shared interests with like-minded people has hints of ‘fan’ behaviour, but that research in that field so far has mainly focused on popular music only. “Classical concert-goers are perhaps more often thought of as ‘consumers’, with their attendance and purchasing habits followed closely by marketing and leisure analysts” (p. 229). They posit that “there are elements of both fan and consumer behaviour in the audience’s developing attitudes to the festival, but neither characterization quite captures the complexity of the individual and collective listening experiences reported by audience members” (p. 237). The authors therefore propose that a suitable framework for future research might sit somewhere between fandom study and consumer analysis study. Pitts and Spencer emphasise the limited amount of existing research investigating the experiences of long-term concert-goers, and argue that “a greater understanding of their attitudes and motivations is needed to offer insight into classical music audiences as they currently exist, and so to identify the barriers and opportunities for future audience growth and satisfaction” (p. 228).

Further on in the article, Pitts and Spencer introduce the reader to an additional concept, that of place attachment:

Music in the Round was often the main event in audience’s listening schedules, valued for its proximity and convenience for the largely local
audience, as well as for its high musical standards. In these concert-going habits, established over years or decades, the festival has provided a geographical and cultural ‘comfort zone’, which appears in most cases to have survived the disruption of new performers and changes in programming. Environmental psychology research on ‘place attachment’ confirms that cognitive and emotional connections with a place are reinforced by positive memories of events that have occurred there … (p. 235)

Pitts and Spencer conclude that:
These findings are generalizable beyond Music in the Round in that they reveal the value of understanding audience experience and illustrate the importance of place, performers, and fellow audience members as factors in the enjoyment of concert-going and the likelihood of repeat attendance. A sense of belonging and community has been shown to be vital in maintaining audience loyalty and longevity, both through interactions with like-minded listeners and through a desire to establish a sense of friendship and familiarity with the performers. While musical motivations and interest remain at the heart of concert attendance, there is undoubtedly a need for further investigation of the social aspects of collective listening, which have previously been neglected, particularly in relation to classical music. […] Investigating live listening as a central but under-researched component of musical experience could have a valuable role to play in securing the commitment of classical music audiences for the future. (Pitts & Spencer, 2008, pp. 237-238)

My doctoral study of Artico Ensemble and its audience delves into the near-identical field of audience experience at live concerts, and its findings share many similarities. Pitts and Spencer founded SPARC, the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre at the University of Sheffield in the UK. This research centre is engaged in empirical approaches to understanding arts experiences, investigating audiences, performers and live music. Their aims include:

To illustrate the musical, social and personal richness of audience experience in different contexts; to investigate the perceived relationships between audiences and performers; to explore musicians’ perspectives on live performance; and to consider the relevance of our
research for arts organisations, musicians, educators and researchers. 
(http://www.sparc.dept.shef.ac.uk/aims)

Many publications from SPARC are relevant to this study, and my own doctoral study in turn can add to its body of research. SPARC affiliates Lucy Dearn and Sarah Price have expanded on Pitts and Spencer’s work, by investigating concert attendance as a form of socialising, the short-term communal aspects of being ‘in-audience’, and the longer-term communities that surround cultural institutions (Dearn & Price, 2016, p. 1). They re-introduce the idea of classical music fandom, and:

aim to demonstrate that aesthetic pleasure is never the only motivating factor behind concert attendance, even for frequent attendees, as their selection of concerts and their listening experiences are always influenced by social interactions. (ibid.)

Dearn and Price explain that throughout the history of classical music, scholarly attention has been focused on the musical work, the composer, the performer and the concert hall, but that in recent years there has been a growing interest in the final element of the concert experience: the listener (p. 2). They cite Christopher Small’s influential book *Musicking* (Small, 1998), which described the aesthetic and social experience shared by audience members at a Western classical music concert, but regret that this book only drew on his own personal experiences rather than including multiple listener’s voices (Dearn & Price, 2016, p. 2).

Dearn & Price acknowledge that Pitts and Spencer began to explore “how the feeling of belonging and community can contribute to an audience members’ loyalty to an arts organisation (Pitts & Spencer 2008; Pitts et al. 2013, as cited in Dearn & Price, 2016, pp. 2-3), but that they aim to learn more about “the extent to which socialising affects the decision to attend a particular concert” (2016, p. 2, italics added). One aspect of socialising which Dearn & Price explore in their paper is the formation of listening communities, and they elaborate by providing a useful definition of ‘community’:

“Varying definitions of community are found across disciplines, however we are defining community as a group of people joining together publicly over a shared passion, in the same geographical setting, who are united by a social matrix” (p. 3). Dearn & Price make a comparison between the inner workings of these classical music communities and fan communities in popular music: “Although fandom within classical music may present itself in different ways to popular music listening cultures, we aim to
show that the same sense of affiliation can be found and classical music audiences can be considered as fans” (p. 4).

Dearn and Price adopt the term ‘companions’, first found in research with visitors to art galleries, to refer to audience members who plan to attend together and recognize that “the frameworks developed in this more established (research) field can be used to aid our understanding of classical music audiences” (p. 4). The term ‘companions’ will be useful for this study. The authors conclude by stating “with ever-growing technological advancements, accessing high quality classical music away from the concert hall is becoming easier and cheaper than ever before, yet many people are actively choosing to experience this music as part of a live audience” (Dearn & Price, 2016, p. 14).

Anthony Uzarovski, who maintains a classical music blog for The Guardian online newspaper, is by his own admission “neither a classical music expert nor even a particular enthusiast and had no idea what to expect as I headed for the Sound Unbound festival” (Uzarovski, 2015, para 1). He states that “in a reality where most things, be it works of art, music or information can be accessed by a swipe, click or snap, the very basic act of listening to a live performance can be a very odd experience” (ibid.). He was, however, quite surprised by how the experience affected him:

It was the collective experience of listening to classical music in a live setting which really impacted on me in a way I hadn’t anticipated. The incredible intimacy that’s created between the audience and the onstage musicians, particularly in case of chamber music, creates a unique energy. I found it a thrilling idea, to think how the auditorium was filled with people each transported by the music to their own individual memories and thoughts, images and emotions. (Uzarovski, 2015, para 2)

Continuing the concept of ‘liveness’, Australian researcher and SPARC affiliate Katya Johanson co-authored The Value of ‘Being There’: How the Live Experience Measures Quality for the Audience (Radbourne, Johanson, & Glow, 2014). Her book chapter focuses on “the audience’s experience of the live performance, because […] the very elements of ‘being there’ contribute to the qualities identified as important to the audience. The chapter examines how the live audience experience of a music performance contributes to the value of the performance” (2014, p. 2). Johanson’s work is of special interest to this research as it reports on findings from an Australian study involving five Australian music companies and their audiences, designed to investigate what the audience experiences during a live performance, and how audience members
define the *quality* of their experience during the performance (p. 6, italics added). Johanson begins by describing the conventional measures of quality in the performing arts commonly used in the past:

- economic measures of inputs (costs, resources, subsidies), throughput (number of people affected by the activity, target groups’ attendance, number of performances) and outputs (venue capacity against attendance, income against production costs) were the most common labels of quality measurement. (Radbourne et al., 2014, p. 2)

The authors point out that none of these indicators related to the experience the audience had during the performance (p. 3). In the late 1990s, however, researchers began to turn their attention to audience indicators of quality and value in the arts, which often identified these qualities as relating to personal fulfilment (p. 3).

This emphasis on the emotional aspect of a performance has been neglected by conventional measures of artistic quality. The consistency with which it appears as a factor in audience accounts of their experiences, however, suggests that research on audiences must attempt to evaluate the audiences’ emotional response to the performance and the performers. While governments have values (and rewards) around operational performance and efficiencies, consumers and audiences have their personal values. These values are the benchmarks against which individual audience members attribute quality. (Radbourne et al., 2014, pp. 3-4)

Rossel argues that empirical studies of audiences for music should “expect to find two modes of consumption: one more analytical and intellectual, and the other focused on pleasurable aesthetic emotions” (Rossel, 2011, p. 88, as cited in Radbourne et al., 2014, p. 4). These two modes of consumption are also recognized by Osborne, Wheeler & Elliott (1999), and will again be demonstrated in the data of this doctoral research study.

Johanson delves into the concept of ‘liveness’ in more detail:

Participants were asked to reflect on their responses to the performance, such as when they most felt engaged in the performance, what prompted this engagement, what emotions were elicited and how they expressed this emotion. In particular, respondents noted that the live nature of the experience was qualitatively different to the experience of being an
Barker (in Radbourne et al., 2014) identifies seven elements unique to the experience of ‘liveness’ in cultural experiences, which are:

1. Physical co-presence with performers and performance;
2. Simultaneity with the performance;
3. Direct engagement and absence of intervening (technological) mediation;
4. A sense of the ‘local’ within the experience;
5. A sense of interaction with performers;
6. A sense of interaction with others in the audience;
7. A feeling of intensified experiences/participation through sensing any of the above (Barker, 2014, in Radbourne et al. p. 20).

Barker, and Philip Auslander (2008) lead the discussion about the concept, status and value of live performance in a digital age dominated by mass media. In this technological era, it is no longer so simple to differentiate between live and recorded (or in other ways mediated) performance; is a live-streamed broadcast of a live opera performance still a live performance, for example? And, using one of Auslander’s examples (2008), does the use of a pop singer’s head-set microphone during a live performance in a vast arena, or the concurrent duplication of the stage on large onsite screens make the performance less live, or not?

To clarify: in this study and adhering to a more traditional definition of ‘live’, the word indicates the physical co-presence of artist and audience (Barker, in Radbourne et al., 2014), with both being in the same space at the same moment, and a performance without the use of amplification and/or recording and broadcasting devices. This leads to ‘liveness’, the sense of interaction between artists and audience, and between audience members themselves, and an intensified experience and participation through sensing these phenomena. The “physical co-presence with performers and performance” described by Barker is a determining factor for the live audience experience, and it is a recurring comment in the audience survey of this doctoral study.

2.5 Related Australian research

In other Australian research, Pauline Griffiths (2003) conducted an ethnographic
study of audiences at Melbourne chamber music concerts, to assess what aspects of their background and mind-set facilitate access, participation and pleasure at and for chamber music concerts. The ethnographic study method was chosen in order to provide “insight into the full social contexts of concert audience-ship or the conditions of familiarity and cultivation that facilitate attendance” (pp. 102-103). The fact that most other music audience research does not separate chamber music from the larger ‘classical music’ category, leading to a shortage in readily available chamber music-specific information, was another motivating factor for her choice of study. The design of Griffiths’ study has helped to shape the audience segment in my research. By undertaking audience surveys at nine concerts in six chamber music categories (new music concerts, flagship concerts, community-based concerts, university-based concerts, regional concerts and festival concerts), extended by follow-up guided interviews, Griffiths was able to provide an extensive and multi-faceted profile of the local chamber music audience members. Her study reinforced that musical and social factors are linked in their contribution to audience participation and enjoyment of chamber music concerts.

The strength of Griffiths’ research is most apparent in the narrative-style segments of audience interviews printed in the thesis; it gives renewed faith in the existence of a love for chamber music (and a wide spectrum of classical music in general) amongst audiences in Melbourne, which has been confirmed in my study of Brisbane audiences.

Examples of other research investigating chamber music in Queensland include Burgess’ study *High Culture as Subculture: Brisbane’s Contemporary Chamber Music Scene* (2004), which profiles Brisbane ensemble Topology and their audiences. Similar to Griffiths, Burgess’ method of involving the audience in a questionnaire-style survey, deepened by follow-up interviews with selected participants, provided a suitable model for my own research design. The pyramid created through anonymous but important statistical information at ground level culminating in personal accounts on first-name basis maximized the impact of this part of her research. By also including the artists in the conversation, the study gained an additional level of insight. Munro, in his study *Brains on Seats: The Struggles and Rewards of Performing New Music in Queensland*” (2004), interviewed members of five local New Music ensembles in order to establish how New Music ensembles survive in an increasingly economic rationalist arts world. In both of these studies the focus is the New Music scene, whereas my research widens the view to the general chamber ensemble scene, while narrowing it down to performance in small community venues. James Nightingale’s Doctoral Thesis (2010)
investigates the creative networks of the classical music sector in Australia. Through a series of case studies, and by using Becker’s ‘art world’ concept as a theoretical framework, Nightingale reveals the diversity of the classical music art world, the varied roles that musicians take within live performance, education and community settings, and the range of organizations in which they work. By bringing these vibrant and constantly evolving aspects of the sector to the fore, the author hopes to assist in the creation of a cultural policy that is more attuned to the needs and contributions of Australia’s classical musicians (Nightingale, 2010, p. 6).

2.6 Arts participation and attitudes towards the arts

Naturally, multi-faceted research such as this current Brisbane chamber music study and those mentioned above, should all be of value to Government arts policy makers and music marketing managers. It will add to existing demographical data provided by studies such as Selling the Performing Arts (Osborne, Wheeler, & Elliott, 1999) and Australians and the Arts (Costantoura, 2001). One of the Australia Council’s landmark reports, More than Bums on Seats: Australian Participation in the Arts (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010), reports on an extensive investigation of how Australians participate in the arts. In a telephone survey to 3000 people, participants were asked to give reasons for not participating in the arts. The Council’s report notes significant opportunities to build arts audiences by understanding and addressing these perceived practical and attitudinal barriers for arts participation prevalent amongst our Australian population (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010). Hearteningly, some of its key findings are that attitudes towards the arts are increasingly positive, and that the arts are strongly supported by the community (p. 3).

In 2013, the Australia Council commissioned a follow-up study in order to assess current behavioural trends and attitudes towards the arts and draw comparisons to those from the original study in 2009 (Australia Council for the Arts, 2014 p. 9). Released in 2014, Arts in Daily Life: Australian Participation in the Arts confirms that public attitudes towards the arts are highly positive, and states that overall engagement with the arts is up (p. 9). Public perception is that the arts have become more accessible in the four years since the last study. Amongst attendees, there has been a three percent drop in the percentage of people who see price as a barrier and find that “the arts are too expensive” (p. 15). There has also been a four percent drop in the percentage of people who believe that “the arts tend to attract people who are somewhat elitist or pretentious” (ibid). These two statements, however, were still endorsed by 36 and 30% of the population respectively, which suggests that these potential barriers for arts attendance
require further and ongoing attention. More worryingly, when specifically quizzing those people who do not attend the arts, 67% of non-attendees (compared with 58% in 2009) list distance, opportunity, lack of anyone to do it with, or health problems as growing barriers to arts attendance (p.21). Also, a large 57% of non-attendees “did not attend arts activities because they felt the arts did not suit their self-image” (p. 21). Intelligent and considered strategic planning is in order, to try, collectively, to counter these barriers where possible.

The Australia Council’s Music Sector Plan 2011 – 2012 identifies issues and states goals specifically for the Music Sector and puts a highly-targeted work plan forward to enhance its strengths and utilize identified opportunities (Mason, 2011). The Queensland Art Council recognizes that Queensland is a significant contributor to Australian classical music, and that it produces many of the nation’s finest musicians and small ensembles (Queensland Government, 2010, p. 30). In its Arts and Cultural Sector Plan 2010 – 2013, it encourages new ways of engaging with audiences, to provide opportunities for people to participate in ways that are meaningful and relevant for them, and to grow audiences for classical music (ibid.). One of its goals was to undertake a classical music mapping project to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities, and results of this current study could be added to their existing data.

The Music Trust’s Music in Australia Knowledge Base is the principal source of information about Australian music sector facts, figures and issues. It covers the entire music sector including the music performance industry, music education, and music in the community. On its website, the music industry is divided into four main categories: Total Music sector; Music Creation and Performance; Support and Infrastructure; and Technology and Research. For each activity or music sector component, the Knowledge Base attempts to provide separate information types:

- **Mapping** — describing the activity
- **Statistics** — adding numbers to the description
- **Issues** — discussing the challenges facing the activity, including
  - **SWOT analysis** of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- **Notes/Gaps to fill** — which includes asking for contributions to the knowledge base in instances where information remains inadequate.

(Music in Australia Knowledge Base, n.d., para 6)

The sub-category of chamber music is currently substantially under-represented when it comes to mapping and statistics, and the outcome of this research can make a
significant contribution in these areas. Mary Jo Capps, CEO of Musica Viva Australia, has provided the Knowledge Base with a SWOT analysis on chamber music performance, which lists its flexibility of product and venue size as a strength and recognizes the social aspect of chamber music concerts as an opportunity for growth (Capps, 2008), which can be supported by findings from this study. Also, current entries on chamber music in this database show a broad and well-developed knowledge of the high profile, well-established NSW-based chamber groups and the mainstream concert venues, and this research aims to add to that by making the small ensembles and small community performance venues in and around Brisbane more visible.

2.7 Additional accessible places for art - Exploring community venues

One other aspect of the rationale for this research study is the notion that there may be a place for an additional layer of chamber music activity in small community venues in Brisbane, co-existing with our mainstream concert venue circuit. Lancaster, Kyte, Craik and Schippers (Lancaster, Kyte, Craik, & Schippers, 2010) make a strong case for expanding the performance venue circuit, whilst highlighting the concept of accessibility. Accessibility can be understood as “in close proximity”, but also as non-elitist, or inclusive, and both of these points are key factors in this research. A local, small concert venue can be easily accessible for audiences in a practical sense, and its familiarity and size creates a low threshold for potential audiences. In her report to Arts Queensland, Lancaster agrees that “community organisations reduce any intimidation which audiences may align with classical music performance in concert halls” (2013, p. 3).

The report from the Music Council of Australia’s Classical Music Summit 2010 (Letts, 2011) is significant to this study. The Summit brought together some of the leading members of the classical music community, to consider its present situation and propose actions towards a vibrant future. Strategies for audience building, new ways of presenting classical music, selecting and creating engaging repertoire, and a strong link to music education and community and regional development have since been put in place. The outcomes of my research should further inform the MCA planning, as a community concert venue circuit could align well with the suggested strategies for music making.

Abram Loft (2003), second violinist with the American Fine Arts Quartet for 25 years, makes a strong case for chamber music performance in local venues in addition to the established metropolitan venues:
For in chamber music, intelligently performed and presented, lies a major hope for the health of serious music in our future. Small ensembles, affordably maintained, can become a constant element in the cultural life of the cities and towns in which we live. Such restoration of truly competent performance in the local setting will balance the centralization of high-level music-making around our major metropolitan areas that has taken place in the course of the last century (Loft, 2003, pp. 9-10).

Admittedly, the Fine Arts Quartet is based in the United States and his statement should therefore be read with the American music scene in mind, but it may be fair to say that urban development in Australia has been similar to the one described, and we can benefit from each other’s experience. Other Government research undertaken in the US also confirmed the importance of community venues for people’s participation in arts.

In 1997, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds launched a major national initiative to encourage community foundations to invest in broadening, deepening, and diversifying cultural participation in communities in the United States. ‘Broadening’ should be understood as reaching more people like those already participating, ‘deepening’ is to make people who participate do so more frequently and more intensely, and ‘diversifying’ is reaching people who have not previously been involved (Walker, Scott-Melnyk & Sherwood, 2002, p. 8).

The Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation initiative (CPCP) selected ten different community groups, who organised a wide range of activities within their communities in an effort to encourage participation in arts and cultural events. A year later, Wallace-Readers Digest commissioned an evaluation of the initiative, and Walker has since written several papers reporting on the findings of the CPCP. He lists some of the key strategies of the CPCP participants, which included:

- To perform in non-traditional venues where performances can reach new and different patrons
- To improve access to cultural opportunities by people who must overcome barriers of distance or cost (Walker, Scott-Melnyk & Sherwood, 2002, p. 8)

One of the CPCP participants, the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, presented a chamber music concert series in churches and community centres “to introduce the concert experience to people who do not ordinarily hear chamber music and to provide
an opportunity for families to spend time together” (Walker & Sherwood, 2003, p. 13). One of Walker’s findings was that people are more likely to attend arts and cultural events at community locations than at specialized arts venues (2002, p. 8), and it will be enlightening to put his figures alongside the findings of this current Brisbane study.

Roodhouse (2010), Chang (2016), Eltham (2012) and Rosewall (2006) offer a different perspective on venues and places for art by conceptualising Cultural Quarters and discussing community arts development ideologies. The ideas and terminology used in these texts can expand our notion of site and place and deepen our cultural understanding. However, an in-depth look at these concepts falls beyond the scope of this literature review and research study.

2.8 Chamber Music

Kozenko (2013) studied the New York Chamber Music Society and its founder Carolyn Beebe. The Society played an important role in the city’s development as one of the major artistic capitals of the world and furthered the performance of chamber music in New York City. According to the New Grove Dictionary of American Music, “few concerts devoted to chamber music were given publicly in New York before 1850” (as cited in Kozenko, 2013, p. 6), but interest in this art form increased after 1915. Much of this increase in profile can be contributed to organisations such as the New York Chamber Music Society (NYCMS), which launched their first concert in 1915. Founded by Carolyn Beebe, the NYCMS was to have a very successful 22-year run.

From 1915 to 1925 the New York Chamber Music Society presented their concerts at Aeolian Hall. From all contemporary accounts, Aeolian Hall was an ideal choice for chamber music recitals. The acoustics were better suited to small ensembles than, say, Carnegie Hall (Kozenko, 2013, p. 63). Late in 1925 they moved their concert series to the Ballroom of the Hotel Plaza and launched in Salon Concert format. According to Kozenko, the concept of the Salon Concerts given by the NYCMS was based on European models of private concerts, which functioned in parallel to commercial performances in public venues (p. 71). The Herald Tribune newspaper described the concert set-up and its surroundings:

The [NYCMS], which in seasons past played in the usual manner at Aeolian Hall played last night’s . . . ‘Sunday Salons’ in the ballroom of the Plaza, with an audience grouped in armchairs and sofas on three sides of the players. This is to provide a more informal intimate
atmosphere than that of a usual concert. (as cited in Kozenko, 2013, p. 71)

The Herald Tribune reviewer adds that it was custom for a supper to follow the concert, and Kozenko explains, that “the ‘buffet supper’ that followed the concerts gave the audience a chance to socialize and perhaps to converse amongst themselves about the music and the performers” (p. 71). It is interesting to read that even nearly a century ago, chamber music concerts were held in this fashion: in a salon-style room of some kind, with supper to follow so audiences could chat.

Kozenko’s thesis also delves briefly into the topic of programming. She offers a wonderful quote from a New York Times newspaper article of 1902, which even in that day already discussed the importance of programming and its effects on New York audiences:

But the problem of programme making is a difficult and delicate one . . . what pieces are suitable to be heard together on the same evening? What must be the effect of contrast and harmony in spirit and mood and style? And, especially, what must be the order in which they shall be placed, so that one shall not kill the effect of what is to come after, by overpowering or being overpowered by it, or by showing unfavorably the contrast of a brilliant modern style with a soberer and more old-fashioned one, or a profound musical thought against a merely diverting and pleasing composition? How shall the pieces be selected and arranged so that they shall complement and intensify each other’s effects and create the impression of an artistically balanced and satisfying whole. How often have concerts that should have stimulated and refreshed left an impression of weariness and dissatisfaction because the color was too grey or too garish unrelieved and unchanged, or else because there was a mixture of things that would not mix! A good programme maker instinctively avoids such things. […] A proper length is one of the obvious requirements of a good programme, and it is curious to note how greatly public taste has changed, suffering less exaction to be made upon its time and strength of attention. Modern life has grown more intense and people have neither the time nor endurance they had a hundred years ago [in 1802!]. Modern music, too, has grown more strenuous in its demands upon the listener than much that formed the staple of those days. The task of the programme maker has become by some much more responsible, exacting and delicate. (as cited in Kozenko, 2013, p. 75)
The sentiment that “public taste has changed, suffering less exaction to be made upon its time and strength of attention”, and that “people have neither the time nor endurance they had a hundred years ago” is so relevant to many (chamber music) ensembles nowadays, that it seems the world has not changed much at all in a century. As Leonard Liebling observed in 1929: “In New York, concert audiences desire only the best music, new or old, in interesting variety and order, and in easy duration and quantity” (as cited in Kozenko, 2013, p. 76).

Kozenko also provides a definition of chamber music:

Chamber music, in its purest form, can be defined as music written for small instrumental ensembles, with one player to a part. It was intended for performance either in private, in a domestic environment with or without listeners, or in public in a small concert hall before an audience of limited size. In essence, the term implies intimate, carefully constructed music, and even though many groups were trying to expand the definition and make chamber music accessible to a wider audience and play in larger venues, much chamber music was performed in private homes … (2013, p. 10)

To gain a broader understanding of the research topic of chamber music and its special characteristics, I have also accessed several other older publications on chamber music, such as Cobbett’s Cyclopedia Survey of Chamber Music (1963), Uhlrich’s Chamber Music (1966) and Fiske’s Chamber Music (1969). As early as 1964, Ferguson suggests that chamber music possesses one unique value over other types of music, which may be described by the word “intimacy” (1964, p. 3), an idea mirrored by Uhlrich (1966), Halle Rowen (1974) and Baron (1998). Baron even goes as far as to say that “the core feature of any chamber music is its overt or implied intimacy” (p. 6, italics added), and it will be interesting to see whether this research will come to the same conclusion.

The members of Artico Ensemble, this research’s central case study, are all committed chamber music players. They allocate time and energy to this medium, making it a substantial part of their varied music careers. This commitment is similar to that found in Cahill and Scott’s research, were they approached nineteen string players, enquiring about their passion for playing in small ensembles by:

[posing] one simple question: Why do you play chamber music? […]

Indeed, the replies are as varied as the music itself, as exhilarating as the
interpretations of these great works, and as personal as the intimate experience of putting bow to string with one, two, three or more fellow musicians. (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 37)

Many of the interviewees state that playing chamber music is a wonderfully intricate balance between each player having their own strong personal beliefs but staying open to the ideas of others. As cellist Joshua Gindele says:

While each member of my quartet has a healthy ego with many opinions, we are constantly finding a balance between the four individual voices, striving to seamlessly gel into one cohesive unit. This is one of the most exciting and challenging dimensions of chamber music: the ability to bring conviction with regard to your own musical ideas, while at the same time be open to the ideas of others in the group.

(p. 41)

He mentions that chamber music is quite demanding. Not only is this something I wholeheartedly agree with from my own personal experience, it also is one of the points raised in this doctoral study. As Gindele says:

I love the personal integrity that chamber music demands of the performer. With just one player to a part, you are personally responsible night after night for delivering your absolute best and are required to stay in top shape both musically and technically. While challenging, this aspect of chamber music is also incredibly rewarding. (p. 41)

Another cellist, Sarah Freiberg, comments that chamber music is very dynamic: the melody is always moving from instrument to instrument, and so my role is always changing. […] And while a group may work really hard at finding just the right sound in rehearsal, we may do something entirely different in performance. You are always working with, and reacting to, your chamber music partners - and you never play the same thing exactly the same way twice. (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 40)

This article provides a wonderful insight into musicians’ personal experiences with chamber music performance and highlights why so many professional musicians choose to engage in chamber playing in addition to their often already full-time positions as lecturers or orchestral musicians.

In closing, this study investigates chamber music performance in small community venues in the wider Brisbane area, and highlights the experience of the
performing artists, audience members and concert administrators actively involved in these concerts. The various topics discussed in this Literature Review not only create and describe the setting in which this study takes place, but have all invariably impacted on the study, its participants and its findings. In turn, this study will add to the available body of knowledge on all these intricate, interrelated aspects associated with chamber music performance in small venues. It is a study both timeless and topical, as Strahle’s following (very recent) statement attests: “Fine music, wine and food in intimate surroundings: it is a familiar combination that has proven to be exceptionally successful in Australia over the last three decades, and it continues to grow in strides” (Strahle, 2018, para 1).
Chapter 3. Research Method

3.1 An ethnographic case study - Study design

This research is based on an ethnographic case study of Artico Ensemble, involving the artists (myself and all three colleagues), our audience and the administrators of some of our performance venues. The term ‘ethnographic case study’ blends two research methods that are best explained independently: the case study, and ethnography.

A case study is defined as “an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon. The study is conducted in great detail and often relies on the use of several data sources” (Orum, Faegin, & Sjoberg, 1991, p. 2). Cases are bounded by time and activity, with the researcher collecting detailed information […] over a sustained (but finite) period of time (Stake, 1995, in Creswell, 2009, p. 13). The suitability of a case study approach to this research is defined by Yin, who states that “the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 1989, as quoted in Mason, p. 166). Case studies can be theory-building but can also be designed to lead to the presentation of assertions, or findings, about the case study subject. Alternatively, to retain the holistic characteristic, the case study project can be presented in thick, descriptive narrative (Miles and Huberman, 1984, in Creswell, 2009, p. 200).

Stake (1995) explains that it is possible to distinguish between three different types of case studies, one of which is the instrumental case study, where the researcher has a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feels that [they] may get insight into the question by studying a particular case. […] This use of case study is to understand something else. Case study here is instrumental to accomplishing something other than understanding this particular [case], and we may call our inquiry instrumental case study. (1995, p. 3)

Through my case study of Artico Ensemble I hoped to build a better understanding of the experience of creating chamber music in small community venues, and as such it should be seen as an instrumental case study. In keeping with the case study definition mentioned above, the design of this study features various types of data collection as shown in Figure 1 overleaf. The method of data collection varied for each partner, creating three independent pathways that will be discussed in more detail below. The collected data were transcribed, read, and analysed by distilling the
underlying issues, or themes (Creswell, 2009). The three pathways come together in the last phase of analysis where comparisons have been drawn between the partners’ themes, leading to the final case study findings. Throughout this thesis, thick descriptive narrative has been used to maintain our connection with the case study material. (NB: Figure 1 presents a simplified illustration of the design and process of data collection/analysis of the Audience survey. This component of the study design is shown in more detail in Figure 2 on page 47).

Figure 1: Artico Ensemble case study research design

This style of in-depth case study research is closely related to ethnography, “a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). Often used in studies of lesser-known cultures and social groups, the purpose of such research is “to describe the culture and lifestyle of the group of people being studied in a way that is as faithful as possible to the way they see it themselves and to the social contexts in which their behaviour occurs. The idea is not so much to seek causes and explanations, as is often the case with survey-style research, but rather to ‘tell it like it is’…” (McNeill & Chapman, 2005, p. 89). Robson (2002a) suggests that ethnography can be logically linked to case study, in the sense that a case study can be approached ethnographically (p. 190), which has been the intention of this study. This research has also drawn on Griffiths’ ethnographical method for her study of chamber music audiences in Melbourne (2003), which involved
data collection via in-depth interviews with volunteer audience members in addition to a large-scale audience questionnaire:

The ethnographic-style interviews … were to be the heart of the field study. Ethnographic interviews can both describe and explain the regularities and variations in the rich and complex conventions and experiences that are part of the social and cultural configurations of chamber music audience-ship. (Griffiths, 2003, p. 102)

The terminology of “case study” will be maintained for this particular study (rather than naming it an ethnography), as it focuses on one ensemble only, Artico Ensemble, instead of the whole cultural group of chamber music artists/ensembles. Furthermore, instead of primarily wanting to investigate who my chamber music artists, audiences and administrators are, as is most commonly the case in ethnographic studies, the aim of this study is to distil their experience of being involved in chamber music in small community venues, which falls more comfortably under the term of instrumental case study.

3.2 Selected case study venues

The case study encompassed six of the ensemble’s concerts in their 2012 concert series. When assessing the ensemble’s confirmed bookings for the second half of 2012, it became clear that these concerts featured several different programmes in six different venues: five churches and one private home. Three of these venues were new venues in which the ensemble had not performed before whilst others were return visits to established Artico venues. The ensemble’s system of programming is such that for a first-time performance in a new venue their introductory programme, Programme A is selected. On a return visit they perform their Programme B, followed by C, etcetera (the concert programmes naturally have more appealing titles for advertising and promotion). For special events a composite amended programme is usually created. The concert programme is therefore a variable throughout this study, as is the venue. In fact, the only non-variable is the ensemble.

After careful deliberation it was decided that material gathered in the pilot study undertaken in November 2011 in the Redland Museum in Cleveland would also be included in this research. The museum is an established Artico Ensemble venue with a strong audience base and an excellent and cooperative administrator. Most importantly, there had been no significant changes to the study method and research instruments.
between the pilot and the main study, and it was felt that the material gathered in the pilot study was therefore not only valid but also highly relevant.

As a consequence of this decision, this research case study encompasses performances in the following seven venues:

- November 20, 2011: Redland Museum, Cleveland - Return visit, Programme C - pilot study;
- July 29, 2012: Elanora Uniting Church, Elanora - New venue, Programme A;
- August 26, 2012: Kenmore Uniting Church, Kenmore - Return visit, Programme D;
- September 1, 2012: St Thomas Anglican Church, Ipswich North - Return visit, Programme B;
- September 23, 2012: The Imperial Room, Wynnum - New venue, Composite Programme;
- October 28, 2012: Kairos Uniting Church, Wavell Heights - New venue, Programme A;
- November 4, 2012: St Alban’s Anglican Church, Wilston - Return visit, Programme C.

A detailed profile of each of these community venues can be found in Appendix A (page 308), which describes 18 different aspects of each case study venue: style of building; shape and size of performance space; seating capacity; type of seating; features such as decorative windows or ceiling (as relevant to ambience and acoustics); floor and wall materials (as relevant to ambience and acoustics); description of stage area; availability and quality of the piano; performance acoustics (as applicable to classical chamber music); whether there is a need for the use of a microphone for spoken introductions; quality of visuals for audience; lighting; and air-conditioning (Y/N). Practical matters such as bathroom and green room facilities for performers are included, and whether there is an option of warming up in the green room during performances. Additionally, available parking and wheelchair accessibility are listed.

In the chapters to follow, most of the study venues will be identified by their locality; the Elanora Uniting Church (for example) will be called ‘Elanora’, and the private home in Wynnum is called ‘Wynnum’. An exception has been made for the museum venue, which will be referred to as ‘Redland Museum’.

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3 The presence or absence of air-conditioning affects comfort levels for the artists and audience alike. Furthermore, venues without air-conditioning frequently feature ceiling fans, which, when switched on, can interfere with an ensemble’s acoustically produced sound.
3.3 The process of data collection

3.3.1 The Audience. The data collection for Artico Ensemble’s audience was managed in several stages. Firstly, in the seven concerts listed above, the audience was asked to complete a questionnaire, anonymously and on voluntary basis. The questionnaire contained very practical questions such as age and gender of the participants, their connection to the venue, and distance travelled to attend this particular performance, as well as qualitative questions relating to their concert experience. The benefit of a quantitative survey component in this particular part of the research is that it provides statistical data for the specialist field of chamber music and its audiences in and around Brisbane.

Secondly, by leaving contact details at the completion of the questionnaire, participants could volunteer for semi-structured follow-up interviews. A semi-structured interview does not use a fixed set of questions, just a list of topics to cover ("Audience Dialogue," 2011). This list acts as a guide, to ensure that all interviews cover similar ground so that responses can be compared and conclusions drawn.

I undertook all these follow-up interviews personally, allowing scope to discuss participants’ perceived experience of attending the concert. Whilst in the questionnaire there was only very limited writing space, leaving no room for in-depth answers, the follow-up interview allowed the participant to explain and elaborate on their answers. The follow-up interviews intentionally did not expand the discussion (much) beyond the boundaries of the questionnaire questions. This meant that insights gained through the follow-up interviews could still be compared directly to the data from the questionnaire, and the follow-up interview material could be used to triangulate and check the questionnaire data at the time of analysis.

After the completion of several follow-up interviews, it became apparent that there was a clear trend that the interviews corresponded with and embellished the questionnaire data, without generating markedly different insights. For this reason, it was decided to limit the series of follow-up interviews to eight individual interviews and two husband-and-wife combined interviews.

As an additional means of data gathering, all case study concerts were recorded on video, with brief vox-pop style interviews with audience members taking place during the interval and at the conclusion of the performances.

In the initial stages of designing the case study I realised that a research question based on an *experience* in music, could easily lead to intangible aspects like feelings, or mood, or ‘intimacy’. It was therefore decided to record the performances on camera,
creating a full visual record of all the case study performances. This footage would provide a visual record of the responses and interactions of all the study partners throughout the performance, especially those aspects of music making that are too difficult (or impossible) to put into words. Further, it would also be beneficial for the data analysis, allowing me to check and/or confirm my own (and other people’s) opinion and experience of the performance, and check/triangulate those aspects we might have noticed whilst the concert was underway. This concept was tested during the pilot research study in November 2011, for which I enlisted the services of documentary maker Derryn Watts.

At the start of this pilot study I became acutely aware of the fact that my position of being both a member of Artico Ensemble and the researcher could cause researcher bias:

Researcher bias refers to what the researcher brings to the situation in terms of assumptions and preconceptions, which may in some way affect the way in which they behave in the research setting, perhaps in terms of the persons selected for observation or interview, the kinds of questions asked, or the election of data for reporting and analysis. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Robson, 2002, p. 172)

In addition, my position could easily create respondent bias, consciously or subconsciously causing the interview participants to give the answers or impressions they think I would want to hear (ibid). This was confirmed when during the shooting of the pilot study footage it was established that interviews lead to more authentic answers when I personally was not the one asking the questions. Even my presence in the interview affected the outcome. To avoid validity issues, Derryn’s role of documentary camera man was expanded to his becoming the assistant interviewer for the duration of the whole case study, to the extent that he conducted those interviews most at risk of bias. Derryn therefore facilitated the four individual artist interviews, the artist's group interview and all the administrator interviews, guided by a list of questions I had compiled.

Selections of the visual footage have been edited into two short documentaries, which can be found as appendices to this thesis (Appendix B & Appendix C page 314). The first documentary was completed as part of the pilot study and aims to highlight the experience of all the three study partners. The second documentary was completed later in the study journey and starts to touch on some of the emerging study themes. As such it gives an insight into what participants view as benefits or challenges of chamber
music concerts in small community venues and establishes an image of the experience of being involved in these concerts. A more detailed description of both documentaries can be found as introduction to the appendices.

The selected visual footage is only a very small part of many hours of recorded material. All material was used for data gathering and verification, as well as it being intended as representation of findings.

3.3.2 The Administrators. It was intended that the seven venue administrators would be interviewed on camera, each on the day of the case study concert, briefly just before the performance and more in-depth at the conclusion of the concert. This worked well for five of the case study events, but due to technical issues and time constraints the interviews with the Kenmore and Wavell Heights administrators were undertaken on a different day. All interviews were undertaken by Derryn Watts as cameraman and assistant interviewer. They were semi-structured, guided by a list of questions provided by me. Examples of the sub-questions and topics discussed will follow below.

3.3.3 The Artists. The Artico Ensemble members (The Artists) were interviewed (on camera) in several stages.

- Stage 1: Brief individual interviews with two of the four artists, undertaken by cameraman and assistant interviewer Derryn Watts, at the conclusion of the pilot study performance in the Redland Museum in November 2011;
- Stage 2: In-depth interviews with all four artists individually, undertaken by cameraman and assistant interviewer Derryn, in February 2013;
- Stage 3: An extensive group interview with the four artists gathered together in one room, undertaken by cameraman and assistant interviewer Derryn, on the same day in February 2013.

After viewing all the footage from these interviews twice, I concluded that some questions were not fully explored and that the study would benefit from additional interviews:

- Stage 4: Brief individual follow-up interviews with Shelli, Paul and Brieley, undertaken by cameraman and assistant interviewer Derryn, in November 2013.

Examples of the research’s sub-questions and topics discussed will follow below.

In addition to taking part in the interviews, I maintained a self-reflective journal throughout the case study, in order to gain a better understanding of my own actions and experience in undertaking the concerts. Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) state that
reflection is an activity in which people “recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over, and evaluate it” (p. 19), and Schön explains that when practitioners reflect-in-action, they describe their own intuitive understandings (2016, p. 276). Whilst writing and reading my entries at that moment provided me with interesting personal insights, I also hoped, through reading this journal back at a later stage, to be able to in fact distance myself as the researcher from me as the artist, and thus gain a more objective view on ‘this ensemble member’s’ experience - aiming to emulate the kind of academic, investigative view an independent researcher might have had when studying me as one of the case study participants. Naturally, this can never be fully achieved and real objectivity is very hard (if not impossible) to establish, but especially by allowing for a substantial amount of time to lapse between the writing of the journal and the re-reading of it, I came as close as possible to assessing its data objectively.

In the journal I kept track of the (email and phone) discussions and negotiations with our concert administrators in the lead-up to the performances in their venues and wrote about my personal experience of ensemble life in general and our case study concerts in particular. For clarity, I used the same reporting format for each concert, by putting thoughts on paper about my personal preparation for the concert, my warm-up on the day, travel and sound-check with the group, the running, feel and quality of the performance from my perspective, and the afternoon tea afterwards. I also created a summary of my overall impression, by briefly reporting on the following four points:

- Artist - audience relationship;
- Artist - venue relationship;
- Artist - administrator relationship;
- Artist - artist relationship.

3.3.4 The sub-questions. As stated in the first paragraphs of this chapter, this research was undertaken by means of an instrumental case study; so, instead of primarily wanting to investigate who my chamber music artists, audiences and administrators are, the aim of this research is to distil their experience of being involved in chamber music in small community venues. To this end, the sub-questions guiding my reflective journal and the interviews with artists, selected audience members and Artico Ensemble’s venue administrators addressed the following aspects:

- The relationship between the artists and the audience;
- The relationship between the artists and the administrators;
• The relationship between the artists and the specific logistics of this type of venue;
• Key characteristics of creating concerts in small community venues, in contrast to large mainstream performance venues, and its advantages and disadvantages;
• Some discovered factors that can contribute to the success of a concert or longevity of a concert series;
• Some discovered challenges in developing the concerts;
• The perceived strengths and challenges of Artico Ensemble and its concerts;
• The background and profile of the artists, audiences and administrators;
• Their motivation for involvement in this type of chamber music;
• Their experience of creating, performing, organising and attending professional chamber music concerts in small community venues in and around Brisbane.

At this point it is important to briefly elaborate on the expression “small community venue”. Based on my experience playing with Artico Ensemble (as well as with a large number of other chamber music ensembles in various settings), and as described in this study, the qualifier small has an impact on the performances independently from the qualifier community. The relationship between the artists and the administrator, for example, is quite distinct in a community venue, which has naturally nothing to do with the venue’s size. And during a performance, the venue’s size has a different impact on the artist-audience relationship than the fact that it is a community venue. The line of questioning in interviews (and in my own journal entries) has therefore had to be very clear in the distinction between the two qualifiers, to avoid ambiguous study findings.

3.3.5 Ethics. Ethical approval to conduct this study was sought before commencement of the pilot study in November 2011, and further approval to start the full research study was sought in May 2012. This study would include interviews with humans, several of whom would be visually identifiable in (some of) the research outcomes. The nature of the desired data would, however, not be considered sensitive or significant in terms of its ethical implications, and all participants were expected to be people who could legally provide voluntary and informed consent. Based on these facts, my supervisors and I applied for an Expedited Ethical Review by completing the associated Griffith University checklist. Ethical approval was subsequently granted for both the pilot study and the full project, with the Office for Research assessing the project as involving no more than negligible risk. Given the nature of the research and
the potential participant pool, the Office for Research felt that a higher level of review was not required.

Following the Office for Research’s recommendation, at all case study concerts an information sheet outlining the filming of documentary footage taking place at that concert was displayed clearly on the front entry of the venue, and at clearly visible spots throughout the venue. Those who wished not to be involved in filming could either decide not to attend that performance, or make themselves known to ground crew so visuals of them could be excluded. No such request was made to me, or my colleagues. At the commencement of each of the concerts it was announced that all audience members were invited to participate in an audience questionnaire, forming part of a doctoral research study undertaken under the auspices of Griffith University. Questionnaires were handed out to all audience members, containing the standard coversheet providing project information. It was made clear that participation in this questionnaire was voluntary, and anonymous. Consent for its data to be used in the study was indicated by the return of the questionnaire. Quotations drawn from the questionnaire and subsequently used in this thesis are only identifiable by participant number.

On the last page of the questionnaire, participants were invited to register their name for follow-up interviews. At the start of these follow-up interviews an information package was given to all interview participants, in which it was made clear that the interviews were recorded (audio only) and would be transcribed for research purposes and the creation of a doctoral thesis. Consent for this to happen was given by return of a signed consent form. Quotations drawn from the audio interviews and subsequently used in this thesis are identifiable by first name of participants only.

The case study venue administrators were personally approached for participation in video interviews. At the start of these interviews an information package was given to all participants, in which it was made clear that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed for research purposes, and selected cuts used in the creation of documentary footage. Consent for this to happen was given by return of a signed consent form.

The three artists in the case study ensemble (other than myself) are adult musicians, who all verbally agreed to be involved in the whole doctoral project. They gave permission for their names to be used in quotations in the written material, and to be visually recognizable in documentary footage. As the three artists are my colleagues
and friends, special care had to be taken to represent their thoughts and opinions truthfully and objectively. This is another reason why I elected to present all quotations verbatim and most in their entirety. Relaying their words out of context would have had ethical implications.

All case study participants featured (and visually identifiable) in the documentary were given access to a pre-final cut of the documentary footage: the draft documentary was uploaded online and a link to the footage sent to all those visually identifiable. The email accompanying this link explained that their contributions could be changed or deleted upon request by return email. I received no such request, which was interpreted as consent for further use of the documentary for research purposes.

All throughout this process, and as stated on all consent forms, it was made clear that visual footage and interview data was to be used within the context of this Griffith University Doctor of Musical Arts research project only. The visual footage is currently only accessible to those who have been given the link, or who have obtained the link via the written thesis; the two documentaries have been uploaded online without open public access. In the event of subsequent use outside of Griffith University, and/or further dissemination of the study or parts thereof, new consent in writing will be sought from all identifiable participants. At that stage I can elect to alter or mask interview participants’ names of those who are featured in quotations in written material, and re-assess the visual documentary access.

Transcripts of all the Ethics Clearance documents and informed consent packages can be viewed in Appendix D (pages 264 - 278).

3.4 The process of data analysis

3.4.1 Research methodology and the researcher as instrument. As is frequently encountered in ethnographic case studies, my approach to this study was not heavily concerned with conceptual or theoretical meaning (Lancaster, 2006, p. 25). The study design was multi-faceted, with the aim of developing and presenting a holistic and descriptive view of the case and its major themes through data drawn from multiple sources.

The process of data analysis was undertaken with a constructivist approach. Constructivism shares concepts with interpretivism (as they both deal with the lived social experience), but constructivists do not identify with the interpretivist treatment of the facts as independent of the observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 236). Instead, constructivists believe that “what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the
result of perspective” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 236). This is particularly important in a study that is in part reliant on data generated from interviews, and where the interviewer is the primary collector, transcriber and analyst of the data.

Within the constructivist paradigm, the discipline of hermeneutics enabled phenomena present in the data to be disseminated and understood. With its derivation in the Greek verb *hermeneuein* meaning ‘to interpret’, philosophical hermeneutics places interpretation in that which is encountered (Lancaster, 2006, p. 26). Whilst aiming to make sense of that which is encountered, the researcher becomes an interpreter. The interpretation will be coloured by personal experience and the social context in which the researcher finds him/herself.

This personal perspective, however, does bring with it the threat of bias, and the issue of potential bias is relevant in this study. My position and experience as a professional classical musician and member of Artico Ensemble may cause potential for imposing that experience on the interview process at the time of data collection, and on the interpretation of the interview material at the time of data analysis. Although assisted by Derryn Watts in the data collection of the interviews most at risk of bias (i.e. all artist and administrator interviews), I undertook all follow-up interviews myself and was the main instrument subsequently collating, transcribing, and analysing the data from all the interviews and the self-reflective journal.

Still, whilst my dominance as analyst of the data may seem to threaten their validity, this dominance is not only inevitable but to be welcomed. As McCracken points out, the investigator is an ‘instrument’ and she or he cannot “fulfill qualitative research objectives without using a broad range of his or her own experience, imagination, and intellect in ways that are various and unpredictable” (McCracken, 1988, p. 18, emphasis added). Rather than see my position and background as a negative force in the study design, I argue that it brought to the follow-up interview sessions a foundation [of experience] from which to probe the commentary of the informants (Lancaster, 2006, p. 27), and to the complete process of data analysis the ability to recognise in the interview and self-reflective journal transcripts those comments that touch on subject matter most relevant to this study.

This adheres to one of the principles on which philosophical hermeneutics is based, that such “socio-historically inherited bias or prejudice is not regarded as a characteristic or attribute that an interpreter must strive to get rid of or manage in order to come to a ‘clear’ understanding” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 194). Instead, through the *engagement* of one’s biases, the researcher is able to adjust those which stand in
the way of understanding the informants’ stories (Schwandt, 2007, as cited in Lancaster, 2006, p. 27), and come to a true understanding of their meaning.

3.4.2 The Artists. The artist data came from several interviews, which were all recorded on camera. The practical process of analysis of this video footage will now be described in more detail.

Initially, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, keeping the material itemized per interview question. The complete transcript was printed and read several times to try to truly understand what was being said. A conscious effort was made to harness the benefits of the researcher as instrument, acknowledging my position and experience as a member of the ensemble and positively engage my own biases as explained above.

Sandelowski observes that analysis of texts begins with proofreading the material and simply underlining key phrases "because they make some as yet inchoate sense" (1995, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 1994, p. 4), and I proceeded to underline and highlight various sections and sentences in the transcript. This technique is also known as pawing, or eyeballing (Ryan & Bernard, 1994, p. 4). These names may make the process sound slightly un-scientific, but it did most definitely bring certain patterns and issues to the surface. Sections would qualify for highlighting if they had components that referred to the main research question; i.e. described strengths or challenges or described the experience in itself. Throughout, I thought of this process as selecting sections that would make good stand-alone quotes.

All of these ‘quotes’, the highlighted sections, were subsequently pasted into a new document. Each quote was then summarized in one single sentence, taking care not to interpret the quote (yet). This process is called coding: the process of organizing material into chunks of text, before bringing meaning to the information (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, in Creswell, 2009, p. 186). It involves taking text data gathered during data collection, grouping sentences or paragraphs into categories, and labelling those categories with a term, often a term based on the actual language of the participant (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). This was best achieved by thinking ‘This quote is about …’ Following this coding process, each artist’s transcript was re-formatted by making the categories into headings and pasting all related quotes under them.

Subsequently, a new document was created by listing all the discovered headings and grouping the quotes from all four artists under the related heading. This process had now formed a logical written narrative, purveying the personal view of all artists on particular issues, whilst as the observer-researcher, I remained as objective as possible throughout.
The headings, or categories, could by this stage be interpreted as Themes, with some themes clearly dealing with the experience of being part of this ensemble and its performances in small community venues, and others clearly highlighting strengths or challenges of this type of performance. Although it was anticipated that later in the research process the title of each theme might still need to be revised, or themes might need to be further distilled or combined into underlying broader themes, the current Themes were treated as the findings of the artists’ component of the research.

3.4.3 A comment about the individual vs. group interviews. The individual interviews with the four artists, and the group interview with all of Artico Ensemble were all transcribed. The group interview took place after the individual interviews, and it was noticeable by listening to the answers in the group interview that some adjustments were being made. Some ensemble members repeated what they had said in their individual interview. Some re-phrased what they said in their individual interview, but some also adjusted their comment to suit the group dynamic. Some ensemble members only highlighted that which they felt comfortable saying with the whole group present.

It was concluded that the individual interviews therefore were more honest and true. For this reason, I predominantly used the individual interview material for the data gathering and analysis, cross-referenced with the group interview material. It also confirmed that relying solely on group interview material would not have been as informative, and not a wise study design choice. Individual interviews were proven to be the more beneficial component of the methodology. The benefit of the group interview, however, was that the ensemble’s group dynamic became more evident, and each person’s different role within that group was highlighted.

The themes, as findings of the artists’ component of the research, will be explored further in the Discussion (see Chapter 7).

3.4.4 From analysis to the presentation of artist findings. Robert Stake (1995) reflects on how best to present case study findings:

We use ordinary language and narrative to describe the case. We seek to portray the case comprehensively, using ample but non-technical description and narrative. The report may read something like a story. Our observations cannot help but be interpretive, and our descriptive report is laced with and followed by interpretation. We offer opportunity
for readers to make their own interpretations of the case, but we offer ours too. (p. 134)

From the outset it has been the aim of this research to allow the reader to form a personal opinion about the concept of chamber music by reading the narrative as if listening in to a conversation or discussion. To this end, all interview selections and quotes have been left verbatim, to allow the individual identity of each ensemble member to shine through. This in turn allows the reader to experience the interaction and discussion between the ensemble members. Utilising this reporting style has been a very deliberate choice: chamber music is frequently described as “a conversation between friends” (“Chamber music quotes”, n.d.), and as “four rational people conversing” (“Chamber music”, n.d.), and the analogy to conversation recurs in many descriptions and analyses of chamber music compositions. Although this reporting style has been guided by Stake’s recommendations, it has been my aim to refrain from offering interpretation in this study’s descriptive research report, instead opting to remain an objective observer where possible, and for as long as possible. Ultimately, this study’s research question aims to highlight all participants’ views on chamber music in small community venues, not merely my own. For this reason, the interview selections and featured quotes have been left verbatim and in some instances quite long. I might have summarised those responses, but the real value is in the words as spoken. At this stage of the study proceedings I also felt it was not yet my task to select what should be declared important in the overall experience, and what as less important. The interpretation, giving my and this study’s views and findings, will follow in Chapter 7, the Discussion.

In this thesis, I wanted the sections 4.3 (reporting on the artists’ experience) and 4.4 (reporting on perceived strengths and challenges) in particular to reflect this verbatim, conversational paradigm. Section 4.2, ‘The members of Artico Ensemble’, is told in more flowing, descriptive narrative. This allows inclusion of selected extracts from the artists’ interviews as well as general Resume material and other known facts about each player and the ensemble.

3.4.5 The Audience. The complete audience survey consisted of a questionnaire, optional follow-up interviews, and live, on-camera interviews with randomly selected audience members. The questionnaire itself had a large quantitative component meant to generate statistical data, and a qualitative component designed to
generate data highlighting the participant’s experience. This survey design can be visualised as follows:

- **Questionnaire**
  
  - Quantitative component designed to generate statistical data
  - Qualitative component designed to generate data highlighting the participant’s experience

- **Follow-up interviews**
  
  - Qualitative semi-structured interviews designed to further highlight the participant’s experience

- **Live, on-camera interviews**
  
  - Qualitative semi-structured interviews designed to highlight the participant’s experience

In consultation with Griffith University’s Research Methodologist, Dr Bill Metcalf, and statistics and methodology consultant Dr Peter Grimbeek, it was decided that in this study it would be sufficiently informative to undertake the analysis of the Excel data and coding of the interview transcripts (as described earlier) manually, without the aid of analysis software such as SPSS and NVivo. The quantitative questions and qualitative interview material each form one component of the larger mixed-method study, rather than either of them being the sole source of data. Further correlations and additional, deeper insights could most likely be still brought to light if these digital tools were to be utilized, and this could be an avenue for further research.

The analysis for both of this study’s questionnaire components was geared towards finding answers and being able to visually represent those findings in charts, as well as produce narrative, in keeping with traditions and common practice in (Government) arts marketing and arts participation research.

All 284 participants in the questionnaire were assigned a participant ID based on the venue they belonged to, as this would allow for the generation of venue-specific findings within the overall image.

Responses to the questionnaire’s multiple-choice questions and yes/no questions were coded and charted accordingly. Coding was also applied to the more open-ended quantitative questionnaire questions, by categorizing the received responses and allocating codes accordingly. This was done from the ground up, i.e. I did not work with pre-set categories but created categories (and coding) based on the responses. This did have the result that some of the data categories were different to those found in existing Government statistics, which made (and will make) it more challenging to draw
parallels and comparisons to those statistical data. It did, however, make charting of and reporting on data from this research more manageable and authentic.

In keeping with the study’s main research question, the questionnaire also included open-ended questions relating to the participant’s concert experience. The answers varied between one-word comments about (for example) the quality of the concert or that participant’s experience of attending it, and whole sentences containing more complex descriptive comments. By using a personally modified version of the Australia Council’s theory of Motivating Factors (or ‘Motivators’) as found in *Selling The Performing Arts* (Osborne, Wheeler, & Elliott, 1999), the compiled data were categorized under emotional descriptors, intellectual descriptors and intellectual emotive descriptors. All these descriptors were uploaded into Word It Out, a free online word cloud generator. As it was not the aim of this question to find a ranking of comments, but rather to create an explanatory image representing the complete range of experiences, the comments were not weighted when uploaded into the program. The word clouds (which can be found on page 132-133) show all comments, in varying font sizes. The visible variation in font size was randomly selected by the Word It Out program (so, comments which appear in larger font were not more frequently mentioned than smaller ones), and I chose to adhere to these different sizes to make the word clouds more legible.

To investigate the second half of this study’s main research question, the questionnaire included open-ended questions designed to distil what the participants saw as strengths or challenges of these types of concerts. The vast array of personal responses was categorized under those interpreted as strengths and interpreted as challenges. As open-ended questions by definition are designed to highlight diversity and generate a multi-faceted view (this in contrast to multiple-choice questioning, or questions formatted using a Likert-type scale), the conscious decision was made to retain a large number of categories, rather than re-grouping similar (but un-identical) answers under only a small number of categories. This safeguarded the integrity of the answers and allowed the personal view of the study respondents to come through as much as possible, showing a diversity of perception and opinion.

The analysis of the follow-up interviews was aimed at extracting personal narrative, highlighting the topics discovered in the questionnaire. I listened to all the recorded interviews, summarizing them by noting the topics discussed, before transcribing them. As mentioned, the private follow-up interviews intentionally did not expand the discussion (much) beyond the boundaries of the questionnaire questions.
This meant that any insights gained through the follow-up interviews could still be compared to the questionnaire data. During the process of analysis, the follow-up interview material was also utilized to triangulate and check the questionnaire answers of the interviewee in question. Overall the follow-up interviews confirmed and embellished the questionnaire data (without generating markedly different insights) and provided rich, personal narrative that is featured in chapter five.

The analysis of the live, on-camera interviews was the least intensive. Participants were selected randomly (from audience present on the day) and their interviews were very brief, undertaken in the vox-pops style common in market research and opinion studies. Although interview participants identified themselves by name on camera, their respective questionnaires were done anonymously, making verifying and triangulating impossible. It is even possible that they themselves did not fill out the questionnaire, as participation was voluntary. Their on-camera answers were taken as stand-alone comments, supporting or contrasting with, or simply colouring the existing questionnaire and follow-up interview data. The common themes prevalent in the questionnaire and interviews were still visible in these vox-pops. Since the follow-up interviews had not been visually recorded, many snippets of vox-pop footage were used in the two documentaries accompanying this Thesis to highlight the discovered case study themes.

Figure 2 below now provides a magnified view of the Audience survey design and research process, as described above.

**Figure 2: Audience Survey Design and Research Process**

### 3.4.6 The Administrators

As with the analysis process for the artists, the first step towards analysis of the administrator data was transcribing all the interviews, verbatim. It soon became apparent that interviewer Derryn Watts had used my list of interview questions, but had added many other questions as well. As all interviews were semi-structured, he had obviously needed to establish a good connection with the interviewee first of all, to make them feel comfortable. He had allowed the interviewee
to lead the interview. In some instances, he had prompted the interviewee by delving further into something they said or asked a new question to steer the discussion in a different direction. This had resulted in nine interviews that were quite different in content.

To start the process of analysis I set out to create a table listing all the questions asked in the interviews (mine, as well as Derryn’s additional ones) and numbered them. I created columns for each interviewee and first of all ticked those questions that were directly (and literally) asked of that interviewee in his or her interview. Some questions, such as those relating to Wynnum’s Grand Piano for example, were very venue-specific and only featured in the one administrator’s interview.

The whole interview transcript document was printed, and all the interview material was read again to see whether the discussion topic indirectly answered any of the questions listed in my question table. If this was the case, the related question number was pencilled next to that paragraph.

The interviewee’s box in the question table document was subsequently marked with an ‘I’ and a page number, indicating that this particular question was answered ‘indirectly’ on that page. In this way I worked my whole way through the (printed) interview transcript document and realized that many more questions had been answered than initially thought.

As a second method of analysing and giving meaning to the data, the interview transcripts were re-read with this study’s main research question clearly in mind. A second table was created in which I entered word or sentence quotes that described each administrator’s experience, as well as what they considered the strengths and challenges of organizing these concerts. This second method bypassed a lot of the narrative interview data but highlighted the common themes.

3.4.7 From analysis to the presentation of administrator findings. In order to report on the interview data, the data were grouped into blocks of questions and answers that dealt with similar themes, allowing each administrator to speak on the topic. These topics were collated and divided into the following segments:

- Administrator Introduction: Who are you, and how were you involved in organizing this performance? A brief description of the venue, and whether the purpose of this concert was fundraising or not;
- Administrator Profile: Examining the administrators’ affinity with music, with classical and/or chamber music, their music or non-music background, their
experience with and frequency of concert going, and whether these were factors that influenced their decision to be involved in concert organizing;

- Administrators’ Experience: What was his/her experience of organizing this event, and what was involved in organizing it? How did the feedback make them feel?
- Administrators’ perceived strengths and challenges: comments hinting at benefits of these types of concerts for the audience, discussing the suitability of their venue for chamber music, and/or hinting at benefits of these types of concerts in contrast to those in larger venues.

These four points form the four sub-chapters of the Administrators’ story, as presented in the Administrators - Research Report (Chapter 6, pp 144-174). Prior to that, this dissertation will report on the Audience experience of attending chamber music concerts in small community venues (Chapter 5, pp 93-143). The Artists - Research Report will, however, be presented first. The group’s four members will be introduced individually, after which their experience of performing these types of concerts in the community will be explored.
Chapter 4. The Artists - Research Report

4.1 Introduction

To answer this study’s main research question and develop a better understanding of the experience of partaking in professional chamber music concerts in small community venues, the central case study is built around Artico Ensemble. The full research report is presented in three chapters, featuring opinions, facts and findings provided and generated by the ensemble’s artists, audience members and concert administrators respectively.

Artico Ensemble currently consists of Shelli Hulcombe (soprano), Rianne Wilschut (clarinet), Paul Kopetz (bass clarinet) and Brieley Cutting (piano). These artists will take to the stage first (figuratively speaking), recounting their Artico experience and personal reasons for being involved in the group, and sharing what they see as the strengths and challenges of this type of performance. As mentioned, each artist was interviewed privately in addition to taking part in a group interview session, and in this part of the report all interview responses have been left verbatim to provide the reader with a strong sense of identity of each group member, and to thus allow the four artists tell the ensemble’s story.

By combining interview responses offered during the individual research interviews with available resume information, the first section of this chapter (Section 4.2) introduces each artist individually and relays their musical journey and professional career to date, with the aim of getting to know their history as independent musicians and highlight what knowledge and experience they each bring to the group. Thus this section answers one of this research sub-questions, investigating who the study partners are and how their background and experience might affect their involvement in this type of music making, and (potentially) colour their experience. During the research interviews the artists were also asked to name one or some of the highlights of their career to date. Their answers to this question can clarify their views on their overall Artico Ensemble experience, whether that would be related to the ensemble's performances, its repertoire, its profile, reputation and role in the wider (music) community, or their own position within the group.

4.2 The members of Artico Ensemble

Soprano Shelli Hulcombe began music lessons as a young child. She played piano and several other instruments throughout her school years and discovered her love of singing relatively late in life. After studying voice at the Queensland Conservatorium
Griffith University, she joined Opera Queensland as a chorus member. She was selected to take part in their ‘Young Artist’ program and was offered operatic roles with the company over the ensuing years. Most of her early professional work was in Opera or in corporate settings as an operatic singer, and she felt most familiar with and adept at operatic repertoire.

Shelli later moved to Sydney for several years, where she became involved with professional chamber choir Cantillation. She really enjoyed being a member of this choir, whom she credits with igniting her love of small music ensembles. When asked to select some of the highlights of her career so far, she mentions:

You know, I’ve done many high-profile things as a soloist, for example the operas that I’ve done, and I sang at the opening of the Goodwill Games, and at some high-profile corporate events, but actually the thing I’m most proud of is, I was in the choir for a recording of the Messiah that was done in Sydney, with Cantillation […] For me, the quality of the music making was so good and so inspiring that it didn’t matter to me that I did not have a solo role, I just loved being a part of that project. And I guess that was the moment for me that I realized that it wasn’t about where you were singing or performing, or, you know, how big your part was, it’s really just about making good music that’s satisfying to me. (Shelli, interview)

Up until the point of joining Artico Ensemble Shelli had primarily worked with singers, but throughout the later part of her career she has explored many different styles of music, from early Baroque music, Lieder, opera, light classical to Music Theatre. Shelli has been a member of Artico since the ensemble’s first concert season in Brisbane in 2009, and is also part of Ensemble Entourage, performing a theatrical and educational music show in primary schools all around the State under the banner of Musica Viva In Schools. Aside from performing she has always maintained a healthy private teaching studio, and she currently teaches voice at the Queensland Conservatorium.

Pianist Brieley Cutting started her piano studies at a young age. Her and her sister received their early piano tuition from their mother, on an old, beat-up upright piano that had been delivered to the family’s farmhouse on a big, rusted trailer.

[The piano] was unloaded from this and thrown into the shed that we were living in, and we started on that. Things got a little bit more posh
in the years to come, but that was the start of it, it was rather rustic. […]

So yes, earliest memory perhaps, dealing with that upright piano.

(Brieley, interview)

Brieley graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University at the young age of 18. She went on to pursue further study at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne, where she was twice the winner of the ANAM Concerto Competition. She later returned to Brisbane to obtain her Masters Degree. She participated in the Symphony Australia Young Performer’s Awards in 2006 and regards performing Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in the Grand Final (in a live radio and delayed television broadcast) with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as a highlight of her career to date. The event would prove significant in more ways than one: winning the keyboard section of this competition allowed her to travel to London for a year of study at the Royal College of Music on a funded scholarship, but the solo performance itself made her realize that becoming a concerto soloist was not necessarily her desired career path. Whilst in London, Brieley became more involved in chamber music and received some very positive feedback on her performances, which led her further down the chamber music pathway. She continued participating in piano competitions and was awarded second place in the Kerikeri International Piano Competition in New Zealand in 2010, but also started Doctoral research through Griffith University, investigating the role of the pianist in chamber music. At the time of this study’s interview sessions, Brieley was the pianist of local New Music ensemble Collusion. As part of her creative work for her doctoral studies, Brieley has recently recorded two chamber music CDs with Collusion (20th century repertoire and Australian New Music), as well as an 8 hand/4 pianist version of Mahler’s Symphony No.2 for Melba Records. She joined Artico Ensemble in 2011 and is also the manager and Artistic Director of her own chamber music series, DeClassified Music, in which she performs new and more traditional classical repertoire alongside other invited musicians and ensembles. Brieley has been awarded prestigious scholarships such as an Australian Music Foundation Award, the Tait Memorial Trust Scholarship and an Australian Postgraduate Award, and she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2013.

Paul Kopetz is Artico Ensemble’s bass clarinettist, arranger, composer and manager. Born in Warsaw, Poland, his parents sent him to a specialist music school when he was six years old to study piano. When his hands were deemed too small to continue with piano, his teacher recommended he try something else. “And as it
happened, on that day of that recommendation the clarinet teacher was at school. And I could have ended up playing anything, but as it happened he was there, and I was given the clarinet” (Paul, interview). He migrated with his parents to Australia where he continued playing the clarinet in local ensembles and wind bands. Whilst studying clarinet and composition at Melbourne University he developed a love for the bass clarinet. Towards the end of his Masters studies at the Victorian College of the Arts he met Dutch bass clarinet soloist Henri Bok, who invited him to further his studies with him in Rotterdam, specializing in bass. Upon his return to Australia, Paul played professionally with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and performed in many music theatre productions on clarinet, saxophone, bass clarinet and all other instruments of the single-reed family. When asked to name a highlight of his career so far, Paul responds:

I think being solo clarinet in Topol’s ‘Fiddler on the Roof’ when Topol was visiting Australia about I’d say nine years ago. I was fortunate enough to be his lead clarinet in the show, and I played the show in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. That stands out as a very strong memory because it was such a professional production, and Topol was a legend in his own right doing this role and working with him was a great privilege. (Paul, interview)

Aside from performing, Paul has been always actively involved in instrumental music teaching, and at the time of this study’s interview sessions Paul was employed full time as Head of Winds at a Brisbane private school, whilst increasing his profile and portfolio as a composer. He mentions receiving fantastic results with his compositions in competitions and performances here in Australia and overseas as a recent highlight of his career.

Rianne Wilschut was born in Heerenveen, The Netherlands, and started clarinet lessons at the age of eleven. Her sister played the clarinet and had a really good teacher at the specialist music school in town, so she decided to learn the same instrument. Initially she was concerned that she should have taken up a different instrument, not the same as her sister, but it actually ended up being a positive experience, as they were able to play and perform together:

We’d do little concerts in the music school that we were members of. The teacher was really enthusiastic and excited, and he also put on ensembles - clarinet ensembles, or clarinet and saxophone ensembles -
and we did little mini-gigs […] and it was really nice, in a relaxed kind of way. (Rianne, interview)

Rianne attended the Conservatorium in Zwolle, the Netherlands, and was heavily involved in ensemble playing throughout her studies. She was a member of a wind quintet, a trio with clarinet, cello and piano, a clarinet quartet and a contemporary music ensemble, and enjoyed building up chamber music repertoire and performing in concerts throughout the country. She moved to Rotterdam to pursue postgraduate studies in performance with Flemish clarinettist Walter Boeykens and obtained a specialist Chamber Music Diploma. After meeting Paul she migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. She auditioned for causal work with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and subsequently did regular orchestral work with them. She mentions being invited to tour with the MSO to Europe and performing in major historic concert halls in Barcelona, Berlin and Paris as a highlight of her career so far.

Rianne also has fond memories of the start-up period and trajectory of Artico Ensemble, explaining that growing the ensemble from its humble beginnings back in Melbourne to its present-day status, with an active, local annual concert calendar, has been really rewarding. She enjoyed touring interstate with the group and recording their first CD and found building up the ensemble’s extensive repertoire really satisfying.

Since moving to Brisbane Rianne has taught clarinet at several independent schools, and she is currently employed at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, where she teaches clarinet and directs the clarinet choir. She is a founding member of the Lunaire Collective, Ensemble in Residence at QCGU. With an instrumentation of wind quintet and piano at its core, the group has premiered new works by contemporary Australian composers, specifically composed for and written in collaboration with the Lunaire Collective. Drawing on a large pool of colleagues they also perform more established, classical works for strings, winds, piano, percussion and voice, and the Collective is host ensemble of the Tyalgum Music Festival in Northern NSW. Rianne is also the clarinetist of Ensemble Entourage with whom she performs in primary schools all throughout Queensland under the banner of Musica Viva In Schools.

As an orchestral player, she performs with Brisbane’s Camerata - Queensland’s Chamber Orchestra, and is a casual player with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Although she feels that orchestral clarinet playing is quite a different way of making music than chamber music, she does hope to maintain it as part of her portfolio career, as she considers it equally interesting and satisfying.
4.3 The experience of creating and performing professional chamber music concerts in small community venues

Aside from providing personal information about each of the artists’ music background and professional career so far, the research first and foremost sought to gain a better in-depth understanding of the artist experience of creating and performing professional chamber music concerts in small community venues. In individual interviews with each ensemble member and in the combined group interview undertaken later that day, each artist was asked to simply describe their experience of being part of Artico Ensemble.

It is important to realise that what follows below are verbatim, unedited transcripts of the individual, one-on-one interviews with the Artico Ensemble members, which are simply re-grouped by question. (NB: for clarity and ease of differentiation, each interview participant’s name will be highlighted in bold throughout). As the individual interviews were semi-structured, guided by the list of questions, they each followed their own path, and interviewees were able to offer their most spontaneous answer. That fact in itself will mean that the comments given should be seen as those closest to their heart, which gives an insight into each individual artist’s own interpretation of the question, and their feeling associated with the ensemble and its concerts. The group interview created an atmosphere of conversation and discussion, with answers adding to individual interview comments already offered, which will be evident in the group interview material presented on page 82 and onwards.

In many instances, the ensemble is in near-complete agreement on issues associated with the group, whereas in other instances each individual’s own viewpoint and outlook is very evident. This makes for an apt and kaleidoscopic view on being involved in chamber music, where, as Brieley mentions in her interview, “the players get to keep their individuality while making a whole”. This style of reporting also strongly (and deliberately) reflects the conversational paradigm associated with chamber music being seen as “a conversation between friends” (“Chamber music quotes”, n.d.).

**Interviewer:** Could you describe your experience of being part of Artico Ensemble?

**Paul:** I feel we are unique in many ways, because as far as I know there aren’t any ensembles in this State (as well as in Victoria when we were there) that do what we do. And that is, no other chamber ensemble is
self-sufficient. No other chamber ensemble as far as I know, does 15 concerts per year, to a different audience every single time. No other ensemble I think has been able to do that for 12 years running. So, I am really proud of the fact that we can do that, and we continue to do so. As far as my membership of the ensemble is concerned I still feel that I am a very big part of it because (a) I do tend to organize a lot of the concerts myself, through my networks, and (b) I still provide music for the ensemble; doing arrangements, and composing more and more, doing original music. And that seems to be working very well. And although we have changed personnel by moving to Brisbane, the actual instrumentation remains the same - still voice, piano, clarinet, bass clarinet.

**Shelli:** Initially a very steep learning curve, but I’ve always just loved it and wanted to do as well as I can within the group.

**Rianne:** Great! Tiring sometimes as well, and it is very demanding, ‘cause in a way you’re it. You organize the concert, you go and do the concert, you’re onstage making the actual event, so it is very demanding. It is very involved, we do our own advertising, we liaise with the administrator of the venue that we go to, so there is that constant work, it's quite a high workload that you want to keep going. Throughout the years that I have now been involved with the group, sometimes I think OK, is this still worth doing, do I really want to go out there on a Sunday … I could also just, you know, have a coffee, sit down somewhere and relax, … but then at the end of the day, and already during the concert, you think, ‘yeah, this is really worth doing’. I just find it really relevant, really inspiring. I love working with the other guys, and I like the moment, say, when ‘lights are on’, that moment of ‘we’re going to bring something that is really good!’ … that is really musical, that is entertaining. It is interesting, it might be new, because people may not have heard the clarinet, or the bass clarinet, or the combination of stuff that we do, and I like that.

**Briely:** It’s been a delightful experience being part of this ensemble, mostly because the people are so terrific. Yeah, finding a chamber music ensemble member that you can work with on a consistent basis can be
quite tricky. Social dynamics, it’s a tricky aspect of chamber music, but these guys are very easy to work with. We can get things done and have a good time.

It can be trying. For instance, that sort of noise at the last venue, I almost think when the butcher bird and the magpie pipe through your Bach piece ‘Why am I doing this again? This is awkward’. Feels like they’re trivializing what you’re doing. [...] But look, the most rewarding thing (which means you can put up with all these things) is you feel like you’re really getting to people, people who would not normally get to concerts. You know, the 94-year old around the corner who can hardly walk, who can really enjoy your concert - it makes it all worthwhile. You just need one of these sorts of people coming up after the concert saying how much they’d enjoyed it, and you can really put up with all of that stuff. That’s what music, what we do about, being musicians, taking this music out to people so they can enjoy it, you know?

To start the discussion about the specific experience of performing in small community venues, the artists were asked to name some key characteristics of these performances. Their answers reveal a strong awareness of the importance of repertoire and programming choices, and of the specific relationship between the artists and their audience in these types of concerts, as well as between them as ensemble members.

**Briley:** Well in Brisbane small venues are good, especially the way that Artico Ensemble organizes the concerts. [...] If we come to a smaller venue, particularly like a community hall, or a church, then there is normally an audience attached to it. So therefore, actually getting an audience to come to the concert they just tap into that ready-made audience and we’re good to go.

**Paul:** When you are playing in non-mainstream venues you are dealing with general public, who may not be educated in terms of concert etiquette. So, you have to become aware of the fact that you’re not an artist or ‘Artiste’ anymore, you are actually a service-provider in many cases. Yes, you still have to be a good artist, you still have to have a certain artistic integrity, but you have to be down-to-earth. You are dealing with venues that may be doubling up as churches, or galleries,
or school halls, and so you can’t be a diva. You are dealing with often
strange acoustics, where, as a musician, they are challenging, and you
have to just get on with it. You have to get over yourself and have to get
over the fact that you are not playing on the best podiums, not playing
with the best acoustics, but you’re still connecting with the people. And
the connection is what for me is the greatest part of what I do with this
ensemble. It’s not that I maybe sound in a certain way, or that we play
certain pieces, it’s that I connect and educate people at the same time.

**Rianne:** Number one I think is interaction. Interaction on so many
levels. It is within the group, we interact, the four of us, and sometimes,
most of the time very successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully. […] It is
interaction in the performance situation, with the audience there. It is the
interaction that we do in organizing that particular concert, so yeah, you
have the emails and the phone calls, and we go to the venue. When there
is a new venue that has come on board we go and check out this venue
and shake hands with the people who are going to organize our concert,
so that they know who we are, and that we get that first link established.
So, I think interaction is probably the biggest thing.

Secondly, I think it’s creation - you create something. […] As an
independent small group, you create everything. You create the
programme, you then create the actual music when you rehearse it, …
so you’ve got the notes on the page, but you actually create the piece.
And that is really one of the main things with chamber music, that it is
four musical brains coming together to create a piece of music that is
not necessarily on that page.

You create the event as well. So, on the concert day it is very
much about you, so you’re in charge of whether it is going to be a
success or not, and I’m very much aware of that. Even from the moment
you walk in, people will have an opinion on you, so that has to be
absolutely right. You want them to ask you back next time, obviously,
to keep that ball rolling.

It is also creative, because you have so much input. You can
change how you play your notes, if you feel like that on the day it can
spark the whole piece up if it’s in the right mood. And we’re now such
an established group and we’ve worked together for such a long time
that everybody can pick up on that. So, it’s a new piece then, all of a sudden. So creative is really important.

And I think another one is accessibility. Perhaps just the fact that we go to an audience, so we make classical music, let’s call it classical or maybe chamber music, we make that accessible. The ticket prices are not too high, it is in a venue that people usually know, so they felt like ‘Oh yeah, that’s going to be ok, I know where to park’, or you know, ‘I can get there, it doesn’t take too long to get there’, so there is a low threshold for access to what I would consider good quality chamber music.

And the repertoire that we play is accessible. That is not to say that it is not difficult to play, or that it is not culturally good quality music, but it is accessible to a certain degree. Perhaps because it is sung, and singing is very accessible, or perhaps because some of our music is arrangements of very well-known pieces that people, yeah, find accessible. As one lady said after one of our concerts, ‘Oh it was really great. I didn’t know anything in advance about your concert but when I actually looked at the programme I knew 11 out of the 18 pieces that were on it!’ So it is also seen as a good, positive thing, that accessibility of what we play.

**Shelli:** But then we also have to make sure that we are appealing as a group, and that means just presenting a little bit of everything. We can’t expect that everyone is going to love what we love, so it’s about presenting a buffet of musical tastes in one concert.

**Brieley:** The main thing for us I think is obviously to make the music as best as we can, but also to communicate to the audience a good mood, a good feeling. I think that’s important, cause they’ve come along to have a relaxing, good time and enjoy themselves, they don’t want an overly intellectual experience, they don’t want to push themselves too much. It’s about involving them, communicating with them in a light-hearted good-natured way I think.

To delve further into the specific experience of performing in small community venues in comparison to large (mainstream) concert halls, the Artico members offered what they saw as important differences. Their personal experience working in other
professional configurations, combined with their instrument and associated position and role within the group, meant that their comments reflect a truly individual viewpoint on this topic.

**Paul:** Well I guess with any chamber music, when you’re performing in a smaller venue, whether it is a commercial venue or a regional venue, you experience the intimacy of the experience. You play to the people and with the people. You’re having a conversation with the audience. You don’t just present stuff and wait for the applause, and there is a barrier between you and the audience, you actually engage them in your performance. So, it’s like having a conversation with them, like being in your house having coffee with people who want to talk to you. So, for me that’s a very big part of it.

**Shelli:** Because we’re so close to an audience, the audience really needs to be able to connect with you as a person. For me it’s all about them liking me, rather than just the character I am portraying or the song I am singing … it is as much about our personalities I believe as about our music.

**Paul:** Yeah, I actually feel like I’m a complete artist. Where I do play quality music, at a high level, with like-minded individuals, and I share my level of musical expertise, and at the same time let people into my world at the same time. And I share what I have inside with them. Whereas if you go to a traditional concert hall, there is always this barrier between the audience and the performers, everyone has to know how to behave. In our concerts, that’s not the case, we try to break those barriers and celebrate music together.

**Briley:** It doesn’t actually bother me too much. Because of the way we construct our programmes, the way we practise our programmes and the type of audience we play them for … I guess it doesn't demand the perfection that you can achieve with classical music performance. […] And there is, it is a good fee, but it is a reserved fee, you know. So, I don’t become terribly concerned from venue to venue, as I would if it was, I suppose, sounds bad to put it like this perhaps, but a more ‘important’ performance, I suppose with media or with a bigger fee, or being recorded, things like that. […] I like small venues, but these
venues that we play at aren’t typical small venues. Small venues that I enjoy would be where you still have space around you, you’re still on a stage, but it is a limited amount of people, those venues I find are ideal, but these are in a church, with your back to an audience often if you’re a piano player, cause ‘where do we put the old piano’ … And you know pianos that, pedals that squeak, and people rustling, so yeah, I don’t play at my best, absolutely not. And I don’t expect to. Because, once again, because of the design of these concerts. You know, two o’clock in the afternoon Sunday concerts for church people. You know, it’s a different vibe.

Rianne: There are probably two things at play in there. Say, if you are in a very large venue it is in my situation usually in a symphony orchestra setting, and it is very different playing clarinet in a symphony orchestra than it is in a chamber music ensemble. [...] In Artico and in an ensemble such as Artico, you work with your colleagues and then a straight line to the audience …maybe even first to the audience and you hope that the rest of your colleagues are also there with you. [...] In a small room therefore that works much easier, because you can feel the audience … sometimes they are sitting as close as you are now to me, and you can feel whether what you played was received well, and whether they understood what you meant, and you get that response straight away. And therefore, you can also make changes, if you feel that they didn't get it, oh, you can change what you do. That interaction that you don’t necessarily get when you’re in an orchestral situation, but also not as easy in a large venue. As an audience member I have been to many chamber music ensembles in a larger venue, and you can feel that the whole action is still on stage, you feel more removed from it. As if it is a TV show that you’re watching. It’s great, but you’re not involved as an audience member, and I know that from being an audience member and I can feel that from being a player in the smaller halls.

The expression ‘small community venue’ consists of two qualifiers, ‘small’ and ‘community’, that each independently has its own effect on the experience of performing in these concerts. Making the distinction between the two qualifiers is
complex, as they frequently blend into each other, but it is an important line of enquiry in this study.

The artists’ answers to this question are again strongly coloured by their instrument and role within the group and vary between personal and reflective comments and more pragmatic ones relating to practicalities.

**Shelli:** The effect of a small venue on my performance means that I feel much more connected with the audience. It is so much easier to get a response from them. I know that when you are in a large venue you are eliciting a response from the audience, but often you’re on stage and the lights are in your eyes and you can’t see them, so you can’t really get that immediacy that you can get in a small venue.... So I really like that about Artico concerts. It really forces you to be sincere. [...] It’s like putting yourself under a microscope. You just can’t get away with things that you could possibly get away with in a larger space with a lovely acoustic, and there’s that distance between you and the audience. You really just have to be true to what you’re doing in a smaller venue.

**Paul:** It is about the immediate response, the immediate engagement of me, the performer, the social worker, the storyteller, the educator, the friend, with the people who are interested in what I do, who are interested in hearing the music, hearing my instrument, in sharing the experience of making music. Because we invite people to talk to us at the interval and after the concert, it becomes like a, it’s an event, a social event, that’s what it is. It’s not a concert anymore, it goes beyond that. And that’s I think one of the greatest successes of our ensemble, is that we are for the people, and they consider us friends. We go and share good moments with them.

**Rianne:** As a clarinet player I think a small to medium size venue is really good. Because clarinet carries well, ideally you want to have an acoustic that is slightly live, but since we play quite often in churches, many of the churches we play in have actually very nice, clarinet-friendly acoustics. There are some that are not quite as great, but the small size of those venues works well for clarinet. So you don't have to struggle very much to get what I might see as the message of the music across. ‘Community’... it’s slightly difficult to judge how that affects
me as a performer…. It has a lot of impact on all the other ‘involvement’ things of how you organize [the concert]. [...] I probably play for an audience that does not have a very big experience with music, because it is in a community venue. It might be in a church, and they normally come there for a Sunday service, and now there is a concert there.

**Brieley:** We do pick the programme based on the crowd that we know we are going to get at these events. Well-known, I suppose ‘inoffensive’ music … occasionally we like to push them a little bit, we don't want to treat them like they’re dummies, but we know that the best feedback we get from them is if the hear a work that they know, something in the mainstream classical repertoire, or a showtune always goes down well, … yeah, programming is definitely specific for the audience.

**Rianne:** I think there is more of a direct line between us as the musicians and the venue because it is a community venue, so all the wheeling and dealing has been done very much one-on-one. If it were to be run either here at Griffith Theatre for example, via an organization such as Musica Viva, the audience that comes there doesn’t know *me*, they have bought the ticket via Ticketek, or they have bought it online somewhere, so they are not necessarily coming for us, they are coming for the event, and they hope it’s going to be good. Whereas now I find, that community factor, they are coming for us, which is really good, because you can build up a bond, you can build, say, let’s call it fans, and you can establish that, and that is what will ultimately make people come back. And that I think is much stronger in a community venue than it would be in a really top mainstream venue.

As part of this case study, Artico Ensemble played in churches, a private house and a museum, all different types of small community venues. The artists were asked whether these different venue types created a different performance experience, and whether they could name some venues they perhaps preferred more than others. It became evident that each different venue most definitely has its own effect on the performance experience (in terms of performance space, facilities, acoustics, available instrument or ambiance), and that the house concert in particular was seen as a very different type of venue.
**Brieley:** Okay! Venues, favourite venues for what we do! I think my favourite would have to be the Redland [Museum] venue. Because the piano is adequate, it’s a decent upright, it’s inoffensive, … […] I think, as far as creating the best music, so ensemble-wise, balance, and feeling like I can actually shape a phrase and do something imaginative with the music, I think the Redlands venue is probably the best.

**Rianne:** Uhm, that museum we have has a very good acoustic, so it’s great for us to play, so I think for what we do its most similar to a ‘real’ concert venue, so a mainstream concert venue. Where we’re an independent group, and people come and have bought a ticket for that group, and they have no other ties to the venue. […] So, my favourite over the past year, … one of the churches was my favourite, and I think the museum. In a way the museum is an ideal situation. The size, the ambience of it, where people come to enjoy the music … that is perhaps my ideal situation. And [I really enjoy] some of the churches we play in, where the ambience is really helpful for the music. And just for the fact that there are lots of churches, and some of these churches have beautiful acoustics, and they will be able to draw in an audience, so I think the more people we reach, the better it is. And in churches you can do that, they stand vacant for most of the week anyway, so if we come on a Sunday afternoon, it’s a concert venue with a near ready-made audience … so from an entrepreneurial point of view I think that that is really strong.

**Shelli:** The thing I would hope to have in a venue is primarily a nice acoustic. As a singer, […] we really develop our vocal technique to be heard best from a distance. […] So when there’s a nice acoustic, and I know the room is going to pick up my sound, I feel like I can relax a lot more, sort of let it happen. Whereas with some venues, like for example Kenmore, it’s a very dry acoustic and there’s nothing that’s going to help you, so I always feel like I have to resist the temptation to push my sound, or to somehow modify ‘good singing’ to accommodate the venue. I […] still should just sing as I know I should sing, but it’s very tempting to try and accommodate a venue. […]
I have to say that when we’re performing in a church, […] I am always mindful of the sort of repertoire that we have chosen, and I am always wondering … there are some aspects of our repertoire that I always wonder whether they are respectful? I am not particularly a religious person, but I don’t want to offend … I have more sensibilities about offending people in churches. Aside from that there is no difference for me between a church and a museum.

**Rianne**: The churches that we played in and the museum are kind of next to each other in a way. In the churches I find that the sacred pieces of music that we play in our repertoire work very well! Because the audience has an understanding of that, and the ambience somehow really enhances those works […] So as a performer, if I play Mozart’s ‘Adagio’ solo, in that kind of a setting it works the best. If you do that in a museum it is not quite as strong. The museum is kind of more impersonal in a way. The audience members that come to that [concert] are not necessarily drawn in because they have a connection with the venue so strongly, like they have in a church, … so in a church the advertising is done in the church, they come as a kind of duty for the organizing part of the church, … In a museum it is more independent.

**Paul**: One of the most interesting parts of my role in this ensemble is to actually explore different venues, to make the connections, to book our ensemble in for concerts. So I really enjoy going to a new venue and seeing what we can do! How we can overcome difficulties, whether we can present what we do well in a new space. Yes, there are problems often associated with non-mainstream venues, like acoustics, like bad pianos, or no pianos at all, or perhaps uncomfortable access, or perhaps uncomfortable seating for the audience. But that’s part and parcel of the challenge.

**Brieley**: I’ve had electronic keyboards, which of course are horrendous, and completely unacceptable, but they insist on having these in churches, and of course your average old, friendly, garden variety upright that’s been there a hundred years and had nothing done to it. Which is always fun! In a way you feel like you can relax with those instruments because it’s going to be lose-lose, so sometimes you can
play quite well … [In Elanora] they went to the effort, as the only venue that we know, of actually trying their best to buy a good piano. And their piano choice wasn’t too bad at all. […] Yes, it was terrific that they had that, but once again, you’re in an environment that’s all carpeted, you’re on a weird shaped stage, so with that … with the grand piano I was behind the group, so they’re over there somewhere, we’re not … it was difficult to communicate with them. Yeah, and […] the audience was strangely wide. So you get up on stage and you feel like you’re at a local Eisteddfod.4

Paul: My role as a bass clarinettist on the other hand is to adjust and try to make it work. It’s part of the challenge as a musician as well, it would be an ideal world where everyone played in perfect concert halls, with perfect acoustics, perfect audience, where everyone understands every note that you play, and like you as a person. But, you know, that’s life, you just have to try to sell yourself, and to make the experience for everyone as enjoyable as possible. And if there’s an audience for it, I’ll do it.

Now, playing in private homes is an interesting one, because you are even more intimate than you are in a church. Going into someone’s home is really the core, as I see it, of what chamber music is. That’s how it all started. It didn’t start in churches, it didn’t start in halls, it started in homes. So actually, going to a private place is going back to the origin. And that’s the ultimate. Making it work is a different story because homes are not built anymore for musical presentations. But I’m always surprised how well it works with someone’s initiative, in arranging the furniture, in organizing perhaps an audience in a certain way. And homes are always very dear to me, because, being in a house, you’re in the heart of the host. They have taken you in.

Shelli: It is really, it is very intimate, I mean you are being invited into someone’s home, and it feels more like a friends-kind of experience,

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4 Originally the name for a traditional Welsh festival of literature, music and performance, an Australian Eisteddfod is a performing arts competition with events for singers, dancers, actors and instrumental musicians. They are most often community events reserved for school-age children, though some have open sections in which anyone may compete, including professionals.
rather than an audience and a performer sort of experience, because you know that these people also have been invited into their house … it’s just a lovely warm feeling.

**Rianne:** The house concert we did was very different from my perspective. I had expected it to be great fun and really nice, and really exactly what you want as chamber music, but I actually found on the day that it was lots of other things. People were sitting very close, which puts a lot of strain on you as a player, a lot of strain, … in your decision making of what reed do I put on, where do I breathe, because everybody can tell. I also noticed that in the rest of the group. Noticed it with the colleagues as well, that there was less room to manoeuvre in a way.

**Brieley:** The house concert was a little bit awkward, because it’s a massive piano in a very small space. So what do you do with that? It’s a nine-foot Bösendorfer, it’s in good condition, it’s perhaps not supposed to be in a room with only 40 people … so in a small chamber music situation that presents its issues.

**Shelli:** There is also the added difficulty of often not very adequate facilities, like we’re getting changed in someone’s bedroom, and you know, you’re always a little bit on edge in someone else’s house.

**Rianne:** Secondly, I think it was less about us. It was very much … the audience came to the house because they were all invited by the people that live there and that run the concert series. So we’re kind of like a, well, not really the event. So it was not really about us. Although it was very well received, and the audience members we talked to afterwards thought it was really nice and they enjoyed the programme and the concert, I felt on stage very much like it had nothing really to do with us so much. It is a community get-together, people from the street came, you know, the neighbours, and other people who had just had an invite of ‘okay, you know, I have this musical soiree coming up, do you want to come?’ So it was about that, about getting the community together, which is a strength in itself, but as a performer it had less to do with me, really. I do think that it is an avenue to pursue, so I think it would be great that people that have a house large enough to do concerts in, should try and do that, but from a different point of value in a way. I
think it brings people together over a cultural experience, and I think that is great, but as a musician, especially for a group such as ours perhaps, it is not necessarily an easy set-up to play in.

Since its inception Artico Ensemble has worked under several different names. The first name change was due to circumstance. The recent definitive change to ‘Artico Ensemble’, however, was brought on by a difference of opinion amongst the ensemble members and an ensuing communal discussion of the group’s identity and was therefore included as a separate topic for further exploration in the individual interview sessions.

On first viewing, the name change topic may seem like a trivial matter in the grander scheme of this research and as such may not seem to contain that much transferrable knowledge beyond the case study of this particular ensemble. This research would, however, like to draw attention to the elements of group dynamics, compromise, ensemble identity, definition of chamber music, and marketing and promotion highlighted in the interview material. These are essential and current components of ensemble membership, which deserve presentation in this study and most certainly warrant further investigation in future research by myself or others.

Rianne: Well, it was Brieley really that started it all. We had one name change from way, way back, when we lived in Melbourne, when [the ensemble] was called the Victorian Chamber Musicians. Moving to Queensland, we could have called it the Queensland Chamber Musicians but that’s also limited, so we decided ‘ok, let’s call it the Australian Chamber Musicians’. You know, if we have to move back, we can still keep the same name. So it felt like a platform name. Also, it placed us where we are … which I really liked. Brieley was the one who had a bit of a problem with it.

Brieley: Yes, I came into the group and I did initially have a problem with that name, because my question was to them, do you really feel like you are the definitive chamber musicians of Australia, is that how you want to be thought of?

Shelli: I think it’s really important for every member of the group to be happy with the name, and we just had the situation where one of the group members thought that it wasn't an appropriate name for us, because we weren’t pitching ourselves at a national level and yet we called ourselves the Australian Chamber Musicians. It wasn't something
that had previously worried me, but taking on board her opinion, and thinking about it I was also in favour of changing the name. To just be something a little vaguer.

**Rianne:** And I think [Brieley] was worried also about the ‘chamber musicians’, the chamber perhaps be slightly on the daggy side, or perhaps the whole name being slightly on the daggy side. I didn’t feel ‘the Australian’ two words in it to be a problem, I actually thought that was quite a good thing to do. However, I do agree with the thing that it sounds perhaps first of all too long, and also not quite up-tempo enough, not quite bright enough for what we probably are.

**Shelli:** The Australian Chamber Musicians to me puts us squarely in a ‘High Art’ category, and I felt also that the range of repertoire that we explored wasn’t necessarily reflected in the name. So I think it was important for us to find a name that, (a) we all agreed with, and that (b) was much more reflective of what we do.

**Brieley:** There’s also the chance of that name being misconstrued, as it was proved to be later in the year, so my points were very much proved.

**Rianne:** Sometimes on a poster say advertising us, it would say The Australian Chamber Musicians, and people afterwards would say, or during the interval come up to us and say ‘I had no idea what you were going to be, so I had no idea really that it was going to be fun’. And that was a bit of a suss sign in a way, so I agreed with that aspect of it when Brieley said it, and thought, ‘well, maybe we do then have to find a name that is a little bit more enticing’.

**Paul:** Recently, with the launch of our new website, where we wanted to clarify our identity a bit more, and to not be associated with other similar named ensembles, like the Australian Chamber Orchestra and other ensembles of that ilk, we decided ‘well, how about we do something different which is really clearly cut, so there’s no confusion’.

**Shelli:** It took us forever to come up with the right name, because it’s like opening a can of worms! There’s just so many possibilities, and it really forced us to examine what we thought the group was. So, yeah, I mean everyone had to be on the same page as to what we wanted
reflected in the name. Yes, it did take a long time and many coffees-slash-wines.

Brieley: We agonized over this! Yes, you go through leaves, plants, animals, anything Brisbane, street names, none of them worked. And obviously you want a name that reflects who you are, so we had to do some thinking about that. Rianne came up with Artico and I think it’s good, it’s kind of, we don’t do anything that’s particularly modern, we’re not a New Music group, so it can’t be on the edge, and trendy, you know, cause that would give the wrong impression. At the same time calling ourselves things like the Jacaranda ensemble, or Poinciana, also gives a very … ‘wow, you’re not going to be that good’ … I felt like that didn’t give us enough credit.

Rianne: We have to experiment and see, because it’s only very early days, to see whether the venues that have known us and that we have built a rapport with under ‘the Australian Chamber Musicians’ are going with us on that change, because that was one really big concern. If you’ve built up a bit of an audience membership under the Australian Chamber Musicians you don’t want to rebrand because people will forget. People will not click that you are the same as you are, so a name change is not necessarily a good thing, but we’ll see how it works out. So far people have reacted really well to ‘Artico Ensemble’, so I hope that they think that’s us.

Paul: Artico sounded great at the time and we settled on that. And I have no regrets, I think we just move on, we have a new website, we have a CD coming out, and we’re looking forward to the future.

4.4 The strengths & challenges of creating & performing professional chamber music concerts in small community venues

The experience of performing in small community venues described in the previous section already touched on a few occasions on particular issues associated with this type of performance that can be seen as strengths or challenges of this medium. As the second main line of enquiry, this thesis set out to disseminate these strong or challenging aspects, and in their individual interviews the artists were asked to provide their personal view on the topic. The report that follows below flows from strengths to challenges in continuous narrative.
Rianne: I think one of the strengths of the group is the people, […] I think we’re all of a calibre that we know our instrument, whether that be voice, clarinet or piano, so whatever repertoire we decide to play, we’ll be able to do it.

Paul: Well, the strength of who we are is our professionalism. I believe we do deliver the goods every single time we perform, because we do take it seriously.

Shelli: So the musical strengths of Artico are that we’re all very experienced musicians and we’re all at a similar stage in our developments, where we just want to make good music.

Paul: Our strength I believe is also being on the same wave-length, musically. We’ve got four musicians, yes, we’re all different, but when we play we understand each other. So we don’t have to rehearse copious amounts of hours, it’s like a good team. That's our strength.

Rianne: I think also the rapport that we have, the four of us, between us, is one of the strengths.

Brieley: The strengths are that Artico is keen, and full of good musicians. We work well together.

Shelli: And I think we’re also mature enough to realize that we can’t be too precious about what we do, that it is good to be diverse in our repertoire. We’re all quite versatile in being able to shift around between genres.

Rianne: I think from the concerts, some of the strengths are the repertoire, that it is varied repertoire, that it is a balance of all the things and all the sounds that you can make with the instrumentation that we have, … a selection of old, early music, classical music, light, jazzy, new compositions, I think that is one of the strengths of the concerts.

Paul: Our strength is our unusual instrumentation, there is no other ensemble that I know of which would use clarinet, bass clarinet, voice and piano in one quartet.

Brieley: And I think it’s terrific as well that we have a singer in there as well […] I think we’re very lucky, particularly because of the audience
we play to, the level of communication does tend to go up when you’ve got a vocalist, ‘cause of you see them face to face, communicating with the audience, and drawing them in. And it makes the music in a way easily understandable. Like I said, these audiences are not coming along to have an intellectual, spiritual, moving experience, they’re there more to be entertained in a superficial, mostly, (I mean I’m generalizing) superficial sort of light way on a Sunday afternoon. So having a singer there, especially Shelli, cause she is just so bubbly and marvellous, and big smile, and you know wears a lovely frock, so yeah, I think it adds a tremendous amount to our group, particularly because of what we’re doing.

**Rianne:** From what I’ve heard, our style of presentation in our concerts is one of the strengths of the group, so that it does come of the stage, that it is presenting towards an audience, so there is that interaction, between all of us, and the audience.

**Paul:** And our strength is also our size. There is four of us only, not eight, not fifteen, four. Which means that we can still be rewarded for our efforts without any additional burden to our hosts.

**Paul:** Our strength is also our courage to play in strange venues, that’s our strength, and we are prepared to take our own keyboard with us, … we are mobile, that’s our strength. We go to places where other ensembles would not be able to play.

**Brieley:** Brisbane desperately needs this side of its arts and culture to be increased. I think Artico, I guess, educate … I hate to use the word educating … but I guess reminding people that this sort of music is very entertaining and has its place. And being able to take it out to people who can't come is extremely valuable.

**Rianne:** On the practical side, I think THE big strength of Artico concerts is that we go to where the audience is, rather than expecting them to come to us. So it’s an ‘ok, we make that first step’, and the response has been only, say, hundred-and-ten percent positive to that. ‘It’s so great that you come out’ and ‘to have such fantastic level, professional level concert at our venue’ … so that must be the strength of the ensemble.
Paul: There’s a lot of people out there who either have a very strong musical background coming from well-educated families, who had music education at school, people who are keenly interested in listening to classical music, yet, the same people don’t go to concerts. They choose not to do it because of, again, costs, location, and other factors, and just because we exist as a group of musicians, that gives those people an opportunity to actually access that interest. And from my point of view as a professional musician, I think the fact that I can take music to the people and share it with them, to me that’s more valuable than playing very high-brow classical repertoire to say five people, who will appreciate it for what it is in terms of academic, intellectual pursuit, but I prefer playing to a hundred, something maybe less challenging, but having a real experience, down to earth, connecting experience with people who want that sort of experience in their own backyard.

Shelli: I think the strength of Artico (is) its accessibility to the audience. I think we are all friendly, personable people, and I think the audience really react to that, and feel safe, being there. It can be confronting to come to a classical music concert if you’re not sure what it is going to be about and if you’ve not grown up going to classical music concerts, so I think the strengths of Artico is that we’re easy for an audience to enjoy.

Brieley: The other thing that’s really good about Artico is the, I suppose, the win-win for the venues and for the group, the fact that the venue because of the people coming in they can put on this concert and they’re doing things for the community, we get paid this money and get to enjoy making music for people, they sometimes also make extra money which they can give to charities - I think that’s where it really comes into its own, where there is that happening as well. And then all the people come along, don’t have to pay very much, get a full afternoon tea and an afternoon of music …. And get to talk to Shelli afterwards! (laughs). How can it go wrong?!

Shelli: The challenges involved with Artico I think are the chamber music cliché myth: that we’re going to be a string orchestra, we’re going to be boring, and that chamber music is not something that the general
public is interested in. Also, I think the fact that we’re not in a mainstream, big venue, people assume that we’re going to be less, uhm, polished or of a lesser standard than if we were in those venues. So I think the difficulty is just getting people there initially. On a personal note a difficulty for me is that, as a singer you can never really hear around you very well - your own sound takes up so much of your space when you’re singing that I find it very challenging to not have someone on the outside, for example a conductor, controlling the dynamic, the balance between us, and just learning to listen in the rehearsal process to what needs changing. So I often feel like I don’t have much to offer in a rehearsal sense, ‘cause I really just can’t hear a lot of the nuances of what’s going on. So, eh, yeah, that’s just on a personal note.

(A)nother difficulty I find in this ensemble, because of the particular combination of instruments, and also an audience’s predisposition that the singer is always the soloist, I find it very difficult to be part of … to sort of marry up the two ideas of ‘we’re a chamber ensemble’ (and to me we’re absolutely equal) and nobody needs to stand out, but I know that 90 percent of the time the audience is watching the singer. So I find that juxtaposition between being the soloist and being a member of the ensemble occasionally difficult.

[...] I think another challenge we have is because we are all very well-established musicians, who have had very different paths to get here, it’s hard to always be on the same page, musically. And there have been occasions where one person has wanted a different speed, a different, you know ... there is a lot of negotiating that goes on the rehearsal process. Cause we are, we know what we like, and it’s all valid, but it is just really … yeah, compromising.

**Rianne:** Some of the challenges are in that it is perhaps not quite clear where everybody wants to take the group, so you have four different people that have four different aspirations. And to try and marry that and to be, uhm, democratic about it, that … the juggling of opinions, and ... but then ultimately the decision making, somebody has to make the decision of what it is that you’re going to do next. To do that without one big leader, I think is a challenge, although it is the only way to run an ensemble, that everybody has input.
**Brieley:** I suppose the difficulty for me personally would be that, uhm, we aren’t going to be playing at a level that satisfies me. And that’s ok, because of what we’re doing, so … yeah, I find that a bit trying at times. And we’re not, I guess what a chamber ensemble would usually do is pick a programme […] and rehearse that programme so it develops to within an inch of its life. Practise it, so it’s absolutely fantastic, and then you go on a tour and you play the same programme over and over again for a short, relatively short amount of time. But we don’t, we have five or six programmes and we have generally busy lives, that we have to bring up at the last minute with very limited rehearsal, and put together, and perform. So, yeah, that’s trying, and it bothers me a bit professionally, but I think, considering the amount of enjoyment the audiences get out of it, and having the opportunity to play as many concerts as we do around Brisbane, you’re getting me out performing in all these different venues - look, it’s all worth it in the end.

**Rianne:** The concerts we do are also very demanding, I’m not sure whether people realize, but if you are actually doing a nearly two hour ‘show’, and it is about you, physically I personally have to be in physical shape to be able to do three hours of playing. And to keep that up in another freelance diary with teaching and other kind of administrative stuff is very demanding, so that’s very hard.

**Shelli:** I’ve come to realize that there’s no easy programme in this ensemble, and there’s really no chance for a pause or a break. Sometimes there will be a piece here and there where I’ll get to go off-stage, but really, we’re all *playing* the whole concert. And again, that has been a stamina thing for me to really work up to speed with.

**Rianne:** One of the challenges I think is that it does take up a whole day - the moment you have a concert on in the afternoon, you have to leave very early, you have to do that sound check, and you have to work with whatever you’re given. […] The acoustic might be very bad. That’s definitely a challenge. The more you do it you’ll get better at it, but it’s never a relaxed environment.

**Shelli:** Oh, there are so many factors that come into play when you are dealing with concerts not in venues that are primarily for performance:
The size of the room that we set up in is obviously one, the different acoustics of the venue (either too dry or too boomy) - it depends a lot then on how well we can hear each other. Even down to factors like if it’s a hot day, like today, and there is no air-conditioning, you know, it can be quite uncomfortable to be getting through your programme sweating. But they’re all things that you just accept as part and parcel of not being in a performance venue.

**Brieley:** Acoustics. Most of [the venues] aren’t designed for music performance. So, balance, sound projection, and hearing the group together - we’re lucky if all of those things work. And of course, noise, these venues aren’t built to block out noise. So, like the concert we did last time, we had the birds singing and the wind blowing your papers off the piano, and you know, the cars driving past, the truck that pulls up outside - all these things you’ve got to contend with, it’s not a music venue where you can just shut the door, and you can have that silence in which you can concentrate and, yeah … […] I really enjoy live performance, but these are different types of live performance. I particularly like live performance when I am playing at the top of my game. And that’s not what we’re trying to do with these. But I still enjoy I guess feeling like we’re communicating music to people, who have come along because they want to, you know … so, yeah, … I can’t work the way I can with a normal audience, ‘cause you need good equipment, the acoustic, and the piano, the preparation, and the mindset, to be able to do the best, but yeah, …

**Rianne:** It is the artistic decision. You have to weigh up: is it worth it for the audience we’re going to, to put this concert on, even if it is in a difficult acoustic with a difficult instrument to make it come across, …but surprisingly, now over the last six concerts for example we’ve interviewed people and taken reactions from audience members, the concerts where we struggled the most (out of the part that was in the research) which was in Kenmore, … where we all go ‘Oh, this is going to be so hard and the acoustic is so bad’ - the audience reactions out of that have been absolutely fantastic. Probably the best (well, not necessarily the best) but one of the three best ones we’ve done. So, from
their perspective it’s worth doing. Well then, I, as part of the planning team, think it is worth doing. Even though it is a difficult instrument for Brieley to play on, and we struggle to do this, but it’s worth it for their perspective. So I think as an ensemble it survives. And to me that’s the only thing that matters, really. Because we can make it work - I can deal with an acoustic. Well, I mean ideally, not always, but in most of the cases you can deal with it. So I think the integrity is still there. That’s for me the most important thing. To still make it happen. I much rather do that performance than say ‘Oh no, sorry, we only play in a very good acoustic’. Because it will be a backwards spiral, it will then start to die out.

Paul: Challenges as I see right now, are the continued access to new repertoire. Because of our unusual instrumentation we have to always be on the lookout for good music that we can use in our concerts. I come into that equation as well a little bit as an arranger, but it would be nice to have every concert an original, at least one or two or three original pieces, which don’t have to be arranged. And that’s a challenge, which we forever try to overcome. Another challenge is I suppose, finding also outlets other than our community playing, where we become a concert ‘traditional’ ensemble, and we do festivals, we do stand on a real stage, with a ‘real’ audience, with a barrier between us and them, ... occasionally that would be nice as well. We’ve started doing that, but for me, as one of the founders of this ensemble, that would be something I think we’d enjoy, as another side of Artico.

Rianne: Ideally, I think our system of how we set up our concerts only works in venues where there is an audience base. So I would find it very difficult to organize a concert in a random venue, in the middle of nowhere, where I don’t necessarily know whether there is an audience for it. So our set-up currently limits it a little bit to having venues where there is an audience base, such as a museum, or a gallery. Or the churches, like what we’ve done.

I wonder whether schools might work, school venues - I mean, some of the schools, especially here in and around Brisbane, have fantastic auditoriums. Where there is an instrument, there is an acoustic,
and there are resources there. But then you’d have to work very hard at your publicity, so I’m not quite sure whether I have the know-how to actually do that and to draw the audience in. So far I’ve been hesitant to do that. But it’s certainly an option worth exploring.

Shelli: I would love to see Artico get more involved in festivals, and probably to do a bit more recording, maybe do one or two tours a year, but yeah, I think we’re best at what we’re doing now. ‘Cause although I’d like it to do all those things, I am constantly fighting against not wanting to add more concerts into the schedule, because … I don’t make a lot of money out of it, and it actually takes me away from my family on the weekends, so from a family point of view and a lifestyle point of view it actually goes against probably what I should be doing, but I really see it as a kind of thing that will help the culture of music in Australia, and just getting the idea of chamber music out into the suburbs I think is beneficial.

Rianne: Also, all the other administrative things that you actually have to do to make the ensemble work and keep rolling over and keep running, is also one of the challenges. To do that with a happy face, and be ‘Yeah!’ , be energetic about it after many, many years is very difficult. Cause you get a lot of obstacles, and it’s ‘uh, we’re not actually feeling like it anymore’, that can be a struggle. […] I find I live for the happy moments, where you have a really good concert, and you know this is so worth doing.

Examining the narrative above, it is evident that the four artists in their individual interviews all pointed at different strengths and challenges, deeming those issues to be the ones that were in their opinion most worth mentioning. This highlights the four different artist experiences of these concerts - not all artists felt the same way. This may point towards each individual performer’s primary focus with and in the concerts, their individual position or instrument in the group, their personal, independent ideas about what the concerts should be like (i.e. the concept of the ensemble and its direction), and each individual artist’s stage and position in life and musical career. Placed together, however, all these different viewpoints provide a multi-layered image of this (or perhaps any) chamber music ensemble’s strengths and challenges.
It may be necessary to clarify the statement ‘deeming those issues to be the ones that were in their opinion most worth mentioning’ mentioned above: After posing the initial question enquiring about the perceived strengths or challenges of this type of chamber music performance, interviewer Derryn did not guide the artists’ thoughts any further, nor did he extend the discussion by mentioning what some of the other ensemble members had offered. As instructed by this researcher, he was extremely cautious not to put words into the artists’ mouths and cloud their responses. This can however also be seen as an oversight, causing a weakness in the data: had the artists been probed further, the interviews might have generated more areas of strength and challenge with which all the artists were in agreement.

As Artico Ensemble performs in venues that are not custom designed for music concerts, the venue’s facilities and acoustics are two recurring challenges all four ensemble members agree on. The venue does not always have a suitable, good quality piano available either. As Artico’s pianist, this naturally has the most immediate impact on Brieley’s performance experience that day, but it does affect the other ensemble members strongly as well. After having spent time with the ensemble for several months, filmmaker Derryn Watts noticed that the issue of the availability and quality of the pianos in the performance venues was an important recurring thread throughout the study. He therefore created an additional, targeted interview question exploring this specific challenge further.

**Brieley:** Well, look for everyone it’s tricky, obviously for Shelli with the voice it’s tricky, because if she’s in an awkward, carpeted weird venue, like Kenmore with that thing that goes up, and all the sound just disappears, then you know, she has to struggle with that. But yeah, I possibly have to struggle more than anybody else, because I am confronted with a different instrument every time being the piano player. And people aren’t aware of what a quality instrument *is*. I can say that actually about every single person we’ve had to deal with - they have absolutely no idea. So you’re lucky if you get an upright piano, I consider myself extremely lucky - I consider myself extremely lucky if the piano is within 30 years old, and not 120 years old. And Clavinova’s are out. But I’ve had to play on some of those. It vastly affects the music that we play, you know - I can’t be expressive, I can’t change colour, I can’t bring out the bass, I can’t support the group, I can’t be flexible - it affects it in a dramatic way.
Oh, I’m becoming more and more rude. Concert promoters at the churches, when they start saying how lovely their keyboards are, I used to be rather lovely and say ‘Oh well, you know, it’s not so bad, yeah, could be improved’, […] but now I look at them straight in the face and go ‘No, it is awful. You really can’t have this. It’s terrible’. […] But yeah, I believe Rianne is talking to some people, people who supply pianos, whether they can be rented. I guess it’s an idea that perhaps there can be an Artico piano in fact, that can be shipped. To these concert venues. Seeing as that they obviously have absolutely no will to provide their church-going congregation with a decent instrument, most of the time.

Rianne: What we’re looking into at the moment (well, we’re hoping to achieve somehow, with support obviously, cause that is where financial support like a grant would come in, or help by just an individual sponsor) is that there is an upright piano for us to use. That would be the perfect solution. I know also of an ensemble in England, many, many years ago, that had that kind of a set-up. They travelled with their own upright piano.

Brieley: Susan Tomes back in her twenties she went around Europe really … she had a venue she took with her and they had the upright piano in a horse float I think it was, or basically. So it has been done before.

Rianne: In a way that would be really good to be able to do that. It has its own problems then of course because you become expensive because you have all these travel costs that you have to somehow, you know, recover.

Paul: Well, the easy way out is to purchase a very good keyboard, a mobile keyboard, which is never as good as a decent piano, but at least you can control the quality of the outcome. That’s one thing I’d like to do: I’d like to have a really decent keyboard - may cost up to $2000, but at least it’s something that we can be proud of in case of an emergency. When there is no keyboard in a venue, where the piano that is in the venue is unplayable. What we’re trying to do now is to make links with Arts Queensland and some piano providers. By showing them what we
do, and taking them on a journey with us, and perhaps somehow teaming up, and having access to good pianos, delivered to the venues by those people. So everyone is a winner again: the certain piano provider gets exposure, and perhaps has access to community service, where people use them as their piano tuner or piano repairer; we have a good piano every single time we play; maybe there is some funding involved - although I did say earlier that we are self-sufficient, self-funded, but that would be the exception: to provide our pianist who tirelessly struggles on variable instruments, to provide her with something that she is really proud of. And that takes team effort. We can’t do it ourselves, we can’t actually have a truck and take it with us every time, we have to have a partner. Someone like a music shop, a piano shop, or perhaps a private person, a private sponsor, who are happy to deliver that piano on our behalf. And have it tuned, of course. So we’re working on that. That’s something that I’m hoping will happen within twelve months.

Brieley: But look, it all comes down to money, doesn’t it? Pianos cost money. They’re big instruments, and quite frankly we’d need funding and sponsorship. And I don't see why it shouldn’t come from our local council. Because yeah, this should be something they care about.

As identified above by Rianne, one other challenge for this (or any) chamber music ensemble, is “that it is perhaps not quite clear where everybody wants to take the group, so you have four different people that have four different aspirations” (Rianne, interview). To explore this particular issue further, the one-on-one research interviews contained a question enquiring about each artists’ vision for the future of the group.

Shelli: Well I think Artico at the moment is best doing what it is doing. Small concerts, in small venues, quite casual, and really just getting music out into the community.

Brieley: I see it keeping on keeping on, I don’t see why it should stop. If anything you’d go to more places, I mean, it depends what Rianne and Paul want to do cause they're the marketing side of things, luckily I don’t have to do all that. I have suggested in the past if they wanted to spend a bit more time and take some festivals and things, but I think I get the feeling they really want to, I suppose, leave it in the place it is -
well, not ‘leave’ it … in a nice way - so, smaller venues, for suburban crowds, and I think that’s a terrific place to have music, and I think, yeah, Artico is very, very valuable in Brisbane and Queensland, ‘cause to be quite frank, there is nothing, no-one else doing anything slightly what this is. And especially not the standard that this is. You know, we’re not a local community band getting together and rocking it on with little bow-ties and, you know, putting gold coins in a bucket … You know what I mean, which is great, which has its place, but we’re not doing that, we’re trying to do the best we can, take what quality we can, to these places, and they hear some fantastic music and enjoy this. And no-one else is doing that. So yeah, I don't see why it should stop, I think it should go to more places, more venues.

**Rianne:** I think the concert circuit we have now can be extended - knowing what we know now, and that we’ve only tapped into a small amount of venues that could theoretically be concert venues, if we have the energy it can be a much larger network. I am also thinking it should perhaps not only include us. If you’ve got a venue where we play, say, in May, why not have another ensemble play there in September. So this concert scene, this concert circuit scene for chamber music with all those venues that we now know of, can grow. And in a way then you build a real understanding and a real love for music. I also hope that with the new website that we have established, and therefore with a bit of a business card, a flyer for what we do as an ensemble, that it will be easier for us to get access to festivals. Festivals of music or chamber music, or clarinet festivals or voice-specific festivals, … to show some of the repertoire that we’ve got. Some of the repertoire has been either composed by Paul, so it’s completely fresh, completely new, some are arrangements that have added to the established repertoire that is there for voice, clarinet and piano, and I think it would be worth for other ensembles to know about that. So I think that might be an avenue that I’d like to go to. […] I’d like to record more CD’s, […] (and) I would like to still tour as well. My experiences with the previous touring that we did, so interstate touring, has been really good, and I do find that, as a group, you become really tight, and really good as well, during a tour
like that, because it’s your only focus. So I would like to set that up as well.

The point of the future of the group was again raised in the group interview session held later in the day, to induce an open exchange of ideas and constructive discussion. The ensuing discussion not only generated valuable data about the artists’ personal vision for the future, but also provided this research with a perfect portrayal of the atmosphere and vibe within this group, with all its corresponding strengths and challenges. It is for this reason that the group interview conversation regarding this particular topic is included below, in its entirety and verbatim, as a conclusion to this section.

Paul: Well, from my point of view, I’d like to keep doing what we’re doing, and expand. I’d love to be able to nearly make a living by doing this, so if we average 45 concerts a year, that’s pretty good going.

Brieley: Wow, significant - 45 concerts a year!

Paul: And we’re halfway there, nearly.

Brieley: Wow, … when were you going to tell me that?

Rianne: And why not?

Brieley: No, no, it’s cool - I’m with you! I like a dream!

Paul: Look, now I am more free, you just never know.

Brieley: I’m a bit scared now.

Paul: Another idea that I have, with the help of our new website, is that we perhaps can start doing some festivals, and spread our wings and do something off-shore. We’ve done tours before, interstate tours, but why not do an international tour, why not? If we do what we do here, and it works well, it works anywhere.

Brieley: Maybe we should go rural.

Rianne: Yes!

Brieley: I think that’s where we will be loved.

Shelli: Yes, actually, along the social philanthropic side of things, that’s an area that I would be happy to do.

Brieley: We should get a van and go rural.
Paul: … and shoot a documentary while we’re doing it.

Brieley: Yeah, sure. We might need a bigger van!

Rianne: I wonder whether we're all seeing the future slightly different! (Laughs all around) … on the strengths-and-challenges kind of topic! But that’s of course a very big point, that we may not all think along the same lines. I would personally think that with the combination of instruments and voices we have, that say a clarinet festival is very logical to try and target. It might be a good point to start - you go there, and then around there you do local concerts in the area where you are.

Brieley: It just seems there’s such a … especially since we did that recent Collusion thing out to regional Queensland, I think they’re crying out for things like this. Stuff that comes to them, you know? And some of them have actually fairly ok resources. What was it, Capella? They have a hall with a big piano in it.

Rianne: Yeah!

Brieley: A seven-foot. I’m not saying we should do it in the hall, but …

Shelli: It might be a financial thing, though, I suppose, because the distances … I mean, what we currently get from concerts is not feasible to …

Brieley: Perhaps we can get our local council on side?

Shelli: Well, yeah. That would be …

Brieley: There is always Arts Queensland.

Shelli: I suppose that would be the next step for that. Cause I also think that would be fantastic.

Brieley: Rewarding, in many ways.

Paul: But speaking of maybe not being rewarded enough for our concerts - with the CD coming out, that would change. In a way you are earning your fee as an artist, properly. If you bring a CD to the concert and you manage to sell ten, fifteen copies per concert, that’s a pretty good reward, plus you fee.
**Brieley:** I’m gonna believe you on this one. Because I have never sold CD’s.

**Paul:** Well, we have sold out, before.

**Brieley:** That is terrific.

**Rianne:** And I also think that there is more room there, to record. Because some of the repertoire we do (although there are restrictions in terms of copyright, perhaps) but some of the repertoire we do is an addition to the repertoire that is available. So I think that would be great, to put that on a CD, like we have done. Although it’s a challenging kind of situation to be in, recording, …

**Brieley:** But we’ll be better at it.

**Shelli:** Exactly

**Rianne:** Well, that’s another thing as well. As long as we all kind of agree that we do want to go forward, we do want to have a future as an ensemble, ‘cause ultimately every time you have to decide, like ‘yeah, are we going there still? Are we all on the same line, are we going ahead with this?’

**Brieley:** Well, as you know, initially I didn’t quite get what it was. But when you actually understand what it is, where its place is, in the community … it makes sense.

**Rianne:** And I was a bit concerned, when you mentioned, when you talked to us and wrote a little note about ‘I’m not sure whether I’m happy…’

**Brieley:** Again, it’s challenging in my mind, to work in all these levels, but especially talking to Shelli … you put it very clearly for me.

**Shelli:** Did I?

**Brieley:** You did.

**Shelli:** Can’t remember what I said, but it must have been good.

**Brieley:** It was good. (Laughs all around)

**Brieley:** It was effective.
**Rianne:** So yes, there is lots for us to do still! There is a real kind of a … as long as we keep that kind of vibe, and work together really well, and get better also as a group, because I think, professionally it just has to be top quality, and I want to stay right on that line to make sure it’s really good. Because then people will want to have you in, and want to enjoy the concert. And there will be, like there have been, hundred or two-hundred people in the audience, because they *know* it’s going to be good.

**Shelli:** Yeah, that’s right. And that’s also a mental shift. Sometimes, I know I’ve been guilty of this in the past, you go ‘Oh, it’s just a local church’ …

**Rianne:** Oh, so not!

**Shelli:** … ‘I’m a bit below par today, but it doesn’t matter because no-one is going to really notice, or care, so…’ It’s that sort of…, that’s very tempting to fall into that mentality occasionally, so it’s just always forcing yourself to be, just to treat it as if it’s the top professional gig, and that you still need to be at your best.

**Brieley:** Do the best you can anyway

**Shelli:** And that’s what I find very challenging about doing concerts so regularly, and maybe just the one concert in the weekend or something, I’m always feeling like I’m having to stay on gear, and obviously as a singer.

**Brieley:** It’s very tiring.

**Shelli:** If I’m tired, like I can’t allow myself to get tired, or I can’t get sick, or there’s just that … where-as in other situations, like you’re working towards a performance, like you got the rehearsal process, you can just pace yourself a little bit better. It’s a personal challenge of mine, you just have to always be rolling along at that top level.

**Paul:** And how often have we come across in the audience people who were fantastic artists in their working life …

**Shelli, Brieley, Rianne:** Exactly!
Paul: And they're listening to you. You just don't know who you're playing to!

Brieley: You have to retire somewhere…

Paul: Budding students, professional musicians, whom we’ve never heard of, but they’re there.

Brieley: You never know.

Rianne: But with the kind of instrumentation that we have (since we’re also wind players, you’re a vocalist) we always have to be at the top physical kind of level to make that work. At least I can recognise that, and we can do that kind of together. Say, if we have every Saturday and Sunday, we have the weekend, we’re in the same boat. We just have to be really ready for it, and play.

Shelli: And I think it’s really nice that, uhm …

Brieley: Physical not so much, it’s more mental for me. Pneumonia - still out there.

Shelli: Like that concert in Bribie, where you (R) had a really bad cold, like it’s - you’re just aware of that, and you just have your ears extra open to cope with whatever might happen. Nothing ever happens with you, cause you’re the ultimate professional, but you know. It’s nice that we’re aware of each-other’s struggles. Like there’s one day that someone is particularly tired, or not feeling well, then we all realise and just accommodate …

Brieley: But you guys don't complain. You guys make it bearable. Because for some people, everything is a complaint, everything is difficult, …

Paul: Can you name names?

Brieley: No. (laughs all around).

Shelli: Uhm, like most singers I know?

Brieley: You guys, you know … are like ‘yeah yeah, I’m tired but I’ll give it a good go’. And it doesn’t bring everyone down.

Shelli: And that’s what I mean, that you just have to have …
**Brieley:** It's a positive thing. Makes it doable.

**Paul:** What brings *me* down is when you discover a bad piano, and switch off.

**Brieley:** Yeah, I know.

**Paul:** That brings me down really badly.

**Brieley:** I know! But there’s nothing I can *do* with those things! All these things I can do, and I can do … nothing! With that thing. Some of them are just so *bad*. Like $600 keyboards! How can you play a two-hour programme on a $600 keyboard? With professionals? It’s not like I’m accompanying some fourth-grade flautist, you know … I’ve got to try and play Mozart and Bach, and this ridiculous thing …

**Rianne:** But for the audience, *that’s* the piano they’re hearing. And that’s, it may be *that* concert…

**Brieley:** A piece of me dies every time

**Paul:** And which piece would that be?

**Rianne:** But for the audience, that’s the concert they hear. They even then can comment on, you know, ‘I would have loved to hear a piano solo’.

**Shelli:** That’s right.

**Rianne:** And they can *still* recognize whether somebody plays well or not. So it’s still worth *doing*. And really making that concert, giving it your best.

**Brieley:** But I do try - believe it or not.

**Rianne:** Yeah, well…

**Brieley:** That’s me putting on a brave face. (Laughs all around)

**Shelli:** So yes, that’s definitely a difficulty that we face.

**Rianne:** Absolutely.

**Brieley:** I’m not very good at hiding thoughts.

**Rianne:** But it is also one of the things, just now also talking about it, it’s typically what chamber music is about. I find that, like I’ve been in
other groups and currently still part of other ensembles as well, and in all those situations it’s about what you as a group make of it.

Shelli: yes!

Rianne: And that’s also the interesting thing! That the music is out there, it’s not just the dots on the page, it’s actually what you all create with that. And that’s what the people like, or that’s what they really come for.

Shelli: Yep. There’s never - there’s no such thing as an ideal situation for all of us, all four of us at once, so yes, you’re exactly right. Just, you know, doing The Best.

Brieley: You may confuse that look on my face of ‘giving up’, as concentrating really hard. I do actually try really hard on those keyboards, it just sounds like shit, and it’s not actually me, it’s just the keyboard. And that’s my concentrating ‘gee, that sounds like shit’ look. Which you may be mistaking for ‘oh, she’s given up’.

Rianne: It does affect us, yeah. It does affect us in the sound check a lot, and it does then affect us in the concert as well. But then the more we are together as a group, perhaps that’s also then something we then recognize and get used to …

Brieley: I’ll strive to be a better human being

Shelli: No, it’s not that…

Brieley: I’ll be more resilient.

Shelli: That will never happen. (Laughs all around).

Brieley: Fair enough. (Laughs)

Paul: Now this is therapy now!

4.5 Why are you a member of Artico Ensemble?

The preceding section relaying the strengths and challenges associated with performing chamber music in small community venues provides a colourful and multi-layered image of this type of music making from Artico Ensemble’s point of view. It also shows glimpses of each group member’s personal view on the various ensemble and performance matters, but in order to unearth each artist’s own, intrinsic motivation
for being part of Artico Ensemble, the interview sessions included one final targeted and probing question …

**Paul:** Why am I a member of Artico? Because I believe in this ensemble. This ensemble does a lot of good. It is not only a musical group, it is not only an outlet for four musicians to strut their stuff. It is more than that, it is a community institution. I think it has become such, in both Melbourne and Brisbane, with people appreciating having an ensemble like this in their midst. Again, it’s a community service, it’s more than just an ensemble. And that’s why I like playing with this ensemble. It’s not because it’s the greatest artistic experience ever, what makes it so, is the combined result.

**Shelli:** Basically, because it is so satisfying to do music in this context. You have such power as an individual to shape the music the way you want, and it is so rewarding to make this kind of music with other people who are like-minded about what music means to them, and how they want to portray that in their lives.

**Rianne:** Personally, I like playing, I like performing, I like meeting people, I like meeting people that are really excited about music, ‘cause it gives you a feeling that all those years of study that I’ve done are so worth it. And you do lose that sometimes as a musician, being a freelancer, that you think ‘Is it really worth it?’ You read books and articles about classical music, and the future of classical music is dying, … And I have found with this group, that that is not the case. So, there is a love for music out there, it is just trying to establish that kind of link between the musicians themselves and that audience that likes that music and wants to hear it. You have to establish that, and I think that that’s why I keep doing this, and that’s why I am a member of the group.

**Brieley:** Well, a lot of reasons that are equal to each other: I like working with the people. I think that’s really important in chamber music. Especially if you’re doing regular concerts and stuff such as this that requires everyone to have a certain amount of input. It is really important to be able to get on professionally. And I guess socially as well makes it that much easier. And yeah, getting the satisfaction about taking the music to a wider audience. You know, feels like you are
reminding them that this music exists, and it’s amazing, and you know, brings back a lot of memories for people as well as introducing them to new things. I really enjoy that. The fact that when we do small venues there is a regularity of gigs: as opposed to just doing one at the recital hall at the Conservatorium, we can do 17 in small venues. That is far, far better.

Yeah, it is hard to make a go of things in Brisbane, as a piano player, as a performing piano player, I mean, what job would you get? Oh, let’s join the local orchestra?! Can’t do that. So, what do you do? Chamber music is a fantastic avenue to take, small ensemble playing. Cause it’s professionally and intellectually stimulating to work with other people… good repertoire. So, yes, this also gives me a certain cash-flow on the weekends - I don’t earn very much money. I mean, these concerts don’t give you \textit{that} much money, but it’s better than nothing. And it’s more satisfying than the equivalent of what I would have to do, which would be accompaniment work.

And it is also I guess, even though I complain bitterly about all the travel, the road trips are kind of fun, they get me out of my, you know, circle of life that I just live in, so that gets me out and I never regret it when I come home. ‘Oh, I’ve been somewhere different’, that’s good, that’s refreshing.

\textbf{Rianne}: Because I think it’s really relevant. I find it very valuable. Value is a difficult kind of word, because, you know, are you talking about money? No, not really. It is about \textit{value}. I feel that we are contributing to the music scene in and around Brisbane. Not only because there is no other ensemble such as us, but it is also sitting in a level where there is not that much happening. So, yes, you have in QPAC and the Griffith Con Theatre here, you have concerts, people come to those, and I feel that we are adding to that, in a different way. We are providing something that was not there before, and that’s one of the reasons why I think this is really worth doing. […] And just the fact of playing beautiful music with nice colleagues, … and on a Sunday afternoon at the end of a concert I think ‘yeah, that was just really worth it!’
4.6 Conclusion

In this first Research Report chapter, the case study ensemble and its members were introduced, and each artist’s musical background and professional career to date was briefly highlighted. To make the first step towards answering this study’s main research question, the chapter delved into the artists’ experience of creating and performing professional chamber music concerts in small community venues.

This experience proved to be substantially different for each artist, and branched out into thoughts about the following topics:

- Personnel of the ensemble, and associated social dynamics;
- Adapting to venue logistics, and how that affects each artist differently;
- Interaction with audience;
- Accessibility in repertoire selection and style of presentation, and communication;
- Intimacy, and closeness and connection in artist-audience relationship;
- Subtle differences in performance venues, and whether and how that affects the performance itself, with a main emphasis on venue acoustics but also on programme choices;
- Ensemble members’ roles;
- Marketing, and ensemble branding and identity.

In the next section of the chapter, a more detailed discussion about the perceived strengths and challenges of performing chamber music concerts in small community venues ensued. The strengths can be summarised as follows:

- Ensemble personnel, performance standard and musicianship, professionalism, versatility, experience and team-mentality;
- Programming and presentation, ensemble instrumentation and audience engagement;
- The broader topics of Interaction and Connection, amongst the artists and between artists and audience, and the special value of the smaller venue in experiencing and negotiating this;
- The intimacy of the performance experience;
- The artists’ desire to bring chamber music to an audience, providing accessibility and a win-win situation for the ensemble, the venue and its audiences;
• The shared feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction with the performances and the musical journey, hinting at elements of value and the worthiness of the cause.

The perceived challenges can be summarised as follows:
• Fighting the chamber music myth of tediousness and/or elitism;
• Finding performance outlets and avenues, and ongoing marketing to attract and maintain audiences;
• Performance costs and the need to balance that with accessibility;
• Identifying a satisfying shared vision for the ensemble;
• Negotiation and compromise, and creating a democratic team environment;
• Specific logistical challenges of the small community venues;
• Physical demands of the performances and a performer’s life.

This conclusion marks the end of the artists’ story. The second study partner, Artico Ensemble’s audience members, will be introduced in the next research report chapter. The chapter will deliver a demographic profile of the audience and assess their music listening and concert attendance habits and bring their experience of attending the case study event to the fore. The audience’s views on the strengths and challenges of chamber music performances in small community venues will also be presented, with the view to answer this research’s second main line of enquiry.
Chapter 5. The Audience – Research report

5.1 Introduction

This next Research Report chapter contains the Audience survey. It consists of four sub-sections: a demographic overview of the audience members (Who is the audience? - a demographic account) followed by a discussion of their general listening and concert attending habits (Who is the audience? - habits of listening and attending), and an exploration of their experience of attending that particular Artico Ensemble case study concert (What was the audience experience of attending this concert?). The final section highlights perceived strengths and challenges of these types of concerts (What are some of the strengths & challenges of attending professional chamber music performances in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds?).

This chapter’s findings add to available Government-initiated research in the area of audience participation in the arts. Currently, the majority of these studies gather all of the music styles under the one category of “Music”. Whilst comprehensive and enlightening, it gives very little insight into the mechanics at play in chamber music. The Australia Council’s large national study Selling the Performing Arts (Osborne, Wheeler, & Elliott, 1999) for example, was conducted to provide “a comprehensive demographic and attitudinal profile of attenders and potential attenders of the performing arts” (1999, p. ix). It included all the professional performing arts, classified into five main art-form groupings, with the category “Music” comprising classical or choral music concerts, multicultural or Aboriginal music, contemporary or experimental music, and jazz or blues. This extensive study consisted of a quantitative population survey, and also (importantly) added qualitative methods aimed at gaining an understanding of motivation and barriers to attendance at live performing arts as well as components exploring the more emotive aspects of attitudes to the arts.

In a similar fashion, this thesis section creates an audience profile, but will focus on the specific chamber music audience present at Artico Ensemble’s concerts in small community venues in and around Brisbane. By specifically highlighting chamber music audiences and their experience, this section adds to what is currently a small body of research, sitting alongside work by authors such as Australian Pauline Griffiths, whose thesis discusses the social contexts of concert audience-ship among selected Melbourne chamber music audiences (Griffiths, 2003), and Stephanie Pitts, who investigated the audience role and experience at the Music in the Round chamber music festival in Sheffield, England (Pitts, 2005). By using categories found in Berkel-van Schaik
(2006), a social studies PhD thesis discussing the audience experience at classical music concerts in the Netherlands and supported by findings from *Participation in Arts and Culture - the importance of community venues* (Walker, 2003), discussion of this study’s results chart the audience’s main reasons for attending the concert.

Further on in this section, this research also reflects on what the audience members perceived as the strengths and challenges of these types of concerts. By measuring their findings against existing arts attendance research, the conclusion of this chapter explores how Artico Ensemble’s operational model for chamber music in the community may address some identified barriers for arts attendance present amongst the general population.

The audience survey was undertaken during seven concerts of the ensemble’s local concert series, which took place in five church venues of various sizes and denominations, one museum and one private home. A hard-copy questionnaire was distributed amongst the concert audience, and its function briefly explained at the start of the performance. It was made clear that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that if time did not allow for the completion of the questionnaire on the day, it could be sent to the printed return address by mail. By leaving contact details at the completion of the questionnaire, participants could volunteer for follow-up interviews. The questionnaire and follow-up interview questions were carefully constructed to learn more about the demographical profile of the specific audience present at chamber music concerts in small community venues, their connection to the venue, their general listening and concert attendance habits, and their experience of partaking in that case study concert in particular. A total of 284 audience members took part in the survey’s questionnaire, and 12 of those people were contacted for follow-up interviews. Throughout the section, participants’ written questionnaire responses will illustrate the topics where appropriate, and those responses are cited using the venue’s suburb initials plus participant ID (e.g. WH 212, for Wavell Heights questionnaire participant 212). Since the questionnaire was anonymous, no names have been added to these IDs. Those people who participated in private follow-up interviews, however, are referred to and cited by first name and venue’s suburb initials.

What follows is a presentation of the survey findings only, with certain aspects highlighted for discussion and reflection. A more theoretical lens will be applied to the data later in this thesis. As is common in most methodologies based on grounded theory, at this early stage in the dissertation it is the aim to let the questions and answers guide the research, but not confine it.
5.2 Who is the audience? – A demographic account

This first component of the Audience section presents questionnaire data relating to study participants’ age, gender, occupation and travel time to the performance venue, with the aim to create a demographic profile of the concert attendees and highlight their connection to the venue.

Age

The majority of the 284 survey respondents were between 50 and 80 years of age. The exact percentage breakdown per age group, and per venue, is shown in Table 1 below (NB: all percentages have been rounded off to one decimal point). There were some high-school age students in the audience in Kenmore and in Wynnum; Wynnum in fact had the youngest audience overall, with 10.8% of audience members below the age of 30. The 60-79 age group is the most represented throughout, and the Redland Museum audience was the most senior. The 30-39 age group is least represented, which corresponds with findings in most audience research. Amongst other reasons, people in this age group are known to be busy with work and family life, generally allowing less time for a range of leisure pursuits.

Table 1: Age of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>10-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
<th>Total n respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Study</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanora</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynnum</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Museum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavell Heights</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilston</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex

Seventy-six percent of the questionnaire respondents were female and 24% male, with 211 female participants out of the total 284 respondents. Twenty-four percent of these female respondents wrote that they attended the concert with their
spouse, so although only a quarter of the respondents was male, this does not quite reflect the make up of the audience present at the concert.

**Occupation**

In answer to the question ‘What is, or was your occupation?’, respondents entered a varied list of occupations. Several types of occupations featured significantly more\(^5\) than others: Retired (17.7%); Teacher / Educator (17.3%); Healthcare professional (12.3%); Administration officer / administration manager (10.8%). On first impression, these occupations corresponded with employment areas which, nationally, have a high percentage of female employees, and this result is to be expected considering that 75.6% of the questionnaire respondents was female.

**Connection to the venue**

To establish whether there was an existing link between the venue, the audience and the artists, questionnaire participants were asked to describe their connection to the venue, with 44.3% of 235\(^6\) respondents replying that they were a member of this church or museum, so a member of the venue’s church or museum community. As shown in Figure 3 below, 31.5% were friends or relatives of a community member, and 5.5% were members of an affiliated church/museum community. For 4.3%, the main connection was through the venues’ concerts rather than being part of the daily community of the venue, and for 7.2% the connection was established through the artists themselves. The remaining 7.2% had no connection to the venue at all but heard about the concert through general advertising.

In order to be able to compare the church and museum venues and their audiences to the private house concert venue and its attendants, being part of the house concert hosts’ immediate circle of relatives was categorized as being the same type of connection as being a member of a church/museum venue’s community.

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\(^5\) Significantly more = more than 5% above average. Here average was 5.5%  
\(^6\) Due to the fact that some questions were added to the questionnaire after the first case study concert in Elanora had taken place, some questions have a reduced number of respondents.
For this particular question it is valuable to compare the individual venues, charted in Figure 3a-f on this and next pages. On this topic, no venue-specific data is available for Elanora, as this question was added to the audience questionnaire after the case study concert in that venue.

The data for Ipswich and the Redland Museum showed similarities: the majority of their audience comprised members of their community, and approximately one quarter consisted of family and friends of community members.

Aside from those visitors there were some members of an affiliated (church) community at the Ipswich concert, and the Redland Museum concert had a similar percentage whom had no connection to the venue at all. But aside from these three components, Ipswich and the Redland Museum had no other visitors.
In Wilston the vast majority of audience members were family or friends of church community members. Just under one quarter of the attendees were members of the church themselves, many of whom must have encouraged family and friends to come to the concert - 66% of the audience was connected to the venue through family and friends.
The Kenmore data demonstrate the appeal of their annual three-concert series: nearly 10% of their audience mentioned the concert series as their main connection to the venue. The majority of their audience was a member of the venue’s community, however, or a relative or friend of a community member.

For a first-time venue, Wavell Heights was quite successful in attracting more than 50% of their audience through friends and family of community members, rather than solely relying on their own members. The church also made connections with affiliated communities, thus bringing in another 12% of their concert attendees.
Figure 3f: Connection of audience to venue – Wynnum

The hosts of the private venue in Wynnum organise an annual concert series in their home, and 13% of their audience mentioned this series as their venue connection, reporting they were regular attendees.

Of all the venues, the concert in Wynnum attracted the most people who had no connection to the venue at all, with 15% falling into that category. When comparing these respondents’ answers for venue connection with those for a different question relating to concert notification, however, it showed that 71% lived in the same street or in the neighbourhood and had been made aware of the concert via a flyer distributed through a letter box drop. These respondents form part of the venue’s wider community: their neighbourhood community, to which they seemed to feel enough belonging to want to attend this private concert held by one of their members. The Wynnum concert differed from the others in one more aspect: the musicians did a lot of advertising themselves by sending out invitations to their immediate circle of acquaintances. This is evident in the specific data for this venue, with 32% of the audience connected to the venue through the artists. For the other concerts the ensemble outsourced their marketing to the host venues. This generally meant that these concerts attracted audiences from their hosts’ network and/or community, not only their own. This system has always been part of Artico’s organizational model, as the ensemble recognized the need to attract ‘the audience you don’t know yet’ as well as the one you know.

Traditionally, chamber music ensembles attract audiences by inviting their family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and advertise their concerts in relevant and available (social) media. All these invitees have a direct line to the artists: either by being related or having read or seen an advertisement created by the artists. By linking up with an independent and unrelated host and outsourcing the event marketing
(mainly) to them, thus connecting one existing network to another unrelated network, an additional second layer of potential audience can be reached that has no direct line to the artists. In time this new network can become part of the ensemble’s own audience network, ‘the audience you didn’t know’ beforehand.

**Concert notification and marketing**

How did the audience find out about the concert? A chart for each individual venue is shown in Figure 4a-c on this and following pages. Elanora and Wavell Heights were similar in their approach, with audiences responding equally to announcements in the venue and printed notices, and strongly to invitations from family and friends. Elanora also advertised in their local media.

![Figure 4a: Concert notification - Elanora](chart)

![Figure 4b: Concert notification - Wavell Heights](chart)

Kenmore closely matched the pattern above, although their advertising through church notices seems to have been slightly more successful than for the others, with 32.6% of Kenmore audiences responding to printed venue notices in contrast to 28% in Elanora and 27.5% in Wavell Heights. Ipswich had a very direct approach with announcements about the upcoming concert in the church itself.
The results for Wynnum, the Redland Museum and Wilston are most contrasting: Wynnum successfully attracted its audience through personal emails, Redland Museum’s campaign with printed notices, brochures and newsletters worked very well, whereas the majority of the Wilston audiences simply heard about the concert through family and friends.
The statistics for the concert notification for the whole study are similar to the ones for Elanora: a third of the attendees came through announcements in the venue and another through being told by family and friends, with printed notices boosting the audience by a quarter. The slightly indistinctly titled ‘word-of-mouth’ category was needed throughout the study, as many respondents only mentioned ‘word-of-mouth’ rather than specify through whom.
With the exception perhaps of the Redland Museum, all venues attracted a significant amount of audience through a simple personal, verbal approach. Although one should not discount the fact that in order for someone to tell their friend about the concert, they themselves must have heard about it first (or seen it advertised somewhere/read about it), the amount of money having to be spent on external advertising appears to be relatively low for the chamber music concerts highlighted in this study. Artico Ensemble’s operational model of outsourcing their concert notification to the host venue’s organizing team (creating a direct line of information from the organizers to the potential audience), addresses the issue of marketing and advertising that many ensembles face in a very cost-effective and personal way.

**Residential suburb**

Approximately one quarter of all the concert attendees, or 73 out of the 284 respondents (25.7%) lived in the suburb where the concert was held. Almost one third (92 people/32.4%) lived in a neighbouring suburb, and 119 people (41.9%) lived further afield. When the categories were collapsed, 58.1% of respondents lived no further than one suburb away from the concert venue. The place of residence of attendees is charted for each venue individually in Table 2 overleaf.
Table 2: Residential suburb of attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study venue</th>
<th>Suburb of concert venue</th>
<th>Neighbouring suburb</th>
<th>Further afield</th>
<th>Total n respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole study</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanora</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynnum</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Museum</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavell Heights</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilston</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The venues in Kenmore and Wilston had a fairly even distribution of audience, attracting people from their own suburb, neighbouring suburbs as well as suburbs further away in similar numbers. As discussed in ‘Connection to venue’ (page 98), participants from Wilston were connected to the venue via family and friends, so the venue relied less on their own church congregation to make up the concert audience - audience members came from different suburbs to join their friends or family for this concert. Out of all venues, Wynnum drew the most people from further afield, which may seem contrary to what one would expect from a house concert in a residential suburb. However, when looking at connection to venue, their data also had a more even spread than the other venues: there were many different types of audience members - friends, locals, relatives, people with no connection at all, artists’ friends - who therefore all came from varying suburbs. Many were notified by email, thereby relying less on in-situ advertising than some of the churches.

The venue in Wavell Heights also had a wide reach, with more than half of respondents coming from further away. Since more than half of the audience consisted of friends and family of their own community members (as discussed earlier), this could account for the less-localised suburbs. The Redland Museum had only one respondent from further afield, significantly less than others when comparing the percentages for each venue. Their audience was the oldest, which could be one explanation for the fact that most did not travel far. Their advertising was also such, that they did not reach any members of affiliated communities, which otherwise could have extended their reach beyond their very local audience. Notifying other museums about the upcoming events in the Redlands could perhaps be a good marketing strategy for future concerts.
Transport to venue

Most questionnaire respondents reported that they arrived at the concert by car: of the 235\textsuperscript{7} people who answered this question, 90.6% came by car, 2.6% came by public transport and 6.8% walked.

Travel time

Travel time to the concert venue varied, but half of the respondents (50.9%) travelled between one and ten minutes only. Therefore, even living in a neighbouring suburb meant it took less than ten minutes to get to the venue. Just over 29% of attendees travelled between 11 and 20 minutes, 9.5% between 21 and 30 minutes, 7.8% between 31 and 40 minutes, and the remaining 2.5% travelled more than 40 minutes to attend this concert venue. Table 3 charts the travel time to the concert venue for each venue individually.

Table 3: Travel time to concert venue - per venue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study venue</th>
<th>1 - 10 min</th>
<th>11-20 min</th>
<th>21-30 min</th>
<th>31-40 min</th>
<th>&gt; 40 min</th>
<th>Total n respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole study</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>283*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanora</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynnum</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Museum</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavell Heights</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilston</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One respondent from Elanora did not complete this question

The Wynnum house concert again showed very contrasting data compared to the other venues. A significantly larger percentage of their audience travelled between 31 and 40 minutes, which corresponds to the fact that many of their attendees lived further afield, as shown in Table 2.

Kenmore and Ipswich had no attendees who had travelled that long, with the majority of their audiences travelling up to 20 minutes only. The venues in Elanora, Redlands and Wilston had high percentages of audience members who only travelled between one and ten minutes. For the Redland Museum this was as expected, as their

\textsuperscript{7} Due to the fact that some questions were added to the questionnaire after the first case study concert had taken place, some questions have a reduced number of respondents.
Osborne states that “the most common form of transport used to get to live performance was a car” (Osborne, D. et al., 1999, p.53). This is confirmed by this study’s findings, which saw 90.6% of the audience arrive by car. Osborne also noted that a high proportion of participants (49%) travelled 30 minutes or less to get to the performance venue (ibid). In this study that percentage sat markedly higher, at 89.8%, due to the fact that these concerts were held in suburban venues, close to where the participants live, rather than in mainstream performance venues in the Brisbane CBD.

Evidence that extended travel time and distance will not necessarily deter arts lovers from attending cultural events was also found in this Artico study: one attendee lived ten minutes from the concert venue but on the day of the concert drove 2 hours and 15 minutes all the way from Toowoomba to attend, and another lady (80+ years of age!) travelled for 40 minutes by train and bicycle to attend Artico Ensemble’s performance in the Redland Museum.

5.3 Who is the audience? – Habits of listening and attending

Drawing on data from a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions, the second part of this chapter focuses on the musical tastes and concert attendance habits of study participants.

Attendance partners

The majority (75%) of all 284 respondents attended Artico Ensemble’s concert with someone else, and 24.3% came alone. For the remaining 0.7% this was unknown.

- Of the 75% of respondents who came with someone else, 53.4% came with family, 35.6% came with friends, and 11% came with both family and friends.
- Of the 24.3% who attended alone, 87% came anticipating to meet friends and 13% simply attended alone.

Osborne et al. (1999) confirm that the vast majority of arts participants attends performances with somebody else, most commonly a partner/spouse, other relative, or friend. In that study, only 4% of respondents attended alone. In this current chamber music study, 24.3% attended on their own, which suggests that certain aspects inherent to performances in community venues may take away some of the potential barriers for concert attendance for single visitors. The familiarity of the local community venue itself and its easy accessibility may encourage single visitors to attend. Also, the fact that these concerts take place in existing church or museum communities (whose
members see each other on a regular basis unrelated to this event) means that attendees could expect to meet others they knew at the concert: many of the single attenders (87%) responded that they expected to meet friends. As Helen at the Redland Museum mentioned: “I did come on my own but I know a lot of people here, so, yeah, it’s been a lovely afternoon” (Helen, RM).

**Listening habits - recorded music**

The study also asked participants whether they listened to recorded music. The majority (93%) of all respondents answered affirmatively, which corresponds to the Australia Council’s finding that “nearly all Australians intentionally listened to recorded music” (2010b, p. 3). One percent wrote they listened “occasionally”, 4% answered that they did not listen to recorded music and 2% of participants left the question blank. Of those who listened to recorded music, 53.9% mentioned they listened every day, 27.7% several times a week, 10.7% several times a month, and 7.7% occasionally.

**Styles, artists, composers or performers**

When asked to freely name some styles of music, or artists, performers or composers they enjoyed listening to, nearly half of the respondents (47.7%) mentioned the names of various classical composers, artists or classical music styles, and many answered “ABC classic FM” or “usually classical”. A small percentage (1.6%) specifically listed only jazz composers/artists/styles, and 8.3% mentioned listening to popular music only. A large group of respondents (36.2%) entered an eclectic mix of musical styles and composer or artists names. Interestingly, 12.2% of respondents listened to classical and jazz composers/artists, but no others. This percentage was large enough to warrant creating a separate category rather than entering it under “eclectic mix”.

![Figure 5: Listening habits and musical styles - whole study](image)

Artico Ensemble’s programming of classical and light classical repertoire mixed with new compositions, music theatre and jazz selections corresponds quite well with their patrons’ general listening habits as charted in Figure 5 above. What should not be
overlooked, however, is that most questionnaire respondents answered this particular question after having just listened to a concert programme featuring these styles of music. Although a conscious attempt was made to guide respondents towards thinking about their usual home-listening habits by wording the previous question accordingly, there is potential for an element of bias associated with their immediate concert experience.

**Perceived difference(s) between listening and attending**

With the majority of study participants listening regularly to recorded music (and more than half of them even doing so every day), what do people perceive as the differences between listening to recorded music and attending a live performance?

Overall, the atmosphere of a live performance was seen as the biggest difference, with some participants just entering “atmosphere”, and others “better atmosphere”. A respondent from Wavell Heights wrote: “The atmosphere is so much better & you can watch the feelings/expressions & be part of the whole experience” (WH 166). This visual element, of being able to see musicians’ facial expressions and/or watch their fingers, was also frequently mentioned by other participants in the study. Thirdly, many wrote that live performance was more (emotionally) involving or engaging, closely followed by comments about the interaction between the artists and the audience. As one teacher from Wilston wrote: “Live performances are the best because you have the link between performer + audience - often the emotion of the music that you can miss in recordings” (Wil 260).

Figure 6 shows the most frequently made comments. Some respondents wrote they felt live music was “real”, or as one gentleman put it, “organic”: “Powerfully, beautiful clear sounding music, professionally presented by lovely talented musicians, lovely, clear music presented without the modern use of electronics - true music, not loud music (organic music, true)” (WH 212).
The survey also aimed to ascertain what kind of concerts participants attended aside from the case study concert, and the results show that the vast majority of the respondents attended performances of what is generally categorized as classical music - orchestral performances and chamber or choral music concerts. Many people mentioned having attended jazz concerts, with world music performances and pop and new music concerts appearing less frequently. The questionnaire listed eight categories, and Figure 7 below shows how often each category was selected:

Figure 7: Attendance history - musical styles - whole study

The people who ticked the box ‘other, namely …’ listed various music styles, such as musicals/music theatre, opera, rock & roll and country & western. The concert
attendance history of musical styles varied for the different case study venues, which is reflected in Figures 7a-g on this and the next page.

![Kenmore attendance history - musical styles](image)

**Figure 7a: Kenmore attendance history - musical styles**

![Ipswich attendance history - musical styles](image)

**Figure 7b: Ipswich attendance history - musical styles**

Audience members from Kenmore and Ipswich attended the same percentage of orchestral concerts, and chamber music concerts in similar numbers. The rich choral tradition of the Ipswich area is represented in this venue’s figures: choral concert attendance is markedly higher than the Kenmore figures presented above and is the highest of all the case study venues.

Kenmore shows a significantly higher attendance of jazz concerts, especially in comparison to Ipswich, and higher figures for chamber music. Kenmore audiences listed ‘school concerts’, ‘band concerts’ and ‘music theatre/vocals’ as other performances attended, and Ipswich participants attended (by percentage) more ‘other’ performances, namely musicals, opera, ‘vocal: tenors’, rock & roll, and piano recitals.
The chart for the Redland Museum figures is revealing, as it shows that this audience did not attend any pop music performances. As mentioned in section 5.2, the Redland Museum audience was the most senior in age, with no attendees below the age of 50 and a large percentage of 80+ attendees. This may well account for the lack of pop events attended. Interestingly, of all the case study venues, the Redland Museum does have the highest percentage of world music events featured in their attendance history.

Audience members from Wavell Heights had attended choral concerts in large numbers (similar to Ipswich), but not a lot of world music, nor chamber music: in fact, their chart shows the lowest figures for chamber music in this study. In the following chapter it will be shown that not only was it Artico Ensemble’s first performance in this venue, the venue had not hosted concerts of any kind before. This could, in part, explain the lack of chamber music concert experience of the Wavell Heights audience. As can be seen when comparing the data for all the case study venues, world music (as a category) is not highly represented throughout, with the exception of the Redland Museum above.
Figure 7d: Wavell Heights attendance history - musical styles

Figure 7e: Wilston attendance history - musical styles

Figure 7f: Elanora attendance history - musical styles
Audience members in Wilston had the highest percentage of pop music attendance, which is especially visible when compared to a venue such as Elanora. As was shown in section 5.2, Artico’s concert in this venue attracted a younger audience, with audience members in the age categories of 20-29, 30-39, and 40-49 represented. This could be a possible explanation of the higher-than-average pop music representation. In general, however, the data for Wilston shows a fairly even spread of musical styles throughout. There is a lean towards orchestral attendance, but that is common for most of this study’s participants. It is especially evident in the data for Elanora.

Wynnum is another venue that features a fairly even concert attendance history of musical styles. This corresponds with the broad age group representation of the Wynnum audience, which was discussed in section 5.2.

In Figure 7h below, the attendance history of musical styles of participants in the whole study is once again presented, this time charted in percentages to facilitate comparisons between the data for the individual venues and those for the whole study. As shown, the attendance history of the Elanora and Wynnum participants is most similar to that of the results of the whole study.
In summary, it can be concluded that, although there are marked differences between patrons from the various suburban venues, the case study concert patrons have an attendance preference for orchestral, chamber, choral and jazz performances, and are exploring world music, pop, new music and other uncategorized concert events in near-equal measure.

**Attendance frequency**

More than half of the audience in this research study (51.3%) attended a concert three to six times a year, which in this study has been categorized as regularly. 29.9% attended more than six times a year (frequently), and 18.7% attended concerts only once or twice a year (occasionally).

These frequency categories were created to suit this specific chamber music study and correspond to the frequency categories found in Berkel-van Schaik (2006). Both *Selling the Performing Arts* (Osborne et al., 1999) and *More than Bums on Seats* (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010b) feature much wider categories, with the latter for example describing high attendance as 16+ times. But since those studies investigated *all* performing art forms, not only music, it was felt utilizing those categories would be less relevant here.

Several of the frequent concert-goers attended *very* frequently. Nine people attended 20 concerts or more this year (which is approximately one every two weeks), some went 30 or 40 times, but most notable was the attendee from Chapel Hill who wrote she had attended 50 concerts this year! She attended orchestral concerts, chamber music, choral and new music performances, but also piano recitals and opera.
Other attended venues

In an open question, survey respondents were asked to name some other concert venues they had attended, aside from this Artico venue. In total, 78 different venues were mentioned, encompassing everything from large commercial venues such as the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), small commercial venues like the Brisbane Jazz club, to large community venues (the Tweed Civic Centre on the Gold Coast, for example) and churches and other small community venues. All venue names were collated and divided into four categories depending on seating capacity and operational structure as shown in Table 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue category</th>
<th>Building design and use</th>
<th>Operational structure</th>
<th>Performance space</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large commercial venue</td>
<td>Custom built and predominantly used for music performance</td>
<td>Commercially managed for music performance</td>
<td>Large hall or auditorium</td>
<td>QPAC, RPAC, Griffith Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small commercial venue</td>
<td>Custom built and predominantly for music performance</td>
<td>Commercially managed for music performance</td>
<td>Small hall or auditorium</td>
<td>Ian Hanger Recital Hall, Brisbane Jazz Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large community venue</td>
<td>Not custom built for music performance, but multi-purpose use</td>
<td>Not commercially managed for music performance</td>
<td>Large hall or auditorium</td>
<td>St John’s Cathedral, Cambrian Centre, Tweed Civic Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small community venue</td>
<td>Not custom built for music performance, but multi-purpose use</td>
<td>Not commercially managed for music performance</td>
<td>Small hall or auditorium</td>
<td>Redland Art Gallery, suburban churches, private homes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brisbane’s QPAC and Griffith University’s Conservatorium Theatre were the only two venues that attracted patrons from all the suburban case study venues. They attracted 106 and 25 visitors respectively. Other performance venues that had attracted visitors from at least four of the case study venues were the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Brisbane’s Old Museum, St John’s Cathedral in Brisbane, the Powerhouse, the Brisbane Jazz Club and outdoor venues. This gives a good insight into respondents’ attendance habits and would seem to indicate that these frequently mentioned venues are an integral part of Brisbane’s cultural scene.

The Kenmore Uniting Church, one of this research’s case study venues, attracted many (17) loyal visitors from their own community base, but only one visitor from another venue. The Gold Coast Art Centre attracted 18 patrons from this study’s venue in Elanora, but no other patrons from any of the other case study venues visited this Gold Coast venue. The Redland Performing Arts Centre had a strong local following as well (with 15 patrons) but did not attract audience members from other suburbs either. It
can be concluded that these venues have a strong function in the local cultural scene, but their reach does not appear to extend towards other Brisbane (or Gold Coast) suburbs.

When comparing the data for attended venues with those for participants’ attendance frequency (as discussed above), there were some differences between the habits of occasional, regular or frequent attenders in the types of venues they had visited, which is shown in Figure 8a-c below.

Occasional attenders clearly favoured the large commercial venues, which may be explained by the fact that these venues are most well-known, and highly visible in advertising. Occasional patrons did not attend small commercial venues often, but 23.8% attended performance in small community venues. A slightly smaller, but still sizeable percentage attended large community venues.

The regular concert-goers still attend performances in the large commercial venues but start to visit small community venues more often than occasional attenders, preferring those venues over large community venues.

The data for the frequent attenders starts to show a slightly more even spread throughout all venue types. These patrons visited small commercial venues and large community venues in similar numbers but visited large commercial venues less than other attenders.
Small community venues were well attended by the frequent concert-goers, and even better attended by the regular concert-goers. Overall, however, the large commercial venues were the ones visited by the highest percentages of occasional (57.1%), regular (49.7%) and frequent (45.4%) concert attenders.

For ease of comparison, Figure 9 below presents the combined concert venue preferences of all frequent, regular and occasional attenders.

Seen through this lens, it becomes once again evident that survey participants attended concerts mainly in the large commercial venues like Brisbane’s QPAC. Small community venues, however, are the second-most frequently visited type of performance venue, which highlights the importance of such venues in respondents’ arts participation habits. Frequent concert-attenders are slightly more varied in their venue choices, and occasional attenders favour large commercial venues even more than other attenders, but all concert attenders visit small community venues as their second venue choice.
5.4 What was the audience experience of attending *this* concert?

**Existing venue history**

Of all 284 questionnaire respondents, 47.2% had attended a concert in their community venue before but for 50.4% it was the first time; 2.5% of respondents left this question blank.

**Table 5: Previous venue attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Yes, have been to a concert in this venue before</th>
<th>No, have not been to a concert in this venue before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study venue</td>
<td>n respondents %</td>
<td>n respondents %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total study</td>
<td>134 47.2%</td>
<td>143 50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanora</td>
<td>23 47.9%</td>
<td>25 52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>34 82.9%</td>
<td>7 17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>16 40%</td>
<td>24 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynnum</td>
<td>17 37%</td>
<td>29 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Museum</td>
<td>17 89.5%</td>
<td>2 10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavell Heights</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>39 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilston</td>
<td>27 61.4%</td>
<td>17 38.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The administrative team in Wavell Heights had never organized a concert in their church before, which explains the 100% first-timers indicated in the table above. Elanora had a good balance of loyal and new attendees. Wilston organizes one annual concert by this ensemble in their venue but does not host other concerts, which is visible in the figures when comparing their venue attendance history above in Table 5 with the charted Artico Ensemble attendance history in Table 6 overleaf: the figures are identical. Kenmore on the other hand runs a three-concert concert series in their venue, and when comparing their data in Table 5 to those in Table 6, it is clear that the six people who had not been to an Artico concert before did attend another concert in the series in that venue.
Table 6: Previous Artico Ensemble attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Yes, have been to an Artico concert before</th>
<th>No, have not been to an Artico concert before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study venue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total study</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanora</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmore</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wynnum</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Museum</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavell Heights</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilston</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing Artico Ensemble history

Of all 284 survey respondents, 40.1% had attended a concert by Artico Ensemble before and for 58.5% it was the first time; 1.4% of respondents left this question blank.

It was the ensemble’s first performance in Elanora and Wavell Heights, and although some audience members knew the group from performances elsewhere, these two venues account for the majority of the Artico novices. The ensemble had not performed in Wynnum before either but did most of the advertising and marketing for this concert themselves, which is shown in the larger proportion of audience that knew the group but came to hear them in a new venue. The ensemble’s long-standing venues in Kenmore and Wilston have a loyal audience: more than 60% of their audience had heard the ensemble before. Nearly all of the Redland Museum participants had been to an Artico concert before - the museum’s figures listed in the table above however, could also indicate that this time around the concert organisers might have been less successful in attracting a new audience. Alternatively, perhaps their new audience members simply did not take part in the questionnaire. It was the group’s second performance in Ipswich, and the even spread of returning audience members and novices (as visible in Table 6 above) looks encouraging for both ensemble and concert organizers.
Main reason(s) for attending

As part of a set of qualitative questions spread throughout the questionnaire, audiences were asked to name their main reasons for attending that day’s concert. Respondents gave a wide range of answers, but after close examination they could be grouped under 12 different main reasons for attending, as shown in Figure 10.

![Main reasons for attending - whole study](chart.png)

**Figure 10: Main reasons for attending - whole study**

When examining the data for the whole study, the six most frequently mentioned reasons for attending were:

- Enjoy the social occasion / join family or friends (mentioned 57 times);
- Support the organization (50) / Enjoy the music (50);
- Enjoy this type of music (47);
- Chance to hear good music/good musicians (45);
- Enjoyed the concert last time / repeat visit to the group (37);
- Support the good cause (31).

The main reasons for attending varied significantly for each venue, as is visible in the individual charts as presented on this and the next pages (Figures 10a-g).
In Elanora, the social occasion was indeed a big drawcard, but most respondents gave “support the good cause” as their main reason for attending. In this venue, all excess proceeds went to a selected charity, which had been clearly advertised. For Artico Ensemble, this was an excellent way of attracting a new audience. The group had not performed in this venue before and could therefore not rely on their own reputation to attract an audience for their concert. By advertising the concert as a charity concert (and aided by the tireless and excellent work of the local organizing team) 250 people attended on the day, many of whom may not have attended otherwise. The group has since made a return concert visit to the venue, again attracting a large audience, which could be the start of a mutually beneficial association. Walker & Sherwood (2003) highlight this point in their report, by stating that,

a charity concert for a community organization is likely to be attended by the group’s staff, board members, donors, beneficiaries, and well-wishers from the neighbourhood. Therefore, arts and cultural organizations can reach broader, more diverse audiences by connecting with such non-arts organizations. (2003, p. 10)

In many of Artico’s first time venues, the audience did not come primarily for the music, but for a variety of different reasons: to support the community, to support the good cause, and to enjoy the social occasion/join family and friends. This is something participants felt strongly about. In Elanora, these three reasons combined accounted for 44% of attendees, in Wavell Heights for 43% of attendees, and in repeat venue Wilston these reasons still accounted for 47% of attendees.
By attending for reasons other than purely musical, people are exposed to a type of music they may not otherwise listen to and realize they actually like it. This may be the case for the lady in Elanora who wrote she did not attend concerts regularly, adding a dash for number of concerts attended per annum. She came to this one with girlfriends, listened to recorded music such as “blues/rock & roll/modern music/pop” and listed her main reason for coming as “having a good time, listen to life (sic) music, meeting friends”. However, she described the concert as “fantastic, very professional, great talent, very enjoyable” (E 28). Another audience member, this time in Wavell Heights, did not usually attend concerts either (a dash for number of concerts per annum) but came to this one with her sister. She listened to recorded music, “mostly pop music -Snow Patrol, Frey, Elton John, listen to the radio mostly”, and listed the invitation from her sister as the main reason for coming today. Her description of the concert was “very enjoyable!” (WH 216). Naturally, enjoyment of a concert does not automatically lead to return visits. It can be assumed, however, that for these two audience members any barriers to attend similar events in the future have been reduced.

For Elanora audiences, venue accessibility was a more prominent reason for attending than for other venues. The fact that Elanora is a suburb on the Gold Coast, thus further removed from the cultural offerings in Brisbane than the other case study venues, is an important factor and probable/likely explanation. This was highlighted by one participant who reported that she came to the concert in Elanora for the “chance to listen to a life (sic) concert without paying the earth or having to travel far” (E 39), and by another attendee who wrote: “not being able to travel too far - the venue was ideal” (E 10).

Both Elanora and Wynnum audiences listed the enjoyment of this type of music as an important reason to attend. This could refer to the general habits of listening and attending of these particular respondents, but also suggests very clear and specific event marketing, even though it was a first-time performance for the group in these two venues.

In Wynnum (the private house concert) the setting itself was an equally strong reason for audiences to attend, and the home venue was said to be “perfect for sound, (...) perfectly designed for ‘drawing room’ atmosphere for musical concerts” (Wyn 168). One participant said: “I think the venue makes the occasion even more special than it would otherwise be. A very special musical experience and a magical setting” (Wyn 150).
Audiences in Wavell Heights, another first-time venue, predominantly came to support the organization, but also for the chance to hear good music, as expressed by the lady who commented that she came “to see Artico Ensemble at a venue I can afford” (WH 231). There was also an element of curiosity amongst attendees, as indicated for example by the man who mentioned that he came “to see if I would like to go to a full performance of an orchestra” (WH 5).

The majority of the Wilston audience attended to enjoy the social occasion/to join family or friends, which was also evident from the data regarding their connection to the venue.
In venues where the ensemble had played before, such as Wilston and Ipswich, “enjoyed concert last time / repeat visit to the group” was a prominent reason for attending, whereas in the data for Elanora, Wavell Heights and Wynnum (all first-time venues) this reason did not feature, as shown in the charts above.

In venues without a regular concert series, “series’ regular / repeat visit to this venue” is naturally not offered as a reason for attending, but in the Redland Museum, Kenmore and Wynnum, where concerts are held regularly, the concert series was mentioned as a reason for attending. For Redland Museum audiences, the cultural reasons of the concert and the music itself are stronger reasons for attending than the social reasons that are prevalent in some of the church venues.
Kenmore audiences came primarily for the chance to hear good music/good musicians, but also to enjoy this type of music and because they enjoyed the concert last time. Combining this with the existing Artico history data for Kenmore, which show that many audience members had heard the ensemble before, it seems that the partnership between Artico and this venue is a successful one: the ensemble is building a fan-base in Kenmore. As Milne notes: “Live concerts (or any live events) are built on a fan-base.” (2012, para 7) - “[…] a group of people who are interested in what the ensemble does” (ibid para 9). In Kenmore in particular this has been combined with the hard work of the concert series administrator, who has managed to establish a fan-base for the concert series itself as well, with many people attending all of the concerts in the series. As the venue history in Table 6 showed, 82.9% of respondents had attended a concert in the venue before.
Although the venue accessibility is not one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for attending the performance in the figures above, it was one of the three main positive comments made when respondents were asked to compare the experience of attending a concert in today’s venue in comparison to other venues they frequented. One audience member in Wavell Heights reported that one of the ensemble’s programmed pieces was his main reason for coming (“Shepherd on the Rock - a favourite piece of music that I performed a very long time ago” - WH 9) but described the difference between this venue and others he attended as “nice that it is ‘local’, informal”. A lady from the Redland Museum gave many reasons for attending: “because I could. I like the ensemble and the venue and I like to support the team…” (RM 188) but described the difference between this venue and others as “good acoustics, informal, relatively close to home, friendly”.

It is worth considering whether the fact that participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire after the concert had any impact on their response. At the conclusion of what for many people had been an enjoyable concert with a varied programme performed by good musicians in a relaxed atmosphere, a practical prior consideration such as distance or travelling time to the venue may not remain significant.

In private follow-up interviews (which took place at least a few weeks after the concerts) it was easier to get an idea of how much the fact that the venue was local played a part in the decision making process. Peter from Kenmore wrote that the venue being close-by was not a deciding factor in attending the concert, but he and his wife Wendy lived so close that they walked to the venue and, when interviewed, said “it was very convenient”. Suzanne described her reasons to attend as:

I like to support the church, …uhm because it’s local I can bring my, it’s an outing for my mum, ‘cause it’s at a good time, I like the time of the afternoon … it was a Sunday afternoon, about … was it 1 or 2 o’clock or something? Which is a nice time, because you can still do some stuff in the morning, it’s that time in the afternoon that really, you know, you’re probably getting ready for the weekend but you still have enough time afterwards, so it’s, it’s that type of thing. And I can take my mum, and I brought her a friend along as well just as a bit of company. So I think the locality of it, the support for the church as well as just the timing were probably the three main reasons. (Suzanne, K)

She also added that she was not sure whether she would have attended if it had been further away. These personal accounts strengthen the argument that the
convenience of a local venue can sway people towards attending arts events, or at the very least take away a barrier for attending. When discussing distance travelled to performances, Osborne et al. state that “accessibility clearly plays a part in encouraging attendance” (1999).

**Selected concert descriptors**

When discussing the many different reasons why people attend concerts, Osborne et al. (1999) identified that the reasons why audiences are attracted to and attend classical music can be divided into two categories, the intellectual and the emotive or sensual. Intellectual motivators included the educational and cultural aspects of attending, and Emotive motivators were those aspects which described how the performance made the person feel, such as the sensory pleasure, or the spiritual or uplifting and relaxing feeling of a performance.

In an open question, this Artico Ensemble case study asked participants to choose a few words that best described that day’s concert, with the aim to get a better sense of their personal experience of the concert. The resulting extensive list of descriptive words reflected the two categories Osborne identified above, featuring many Intellectual descriptors and Emotive descriptors as shown in Figures 11a and 11b.

![Figure 11a: Emotive descriptors](image)

A more detailed explanation about how these word cloud figures were constructed can be found on page 49.
Many respondents commented on the concert programme itself, using emotive descriptors of what is basically an intellectual category, with phrases such as “Pleasant choice of selection”, or “Not too heavy not too light, just right”. An additional category of Emotional Intellectual descriptors was therefore added to allow these comments to be categorized correctly. Comments such as “inspirational”, or “NEW” (capitals in original data) were also grouped under the Emotive Intellectual descriptors, as shown in Figure 11c.

Catharina was quite emotionally touched by the concert, and explained her comments in her follow-up interview:

I had so many pieces that were played I was emotional about, but maybe that was because I just had a very bad experience with the death of my son. So the ‘Ave Maria’, I had tears all over me. Certain pieces of music I was very emotionally involved, and it was (maybe that was also a reason that I felt so warm inside with this music) also lots of memories from the past. Because of my background with my parents (we went to lots of this sort of music) but it was all warm, it was so personal, it was
so … yes, a fantastic experience. […] It was a beautiful variety of music, and it was played so well. And what I do like is that […] I could see the emotion also on your faces: you were playing with your heart. (Catherina, E)

One of the attendees at the Wynnum house concert offered a more Intellectual comment: “Professional, friendly introduction of pieces, interesting program” (Wyn 137). One of the audience members from Elanora entered the following in her questionnaire form: “I enjoyed the personal, vivacious! performers and the spirited comments re. the pieces, backgrounds & instruments” (E 41, exclamation mark in original), a clear example of an Emotive Intellectual comment. Another Wynnum audience member did not quite stop at a few words, but filled her questionnaire with this extensive Emotional Intellectual comment:

How can words describe this concert? So professional, so top of abilities, masters in presentation & ability, yet relaxed enough for all people to enjoy. Taking me to a place of relaxation, quietness of enjoyable mind, and escape from the pressures of this time. Just as music should do - restore the soul. (Wyn 225)

It is perhaps important to confirm that this research does not wish to treat one of these styles of concert experience as better or more true than the other. It simply utilizes Osborne’s categories (1999) as a means to achieve a clearer understanding of the experience of concert attendance and the various ways in which concerts can be enjoyed.

Selected venue descriptors

Questionnaire participants were also asked to select a few words that best described the concert venue itself, which resulted in a list of widely varying words and comments. For the purpose of analysis these were translated into their underlying meanings and collated. For example, simple differences in chosen vocabulary such as ‘uncomfortable chairs/uncomfortable seats/hard seats’, or ‘attractive surroundings/attractive environment/nice setting’ were all gathered under the one term where possible. All terms that appeared five times or more were listed separately, distilling the venue descriptors down to the most frequently mentioned terms, which are charted in Figure 12 overleaf. The most important terms were intimate, good acoustics, comfortable, suits this type of music, attractive surroundings, friendly, and convenient -
all descriptors that indicate that the host venue was felt to be a suitable concert venue for this type of music.

![Venue descriptors - mentioned most frequently](image)

**Figure 12: Venue descriptors - mentioned most frequently - whole study**

Catherine attended the concert in Elanora and describes that venue as intimate: “There were a lot of people, but it didn’t feel like that, maybe it was because of the … it was intimate. Because of the church, probably” (Catherine, E). Ruth, another audience member from Elanora, explains her choice of “comfortable” as venue descriptor in our private interview:

> I think for myself actually because I’m familiar with and comfortable in a church setting, that might make a difference. […] Perhaps if it’d been in like a school hall or something where it’s a bit more sort of stark, there’s not like a stained glass window or nice garden outside … Does that make sense? I think it was a very pleasant venue. It was very comfortable, I felt comfortable in it. (Ruth, E)

Wendy concluded that the Elanora venue “was quite intimate, which was nice, and the acoustics were good. And I thought it was quite a relaxing nice venue, really, for a chamber group, a small group” (Wendy, E).

Most of the venue descriptors noted above are of a positive nature, but several questionnaire respondents commented on the uncomfortable seating of their venue, with one adding a reminder to herself to bring a cushion next time. The question enquiring about the perceived differences between attending a concert in this small community venue in comparison to other performance venues brought forth a few additional
challenging aspects of these types of venues, which will be discussed further in section 5.5.

In answer to the questionnaire question “Is there any relationship between your experience of today’s concert and this concert venue?”, one respondent wrote “yes, enjoyable ambience assists enjoyment of the music”. (K 79) One other participant commented that she felt “very connected because I belong here and it's like having guests in my home” (K 90). Another remarked on the effect of the venue acoustics: “couldn't pick a better venue, all words clearly heard” (I 123), and another on its size “small enough that I would forget my surroundings & immerse myself in the music - not distracted” (I 132). One of Avon’s house concert guests confirmed the effect that particular setting has on its attendees: “Seeing outside is enjoyable, music and nature go well together. Relaxed friendly atmosphere makes the concert more enjoyable” (Wyn 139). Catharina, audience member in Elanora, described how the venue made the concert experience more emotional for her:

Yes, where it was played, in that beautiful church … [...] We don't go to churches, so for me, it didn't matter where the music was, if it was in a church or in another building (it could have been in the Art Centre in Boondall), but it was that church that made that music, I think. That's what I found, I found it so - it was very personal. I had so many pieces that were played I was emotional about …(Catharina, E)

Jill remarked that the atmosphere of the church in Elanora also affected her concert experience in a positive way:

Well I think it's just the atmosphere, churches have atmosphere. There's a lot of windows along the back so there's plenty of light which is lovely. […] But I think it's just a feeling that you're in a friendly building. You get in there and there's carpet and there's … yes, I think churches have got a certain character and it lends itself to music. I suppose because music is a spiritual thing and churches are spiritual. (Jill, E)

An anonymous questionnaire participant, this time from the house concert in Wynnum, used the word “reinforced” to describe the relationship between that venue and the music: “The venue reinforced the music, it's open space and great acoustics very much complemented the wonderful performance” (Wyn 158).
All these comments seem to suggest that the performance setting (the venue and the environment) has a strong impact on the audience’s experience of that performance. This concept will be explored further in the conclusion of this Chapter.

5.5 The strengths and challenges of attending professional chamber music performances in small community venues.

Perceived difference(s) between study venue and other attended venues

In the final part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to comment on how the experience of attending a concert in today’s venue differed from the other venues they had visited. In a private follow-up interview, Suzanne, who attended the Artico concert in Kenmore but who also enjoys going to music theatre performances at QPAC, describes the difference as:

I don’t think you get, it is not as personal, it is definitely not as personal. (…) I think that’s what’s nice about going here, it feels a bit more intimate, it feels a bit more personal, and you feel like you’re actually part of it, whereas the other one you kind off you sit back and you watch. And you appreciate it, but I don’t think it’s quite as intimate. (Suzanne, K)

As this was an open question in the questionnaire, many different opinions were offered, with comments discussing the size of the venue, the feel and atmosphere of the building or the performance, or the logistics of attending. During analysis these were divided into three groups: those comments that hinted at benefits of a small community venue (b); those comments that hinted at challenges of a small community venue (c); and neutral comments (n). Table 7 below charts all results.

The comment that was most frequently made was that today’s venue was (more) intimate: this was mentioned 52 times in a total of 214 responses. It was often mentioned in combination with the venue size, as in “small and intimate” or “smaller and more intimate”, in which case it was interpreted as an emotive comment relating to the nature and feel of a venue or performance rather than only its size. It also featured as a stand-alone comment. “Small(er)” was categorized as a neutral comment if it was mentioned as a stand-alone comment but categorized as one of the perceived benefits of a small venue if it was mentioned in conjunction with intimate, or personal, or (more) relaxed. Other comments to appear frequently (28 times) were comments relating to the nature of the venue and the performance, e.g. “more casual”, or “(more) informal / less formal”, and “friendly”. All comments regarding locality (23 in total) were categorized
under the header “Convenient/accessible”. Among these, “Local” or “Close to home” were offered eight times, “Easy to park” three times, and “Convenient” or “Easy access” 12 times. The fourth comment worth highlighting here was “(more) personal”, which featured 17 times.

These results differ markedly from those in the previously cited Australia Council study *More than Bums of Seats* (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010b) which, by comparison found that people thought they might feel uncomfortable or out of place in an arts event; that they thought it would be hard to get to; that there weren’t enough opportunities close to where they live; and that people found it difficult to find the time (2010b, p. 9). Judging by the venue-related comments mentioned in this Artico Ensemble case study and those listed above, there is strong reason to suggest that concerts in small community venues can negate several of these perceived barriers for concert attendance.

Interestingly, 11 respondents also commented on the good venue acoustics, although these venues are not necessarily purpose-built for chamber music performance. Table 7 overleaf provides an overview of all comments relating to the benefits or challenges of the case study venue as well as the neutral comments and shows the frequency with which they were made. There were not as many ‘challenging’ comments as favourable comments; it should be acknowledged, however, that questionnaire respondents present at a concert in a small community venue will most likely already think favourably of it. Ideally this research question should also have been put to non-attenders, but this fell outside of the scope of this current study.

Two audience members who usually attended performances in venues such as Brisbane’s Tivoli and The Zoo, classified their case study venue as “more formal” than those venues, and two participants who mainly attended performances in QPAC, St John’s Cathedral and the Queensland Conservatorium found their case study venue “less professional”, and lacking “the big venue/special occasion feel”. The comment about uncomfortable seating also featured quite strongly in Figure 12 (page 131) which charts all the results of the questionnaire question about selected venue descriptors. One of Kenmore’s audience members acknowledged that venue’s difficult acoustics, and one questionnaire participant (who frequently attends concerts in QPAC and the Queensland Conservatorium) remarked that in this venue she heard “bird sounds and other sounds from outdoors” (Wil 242), which has been interpreted as one of the challenges of these small community venues.
Table 7: Differences between attending a concert in this venue vs. other venues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments hinting at benefits of small community venue (b)</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intimate in feel</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal / casual / friendly</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient / accessible</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller in size</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close contact / interaction between musicians and audience</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good venue acoustics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful surroundings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with other audience members</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime slot</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good value / cheaper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate control</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close contact with other audience members</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar surroundings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More consistently good quality(^8)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments hinting at challenges of small community venue (c)</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable seating</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More formal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult venue acoustics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distractions from outside</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not have the “special occasion” feel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less professional</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral comments (n)(^9)</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller venue</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different demographic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different setting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger venue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger audience</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very different</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admission prices

Ticket prices for the case study concerts were set by the host venue, and in the series, they varied between $15.00 and $25.00. Some of the venues offered concession prices ($15.00 instead of their regular $25.00), and in all venues the post-performance

\(^8\) Comment came from patron who regularly attends concerts in other churches, leagues clubs and parks.
\(^9\) First four neutral comments were responses from patrons who regularly attend pop/band-style performances, and neutral comment 5 and 6 came from patrons who regularly attend performances in nursing homes and retirement villages.
refreshments were included in the admission price. In a multiple-choice question, respondents were asked to select which comment best described the admission price. The house concert in Wynnum was a free event (due to unforeseen circumstances), which led to this question being omitted from the questionnaire on that day. In total, 130 people responded to the question regarding ticket prices. Most selected one comment only, but many selected two or more of the six given options, adding to a total of 268 responses. 44.8% of those selected that the concert was good value for money, 31.3% felt the price was reasonable, and 17.5% thought it was cheap. 6% selected “normal/affordable”, and one person thought it was expensive. The sixth option, “too expensive”, was not selected at all.

In the Australia Council’s 2010 report (Australia Council of the Arts, 2010b) 41% of surveyed participants stated they did not attend arts performances because “It costs too much” (2010b, p. 9.). In the Council’s most recent 2014 report it is more difficult to isolate the matter of costs, as the Council created the new category of “opportunity costs”, which in this report is defined as “taking time and money away from some other activity” (2014, p. 21) or “investing time and money in the arts” (2014, p. 89). Although in this terminology cost is hidden and blended with time availability (and the subtle underlying accompanying factors of preference and choice), the concept of opportunity costs is a factor against arts attendance for 72% of non-attending study participants.

In a bid to go some way towards addressing these barriers for attendance, Artico Ensemble’s chamber music performances in small community venues as highlighted in this study make professional chamber music concerts accessible to those for whom cost is a barrier. They do this on several levels.

Firstly, these performance venues have very low overheads. They belong to the community and do not need to be hired, and professional staff is not required as volunteers and committee members take charge of most of the organising. This keeps organizing costs low. Secondly, in Artico’s operational model the host venue pays the ensemble a flat performance fee. The hosts then set their ticket prices based on estimated audience numbers and on what they think their clientele can afford. Lastly, with marketing and promotion done at low costs as well (either in-house, through local channels, or via word of mouth), admission prices can be kept at low levels.

A public servant from Stafford Heights (50-59 years old) who attended the performance in Wavell Heights, described the concert as “cheap” and even wrote “too cheap” in the sideline of the questionnaire paper. Another participant from that same
venue also selected “cheap” but added “excellent value for money” by crossing the questionnaire’s printed ‘good value for money’, out. Suzanne from Kenmore explained why she chose “good value”:

what made me say that was for the entertainment, I thought it was actually quite a cheap ticket for the entertainment that we got, because I mean like I know you go into town to the big musicals and that can be up to a hundred and fifty dollars, and yes it’s a lovely experience and the rest of it, but that’s getting into town and all the rest of it and all that goes out of it. I actually thought that was really, it was good value. It was a good afternoon, it was a lovely afternoon of entertainment it wasn’t really too exorbitantly expensive. That’s what I liked about it, that’s why I said it was good value. For the amount that we actually paid I thought it was a really good experience. (Suzanne, K)

Was the admission price a decision-making factor?

In an open question concluding the questionnaire, audience members were asked whether the advertised ticket price had influenced their decision to attend. 16.8% said yes and one person answered “probably”. One member of the Kenmore audience responded with “yes - retired” (K 24), and another by commenting: “yes excellent price for good music” (K 30). David, one of the committee members from Wilson who initiated the very first performance by Artico Ensemble in their venue, wrote that “the aim of the price is to attract the community”, and one of their attendees agreed that the advertised ticket price had influenced their decision to attend: “yes, it was low enough to make it easy to come” (Wil 271), a statement reflected in several of the other comments. These personal accounts confirm that by setting affordable admission prices, one of the barriers for arts attendance was taken away for many of this study’s participants.

Curiously, the vast majority of respondents answered that the ticket price had not influenced their decision to attend: 82.7% wrote ‘no’. Some of the additional comments people made, however, put these statistics in a slightly different light. One respondent from Wilston wrote “no, though I can’t afford expensive concerts” (Wil 244), and another wrote “not really, but I thought it was a reasonable price” (Wil 285). One respondent from the Redland Museum responded with “no, unless it had been $40.00 or so’ (RM 187). These comments suggest that this concert’s ticket price was seen to be in the “affordable/value for money” category for most people, and therefore
had not affected the decision; in other words, had it been more expensive, the decision whether to attend or not would have been more difficult.

One audience member from Ipswich answered “not really. Just based on past experience” (I 117). This indicates which factor could have influenced some of the return visitors’ decision to attend and highlights the prevalent perception of Artico Ensemble’s performances as being ‘quality events at an affordable price’.

5.6 Conclusion

The first segment of this Audience Research Report set out to create a demographic profile of the concert attendees and highlight their connection to the venue. Its findings can be summarized as follows:

- Audience member study participants were between 50 and 80 years of age;
- Of these participants, 76% were female, and 24% were male;
- Their occupations showed a mix between employed professionals and retirees;
- 25.7% of the participating audience members resided in the suburb of the concert venue, 32.4% in a neighbouring suburb and 41.9% further afield;
- 90% of them arrived by car;
- Half of the participants travelled ten minutes or less to get to the performance;
- Whilst the study results showed significant percentile variations for each case study venue, audience members’ connection to the case study venue was most frequently through them being a member of the host community, or by having friends or family that were members of the host community;
- Each venue’s concert notification methods were charted, highlighting how the audience had become aware of the concerts. All venues attracted a significant amount of audience through a simple, personal approach. Announcements in the venue and printed notices from the venue, host emails, and information passed on by family and friends were most successful.

The next segment of this Audience chapter investigated participants’ concert attendance and general music listening habits. Its findings can be summarized as follows:

- The vast majority (75%) of participating audience came with an attendance partner. Of those attending alone, most anticipated to meet friends at the concert;
- 93% listened at home to recorded music of some kind, with nearly half of respondents selecting classical (and light-classical) music styles as well as others;
• The atmosphere at a live performance, the visual impact, and the level of (emotional) engagement were seen as the most significant differences between concert attendance and listening to recorded music;

• Audience participants attended (or had attended) a wide range of other performances. Patrons had an attendance preference for orchestral, chamber, choral and jazz performances, and explored world music, pop, new music and other uncategorized concert events in near-equal measure;

• More than half of the audience in this study attended a performance three to six times a year;

• They visited a wide range of venues, 76 different ones in total, ranging from large commercial venues to small community venues. The large venues such as QPAC and Griffith Theatre were visited most, with the small community venues second-most.

In the next section of this Audience research report, a combination of statistics and qualitative interview material presented the audience’s reasons for attending the case study concert and explored their experience in doing so. Its findings can be summarized as follows:

• Of all of this study’s participating audience members, 40% had been to an Artico performance before, and 60% were novices, although these figures varied significantly between the case study venues;

• Participants attended the concert generally to enjoy the social occasion or join family and friends, to support the organization hosting the concert, and to simply enjoy the music. Again, figures and attendance reasons varied from venue to venue. Repeat visits to the group was interpreted as loyalty to and affinity for Artico Ensemble, which proved to be a solid attendance reason in the ensemble’s repeat venues. Support of the good cause was a defining attendance reason in those case study venues that marketed this concert as a benefit concert;

• Several Emotive, Intellectual, and Emotive Intellectual concert descriptors were identified, which acted as motivating factors for this study’s audience participants’ concert attendance;

• This study’s audience participants described the concert venues as intimate, having good acoustics, as being comfortable, and suited to this type of music.

The audience’s demographic profile and their habits of listening and attending, and even the experience of attending one of Artico Ensemble’s chamber music concerts
as reported here, can be easily read and interpreted on their own merit. To gain a better understanding of the strengths and challenges associated with these concerts (as reported in section 5.5), it is valuable to compare the data with other statistical, quantitative and qualitative information about audience attendance. How else to understand the strengths or challenges of a subject than by measuring its qualities or issues against something else? A particular aspect of chamber music performance in small community venues can only be identified as a strength or a challenge when it is compared to a similar event elsewhere, or an event done elsewhere in a different manner. This is why the Artico questionnaire asked its participants to comment on how the experience of attending a concert in the case study venue differed from the other venues they had visited, for example.

As mentioned in the Literature Review, a number of years ago the Australia Council published More than Bums On Seats (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010b), a research report continuing the investigation of how Australians participate in the arts. In a telephone survey to 3000 people, participants were asked to give reasons for not participating in the arts. The ensuing report noted that there are significant opportunities to build arts audiences by understanding and addressing people’s reasons for their current lack of participation, which were stated to be:

- practical (such as time constraints, prohibitive cost and a perceived lack of information about the arts events available, and poor access) and
- attitudinal (such as lack of interest, feelings of inadequacy or a preference for sports over the arts” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010b, p. 9)

Figure 13 below presents these identified barriers for arts participation collated by the Australia Council, as charted in More than Bums on Seats (ibid.).
After analysing the audience data of this current research study, it became apparent that many comparisons between its findings and those stated in the Australia Council’s report could be drawn, in spite of the fact that the Artico Ensemble chamber music subject highlighted only a small component of the Council’s extensive arts participation survey. And although the Australia Council surveyed a random sample of 3000 ‘regular’ Australians, and the Artico audience questionnaire was distributed amongst a target audience at several chamber concerts, the findings of both studies revolve around common themes when read side-by-side. The Australia Council’s follow-up study released in 2014 (Australia Council for the Arts, 2014) reports on similar themes and presents similar results, although exact statistical figures vary by a few percent in many instances. The report’s formatting, categorisation and itemized charting of findings is not as clear as the 2010 report, which makes it less suitable for comparison for the purpose of this research, unfortunately.

The Australia Council chart printed above lists 16 barriers for arts attendance, some of which are practical and some attitudinal. In this reflection, it will be shown that for the Artico Ensemble audience participants the group’s operational model of professional chamber music performance in small community venues may address ten of the practical barriers for arts participation recognized by the Australia Council. These ten selected practical barriers are charted below in Figure 14.

It is not the aim of this research to discuss or negate people’s attitudinal reasons for not attending arts performances. Reasons relating to personal preference (‘I’m not
really interested”) or to self-image (“I’m not an artistic person”) may not change simply by having arts organisations provide more or different opportunities.

![Figure 14: Selected practical and attitudinal barriers for arts participation](image)

Providing concert options that are accessible in terms of travel, cost and effort, can significantly reduce the first four attendance barriers listed in Figure 14 above. As Ruth, an audience member attending an Artico concert on the Gold Coast, mentioned: “It is all too complicated to fit in. With the travel, the parking, the ticket prices and then usually the concerts are in the evening. This one was just really accessible” (Ruth, E). By bringing chamber music to audiences and creating cultural events in suburban areas close to where people live, travel time is drastically reduced: half of Artico Ensemble’s audience members travelled only ten minutes or less to get to the performance. Artico endeavours to keep its admission prices affordable by performing in suburban community venues, by liaising with the venue’s administrators in the organization of the event, and by outsourcing their marketing to their hosts who are able to reach their target audience without the need for extensive and expensive publicity campaigns. And with a line of information about the concerts directly from the organizers to the potential audience members, it is effortless and easy for people to find out what is available.

The familiarity of the local, known community venue can reduce the listed barrier of “feeling uncomfortable of out of place”, and any hesitation about attending without a concert partner (“I don’t have anyone to do it with”) was shown to be reduced by the community setting: 25 percent of Artico audiences came alone, with 87 percent of these single attenders anticipating to meet friends at the concert.
The three remaining barriers are best grouped together for discussion: In many of Artico Ensemble’s first-time venues, the audience did not attend primarily to hear the music but for different, social reasons: to support the community, to enjoy the social occasion or join family and friends, or to support the good cause. This is something participants felt strongly about, “something they all do”, and for many the social occasion is a good way of trying something new like attending a chamber music concert. Even in the ensemble’s repeat venues (venues where the group had performed previously), these reasons were still among the top five reasons for attending.

By attending for reasons other than the purely musical, people can get introduced to a type of music they may not usually listen to and realize they actually like it. This was highlighted by an example of a female audience member from a first-time concert venue in Wavell Heights. According to the questionnaire she did not usually attend concerts (she entered a zero for the number of attended concerts per annum) but came to this concert with her sister. She listened to recorded music, “mostly pop music - Snow Patrol, Frey, Elton John, listen to the radio mostly”, and listed the invitation from her sister as the main reason for attending. Her description of the concert was “very enjoyable!” (WH 216). Naturally, enjoyment of a concert does not automatically lead to return visits. It can be assumed, however, that for this audience member the barrier to attend another similar event in the future has been reduced, and that it is no longer “something someone like her would not do” (see barrier 5 charted above). That same audience member also left an additional comment on the questionnaire sheet, which further illustrates the strengths of chamber music in small community venues:

I believe by having concerts in community venues such as this, it makes concerts accessible for everyone. Often classical concerts are seen as expensive and for the elite crowd. Venues such as this changes that.

(WH 216)

The existing connection between the venues and their community members has proven to be a key element in attracting audiences to Artico Ensemble performances. As shown, many study participants attended the concert in support of the host venue, its community and its organizing team, and to enjoy the social occasion. This was especially evident in venues with little or no history of music events. Audience members who attended initially for reasons other than the music, however, frequently returned in following years because they had enjoyed the concert, thus becoming part of Artico Ensemble’s audience development.
And finally, whilst performing in community venues has brought their performances to new audiences, it has also allowed Artico to connect with an older, existing chamber music loving audience that may not be able to access concerts in mainstream, commercial performance venues. It is the group’s aim to rejuvenate and demystify the genre of chamber music whilst staying wholly inclusive of these senior members of the community.

This conclusion marks the end of the audience’s story. The vital role of the concert administrators, their experience of organising the events and their views on the strengths and challenges of chamber music performances in small community venues will be highlighted in the next chapter.
Chapter 6. The Administrators – Research Report

6.1 Introduction

Artico Ensemble’s operational model for chamber music performance in community venues is unconventional: as explained earlier, management of the group and all programme planning is shared by the ensemble members, but the marketing of the concerts is outsourced to the host venues. The ensemble liaises closely with the venue administrator for each concert, but the main organizational load is carried by these enthusiastic, non-professional, local volunteer concert promoters, who work tirelessly to make these events happen. Without this third partner concerts such as these could not take place.

This next Research Report chapter is dedicated to Artico Ensemble’s concert administrators. The chapter opens with an introduction to each administrator, describing their connection to the venue and exploring their motivation for organizing the concert. A brief description of the venue, its performance space, and available instrument (piano) has been included, as well as information about the intended use of the proceeds of the concert.

The second part of the chapter examines the administrators’ affinity with (classical and/or chamber) music and describes their music or non-music background. It discusses their own experience with and frequency of concert attending and explores whether these were factors that influenced their decision to be involved in concert organizing.

The third part of the chapter relates the administrators’ experience of organizing the case study concerts in more detail, and this administrators’ report concludes by presenting the strengths and challenges of these types of concerts as seen through the eyes of the concert administrators.

Jan Drury belongs to the Uniting Church in Elanora, on the Southern Gold Coast, where she is part of the active Adult Fellowship Team. She attended one of Artico Ensemble’s other concerts on the Gold Coast with friends and was immediately excited about organizing a performance in her own Elanora church community. The church building is quite spacious and can be configured to seat anywhere between 250 to 500 people, and they recently purchased a Baby Grand Piano. The whole Adult Fellowship team was involved in managing the concert, with Jan herself at the helm. From the onset the decision was made to make this Artico concert a fundraising event, with (excess) proceeds donated to Flying Padre Rev. Garry Hardingham, of the McKay Patrol. The McKay Patrol is a remote-area aerial padre service run by the Uniting
Church of Australia, based in Cloncurry, Northwest Queensland. The concert in Elanora was a very successful event with over 250 people in attendance, calculated by the fact that, in Jan’s words “we certainly ran out of cups and saucers and started on the mugs for tea/coffee”. Artico Ensemble’s artist fees were easily covered and an excellent sum could be donated to the good cause.

Lesley Briggs is a member of St Thomas’ Anglican Church in North Ipswich, where she is part of the events committee. Artico Ensemble had performed in this venue in North Ipswich the year prior, and Lesley decided to take on the role of administrator and liaison person between Artico and the church community when the original administrator said she would be on an extended holiday during the time of the planned return event. There are several people on St Thomas’ events committee, who each year decide together what events they are going to run in order to fundraise for the church. As Artico’s first performance was a success, they definitely wanted to include the group again this year. St Thomas Anglican Church is an intimate redbrick building featuring a heritage, dark wood-panelled interior and beautiful stained glass windows, with seating for approximately 100 people. The church community uses a small upright acoustic piano for their services and events.

Dawn Langford is a member of the Kenmore Uniting Church. For the last three years the church has hosted a three-concert Concert Series called “Cool & Classic”, which is co-ordinated by Dawn. In 2002, Artico Ensemble (or The Victorian Chamber Musicians, as they were known then) planned a concert tour of South-East Queensland, from their home base in Melbourne at the time. They sent out letters to churches, galleries, museums and other community venues in and around Brisbane inviting venues to be part of this tour. Dawn received this letter at the Kenmore Uniting Church and was immediately enthusiastic about the idea: “I was really interested, because what I’ve found is … I really believe that music concerts need to be part of church life” (Dawn, interview). Since that memorable initial concert, Artico Ensemble has done many repeat performances in the church venue. Three years ago, the Church Council approved Dawn’s plans to turn these individual events into a three-concert concert series, and they now successfully host a variety of artists. Dawn manages a large team of community members, who each look after one aspect of the concert organization. Concerts include a wonderful afternoon tea prepared by community members, and proceeds of the events feed back into the church community and keep the series viable. The church itself is an architect-designed building with a semi-modern interior seating
approximately 300 people, and they have an older upright piano and electric keyboard for services and concerts.

Graham Blackman is part of the Kairos Uniting Church in Wavell Heights. He had heard about a music group doing a charity performance for a good cause and thought it would be a great idea for his church:

And so we thought it would be a good idea if we raise funds for the McKay Patrol, and having heard about the chamber orchestra (Artico Ensemble - RW) and their work from a number of sources, we contacted them and the rest as they say is history. (Graham, interview)

Graham organized the concert in Wavell Heights Uniting together with other members of a small events team. The church building itself is a sizeable rectangular space that can seat approximately 400 people comfortably, and they have an older style upright piano for services and events.

Avon Phillips & Helen Georgiou-Phillips live in Wynnum. They host intimate music soirees in the architect-designed living room of their home, which houses a Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand Piano. Named ‘Soiree’s at The Imperial Room’, their house concerts attract a loyal following of friends and music lovers. As Avon explains,

I thought there was so much joy had in the 1800s, when everyone used to just go around to someone’s home and have music together, and we thought, we know so many artists that play beautiful instruments, play beautiful music on that, why don’t they just come down and have a jam session all together? And so it went from there, it sort of went from just an afternoon jam session to what we are at now, where 70 people come. Which is a bit of a shock! (Avon, interview)

They initially created a series of six concerts spread over the year. The word spread quickly, and with many top-quality local and National musicians offering their services, Helen and Avon have had even busier years. Their soirees are complemented by a lovely home-cooked afternoon tea, courtesy of Helen, and all door-takings go to the artists. Aside from piano recitals by renowned pianists such as Alex Rainieri and Jayson Gillham that shine a spotlight on the Imperial Bösendorfer, they also love hosting chamber music ensembles:

The chamber music is because it totally suits the home environment. You know, people can get so close, and the senses … there’s almost
another sense in your body that you feel when such lovely musicians are here, and you’re that close to touching them. It’s a very ethereal feeling, when they’re there, so we wanted to share that. (Avon, interview)

Rick Thomason is one of the curators at the Redland Museum in Cleveland, Brisbane. Aside from their permanent historical exhibition, the museum hosts visual art exhibitions, lectures by guest speakers, dinners and fairs, exhibits displaying research projects, and concerts. When asked how the idea of concerts came about, Rick explains: “Well, what started it all off was we had a benefactor leave money to us, which provided that wing where the gallery is. And it just seemed to be a lovely venue, area, space, for concerts”. The gallery wing features an upright Yamaha piano in a semi-enclosed space that can seat 100 people approximately. Rick, on behalf of the Redland Museum, was one of the people who responded to The Victorian Chamber Musicians’ first touring invitation many years ago, and the ensemble has done many repeat performances in the venue since.

David Swindells is a member of St Alban’s Anglican Church in Wilston, a lovely older-style redbrick building featuring beautiful stained glass windows and a timber arched buttress ceiling. The church does not have an acoustic piano but uses an electronic Clavinova keyboard for their services and events, and the space can seat about 100 people in fixed pews. David organised the first two performances by Artico Ensemble at St Alban’s Church, and explains that “the purpose of getting them in in the first place, was to get the community into the church, and just make the church a place of the community. So that’s what we’re trying to do” (David, interview).

In one of our very first email conversations, he writes that “it was felt by the Council that this would benefit the entire district of Wilston and surrounding suburbs, helping the church to become a focus of the community” (David, private email, January 2010). Rather than being the main concert administrator, this year David was mainly in charge of the afternoon tea, which traditionally follows the concert.

Pamela Ray is also a member of St Alban’s Uniting Church in Wilston and a member of the Parish Council. She has taken over from David and is now the main liaison person between Artico Ensemble and St Alban’s events committee. Similar to David, Pamela got involved in managing the concert because she was interested in having the performance at St Alban’s and bringing it to the community, and proceeds of the concerts (if there are any) feed back into the church community. She explains why Artico Ensemble was invited back this year:
This is the third performance we’ve had by this group. And that’s why we’ve continued with it because the other performances were excellent and everyone really enjoyed them, so we thought we’d have, you know, more people coming and being a part of the performance programme as such here. (Pamela, interview)

For Pamela, the community aspect is a very strong incentive for organizing the concert, and she highlights the importance of serving afternoon tea as part of the event:

For us I think we feel that it’s a social community event, and a lot of the older people really love talking, and being involved, and an afternoon tea is a great time for them to actually chat, and having a good concert to, you know, help make conversation is really good as well. (Pamela, interview)

6.2 Who are the administrators? – A profile

This section examines each administrators’ affinity with classical and/or chamber music and recounts their music or non-music background. It investigates administrators’ own experience with and frequency of concert attending and investigates whether these factors influenced their decision to be involved in concert organizing.

Avon, an engineer who runs his own business, sang bass-baritone in a Barbershop quartet for many years and enjoyed doing performances of various kinds throughout the State. His wife Helen worked in administration at the Queensland Conservatorium for several years before starting her own business. She grew up in the Greek community, surrounded by Greek music, singing and dancing in her parent’s home and hearing church music at their neighbour’s: “So there’s always been that thing about music in houses. And inviting people, and having food …” (Helen, interview). Helen and Avon’s mutual love of music was instrumental in their plans to start musical soirees in their home:

I think it was from a dual love of music, both Helen and myself, always interested in the classical side of music. […] When I met Helen, it was just like a partnership made in heaven, really. And then when we had the opportunity to develop or renovate this home, that’s when it really set in that we could do this sort of thing. (Avon, interview)

Helen and Avon count many professional musicians amongst their friends, which makes it easy for them to select artists for their concert series. As Avon says:
Oh, I love chamber music. I love all music that’s good. And that doesn’t really matter what genre it is, it’s poor music that I don’t really like. But I find it very difficult to find a poor musician around the QSO or people that are associated with that. That’s why we have such … we have a lot of lovely friends from the QSO, and so it’s not hard to get concert pianists here with a Concert Grand - in fact the largest Concert Grand in the world, so … (Avon, interview)

Helen adds:
I love classical music concerts in its various forms, and every experience is a different one: I’ve heard ‘The Trout’ many times but today it’s going to be in a different format than I’ve heard it before, so, yeah, every time it’s a new experience, because a live performance is exciting. It’s that edge of, you know, you’ve got the energy of the artists right there, right in front of you, and every time, anything can go wrong at any moment! (laughs) You know, that aspect of it! Don’t tell that to the artists! But you know, it’s that energy that exudes and takes over the room. (Helen, interview)

Dawn Langford is a retired school teacher. Her daughter-in-law is a professional singer and voice teacher, and Dawn enjoys attending her students’ concerts. Aside from those, she does not frequently attend concerts in Brisbane’s mainstream performance venues such as QPAC, and sees the organizing of her own concert series as a means of being able to listen to a nice concert herself:

Well I must admit I haven’t heard a chamber group in a large venue like that at all. Because, well, finances actually. You know, if there were others in the local area that I could go to that were more, that we could afford, I might, I would go. […] So I can’t compare it with a big venue, because I haven’t really been to many of those. And I am glad these concerts are on because they’re ones I can afford to come to as well! I don’t get to go to too many others, unless somebody gives us tickets for Christmas or, you know, that sort of thing. (Dawn, interview)

Rick Thomason quite frequently attends concerts by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in QPAC and supports local performances as well: “Only recently in the Uniting Church here in Cleveland we had Faure’s Requiem, Rosemarie Arthars sang, and that was quite lovely. So I was excited to see that Faure’s Requiem was part of
[Artico Ensemble’s] programme” (Rick, interview). He really enjoys the Museum performances in the smaller gallery wing, and muses on the concept of ‘Chamber Music’:

Well I suppose chamber comes from ‘chambre’, does it? Room? And so I sort of consider it as an intimate … sometimes I wonder whether that’s even too many people … Soirees and things like that. Smaller crowds I think. But yeah, Intimacy. And privilege in a way, that you’re part of a select sort of small group, enjoying that marvellous music, when all those other people aren’t. It’s a privilege to be enjoying a small concert … a small group in a concert. You know, you go to the great big concerts in town, and you’re one of many, … and it’s just more personal somehow. (Rick, interview)

Graham Blackman is a retired businessman, and he and his wife enjoy attending concerts:

Classical, semi-classical, modern, … We attend events such as Opera in the Vineyard in Stanthorpe, Opera in the Paddock at Inverell, Opera in the Hangar at Caboolture, a number of other venues (QPAC and other venues), so we enjoy a great deal of music. And we decided that this was the sort of (and the repertoire of the group), we thought that this was really, irrespective of age difference, irrespective of musical tastes, irrespective of people’s backgrounds, that this would be really good - that people could come and enjoy two hours of, you know, such a range of music. (Graham, interview)

David Swindells is a secondary school teacher of English and Japanese, who grew up in England. In one of our very first email conversations he writes: “My parents used to attend the parish church of Nantwich in England where orchestras and choirs from Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham would perform. They were a boon to the town and the church” (David, private email, January 2010). He loves music and has been to performances at QPAC in Brisbane city, but does not attend concerts very often:

At work I see quite a few concerts because I am at a school, so therefore I see concerts at schools, but I come to this concert, and also now and then in town, every now and then. […]. But not often, not good concerts. (David, interview)
He thought Artico Ensemble’s performance in his church was good, and it made him feel happy and nostalgic. He mentions it also released a few things in him, and he recognized several of the pieces on the programme:

That’s why I said nostalgic. Especially with the singing. And … basically mostly with the singing, I recognized quite a lot of the pieces. Not the modern ones, the final ones, I knew those, you know those of the radio. But you don’t hear, through the radio or other things, you don’t hear that sort of music very frequently - unless you deliberately turn to Classic FM or something. So therefore, I felt quite nostalgic for things I’d heard in the past. […] I liked several of the pieces of music. Well, I like the Faure because of the depth of the tone, and I like the precision of the Mendelssohn. We were up here working, we were doing the, preparing the tea, and you could hear it, and eh, just its precision. With the arias, well I just like them, so … […] I come from Europe, so therefore it brings back a time when that sort of music was more prevalent in the family circles […] That’s what it brought back. People I used to know played that sort of music. (David, interview)

Although Pamela Ray, as this year’s new concert administrator at St Alban’s in Wilston, was caught up in a lot of practical matters on the day of the performance, she still enjoyed listening to the pieces:

… uhm, (apart from having to write down as I was going) the music was so enveloping that it didn’t matter having to write things down, because most of it I was familiar with, a couple of pieces I weren’t, but a lot of it I was familiar with, so it was really, it makes you nostalgic … uhm, it fills you with a lot of lovely music that you can sing along to in your head, or tap to, or you know get really involved with, and feel very comfortable and peaceful about the whole thing. […] So yes, I think that the music, and I think the combination of the music and the venue really makes for a lovely nice feeling, inside. And nice seeing people that you know there as well, really enjoying it. And the musicians also have a really lovely way of presenting and being involved with the audience. So you feel, like, very … uhm, close. (Pamela, interview)

She would like the church to host more concerts, but feels limited in her knowledge of musicians and ensembles:
I’m not personally involved with a particular musical group, or, so I’m not familiar with who to actually get in touch with for like other chamber music groups, or other musical items that we might be able to sort of have in the church, so maybe I need to see who knows the right people to get to know to do that, … but yes, it would be really nice. I think the church is lovely, …uhm, it’s a good sound, and it’ll be nice I think to have other concerts there. (Pamela, interview)

Jan Drury loves music and can easily quote her favourite piece of Artico’s performance in her church in Elanora: “I think it was the, Rianne’s piece, I think it was Adagio, and with the piano … oh, blown away. Just love that. Love music” (Jan, interview). She also describes her fondness for chamber music in particular, which to her is “a magical experience. It is a calming experience, it’s just such a wonderful, wonderful performance, the chamber music” (Jan, interview). She had attended one of Artico’s earlier concerts in Coolangatta with a friend and thought the group would be perfect for their local church, “because now we’ve got the grand piano - you’ll love it” (Jan, interview). She was very exuberant and determined in her advertising of the concert, “letting everybody on the Coast know that this was on, and if they didn’t come they would miss the most wonderful experience of their lives” (Jan, interview). She was proud of her work as concert organizer in bringing the group to Elanora:

Last year when I heard it, somebody said ‘if we were in the Opera House, this would cost a fortune, to see this, this sort of a performance’. It’s just great to be able to bring this standard of performance to the Gold Coast, at such a reasonable cost for everybody. (Jan, interview)

Lesley Briggs has a strong affinity with classical music, and thought Artico Ensemble’s concert was “Wonderful, marvellous, beautiful” (Lesley, interview). She had one favourite amongst the pieces: “I loved The Swan … really enjoyed that, it was lovely. […] I visualized the swan, gliding on the lake, … it was just a beautiful, tranquil piece that I enjoyed” (Lesley, interview). Her own love of music plays a strong part in her desire to organize more performances by the ensemble for the members of her church community in Ipswich.

Oh, we’ll definitely try to have more … We’d love them to come every year now … Once you’ve seen them and heard them, you just want more. […] Just such talented people, and for them to go around to small venues, and to perform in small venues, and open themselves up to
smaller audiences, is just a marvellous thing. [...] Even people ... people here probably haven’t heard that music before, so it’s just broadening people’s horizons, and giving them the opportunity to partake in all of that music. (Lesley, interview)

Reflecting on the interview material and the profiles created above, a few things are revealed: what becomes evident is that these nine concert administrators all love music - classical music, or even specifically chamber music. Some are more musically educated than others, but all have a strong affinity with this kind of music. Frequently it was this love of music that drove them to become involved in organizing concerts: they feel that this music is something that their community should hear, and they become advocates for chamber music.

They want to share their venue with their community, through music. This is least evident in Graham’s interview, but all the others very clearly feel an ownership of the space, a belonging to the space, which in their minds will be enhanced by a music concert.

What has also become evident is that administrators think like audience members. They treat the organizing of the event as a means of being able to listen to a beautiful concert themselves. They are very much part of the listening crowd, rather than a business-like organizer. This is one way in which these administrators in small community venues appear to differ from concert administrators in large commercial venues, and it has an impact on how they see the experience of organizing these events, and what they consider to be strengths or challenges of the process and performances.

Further findings about the administrators’ experience, and their implications, will be explored in the section below, and in the Discussion (Chapter 7).

6.3 The experience of organising professional chamber music concerts in small community venues

All interviewed administrators were asked more specifically about their experience of organising the concert, and to name some of the things that were involved in organising the concert. Jan Drury and her team did a lot of publicity but were really pleased with the results, as they had more than two hundred people in attendance. She mentions that she found the process of organising this concert quite easy:

No problem at all - it was so easy to work with the team, the musicians and eh, where would we be without emails, but everyone, they were all
so supportive of what we wanted and what they wanted, so not a problem. (Jan, interview).

She was thrilled with the positive response from her audience, but did very subtly hint at the fact that there was definitely quite a lot of work involved:

I couldn’t believe the response from people, cause I was, well, you know, yes that was fantastic, but everyone else said the same thing. Well, they were so enthusiastic, they were just coming up and saying ‘when are we doing this again, Jan, when are we doing this again?’ And I think ‘Ok, next week? NO!’

**Interviewer:** And how did that make you feel?

**Jan:** Oh, fantastic. I couldn’t stop smiling throughout the whole concert, I was like … It was great. I think we’d wait a week before we do it again, though! We’d have to print more programs (laughs). (Jan, interview)

Lesley Briggs agrees that advertising is the most important aspect of organizing these concerts, and was a bit disappointed with the support of her local media:

Advertising is the big thing, to make sure we sell the tickets. Uhm, obviously we can advertise it through our congregation, and hope that they can bring people with them, but we also send out notices and flyers to other churches within the city, and we have had people respond to those. So that was good. […] We did try in the local newspaper, but they didn’t put it in, so, … perhaps we would have got more people if they had put the advert in for us. (Lesley, interview)

When asked what was involved in organising the event at his church, Graham Blackman states:

A lot of angst and a lot of hard work! Uhm, we developed brochures, uhm, … we had some resistance, not resistance but … in terms of when the minister actually decided and selected a date it made it really time constrained. So we produced a number of brochures around the core theme of the chamber orchestra and the programme, but we produced some slightly different, to attract different audiences. And because there was a number of churches in the group, we promoted it through some schools, websites, uhm, we didn't use social media, there just wasn't enough time for that, but we certainly promoted it. We did a letterbox
drop, we put flyers up in shop windows, and we were promoting it to a
range of people, for young and old. Irrespective again of, and promoting
that irrespective of your background, irrespective of your musical taste,
this is timeless, ageless music. So, come along. It was an extremely hard
slog. You know, very time-constrained period of time. (Graham,
interview)

When asked to reflect on his overall experience of organising the concert, he is,
however, more positive in his response:

Uhm …, a great degree of personal gratification and gratitude of what
the chamber orchestra produced. It was beyond my expectations. And
what it did was it really made, for me, for everybody that was there, it
really made a wonderful afternoon of music. So, that was my
satisfaction, people actually really did genuinely enjoy it. (Graham,
interview)

Avon and Helen Georgiou-Phillips have been organising concerts in their
Wynnum home for several years now and have become quite adept at organising the
events. First of all, they book their artists

…and then get some sort of a Herald out that lets people know. […] Till
now, the papers have been really supportive. The local paper has put in a
“What’s On” thing, the Sunday Mail actually did a spread on the room,
as well, […] and the local papers have liked the fact that it’s, you know,
there’s something happening in their suburb. Makes it feel like, you
know, it’s an up-and-coming neighbourhood and it’s improving the
outlook of the neighbourhood. Wynnum’s had a bit of a dodgy past. […]
The papers have actually liked the idea that there’s something

happening, they’ve been really supportive. (Helen, interview)

In the lead-up to the performance, Helen spends time cooking the wonderful
Greek-inspired afternoon tea dishes that will be served at the conclusion of the concert.
On concert days, they re-arrange their living room furniture and bring in rows of chairs
for the audience, depending on how many people they are expecting:

We try to aim for about 60 to 65. But I had 80 black chairs out and
probably ten or fifteen of the lounge-room chairs … it did not get quite
completely that count, but it was about 85 or so, at least, here. (Avon,
interview)
They both really enjoy inviting people into their home for their music soirees: Well, I think what we find is everyone that we’ve invited, or someone who has invited someone else, but they’re likeminded, such an eclectic mix of wonderful people. They all end up friends instantly. […] The biggest joy of this place is the actual sharing. This event is the epitome of what we’re trying to achieve here, so … You know, wonderful musicians, absolutely outstanding musicians, lovely people, lovely friends, and it comes together in a lovely afternoon of … where else would you want to be on a Sunday afternoon? (Avon, interview)

For Avon, the response from the audience, and people’s reactions during the concert, make it especially worthwhile:

It’s interesting, because when you stand aside, especially either over in the kitchen or behind, you can catch people thinking things, and feeling things, that otherwise might be somewhat guarded. But when you enter their world from the side, you can … there’s no place to hide. There’s no point in making it anything it’s not, and you can see the expressions on their faces, and the smiles, and that for me is the biggest joy. To see the smiles and the expression of just amazing, amazing … you know, they’re just so enjoying it. It’s permeating the soul. (Avon, interview)

This year, however, they have encountered some difficulties with people in the neighbourhood, which may have a lasting impact on the management of their house concerts.

So, we’ve had one complaint in the street, who seems to continue to complain, but that’s just an issue that we need to work around, so … Yes, there was a point that we thought we may have to cancel, or at least divert in some sort of manner, but we worked fairly closely with the Council in the ways that we can divert any trouble, so that’s where we are at now.[…] And I’m sure, the lovely Council gentlemen are caught between a rock and a hard place. They’d love to be here, I’m sure. And I know one of them especially, he said, he looked at the programme and said “Oh, wonderful music, wonderful music”. And so, caught between that conflict of interest … I’m sure they would have been here.[…] I think in the future we’ll try to organize something with them where we have meetings, to a point where we can get some sort of future thing,
where everyone is happy, and they might be able to help us in some form, rather than have us head-butt a very hard wall. (Avon, interview)

Rick Thomason elaborates on what was involved in organising Artico Ensemble’s concert at the Redland Museum in Cleveland:

I think Paul sent me an email saying he’d worked out this year’s programme, were we interested? And of course I was interested. So that motivated me to get cracking. […] We’ve been promoting it for quite a while … you never know until the last minute how many people are going to turn up. But it was really Paul’s letting us know that it was on excited me, and I followed it up from that. […] It’s circulated to all our members, which is about 300, promoted generously through the Bayside Bulletin, and Bay FM, which is the local radio station so we get that coverage locally, […] Uhm…, newsletters, circulars, leaflets, things like that … I suppose the usual ones? (Rick, interview)

He was a bit worried about audience numbers in the lead-up to the concert, but pleased with the turn-out on the day:

I was, considering that quite a few of them hadn’t said they were coming, so that’s always a bonus, except for the caterers. But we need, really do … musicians are so expensive these days, we really do need bums on seats! So yes, I was thrilled when they started pouring in. (Rick, interview)

Rick also offers his view on the benefits of these types of concerts for his community members, and shows a humble pride in his own contribution:

I think what it did, was give a lot of people pleasure. So many people said how much they’d enjoyed it, because they’re getting old, they can’t go to the city for these concerts, it’s expensive, and here’s an opportunity for them to hear lovely music and it doesn’t take them long to get home. So they feel comfortable. And I think it’s offering a (service is a funny word …) but I think it’s offering a service to these people. An opportunity to hear live music, good music, and not be far away, not have to come too far. (Rick, interview)

This year, David Swindells was not so heavily involved in the organizing of Artico’s concert at St Alban’s in Wilston: “I organised the previous ones, because they’d done two concerts here in the previous years, so I organised the tickets and
everything for that. But this time I was just helping out with the food” (David, interview). Pamela Ray explains the thoughts and activities of her events team:

Ok, organising an event like this - the first thing I suppose we wanted to do was (it was for the community) so we looked at who in the community we needed to inform about the concert. We do have, the minister has email lists to all the other churches in the area, so we emailed all of those, so they would put all of that in their notices so that they were aware of the concert. And for those who’d been to previous ones and hopefully would be ‘yes, that was great, we’ll come along, we’ll bring other people as well’. We’ve advertised through the school, we’ve had some of the community members here who have put notices up in the local post office, and local shops and cafes that they go to, the local supermarket area, … so we’ve tried to do it more, uhm …, I suppose it’s for a local community, rather than putting it over the air or putting it in Focus (the Anglican magazine) to maybe advertise it more in other areas. But maybe that’s something we can be thinking about doing a little bit more of, so people can actually come and see the church as well! (Pamela, interview)

She lists some of the other tasks as well, and explains that she was disappointed with some of her team members’ attitudes:

Apart from the promotion, we need to look at ticketing, and programmes, and getting in touch with the people who are providing the programme for us, so we need to know when we can have it, and if that’s a suitable time. We need to be organising what their programme is, making sure that we can get a pamphlet out that promotes what they’re actually going to do early enough. Looking at making tickets, looking at trying to push tickets around different people so that they can sell the tickets well. So it’s working out how to sell the tickets, and then putting on the afternoon tea and working out what we need, how we’re going to do it, the food, the drinks, people to help. So getting everyone, trying to get other people on board who … there are some people who are a little negative about these sorts of things, and so it’s rising above that and finding other people who will actually support this sort of an event. […] For those who are a bit negative I think that they probably feel that they don’t want to involve themselves in doing it, they feel it’s
a lot of hard work. So they don’t see that other people maybe have energy to do it. (Pamela, interview)

These more negative attitudes among some members of her community had an effect on her experience of organising the concert. When asked to summarise her experience in a few words, she hesitates:

Three words to describe the organising … uhm, don’t know, not really ‘stressful’, uhm, it’s not a word, I don’t know … I think maybe, I don’t know, this is very difficult. I’m quite happy in doing it, so ‘happy’, … a little …[…] Maybe busy, maybe busy is a good way to say, busy towards the end, but enjoyable? In knowing that you can get it all together. So perhaps happy, enjoyable, busy. That’ll do, yeah! (laughs). (Pamela, interview)

Dawn Langford has gained a lot of experience and organisational skills in her role as coordinator of the annual concert series at the Kenmore Uniting Church. It is, however, a team effort, and as she says “We’ve got to the stage where we can just about run the concerts without having a meeting, which is a very good thing!” (Dawn, interview). The series launched in 2010, and after the first year of performances she did a survey of her church congregation and concert audience and found that everyone was very keen to continue the series. Dawn aims to have variety in her invited artists:

We’re called ‘Cool & Classic’, which gives us a fair bit of freedom. And we have at least one jazz concert, and we have Artico Ensemble each year because it started with their concert years ago. And then we have something else a bit different. (Dawn, interview)

She elaborates a bit more on her careful selection of artists:

We’re very concerned that there is a quality performance. We are trying to offer that, because that’s the point of it, that it’s not just an amateur, uhm, the local people trying to do something - which is fine, and that has its place - but we’re trying to get outsiders in, we’re trying to offer something that is not available in the area (Dawn, interview)

The series’ concerts (now) attract a sizeable audience:

We seem to be averaging between 90 and 110 or 120. We had 125 for the jazz concert last year and this year, that seems to be very popular. It has slightly different … there’s a core group but it has some people that come just to the jazz concert. (Dawn, interview)
Dawn maintains a large display folder with event spread sheets and a list of jobs with task descriptions and was happy to take part in a substantial interview discussing all the things involved in managing her concert series. She says that she starts out by planning suitable concert dates for the year according to the church calendar. She and her events team then create all the tickets; series tickets as well as individual ones. She then makes a start with publicity in the local newspaper, the church journal and noticeboard, because, as she says, “that’s really crucial”. She tries to get some radio publicity as well, at least for some of the concerts in her series: “4MBS will only publicize any classical concerts, so, you know, we can only use them for that”. She also contacts local schools and other churches in the area to ask them to promote the concert. Dawn and her team members send and deliver flyers and get in touch with all potential patrons on Dawn’s mailing list.

We find that if we can get close to a hundred people, then we make enough for it to be a worthwhile effort, financial as well as in every other way. And of course, over that, once we've got the costs covered, […] then we know that every extra person who comes, that’s a bonus. (Dawn, interview)

She organises piano tuning if needed, although “now that we’ve got the digital piano we were hoping that wouldn’t need to be done quite so much”. The next thing she tackles is organising a nice afternoon tea, because she feels that the aspect of hospitality is really important. “And that’s not my forte, so I try to palm that off as soon as I can! Once I get somebody […] who will say they will co-ordinate that, I have a list of everything that has to be done”. The team also approaches retirement villages and assist with transport to the venue if needed:

And we do get people here who are quite frail, who, they can’t get to concerts in town, it is just too much hard work to get them in there, and {we} get people who can bring those neighbours or family members here. (Dawn, interview)

Dawn also looks into the parking facilities on-site:
I have to talk to the local Anglicans and say ‘Can we use your parking as overflow if need be?’, and they always say yes, but we always ask. And I have to get people who will organise the parking, so that it’s not just mayhem, and it’s safe for people coming in and out. (Dawn, interview)
On the day of the concert, she arrives early to meet the musicians during their sound check and check seating requirements and discusses artist payments. After having managed the concert series for a few years, Dawn feels she and her team have a fair bit of experience. As she says,

I just try to make sure that someone doesn’t have to do the same job all the time, especially if it’s one of the big jobs. So that, you know, just shares it all out. […] So it’s a matter of breaking the task down into a lot of small jobs. Because, as I say, our congregation is a bit older and we really need to be able to ask people to do something that is not unmanageable. That’s the way we do it. (Dawn, interview)

Dawn also elaborates on the social aspect of the concerts, and in particular of the ongoing concert series:

There’s an interesting thing that has happened, when we used to have the yearly concerts, at the beginning, when we had the break in the middle, […] most people just, they might have gone and got water or, you know, stood up for a bit and sat down again, and they did that, that’s all they did. Now, it’s hard to get them back to the concert! Because they’re all off chatting to somebody that they met last concert, or somebody that they’ve discovered that they knew from the school or whatever, so … I can see a lot of interaction going on, and that’s really, really nice to know, that that’s happening. It’s something quite special, and it is a difference from the very first few concerts that we ran. […] {And} that’s actually part of our philosophy, especially in the last few years, we've made a big effort to be providing spaces for the community to be in contact, even if they aren’t necessarily belonging to our congregation. (Dawn, interview)

When asked about her thoughts on Artico’s concert at her church, she first of all comments on the programme:

It was good. And we’ve had some feedback from some of our people who’ve been to quite a few of theirs, who said […] they were really pleasantly surprised, because they always seem to re-invent themselves and do a fresh programme. That’s I think really quite important, that they are able to do that. And I think it’s very important when there’s some familiar stuff. Not … it’s always nice to have some new things,
something different in the concert that you didn’t know before (and they’re good at that), but everybody seems to like at least to have a few pieces there that they connect with and think ‘Oh yes, I know that’. And that’s something that comes out. […] A lot of these people are quite knowledgeable musically. I’d say that you’ve got some who actually have concert tickets in town, and they do, they have a history of going to concerts. Not all, because we’re trying to spread into a bigger group now, whereas at the beginning we mostly got people who already, people who liked going to concerts. I think now we’re bringing in people who are thinking ‘Oh, alright, I’ll try this’, so it’s nice if there’s something in there that they can connect with easily, and then there needs to be something that is a bit different. And it’s really good, we find that the vocal always works well, to have a mixture of instrumental and vocal. […] So I think the programme is very important. That you get a balance between what people can connect with and what is new to some, and there’ll be others who are more experienced in concert going who might recognize a bit more. That’s really good. (Dawn, interview)

When asked whether she thinks it is important or valuable to have musicians like Artico Ensemble (and her other artists) who are willing to come out to communities and perform in smaller venues to smaller audiences, in addition to performances at QPAC or the Powerhouse, Dawn states:

Well, as I said, there’s quite a group that we have coming here that don’t get into those concerts, they can’t. So we’ve got that group. They’re frailer and it’s too much work to get them in there. So they’re getting live concerts that they wouldn’t otherwise get. I think also it’s a good introductory step for some people, who come to something local because a friend has asked them, or they’ve heard about it, or it’s not going to be … they’re not going to have to work out how to get there and how to get parked and everything, they know they can come here. So, maybe some of those people might then go a bit further afield if they’ve found that they enjoyed it. There’s something special about live music, I think, that … […] well, I think it’s really important, that we have things locally. (Dawn, interview)
She also mentions that her and her team at Kenmore put a lot of thought into setting suitable ticket prices for the concerts:

If we had to charge too much, then I think we might have a problem getting as many people. It’s a … you’ve got to find a ‘how much are we going to charge that gives you enough return, but it’s not too much so that your audience starts to drop’. So, we’re trying to get that balance. And the last few years, because of the issues with the economy, and the fact that a tremendous number of our people are retired or on fixed superannuation or investment incomes (which are declining sometimes!), we’ve just kept our prices very much the same. […] So it’s a juggling act, I think. It’s a juggling act for the performers, what they can afford to do these things for … I understand that it’s very hard for groups to be able to come at a modest cost. […] And yet if we go to people who are willing to play anywhere sort of thing, because they’re just wanting to get out and play, sometimes if the quality drops […] that’s hard. You’ve got to keep the quality up, you’ve got to keep the price modest, and we’ve got to somehow rather get some variety as well, and still make it a worthwhile thing for us to do. It’s very worthwhile in terms of the community connections. I can’t think there’s ever been any doubt. And when I did a survey of the congregation they were very strong on that. So I think from that point of view it’s worthwhile. It’s just a question of balancing the work input and the other aspects. (Dawn, interview)

6.4 The strengths and challenges of organising professional chamber music performances in small community venues

The experience of organizing chamber music performances in small community venues described in the previous section already touched on particular issues associated with this type of performance that can be seen as the strong or challenging aspects of the medium. As the second main line of enquiry, this research set out to isolate the strengths and challenges, and in one-on-one interviews the administrators were asked to provide their personal view on the topic. The report that follows in this section flows from strengths to challenges in continuous narrative, and the topics are discussed in no particular hierarchical order.

Jan Drury first heard Artico Ensemble a year ago, when she and a friend attended a performance by the ensemble in a different Gold Coast venue. The standard
of the ensemble’s performance was what sparked her interest in booking the group for her own venue:

Last year when I heard it, somebody said ‘if we were in the Opera House, this would cost a fortune, to see this, this sort of a performance’.

It’s just great to be able to bring this standard of performance to the Gold Coast, at such a reasonable cost for everybody. (Jan, interview)

The Kenmore church congregation has a large number of members who are a bit older and less mobile. Attending a music performance in the city’s main performance venues is a challenge for them, and Dawn recognizes the importance of hosting concerts locally, in Kenmore: “There’s quite a group that we have coming here that don’t get into those concerts, they can’t. […] They’re frailer and it’s too much work to get them in there. So they’re getting live concerts that they wouldn’t otherwise get” (Dawn, interview). She has also noticed that the local concerts in her series are attractive to people who not usually attend events such as these:

I think also it’s a good introductory step for some people, who come to something local because a friend has asked them or they’ve heard about it, or it’s not going to be … they’re not going to have to work out how to get there and how to get parked and everything, they know they can come here. So, maybe some of those people might then go a bit further afield if they’ve found that they enjoyed it. There’s something special about live music, I think. […] So, I think that’s really important, that we have things locally. (Dawn, interview)

She does, however, try to ensure that the concerts in her series are always of a high professional standard:

We’re very concerned that there is a quality performance. We are trying to offer that, because that’s the point of it, that it’s not just an amateur… uhm, the local people trying to do something - which is fine, and that has its place - but we’re trying to get outsiders in, we’re trying to offer something that is not available in the area. (Dawn, interview)

As mentioned before, Rick Thomason knows that one of the strengths of the concerts at his museum in the Redlands is that if offers his audience “an opportunity to hear live music, good music, and not be far away, not have to come too far” (Rick, interview).
Lesley is very impressed with the quality of the ensemble, and sees the fact that the group comes to perform in Ipswich as a wonderful opportunity:

I think the advantages of having something like this is it opens people up to different kinds of music that perhaps they don’t listen to at home, or they own music of this type, and eh it’s broadening people’s horizons. And for those that do like this music it is just giving them a wonderful afternoon of entertainment. [...] Just such talented people, and for them to go around to small venues, and to perform in small venues, and open themselves up to smaller audiences, is just a marvellous thing. As I said, even people …, people here probably haven’t heard that music before, so it’s just broadening people’s horizons, and giving them the opportunity to partake in all of that music. (Lesley, interview)

Several of the Administrators mentioned that the combination of the music and the musicians, and the space they performed in created a wonderful experience, for them as well as for their guests. Rick considered his Redland Museum space to be a lovely venue for concerts (Rick, interview), and Avon loved to hear “his” audience’s glowing comments after the well-received performance in his home: “… with such fine musicians, and with such a lovely space. It just provides them with a wonderful experience” (Avon, interview). He described the performance, for himself, as an ethereal experience. Pamela, organizer of the concert in the ambient Anglican Church in Wilston, summarized it thus: “I think the combination of the music and the venue really makes for a lovely nice feeling, inside” (Pamela, interview).

For David Swindells, Pamela’s colleague and past administrator of the first Artico concerts in Wilston, the purpose of getting the ensemble to perform in his venue in the first place, was “to get the community into the church, and just make the church a place of the community” (David, interview). For his successor Pamela, the community aspect is also a very strong incentive for organizing the concert, and she highlights the importance of serving afternoon tea as part of the event:

For us I think we feel that it’s a social community event, and a lot of the older people really love talking, and being involved, and an afternoon tea is a great time for them to actually chat, and having a good concert to, you know, help make conversation is really good as well. (Pamela, interview)
By creating a concert series in her church in Kenmore, Dawn also hoped it would assist in making the church venue a strong and accessible place of the local community:

Well, that’s actually part of our philosophy, especially in the last few years, we've made a big effort to be providing spaces for the community to be in contact, even if they aren’t necessarily belonging to our congregation. […] And it means that our people have got somewhere to invite friends, it’s not as confronting as inviting people to come to worship, but they can come and enjoy the fellowship. And we do get comments, people say it’s such a lovely concert to come to, so friendly, get to talk to the musicians, and the people here they say are very welcoming. (Dawn, interview)

Serving afternoon tea has always been part and parcel of these concerts, as Dawn realizes this can strengthen the community feel of these events:

We’ve always had afternoon tea, or, you know, something, and we’ve always asked the musicians to come and meet people. And they really seem to like that - that they can talk to the musicians. So it’s a very community sort of afternoon, it’s not just a concert where you go along and somebody is up on stage and performs, and then you go home again. (Dawn, interview)

She is adamant that these events should be accessible to the members of her local community, as a local, social community event:

The important thing is for them to ask their friends and feel comfortable, and that we’re actually offering something to the community that they’re going to enjoy. And that they’re going to be coming along and it won’t be a hassle, and they can come in and feel welcome. (Dawn, interview)

Dawn has also noticed that her concerts provide an opportunity for people to meet and chat, and that this type of audience interaction has grown since she first started the concerts a few years back:

There’s an interesting thing that has happened, when we used to have the yearly concerts, at the beginning, when we had the break in the middle, we always have water and everything available, especially in summer, most people just, they might have gone and got water or, you
know, stood up for a bit and sat down again, and they did that, that’s all they did. Now, it’s hard to get them back to the concert! Because they’re all off chatting to somebody that they met last concert, or somebody that they’ve discovered that they knew from the school or whatever, so … I can see a lot of interaction going on, and that’s really, really nice to know, that that’s happening. It’s something quite special, and it is a difference from the very first few concerts that we ran. (Dawn, interview)

She is also of the opinion that hosting the concert in her church venue allows a strong sense of interaction between performer and audience as well:

I think that for a group like that, this is a very good venue. It may not be as perfect acoustically, and in that sense, technically, but I think in terms of interaction with the audience, the closeness to the audience, they’re able to do that. And the audience really feel that they’re singing for them, … (Dawn, interview)

Rick agrees and sees the sense of personal connection that these types of concerts afford as one of their strengths:

It’s a privilege to be enjoying a small concert … a small group in a concert. You know, you go to the great big concerts in town, and you’re one of many, and it’s just more personal somehow. (Rick, interview)

When asked to describe the difference between performances in large concert venues or smaller ones, David points to the different relationship between performer and audience, “and the ability for the performers to make contact with the audience. When they’re in a small place, it’s obviously far easier to do than in a larger cathedral or at QPAC or … the big stuff” (David, interview). As Avon says, one of the strengths of hosting concerts in his living room is that “people can get so close” (Avon, interview).

For administrator Dawn, Artico Ensemble’s repertoire and programming is one of the main strengths of the group, and one of the main reasons for her booking the ensemble for her concert series for several years running:

It was good. And we’ve had some feedback from some of our people who’ve been to quite a few of theirs, who said, they were sort of wondering, you know, ‘this is another one’, they’ve seen them so many times, but they said they were really pleasantly surprised, because they
always seem to re-invent themselves and do a fresh programme. That’s I think really quite important, that they are able to do that. And I think it’s very important when there’s some familiar stuff. Not … it’s always nice to have some new things, something different in the concert that you didn’t know before (and they’re good at that), but everybody seems to like at least to have a few pieces there that they connect with and think ‘Oh yes, I know that’. And that’s something that comes out. […] And it’s really good, we find that the vocal always works well, to have a mixture of instrumental and vocal. […] So I think the programme is very important. That you get a balance between what people can connect with and what is new to some, and there’ll be others who are more experienced in concert going who might recognize a bit more. That’s really good. (Dawn, interview)

She also appreciates the ensemble’s way of presenting, and sees it as an important way of drawing an audience in:

Uhm…definitely entertaining. That’s always something I find about them. And there’s something always about the quality of their performance. It’s never a concert where you’re sitting, thinking ‘I wonder if this one’s going to be alright’, you know … you just know that it is going to be very professional. And then the other thing is the warmth. Ever since they've started to come here that’s something that’s always impressed me, is the warmth of the way they talk to the audience, and the interaction, and I always feel that they’re happy to be here. I mean, that may be their professionalism, but they always give us the feeling that they're glad to be here, that they're enjoying their own music, which I think is really important - I hate going to listen to people who look as if they’re putting on a performance, but not getting much fun out of it themselves. So, it’s that warmth that I would think of when we get their presentations, and what they do in between. Little bits of information they give, it doesn't matter if it’s printed on the programme or not, the point is they talk about it. You hear that enthusiasm about the music. (Dawn, interview)

Graham also sees the repertoire of the group as one of their strengths, and his main reason for booking them for his venue in Wavell Heights:
My wife and I, we enjoy a great range of music. Classical, semi-classical, modern … […] And we decided that this was the sort of (and the repertoire of the group) we thought that this was really, irrespective of age difference, irrespective of musical tastes, irrespective of people’s backgrounds, that this would be really good - that people could come and enjoy two hours of, you know, such a range of music. (Graham, interview)

Avon and Helen frequently invite established and up-and-coming concert pianists to take part in their house concert series, to perform on their large Bösendorfer Grand Piano. They also love hosting chamber music ensembles, …because it totally suits the home environment. […] When we designed this home […], when we thought about the extension, the main focus was chamber music, so this whole conception, the whole building has been the conception of having chamber music here. (Avon, interview)

He had not heard Artico Ensemble prior to booking them for this concert, and enjoyed their instrumentation of voice, winds and piano:
I thought that was an amazing combination, I was really pleasantly surprised. And I love the bass oboe, that’s amazing! It’s so much like, like being a bass vocalist myself, when we start singing, down dead in the low register, it’s a clarity, yeah. It’s just beautiful. That sound gets in your soul, it really does. (Avon, interview)

Rick also commented favourably on Artico’s repertoire:
Well I thought it was a lovely programme. Only recently in the Uniting Church here in Cleveland we had Faure’s Requiem, Rosemarie Arthars […] sang, and that was quite lovely. So I was excited to see that Faure’s Requiem was part of the programme. And everyone enjoys the second half always, because, I think they seriously … uhm, sit through the first half being… uhm, intellectual, and then lighten up and enjoy the second. For so many people say ‘Oh, I love the second half’, and I think it’s people who don’t frequent, you know, orchestral concerts, concerts in the city, all that sort of thing, but they really do like to hear some popular music, so quite a lot of people I think enjoy that part as much as the more serious stuff. (Rick, interview)
Pamela enjoyed the ensemble’s repertoire (some of which was familiar to her), and commented on the group’s style of presentation:

The music was so enveloping […] because most of it I was familiar with. A couple of pieces I weren’t, but a lot of it I was familiar with, so it was really, …it makes you nostalgic, uhm, it fills you with a lot of lovely music that you can sing along to in your head, or tap to, or you know, get really involved with, and feel very comfortable and peaceful about the whole thing. […] And the musicians also have a really lovely way of presenting and being involved with the audience. So you feel, like, very …uhm close”. (Pamela, interview)

She mentioned that the quality of the group and their enjoyable programming was her main reason for booking Artico for performances in Wilston for several years in a row:

This is the third performance we’ve had by this group. And that’s why we’ve continued with it because the other performances were excellent and everyone really enjoyed them, so we thought we’d have, you know, more people coming and being a part of the performance programme as such here. (Pamela, interview)

Through the use of words such as “excited”, “lovely”, “excellent”, and “wonderful afternoon”, nearly all of the administrators’ comments and stories shared/discussed above convey a sense of enthusiasm. By working through the administrator interview material, it also became evident, however, that all administrators and their colleagues put a lot of effort and hard work into organizing the events. Some see and voice this as a (negative) challenge, where others simply absorb it as a necessary means to an end; a job that needs to be done to ensure a successful and gratifying experience for all involved. It should be acknowledged, however, that without these administrators’ tireless hard work, concerts in small community venues such as this could not happen. These active and enthusiastic administrators should therefore themselves be considered a strength of these types of performances, and their efforts and actions a vital component of the concert events.

All administrators mentioned or hinted at the fact that especially the marketing and advertising of these concerts is a real challenge. As Lesley states:

Advertising is the big thing, to make sure we sell the tickets. Uhm, obviously we can do it through our congregation, and hope that they can
bring people with them, but we also send out notices and flyers to other churches within the city, and we have had people respond to those. (Lesley, interview)

She was disappointed by the lack of support from her local newspaper in marketing the event: “No, we did try in the local newspaper, but they didn’t put it in, so, … perhaps we would have got more people if they had put the advert in for us” (Lesley, interview). Jan Drury is fairly matter-of-fact about the work involved in marketing the concert in Elanora, simply stating that she did “a lot of publicity, and I think it has worked - as you can see, people are still streaming through the door. And letting everybody on the Coast know that this was on” (Jan, interview). Her reaction to her audience members requesting another concert straightaway, however, does hint at the fact it was still quite strenuous: “Well, they were so enthusiastic, they were just coming up and saying ‘when are we doing this again, Jan, when are we doing this again?’ And I think ‘Ok, next week? NO!’” (Jan, interview). Having been involved in organizing concerts at her church for many years, Dawn has a whole list of marketing and publicity tasks to ensure the concerts in her series attract enough audience (as shown in the previous section about the experience of organizing these events). Although still challenging, the marketing and advertising has become a manageable challenge to her. Pamela and her team at Wilston kept their marketing very targeted to their local community:

We looked at who in the community we needed to inform about the concert. We do have, the minister has email lists to all the other churches in the area, so we emailed all of those, so they would put all of that in their notices so that they were aware of the concert. And for those who’d been to previous ones and hopefully would be ‘yes, that was great, we’ll come along, we’ll bring other people as well’. We’ve advertised through the school, we’ve had some of the community members here who have put notices up in the local post office, and local shops and cafes that they go to, the local supermarket area, … so we’ve tried to do it more, uhm …, I suppose it’s for a local community, rather than putting it over the air or putting it in Focus (the Anglican magazine) to maybe advertise it more in other areas. (Pamela, interview)

This strategy was very similar to Graham’s marketing campaign in Wavell Heights:
So we produced a number of brochures around the core theme of the chamber orchestra and the programme, but we produced some slightly different, to attract different audiences. And because there was a number of churches in the group, we promoted it through some schools, websites, uhm, we didn't use social media, there just wasn't enough time for that, but we certainly promoted it. We did a letterbox drop, we put flyers up in shop windows, and we were promoting it to a range of people, for young and old. (Graham, interview)

Both Graham and Pamela remarked that, aside from it being a busy time, it was also quite stressful at times. They both encountered difficulties within their organizing teams, which should be seen as an additional challenge of organizing and managing these types of concerts. As shown in the introductory section of this administrators’ report, most of the administrators organized the concert as part of an events team or organizing committee. This allows for division of tasks and as such makes the organizing of the event more manageable but working within a team can unfortunately cause its own challenges. As Graham says, promoting the concert took:

>a lot of angst and a lot of hard work! We developed brochures, … we had some resistance, not resistance, but … in terms of when the minister actually decided and selected a date it made it really time constrained. […] It was an extremely hard slog. You know, very time-constrained period of time. (Graham, interview)

One of Pamela’s challenges was also related to the group dynamics within her organizing team:

>So getting everyone, trying to get other people on board who … there are some people who are a little negative about these sorts of things, and so it’s rising above that and finding other people who will actually support this sort of an event. […] For those who are a bit negative I think that they probably feel that they don’t want to involve themselves in doing it, they feel it’s a lot of hard work. So they don’t see that other people maybe have energy to do it. […] So, yes, it’s getting beyond those criticisms (laughs). (Pamela, interview)

Rick’s museum hosts a number of different events each year that appear to be well-managed, and he did not voice any concerns relating to his team. Jan found it very easy to work with her colleagues of the Adult Fellowship team, and Avon and Helen are
an organising team by themselves, with Avon in charge of marketing and advertising and Helen in charge of refreshments.

Another clear challenge related to the marketing and advertising of these events, is the administrators’ worry of simply getting enough tickets sold to make the event viable. Rick Thomason remarked that many people do not make advance bookings to confirm that they will indeed be attending a published event, causing uncertainty and worry. Thankfully, in this case he had reason to be pleased with the number of attendees:

I was, considering that quite a few of them hadn’t said they were coming, so that’s always a bonus, except for the caterers. But we need, really do … musicians are so expensive these days, we really do need bums on seats! So yes, I was thrilled when they started pouring in. (Rick, interview)

Dawn and her team at Kenmore offer season tickets to their annual three-concert series, which alleviates some (but not all) of the worry:

We sold season tickets, and that largely I think benefits our own congregation. Some other people also buy season tickets, but it certainly gives you a base, you don't have to panic every time, you've got at least a certain number of people that are going to come. (Dawn, interview)

In her case study interview, Dawn does voice a further concern that is particularly relevant to those managing and maintaining an ongoing concert series, which is the need to balance ticket prices, so that events are accessible but still viable:

If we had to charge too much, then I think we might have a problem getting as many people. It’s a … you’ve got to find a ‘how much are we going to charge that gives you enough return, but it’s not too much so that your audience starts to drop’. So, we’re trying to get that balance. […] You’ve got to keep the quality up, you’ve got to keep the price modest, and we’ve got to somehow rather get some variety as well, and still make it a worthwhile thing for us to do. It’s very worthwhile in terms of the community connections. I can’t think there’s ever been any doubt. And when I did a survey of the congregation they were very strong on that. So I think from that point of view it’s worthwhile. It’s just a question of balancing the work input and the other aspects. (Dawn, interview)
The other administrators, for whom the case study concert was the first or second Artico event they organized, did not raise this issue in interviews. Several administrators mentioned that they would be interested in hosting more concerts in their venue, in which case it might become a point of discussion. Avon and Helen run their house concert series on a not-for-profit basis, with all donations at the door going to the artists (as communicated to me in private conversations), which explains their lack of concern related to this issue as presented in this study. Avon and Helen did, however, encounter another challenge due to the fact that their events are taking place at their house. (NB: This challenge is only applicable to them, and not to the other administrators featured in this study). A fellow resident in their street was concerned about concert patrons parking in the street and lodged a complaint with the Council. Avon and Helen were worried they might have to cancel the case study concert but managed to resolve the situation by working closely with the Council.

6.5 Conclusion

In this third Research Report, material was presented that relayed what the administrators participating in this study saw as the strengths and challenges of Artico Ensemble’s chamber music concerts in their small community venues. It also discussed those pertaining more specifically to the role of being in charge of organizing them. Some strengths and challenges were easily spelled-out, and others became evident by reading between the lines of the narrative in the interview transcripts. These strengths and challenges, coupled with the administrator’s love for (chamber) music and their resulting advocacy of these concerts toward their community members, combine into the full experience of organizing the events.

For clarity, it may be useful to briefly summarise the strengths and challenges relayed in this administrator chapter.

Strengths - in order of appearance in this chapter:

- These concerts comprise a high-standard, quality performance offered locally;
- These concerts make this style of music, chamber music, available to different (or new) members of the public;
- The combination of the music/musicians and the space they perform in creates a wonderful experience;
- These events make the church/venue a place of the community;
- These events are accessible (read: easy to enjoy, low threshold);
- These types of venues provide opportunity for interaction between attendees;
• These types of venues provide opportunity for intimate interaction between audience and artists;
• The instrumentation, repertoire and style of presentation are strengths of the ensemble.

Challenges - in order of appearance in this section:
• The general organising of these concerts requires a lot of hard work;
• The marketing and advertising of these concerts (in particular) is challenging;
• Organising these types of events as part of an events team can cause difficulties;
• It is a challenge to get a sufficient number of tickets sold;
• Managing a concert series requires balancing ticket prices, to ensure that events are accessible but still viable;
• Managing concerts in a suburban residential setting can cause challenges.

This conclusion marks the end of administrator’s story, and thereby the end of the case study’s Research Reports. In the chapter that follows, ‘Chapter 7. Discussion of findings and themes’, the experience, strengths and challenges of the Artists, Audience members and Administrators will be distilled to their underlying, overarching themes, and merged. This will create an opportunity to draw parallels with existing literature, and for reflections on the essence and relevance of the main findings of this research.
Chapter 7 - Discussion of findings and themes

7.1 Discussion

All the material gathered together in this thesis so far has created a many-faceted picture of the experience of being involved in chamber music performance in small community venues and brought forth a large number of topics which are seen (by those involved) as the strengths and challenges of this type of music making. Although presented in separate chapters to highlight each performance partner’s individual position within this chamber music environment, the material has started to show the intricate and symbiotic relationship between the three partners, and the many ways in which their experience connects. When we look more closely, two things become clear.

Firstly, the experience, and the strengths and challenges are very much intertwined. The strengths and challenges are the experience, and the experience consists of a combination of strengths and challenges.

Secondly, two elements are central to this study’s topic and gathered material: the venues, and the ensemble. The venues (being small community venues) influence the experiences and contain and cause the strengths and challenges of this type of music making. The ensemble (its personnel, programming, and style of presentation) equally influences the experience, and equally contains and causes the strengths and challenges of this type of music making.

The discussion of study findings that follows flows via the two elements of ‘venues’ and ‘ensemble’ where possible. For clarity, the discussion focuses on the strengths and challenges of each of those (rather than the larger image of the experience) to be able to touch on the more crystallized themes. Those themes that are important to all three partners are discussed first, and those that are only relevant to two of the partners follow later in the chapter. Within this structure, the order in which the themes are presented is not hierarchical, which means that ‘Theme 1’ is not necessarily the most important theme.

One final note to bear in mind: when using the term ‘venue’, it should be understood as being this study’s small community-type place of gathering in the suburban areas of Brisbane (i.e. the church, home, or museum), as well as the place of cultural activity. In other words, not merely the building itself.

Theme 1: Connection & Interaction

The theme of connection & interaction runs very strongly through the data for all three study partners. There are clear examples of connection and interaction between artists and audience, between artist and artist, between audience members and other
audience members, between audience members and administrators, and between administrators and artists.

**Artists-audience**

Due to the small size of the venues, audience members can sit close to the performers, or feel close to the performers even when not sitting in the first few rows. Not only does the small size of the venue allow for the sound to reach each audience member easily, visibility is also enhanced. The connection and mutual interaction that can therefore take place during a performance enhance the performance experience for the audience members as well as the artists.

For this study’s audience members, the connection and interaction between the artists and the audience enhanced the immediacy of the performance, making it more real and lived-in, and therefore created a more meaningful experience. This is what Barker (in Radbourne, 2014) describes when discussing the concept of ‘liveness’. For many audience members, experiencing ‘liveness’ is precisely the reason for physically attending performances rather than simply listening to music on the radio or on CD, so this theme of connection & interaction should be seen as one of the strengths of the venues. The connection and interaction also assisted in making the experience more personal for the audience, allowing them to get to know the artists as people, and allowing them to get a better understanding and appreciation of the music performed.

For the artists, the noticeable connection and opportunity for interaction with the audience made the performance a more worthwhile experience as well: rather than playing and singing to a faceless large crowd seated in semi-darkness (as is most frequently the case in large venue settings), the connection and interaction meant that they could feel the music being received and (in most cases) appreciated. This made the experience more rewarding for most of the artists, and therefore worthwhile pursuing. The connection and interaction was felt during the performance but also during the refreshments afterwards, where conversations with patrons again confirmed that the artists’ performance had been worthwhile.

**Artist-artist.**

These types of venue and their small size allow and foster connection & interaction between the artists themselves. Performances in these venues are self-managed and run by the artists themselves. From the moment of arrival on concert days, all set-up and sound check activities are managed by the artists as a group and are highly interactive with the aim to develop the strong group-connection required to
create a good performance. The size of the venue and its performance space create the opportunity for musical interaction on stage, allowing the free flow of the creative, spur-of-the-moment musical ideas so idiomatic to chamber music.

**Audience-audience.**

There were many examples of connection & interaction amongst the audience members themselves. For many patrons the very reason for attending the event was due to a connection to another person, a relative or friend, who invited them to attend. These attendance companions were not only instrumental to them coming to the performance but also made the whole experience more enjoyable and worthwhile. For many audience members it was reassuring and comforting to know that they might meet other community members at the performance whom they had a connection with. This connection could be a pre-existing one, but there is also evidence that simply attending these events create new levels of connection and interaction. Dawn, administrator in Kenmore, mentioned that the level of interaction amongst her audience members had markedly increased since the start of their concert series:

they’re all off chatting to somebody that they met last concert, or somebody that they’ve discovered that they knew from the school or whatever, so … I can see a lot of interaction going on, and that’s really, really nice to know, that that’s happening. It’s something quite special, and it is a difference from the very first few concerts that we ran.

(Dawn, private interview)

This two-layered social aspect of concert attendance was for many a main reason for attending and contributed to their feeling of enjoyment during and after the performance. Furthermore, many audience members mentioned that they enjoyed watching fellow audience members enjoying the performance. This additional interactive aspect of audience-ship made their whole experience more enjoyable and more worthwhile. These findings correspond with Johanson’s, who noted that audience members value live events differently to pre-recorded events, due in part to the shared, communal experience of being in the audience (as cited in Radbourne et al., 2014, p. 14).

**Administrators-audience.**

The existing or created connection between the administrators and the audience is strongly felt/clearly visible in the study material. Audience members were either part of the administrators’ existing close network of friends and acquaintances, receiving an
invitation to attend, or saw and read publicity material created by the administrators. Many patrons based their decision to attend on the fact that they felt a desire to support the host administrator and his or her project. Others (as in the case of the house concert) based their decision to attend the performance on their personal fondness for the hosts, whom they thought were instrumental to the complete, personal experience and enjoyment of the event as a whole. This role of ‘spider in the web’ makes the function of the administrator and his or her connections and interactions with the audience a key element in the success and longevity of these events.

**Administrators-artists.**

The connection & interaction between the administrators and the artists was also clearly visible in the study material. From the personal, one-on-one discussions regarding the initial planning of the concert event to the friendly welcome greetings on the day of the concert (and several instances of them touching base in between), these concerts feature strong elements of personal interaction between the artists and administrators. The artists have built personal connections with the administrators of the frequently visited venues, creating and cementing a level of trust and confidence in the artistic outcome of the events. Relationships are on first-name basis, and the study data show a shared goal of making the concerts a success. This particular connection is one of the points of difference between these types of concerts and events in mainstream venues, where the booking, managing and marketing of performances is most often done by agencies.

As shown, connection & interaction is a strong and positive theme for all partners involved in chamber music in small community venues.

**Strength 1: These venues facilitate connection and interaction: artists-audience, artist-artist, audience-audience, administrators-audience, and administrators-artists.**

**Theme 2: Intimacy**

The word ‘intimacy’ is one of those words that are easily and frequently used in conversation, but quite difficult to define. This may well be because there are several uses for the word; it can describe a space’s physical size and related/‘caused’ atmosphere, or its acoustical properties, but also describe interpersonal relationships.

For those instances where intimacy relates to an environment or a space, most definitions found focus on atmosphere rather than sheer physical size. The Oxford Dictionary offers the following definition: “A cosy and private or relaxed atmosphere”, as in the sentence “the room had a peaceful sense of intimacy about it” (Intimacy, n.d.).
‘Intimacy’ is usually combined with a word describing size (as in ‘small and intimate’), to clarify that one is mainly discussing a space’s limited physical size. This was encountered frequently in this study. To many, the word ‘intimate’ used on its own signifies size blended with atmosphere, as in ‘the room was intimate’. Coincidentally, it seems to be uncommon for an environment to be large and intimate, as if normally the one adjective would exclude the other. Large and intimate seems an anomaly; instead one would state that a room is large but still intimate.

Van de Heyning (2015) explained that the word ‘intimacy’ is also often used in the theory of acoustics, as one of the parameters with which to rate the acoustic quality of a (performance) space. “Intimacy is used to determine a space where there is a perception that music is being played in a small room” (Van de Heyning, p.12). Both Van de Heyning and acoustics expert Beranek rate intimacy as one of the most important parameters for musical acoustics, with Beranek emphasizing that different styles of music sound best in a hall with the appropriate degree of acoustical intimacy (Beranek, 1996, p.2650). Beranek comes closest to providing a definition of acoustical intimacy when explaining that intimacy, or ‘presence’, is the quality that makes a large hall sound like a small hall. He devised a system to measure the intimacy of a concert hall by the time-gap between the direct sound and the first reflected sound (Beranek, in Barbour, 1965, p. 709).

The third use of the word ‘intimate’ is when describing interpersonal relationships. Psychologists have long been interested in the concept of intimacy, although scholars agree that establishing a strict definition is difficult, even in this context. Intimacy is said to be a ‘natural’ or ‘fuzzy’ concept, which means that it has no single, clearly bounded set of defining features: boundaries between intimacy and related concepts are blurry (Prager, 1995, p.15). When discussing intimacy in reference to interpersonal relationships, the term often includes concepts such as closeness, support, connection and love, feelings and experiences that involve another person in an important way (Prager, 1995, p.13). For use in this context, the Oxford Dictionary also provides a definition: that of “Close familiarity or friendship” (Intimacy, n.d.)

Australian academic Professor Elspeth Probyn (2010), in her work in the area of Humanities and Social Sciences, makes connections between intimacy and proximity, kinship and emotion. Drawing closer to the occurrence of ‘intimacy’ in the arts, an article published in the journal of Theatre Research in Canada by theatre director, playwright and scholar Bruce Barton reflects on what it is exactly that makes a [theatrical] moment, a gesture, an interaction or a relationship intimate (Barton, 2008).
Baron (1998) is one of the few who specifically relates the concept of intimacy to music performance, and he states that it suggests ‘smallness’ and ‘closeness’ on the part of both performers and listeners (1998, p.11). He claims that these two concepts are generally accepted to be the essence of intimacy, but that each person may perceive ‘smallness’ and ‘closeness’ differently (ibid.).

Smallness means that there are a few people involved, both as performers and as listeners; ideally there are only a few performers who themselves constitute the only listeners. Smallness also means that the room in which the music is performed is just large enough for the sound to fully resonate and not any larger; the sound cannot disappear in empty space. Closeness suggests that the performers are physically as near to each other as possible; it also suggests that the performers are aesthetically of one mind and heart. Whatever audience there is must also be as close to the performers as possible. (Baron, 1998, p. 11)

Baron also concedes that “the concept of ‘closeness’ has become the most widely disparate part of intimacy” (1998, p.12). With chamber music performances moving into bigger performance venues in front of large audiences (or in front of a huge audience when broadcast on video), the performers have remained close to each other but the listeners have moved further and further away, running the risk of losing that all-important sense of closeness and intimacy (ibid.).

So, what is it about the concerts and concert venues described in this Artico study that caused the word intimacy to be used so frequently? I’d venture to say that Artico Ensemble’s concerts in small community venues bring all of the components and definitions of intimacy discussed above, together.

The venue is intimate, has intimacy.

First of all, the venues in which the concerts were held are small in size. It can be expected that the venues themselves, even without any people in them, would feel intimate upon entering. Audience members who also frequented concerts in Brisbane’s large concert venues, described this study’s small community venues as intimate or ‘more intimate’, perhaps simply due to the fact that they are smaller in size than the mainstream large concert venues. For most of the study participants, however, the term did not only allude to size but also indicated that the venue had that certain additional atmosphere of cosiness. As an example, one participant wrote that “the venue creates intimacy” (RM 199), when asked to describe the difference between the case study
venue and other attended venues. This is something that is felt rather than seen and should be understood as a personal individual sensation. Private. This is the type of atmospheric intimacy the Oxford Dictionary refers to in its first definition.

The statement can, however, also be interpreted as containing a sense of interpersonal intimacy, the feeling described in Probyn’s comment and the Oxford Dictionary’s second definition mentioned above. That sense of interpersonal intimacy is even more obvious in a comment by a second participant, who described the difference in the experience of attending a performance in the case study venue in comparison to other venues as “this is more friendly/intimate - feels like being with friends” (WH 225).

I would like to suggest that the fact that these venues are community venues with which the study participants are familiar (because they frequent them often for a variety of social and other reasons) enhances the feeling of intimacy of the venue. As a definition found in an online resource suggests, intimacy can also be understood as “the quality of being comfortable, warm or familiar” (Intimacy, n.d.). It is highly likely that our study participants described the performance venues as intimate partly due to the fact that they were familiar to them: participants had previously attended church services or museum exhibitions in them or had come together with friends in the Wynnum home environment. In this way, the aspect of familiarity heightens and enhances the feeling of intimacy of the venue.

Due to the fact that the case study venues are small in size, acoustical intimacy is nearly automatically created. Thinking back to Van de Heyning’s comment that a concert space has intimacy if there is a perception that the music is being played in a small room (2015, p. 12), Artico’s small community venues all have acoustical intimacy. In some of the venues the audience can sit so close to the performers that hardly any time would pass between the direct sound and the first reflected sound, and there would most definitely be no loss of ‘presence’ of sound, both elements vital to acoustical intimacy according to Beranek (as cited in Barbour, 1965, p. 709). It is therefore very logical that audience members described this study’s small community venues as intimate, or more intimate than the mainstream concerts halls they might visit on other occasions. The all-important theme of Acoustics will be further explored a little later in this chapter.

The concert is intimate, has intimacy.

The thoughts above mainly describe the intimacy of the venue, i.e. the space. Many study participants, however, mentioned that the concert had a sense of intimacy
about it. Participant I 111 said that the concert was “intimate - tranquil”, and participant Wyn 148 wrote simply “intimate, summer, laid back”. Participant RM 190 entered “intimate, joyful” and participant Wyn 154 “intimate, friendly” on the questionnaire form, and participant K 79 wrote it was an “enjoyable intimate experience of excellent music”. Many of these allude to that interpersonal sensation of connectedness referred to in the second Oxford Dictionary definition of intimacy, when it is described as indicating “close familiarity or friendship”. Uzarovski puts this exact feeling into words when describing his experience of attending a chamber music concert for the very first time, relaying what he thought was “the incredible intimacy [...] created between the audience and the onstage musicians” (2015, para 2), which to him exuded a unique energy.

Such a feeling of interpersonal intimacy can only be established if there is an opportunity for interaction and connection (discussed above as Strength 1 of these types of venues), which in turn is made easier by the small, intimate size of these performance venues. As one participant indicated, “the smaller venue adds a dimension of intimacy & connection between performers & audience”. The intimacy of the venue facilitates and enhances the intimacy of the concert, by creating an opportunity for interaction and connection. There is, therefore, a strong relationship between the key theme of Connection & Interaction, and that of Intimacy.

Interaction should be seen as an activity, an action; an exchange of ideas and knowledge, a give-and-take of energy and attention. The artists’ spoken introductions are examples of this interaction, as are the unspoken transfer of musical ideas whilst the performance is underway; a transfer between the artists on stage as well as between the artists and their audience. In this study data material, audience members also spoke of a level of interaction amongst the audience members themselves, which was experienced in the shared listening during the performance and in the flow of conversation during refreshments.

The activity of interaction can develop a feeling of connectedness, of connection. When participants feel a connection on a personal level, the mood or feeling in the room will be interpreted as intimate.

It may be important to highlight that interaction does not necessarily have a notion of positive or negative value associated with it, whereas intimacy will in general be perceived as positive. In this Artico study, the feeling of intimacy and connectedness was said to enhance participants’ enjoyment of the event (with ‘enjoyment’ being an
additional theme discussed a bit later in this chapter) and provide overall a high level of satisfaction with the concert.

The feeling of intimacy and connectedness was also frequently linked to the ensemble’s programme choices and style of presentation. As an example, one participant commented on the concerts as being “intimate, professional, varied, informative, enjoyable”. Another participant brought even more aspects and elements together by describing the concert as “intimate; instruments/musicians well tuned into each other; nice context; eclectic programme, suiting many tastes”. The ensemble’s programme choices and style of presentation will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter under the theme heading of ‘Programme & Presentation’. The idea of “nice context” will be also explored later in this chapter, under the theme heading of ‘Setting, Ambience & Acoustics’. It is, however, interesting to already flag these additional themes here, in order to show how integral the theme of Intimacy is to the whole concept and experience of these types of concerts.

To add another layer of depth to the theme of Intimacy, it is well-known that chamber music, as a style of music, has been frequently described as intimate music. Kozenko writes that “chamber music, in its purest form, can be defined as music written for small instrumental ensembles, with one player to a part. […] In essence, the term implies intimate, carefully constructed music, …” (Kozenko, 2013, p. 10). Ferguson suggests that chamber music possesses one unique value over other types of music, which may be described by the word “intimacy” (1964, p. 3), and Baron states that “the core feature of any chamber music is its overt or implied intimacy” (1998, p. 6).

Chamber music performances usually exhibit/exude an intimacy between the players on stage, as reflected in the frequently quoted words by Catherine Drinker Bowen: “Chamber music - a conversation between friends” (Chamber music quotes, n.d.). As seen, chamber music and its common setting in smaller venues can also evoke intimacy between the players and their audience, with the audience member listening in becoming part of the intimate exchange. The Peabody Institute’s director of chamber music Michael Kannen explains that this is what sets chamber music apart from orchestral or opera concerts:

It's a mode of musical expression that involves intimate one-on-one communication between the musicians and audience, as opposed to the larger, more public experience of an opera or orchestral concert. (Johnson, 2007)
Australia’s Samuel Cottell, writer and content producer for Omega Ensemble, brings these two concepts together in his newsletter blog introducing the chamber ensemble’s 2017 concert series: “Chamber music is the intimate negotiation and the art of musical conversation, performed to audiences in intimate settings. It is a musical conversation between friends and shared with audiences” (Cottell, 2016).

So far, our discussion of the theme of Intimacy has been focused on the audience’s point of view. Interestingly, of this study’s three partners, the artists did not mention the theme of intimacy that frequently, as if it is something that is easier to experience for those on the receiving end. The artists did use the word intimacy when describing the house concert and chose the word to describe the performance experience rather than the venue, such as when Paul mentioned that “playing in private homes is an interesting one, because you are even more intimate than you are in a church”. Shelli explained that “it is very intimate, I mean you are being invited into someone’s home, and it feels more like a friends-kind of experience, rather than an audience and a performer sort of experience”. Paul again used the word intimacy when describing his experience of an Artico concert in comparison to performing in a large concert hall:

Well I guess with any chamber music, when you’re performing in a smaller venue, whether it is a commercial venue or a regional venue, you experience the intimacy of the experience. You play to the people and with the people. You have a conversation with the audience. (Paul, interview)

This “conversation with the audience” and associated intimacy of the experience that Paul alludes to was also reflected in Johnson (2007) and Cottell’s (2016) writings discussed above and is yet another example of the use of the word intimacy indicating an interpersonal closeness, kinship and connection.

The administrators spoke of intimacy when wearing their listener’s hat rather than when discussing their practical organizational matters, emphasizing that intimacy is something that is felt, and experienced when one is enveloped by it.

Overall, the audience members were the ones mentioning the word ‘intimacy’ most frequently. The concert was described as intimate 11 times, it was their highest-ranking venue descriptor (n34), and was mentioned especially frequently when comparing the case study venue to other attended venues (n52). These combined statistics indicate that Intimacy is a theme that should be seen as one of the strengths of these types of concerts and concert venues, and an integral part of the whole concert experience.
**Strength 2: These venues feel intimate, and facilitate a sense of intimacy during concerts.**

**Theme 3: Setting, Ambience & Acoustics**

The setting, ambience, and acoustics of the venues have a strong effect on the experience of partaking in these concerts. As mentioned, it is closely interwoven with the previous theme of Intimacy, as was clarified by Beranek:

Acoustical ‘intimacy’ suggests to the listener the size of the space in which it is performed. […] It is not necessary that the room have a particular size, but only that it *sound* as though the size is appropriate. (Beranek, 1996, p. 2650, italics in original)

It has already been established that the case study venues have acoustical intimacy, but there are additional aspects to the theme of acoustics (especially in combination with ambience and setting) that are worth further exploration. For some of the administrators the setting, ambience, and acoustics of ‘their’ venue were in fact the motivating factor for wanting to organize concerts in that venue to start with. Rick, for example, described how the Redland Museum’s new wing sparked the idea of staging concerts:

Well, what started it all off was we had a benefactor leave money to us, which provided that wing where the gallery is. And it just seemed to be a lovely venue, area, space, for concerts. (Rick, interview)

Avon and Helen went one step further and re-designed their house specifically to allow them to host music events:

When we designed this home […], when we thought about the extension, the main focus was chamber music, so this whole conception, the whole building has been the conception of having chamber music here (Avon, interview).

Some of the administrators also mentioned that during the concert the combination of the music, the musicians, and the setting they performed in created a wonderful experience, for their guests as well as for themselves. Avon loved to hear ‘his’ audience’s glowing comments after the well-received performance in his home: “… with such fine musicians, and with such a lovely space. It just provides them with a wonderful experience” (Avon, interview). He described the performance, for himself, as an ethereal experience. Pamela, organizer of the concert in the ambient Anglican
Once the performance in their venue was underway, the administrators generally exhibited all the characteristics of audience members. They described their concert experience in the same terms as patrons and felt the effects of the venue setting, ambience, and acoustics in the same manner as audience members, sometimes with an additional touch of pride of having been instrumental in making the concert come to fruition. We will therefore continue the discussion of the theme of ‘Setting, Ambience & Acoustics’ from the point of view of the audience and the artists. For the audience and the artists its effect is clearly performance-related, and only really felt at the time of the actual performance.

For most of the audience, the venue setting and ambience and its acoustics had a strong and positive effect on their concert experience. ‘Comfort’ was mentioned by 22 questionnaire respondents, which has been interpreted as an emotional, positive-value response rather than a simply neutral one, noting that this response was given at the conclusion of the concert. The suitability of the venue for this type of music was noted by 16 questionnaire respondents, which should be interpreted as being something they had perceived during the concert, so synonymous with the venue having a (positive) effect on the experience. In answer to the questionnaire question enquiring about the relationship between the experience of today’s concert and this concert venue, one respondent wrote “yes, enjoyable ambience assists enjoyment of the music” (K 79). One other participant commented that she felt “very connected because I belong here and it's like having guests in my home” (K 90). Another remarked on the effect of the venue acoustics: “couldn't pick a better venue, all words clearly heard” (I 123), and another on its size “small enough that I would forget my surroundings & immerse myself in the music - not distracted” (I 132). One of Avon’s house concert guests confirmed the effect that that particular setting has on its attendees: “Seeing outside is enjoyable, music and nature go well together. Relaxed friendly atmosphere makes the concert more enjoyable” (Wyn 139).

In his private interview, audience member Peter describes how the concert’s setting affected his experience of listening to one of the Baroque works on the programme:

The sound just appealed to me, and the fact that where it was being played (whilst I don’t get carried away too much with the religious significance), I must say I like … I always get awe-inspired when I am
in a large church and someone is playing an organ. [...] It’s sort of the music for the period and for the place. (Peter, K)

Later on in the interview he elaborated a bit more on this idea of “music for the place”:

I thought that the music being played there, (again I’m not a great theoretician, so I call it classical music, or more classical or whatever) was in an appropriate place. A place of calm and peacefulness… at peace. Even if the music got loud and fast tempo at times, that was still okay to me. (Peter, K)

Audience member Catharina described how the venue affected her concert experience: “it was that church that made that music, I think. That's what I found, I found it so - it was very personal. I had so many pieces that were played I was emotional about …” (Catharina, E). Rhoda wrote that the whole setting made the Wynnum house concert experience extra special for her:

I love the hosts, and the venue itself has a nice outlook over the trees and all that sort of thing, and I think it’s situated very nicely, and the hospitality afterwards, having all that lovely food. [...] It's just a very special sort of thing, it's a special afternoon, Sunday afternoon, a special thing. (Rhoda, Wyn)

Rhoda’s comment above is an example of Small’s statement that the performance setting will impose relationships between the participants and create meanings, even without a note of music having been played (Small, 2001, p. 344). Another questionnaire participant used the word “reinforced” to describe the relationship between that particular venue and the music: “The venue reinforced the music, its open space and great acoustics very much complemented the wonderful performance” (Wyn 158).

Some of Artico Ensemble’s audience members and study participants were not very familiar with classical chamber music, and the small community venue setting was said to have had a positive effect on their concert experience. As one first-time attendee from Wilston wrote, “The beautiful church setting made it more enjoyable because I'm not used to this type of music. A large open venue would have made me feel uneasy” (Wil 284).
The impact of the venue on the performance experience was also very strongly
felt by the artists. The setting can frequently affect the players’ performance experience
in a positive way, as I expressed in my own private interview:

Many of the churches we play in have actually very nice, clarinet-
friendly acoustics. There are some that are not quite as great, but the
small size of those venues works well for clarinet. So you don't have to
struggle very much to get what I might see as the message of the music
across. [...] In the churches I find that the sacred pieces of music that
we play in our repertoire work very well! Because the audience has an
understanding of that, and the ambience somehow really enhances those
works. (Rianne, interview)

Several comments in my personal reflective journal (which were jotted down
before, during or after our concerts) also illustrate the positive effect the venue
ambience can frequently have on the performance experience. Such as the following
entry reflecting on the sound check in Ipswich North:

Our opener for this concert, Mozart’s ‘Benedictus’ (from his Requiem)
works very well in this venue, and although the end feels a bit slow, we
play well. Next are three of John Rutter’s sacred songs, again very
suited to this church – somehow the additional ‘church’ feel adds to the
ambience. (Rianne, reflective journal)

Aside from the ambience, comments about the acoustics of the various
performance venues also feature quite heavily in the journal. The following entry,
continuing the description of the sound check in Ipswich, focuses on that venue’s
acoustics:

Paul, Brieley and I sound-checked some of our stuff, and the acoustics
in this venue are wonderful for us windies. The wood panelling of the
interior of this church creates an additional warmth and reverb to our
sound that is very easy to play with. The piano actually sounds rather
nice as well. (Rianne, reflective journal)

Later that day, looking back on the Ipswich performance and especially focusing
on the Artist - Venue relationship, the journal reads:

Very good acoustics! Beautiful sound, warm and rich, and easy to
project to even the very last row. We can play as we are, no need to
adjust. (We recorded the performance on a digital sound recorder placed
at the very back of the church, and the recording quality is crystal clear and rich at the same time). (Rianne, reflective journal)

Later in the journal, an entry written down immediately after the ensemble’s sound check in Wynnum again focuses on the positive effect of the venue’s supportive acoustics: “The acoustics of the room pick the bass clarinet tone up beautifully, which means Paul can play freely in his solo item, and the Bb clarinet carries well as far as I can tell” (Rianne, reflective journal).

As shown, the setting, ambience, and acoustics of this study’s small community venues can have a strong and positive effect on the performances taking place in them, and this should be seen as a strength of these types of venues.

**Strength 3: These venues can enhance the performance experience through their setting, ambience, and acoustics.**

During the artists’ interviews, discussions about the setting, ambience, and acoustics quickly flowed towards the negative effect these aspects can have on the performance experience. And with the interviews containing seven positive comments but twenty-two negative comments on this topic, the small community venues’ setting, ambience and acoustics clearly present challenges for the artists. The less-than-ideal acoustics in some of the venues provide personal challenges for the wind players and for the singer, as reflected in this comment by Shelli:

> With some venues, like for example Kenmore, it’s a very dry acoustic and there’s nothing that’s going to help you, so I always feel like I have to resist the temptation to push my sound, or to somehow modify ‘good singing’ to accommodate the venue. (Shelli, interview)

It can also cause difficulties for the whole ensemble in terms of balance, or how well the musicians can hear each other. As Brieley says “Acoustics. Most of [the venues] aren’t designed for music performance. So, balance, sound projection, and hearing the group together - we’re lucky if all of those things work” (Brieley, interview).

The fact that the venue does not always have a good quality piano available has a negative effect on Brieley’s experience, which creates a flow-on effect on the whole ensemble. Although not strictly an effect of the venue’s setting, to Brieley this means that the venue and environment are not conducive to high-quality playing. Concerts in these venues can also attract patrons who are not necessarily musically educated. For
Paul, this translates into a feeling that the musicians have to be down-to-earth, which has an effect on his performance experience:

So you have to become aware of the fact that you’re not an artist or ‘Artiste’ anymore, you are actually a service-provider in many cases. Yes, you still have to be a good artist, you still have to have a certain artistic integrity, but you have to be down-to-earth. You are dealing with venues that may be doubling up as churches, or galleries, or school halls, and so you can’t be a diva. (Paul, interview)

To Brieley this translates into the sentiment that, because of the design of the concerts and the type of audience they might attract, “it doesn’t demand the perfection that you can achieve with classical music performance”. This sentiment is not shared by the other ensemble members, as reflected by this excerpt from the group interview:

**Shelli:** Sometimes, I know I’ve been guilty of this in the past, you go ‘Oh, it’s just a local church’

**Rianne:** Oh, so not!

**Shelli:** ‘I’m a bit below par today, but it doesn’t matter because no-one is going to really notice, or care, so’… It’s that sort of…, that’s very tempting to fall into that mentality occasionally, so it’s just always forcing yourself to be, just to treat it as if it’s the top professional gig, and that you still need to be at your best.

(Shelli and Rianne, group interview)

Ilmar Gavilan, violinist of the Harlem String Quartet, performs a lot of outreach concerts with his ensemble. He agrees that, in these settings, musicians “need to exude all the professional and aesthetic attributes of the music we play, while maintaining an approachable personality and a language that relates to unexposed audiences” (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 41). He also offers what he considers his mission as a musician: “Our historical role is not only to perfect our craft and constantly pursue excellence alone, but to become personal ambassadors for music” (ibid), a sentiment I personally whole-heartedly agree with.

Performing to communities in their own suburban venues will of course pose its set of problems. The community venues are frequently not climate-controlled nor designed to block out external noise, which are all additional challenges to be met and accommodated by the ensemble. To quote Brieley:

These venues aren’t built to block out noise. So, like the concert we did last time, we had the birds singing and the wind blowing your papers off
the piano, and you know, the cars driving past, the truck that pulls up outside - all these things you’ve got to contend with, it’s not a music venue where you can just shut the door, and you can have that silence in which you can concentrate and, yeah … (Brieley, interview)

Paul on the other hand is more pragmatic in his view:
My role as a bass clarinettist […] is to adjust and try to make it work. It’s part of the challenge as a musician as well, it would be an ideal world where everyone played in perfect concert halls, with perfect acoustics, perfect audience, where everyone understands every note that you play, and like you as a person. But, you know, that’s life. You just have to try to sell yourself, and to make the experience for everyone as enjoyable as possible. (Paul, interview)

These ways in which the setting, ambience, and acoustics can hamper the performance experience from the artists’ point of view are, as shown, very much of a practical nature: in other words, it seems that the actual logistics of the venues together with the acoustics are the most troublesome and challenging.

Throughout this study, the challenging aspects of the small community venues did not come to the fore that strongly in interviews with the third study partner, the administrators. The administrators really like “their” venue and deem it, generally, very suited to chamber music performances. It should be noted that the administrators who took part in this study had all at one stage responded positively to one of Artico Ensemble’s concert hosting invitation mail-outs. And it can be assumed that they would have already considered the concert suitability of their venue prior to responding to Artico’s invitation. Those administrators belonging to other, less suitable venues (or those for whom hosting a concert would have provided too many challenges) would not have responded to Artico’s invite or would have contacted the ensemble to decline the invitation. This happened on many occasions. Through this process of natural selection, the venues that became part of Artico Ensemble’s concert venue circuit (and therefore potentially participants in this study) should all be considered suitable for chamber music performances, at least in the eyes of the administrator study partners. The venues’ setting, ambience, and acoustics do not provide challenges for the administrators …, at least, this was the case for all but one of them.

Quite unexpectedly, the suburban street setting of the house concert venue in Wynnum turned into a challenge for the concert administrators. This challenge did not
have anything to do with the actual performance experience, but with the very practical matters of street parking issues, neighbourhood complaints and Council legislation. Although very interesting in its own right (and certainly worthy of further investigation at some stage) this topic is too site-specific to contribute to this study’s desired broader general consensus on the strengths and challenges of small community venues. As such it will not be taken into further consideration in this chapter summarising the generally perceived strengths and challenges of small community venues.

In the audience data, there is some evidence that the study’s small community venues can provide challenges. As shown in Chapter 5.5 and presented in table 7 (page 135), venues that are not specifically designed for music performance can be more prone to distracting outside noise, can lack that ‘special occasion’ concert feel or feel less professional, can be acoustically not as good and can have uncomfortable seating. To some, it can even feel more formal, which was seen as a negative aspect by the participants in question.

It is important to retain a sense of perspective: with table 7 (page 135) presenting 13710 comments referring to benefits of the venue’s setting, ambience, or acoustics on the concert experience, and nine comments referring to challenges, the benefits do outweigh the challenges by far from the audience’s point of view. Those nine comments, however, do contribute to the finding that the setting, ambience, and acoustics of the case study venues can have a negative effect on the concert experience, and as such they are very relevant. Also, the challenges brought forward by the audience members mainly concern the actual logistics and acoustics of small community venues, which is in line with the artists’ point of view discussed earlier.

**Challenge 1: These venues can hamper the performance experience through their setting, ambience, and acoustics.**

**Theme 4: Community**

The theme of ‘Community’ resonates strongly through this study’s material. Not only do the concerts take place in existing community venues (i.e. venues that already have a social function for people within that local area), but these concert events enhance that role even more: the venue really becomes a place of the community. The term ‘community’ can denote simply a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common but can also have the additional meaning

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10 Table 7 in chapter 5.5 tallied 191 comments hinting at the benefits of small community venues. Those comments not related to setting/ambience/acoustics have been deducted from this total, resulting in 137 setting/ambience/acoustics-related benefits.
of “sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common” (“Community”, n.d.). As illustrated by the long-running concert series in the church in Kenmore, concerts like these can foster a community of music lovers, whilst consolidating the community role of the venue. Some of the administrators expressed their clear intent to create these chamber music concerts “to make the venue a place of the community”, as voiced by David from Wilston. His colleague Pamela explained that they aim for their annual Artico Ensemble concerts to be social community events.

The second of the three study partners, the audience members, expressed a strong feeling of community throughout the concert. Dearn and Price define ‘Community’ as being “a group of people joining together publicly over a shared passion, in the same geographical setting, who are united by a social matrix” (2016, p. 3), and this current study’s audience members frequently describe the sense of a shared experience and shared love for the music performed, and a warm feeling of togetherness with their fellow patrons. Not only is this community feeling important for the enjoyment of the concert itself, it can also have an effect on audience members’ repeat attendance, as acknowledged by Pitts and Spencer:

A sense of belonging and community has been shown to be vital in maintaining audience loyalty and longevity, both through interactions with like-minded listeners and through a desire to establish a sense of friendship and familiarity with the performers. (Pitts and Spencer, 2008, p. 237)

At first glance the theme of Community was not as clearly represented in the artists’ interview data: the artists did not specifically speak about feeling a sense of community during a performance. On a secondary level, however, the theme of community is quite an important undercurrent in the artists’ data. The main reason for establishing the ensemble many years ago was to travel and perform in venues within the community, to reach new and existing audiences for chamber music in the wider community by making that first step as artists rather than expecting the audience to come to them. One of the group’s objectives was also to encourage existing community venues to develop into active hubs of culture; cultural community venues that could potentially sustain vibrant chamber music concert series. The artists were also very aware of the importance of strengthening that community bond for the ongoing success of these concerts, and actively sought to engage on a personal level with the community administrators and community members and become part of their community. It was the group’s suggestion to include a complimentary afternoon tea with these concerts, and
the artists always take part in these social events themselves. This has helped in strengthening the feeling that they themselves are a part of their hosting community, and although they may only visit a particular venue once a year, the feeling of ‘being amongst friends’ is quite evident in many of the repeat venues. The relationship that develops between the artists and the community members of these repeat venues, that sense of friendship and familiarity of which Pitts and Spencer spoke (2008, p. 237) can be described as a type of fandom: a strong bond based on a connection through music.

I identified this bond during my interview, when asked whether the fact that the venues were community venues had any effect on my own performance experience:

I think there is more of a direct line between us as the musicians and the venue because it is a community venue. […] [Because of] that community factor, they are coming for us, which is really good, because you can build up a bond, you can build, say, let’s call it fans […], and that is what will ultimately make people come back. And that I think is much stronger in a community venue than it would be in a really top mainstream venue. (Rianne, interview)

In this way, the artists become an integral part of these communities, and they can also be seen as the facilitators and providers of the community experience. So although the audience felt and expressed the theme of Community most frequently, it is a theme shared by all three study partners, and one that connects each to the other quite strongly. The venue (the physical place as well as a more metaphorical space of gathering) is integral to this theme, by being a place of and creating a feeling of community.

**Strength 4: These venues facilitate, establish and enhance a feeling of community.**

**Theme 5: Programme & Presentation.**

Up to this point, the four themes discussed have been venue-related, generated by the place where the concerts are held. The fifth theme, which is one of Programming & Presentation, is artist-related, so stemming from the ensemble that performs the concerts. It is, however, once again a common thread that runs strongly through the study data for all three study partners.

As shown in chapter 5.3, Artico Ensemble’s concerts attract audience members that love classical (chamber) music and frequently attend concerts, but also audience members who may have less experience with concert attendance and simply came because they were “invited and thought it would be a pleasant way to spend the


afternoon” (WH 202). To cater for this diversity in its audiences, the ensemble aims to create balanced programmes that include existing classical chamber music pieces for any combination of their instruments and voice, original works written especially for the group, and arrangements of light classics and musical theatre pieces. The ensemble generally selects shorter works, or single movements of works, rather than full-length works, to allow for a variety of styles in each concert programme and ensure that the whole concert does not run overly long.

In 1929, Leonard Liebling observed that in New York, “concert audiences desire only the best music, new or old, in interesting variety and order, and in easy duration and quantity” (Kozenko, 2013, p. 76). In my experience as an Artico Ensemble member, this situation has not changed much in nearly 100 years. Much thought needs to go into careful programming to create concert programmes which suit the community venue setting and cater to the group’s expected audience.

In concert, Artico Ensemble members also take turns in introducing the music, sharing information about the history of the pieces or their instruments with the audience. They feel that these introductions are a way of establishing a stronger connection with their audience and draw them into the performance, as well as create a more informal concert atmosphere. This style of presentation can diminish any possible barriers that might exist between the performers on stage and their audience in the hall.

For the audience, the ensemble’s programme and presentation was a very prominent theme, as it had a strong impact on the overall concert experience. As identified in the questionnaire result’s emotional and intellectual concert descriptors, the ensemble’s programmes were well-received by the audience, and the musicians’ style of presentation thought to be engaging. As audience member 30 from Elanora said, the concert was “engaging, musically excellent, interestingly varied and versatile” (E 30). A study participant from Kenmore concurred, and wrote: “love their choice of music + their friendly & professional presentations” (K 57). Audience member 202 from Wavell Heights is a plumber who listens to country and blues music every day. He was invited by a neighbour to come along to the Artico concert (as indicated in the comment quoted on the previous page) and described the concert as “SURPRISINGLY WONDERFUL + REFRESHING”, capitals included (WH 202). During her interview, audience member Rhoda commented on the varied repertoire performed at her Wynnum concert: “I really enjoyed the way you had a mixture of music […] I thought you had sort of things that were popular and things that were more classic and I liked the blend that you had”
(Rhoda, Wyn). Ruth gave her opinion about Artico Ensemble’s tradition of verbally introducing many of the works on the programme:

What I liked too was, like I said, the fact that it was a little bit educational in that you explained a little bit about how the clarinet worked, and different pieces. So from that point of view, it actually exceeded my expectations. I think that just added an extra sort of flavour to a concert. […] So like that Rachmaninov piece for example, you know, ‘The Waterfall’, you know I think I’d heard that music before, I’m sure I probably had heard that piece being played before, but I think there was a little explanation about that and I don't think I ever knew that it was supposed to represent waterfalls for example. So I'm thinking, ‘Oh yeah’, and as I was listening to the piece I thought, ‘Yeah, it really does sound like waterfalls’. So yeah, I think it just enhances your appreciation of the beauty behind it, I think. (Ruth, E)

Wendy noticed that the ensemble members’ introductions and general style of presentation did establish a connection with the audience:

Well, performance-wise, everyone was alive when they spoke. […] … everyone had an animated face, they were very clear, at all time, they were quite articulate, and it made it more interesting. […] And I quite often look around at the audience, to see their reactions, and people were smiling, people were grinning, people were following whatever was happening and I thought ‘that’s good’. (Wendy, E)

I am aware that listing these positive and quite flattering comments about Artico Ensemble’s programming and presentation might seem intended as a marketing opportunity advocating the ensemble, especially knowing that I myself am not only the researcher but also one of the ensemble members. It is therefore important to note that in the construction of the audience questionnaire special care was taken to avoid leading questions regarding this topic. It was decided to simply ask participants to choose a few words that, to them, best described the case study concert, in the hope that this would generate their most immediate and honest opinions, which are the ones mentioned above. Throughout the individual follow-up interviews, comments about the programme and the artists’ style of presentation frequently came up unprompted (sometimes even in answer to other, unrelated questions), which most likely means that
for these audience members the ensemble’s programming and presentation style was truly unexpected, and memorable.

Nearly all of the administrators (with the exception of Jan from Elanora and Lesley from Ipswich) commented directly on the programming and presentation of the ensemble. For Kenmore’s administrator Dawn, Artico’s programming is one of the main strengths of the group, and one of the main reasons for her booking the ensemble for her concert series for several years in a row. She also appreciates the ensemble's way of presenting, and realises it is an important way of establishing a connection with the audience. She says the concerts are

definitely entertaining. That’s always something I find about them. […]

And then the other thing is the warmth. Ever since they've started to come here that’s something that’s always impressed me, is the warmth of the way they talk to the audience, and the interaction, and I always feel that they’re happy to be here. (Dawn interview)

Graham mentioned that he booked the ensemble because he thought that their repertoire and range of music would appeal to his audience “irrespective of age difference, irrespective of musical tastes, irrespective of people’s backgrounds” (Graham, interview). Rick commented on what he thought was “a lovely programme”, adding that in his Redland Museum “everyone enjoys the second half always, because, I think they seriously …uhm … sit through the first half being, uhm, intellectual, and then lighten up and enjoy the second” (Rick, interview), which in this case would have hinted at the light-classical and music theatre pieces on the programme. Avon had not heard Artico Ensemble prior to booking them, but said he enjoyed their concert programme: “I was sitting at the back just drinking it all in. The two last pieces were especially brilliant - I loved all of it, but everybody got very rowdy when it got a bit bluesy, you know, so …” (Avon, interview). Pamela from Wilston commented that “the musicians also have a really lovely way of presenting and being involved with the audience. So you feel, like, very uhm close” (Pamela, interview).

Artico Ensemble’s programme choices and style of presentation should be seen as a strength in these types of concerts, and an important theme for all concert partners. This theme also relates strongly to several of the other themes discussed before: by programming some familiar works, providing introductions to most of their programme items and a generally engaging way of concert presentation, the sense of connection and interaction between artists and audience is enhanced. Secondly, the artists are guided by the venue setting and ambience when making repertoire and programme choices, and
the repertoire choices can be enhanced by the setting and ambience as shown. Thirdly, the programme choices and style of presentation facilitate and frequently enhance intimacy, and the intimacy of the venue informs the programme selection.

The ensemble’s programming and presentation is also strongly related to two further themes that will be discussed shortly: the theme of Enjoyment & Satisfaction, and that of. With so many theme-relationships emanating from ‘Programme & Presentation’, this theme should be seen as a central theme and strength of these types of performances.

**Strength 5: The ensemble’s programme and presentation is seen as a strength of these types of performances, by all partners involved.**

**Theme 6: Enjoyment & Satisfaction.**

In first instance, a theme of Enjoyment & Satisfaction seems trivial, and nearly too insignificant to discuss. However, on close examination of the study material it appears to be one of the strongest themes running through the data. As with all other leisure pursuits, audience members want concert attendance to be first and foremost pleasurable …why else would one bother to buy an entry ticket?

In this study, the audience offered “enjoyable”, “extremely enjoyable” and “most enjoyable” as emotional descriptors to best describe the concert they had just attended, and as shown in Figure 10, ‘enjoyment’ of some kind was for many audience members the main reason for attending the concert to begin with: 50 patrons came to enjoy the social occasion/join family or friends, 50 came to enjoy the music, and 47 to enjoy (specifically) this type of music. In a follow-up interview, Peter from Kenmore said he would only attend a performance if he were sure he was going to enjoy it; his simple but important criterion for attendance.

Concerts can be enjoyable for various reasons, of course. They can be entertaining, inspirational, emotional, fun, educational or challenging (and many other things in between), but ultimately participating in these concerts was enjoyable for the audience. This enjoyment also determined the value of the concert in the eyes of the audience members. As Johanson remarked (Radbourne, Johanson, & Glow, 2014, pp. 3-4), audience members judge the value of a concert or other performance in other terms than those a government agency would use. For an audience member, as comes through quite clearly in this Artico study, the value of the performance lies often simply in the enjoyment they get from it. In other words, the emotional aspect of it. And, as Johanson states, “these values are the benchmarks against which individual audience members
attribute quality” (p. 4). Concerts or individual performances that elicit these emotional responses will be deemed high-quality performances, as was shown in this current case study. As Rossel (2011) and Osborne (1999) agree, audience members may appreciate a concert in a more analytical and intellectual way, or in a purely pleasurable aesthetic way, but ultimately these are emotional benchmarks. The Artico patrons provided Intellectual and Emotional descriptors (and blends of both) to define their concert experience, which can contribute to the body of research investigating audience experience, the value and quality of performances and ultimately the holistic understanding of audience-ship.

For the artists, being involved in these concerts was also said to be enjoyable. Part of that enjoyment stemmed from a feeling of satisfaction; the feeling that creating chamber music events in small community venues was a rewarding experience, and overall a worthwhile one to be involved in. All the artists remarked on the level of satisfaction and enjoyment they get out of being part of the quartet. Most of them even named those words as the main reasons why they chose to be members of this ensemble, as voiced here by Shelli:

> Basically, because it is so satisfying to do music in this context. You have such power as an individual to shape the music the way you want, and it is so rewarding to make this kind of music with other people who are like-minded about what music means to them, and how they want to portray that in their lives. (Shelli, interview)

Brieley mentioned she enjoyed working with the other Artico members:

> … (and) getting the satisfaction about taking the music to a wider audience. You know, feels like you are reminding them that this music exists, and it’s amazing, and you know, brings back a lot of memories for people as well as introducing them to new things. I really enjoy that. (Brieley, interview)

Paul enjoys playing in Artico because he strongly believes in the ensemble and what it brings to its audiences. As he says:

> This ensemble does a lot of good. It is not only a musical group, it is not only an outlet for four musicians to strut their stuff. It is more than that, […] it’s a community service, it’s more than just an ensemble. And that’s why I like playing with this ensemble. (Paul, interview)
I personally really enjoy working with my colleagues and get a lot of pleasure out of performing in our concert series. I love the creative moments of music making that so frequently happen on stage, and the strong connection we as artists have as a group. I also really enjoy receiving the immediate response from our audience members, which makes all the energy and effort I put into my playing and preparation so worthwhile. It is a validation of all those years of study. I also feel that what this ensemble does is really relevant. As relayed in earlier parts of this study report, I feel that we are contributing to the music scene in and around Brisbane, by bringing chamber music to appreciative audiences. In short, the fun and enjoyment of performing beautiful music with great colleagues, combined with the knowledge that it is valued and appreciated by our audiences means that on a Sunday afternoon at the end of a concert I always have the satisfied feeling that it was just really worth it.

Several administrators also mentioned levels of enjoyment and satisfaction when discussing their experience. For Graham, the personal satisfaction of a successful concert made the hard work involved in getting the event off the ground all worthwhile in the end. He says that “it really made, for me, for everybody that was there, it really made a wonderful afternoon of music. So, that was my satisfaction, people actually really did genuinely enjoy it”. (Graham, interview). Pamela had a similar experience, summarising managing the concert as quite a busy time, but also enjoyable: “maybe busy is a good way to say, busy towards the end, but enjoyable? In knowing that you can get it all together. So perhaps happy, enjoyable, busy” (Pamela, interview).

As seen, the theme of Enjoyment & Satisfaction is once again one that binds all three partners together. This theme is not specifically generated by the venue nor by the ensemble, but it should nonetheless be seen as one of the underlying strengths of these types of concerts.

**Strength 6: These concerts provide feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction to those involved.**

**Theme 7: Accessibility**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the noun ‘Accessibility’ can have various meanings. It can indicate the quality of being able to be reached or entered, of being easy to obtain or use, but also of being easily understood or appreciated (“Accessibility”, n.d.). When analysing the function and position of this study’s small community venues and the concerts taking place within, all these various meanings of the term ‘accessibility’ are reflected in the data.
The community concert venues in this case study were already familiar to the audience members prior to the concert and they are low-key in atmosphere, making the concerts taking place within accessible and easy to attend. As Lancaster stated in her 2013 report to Arts Queensland, “community organisations reduce any intimidation which audiences may align with classical music performance in concert halls” (2013, p. 3). In addition, special care is taken to keep entry prices low, to ensure the concerts remain accessible (i.e. affordable in price) to potential audience members, and easy to obtain. The performance fee for the artists is also accessible to venue administrators. The ensemble’s programming and presentation are designed to make chamber music accessible, easily understood and appreciated. Lastly, these chamber music concerts are also accessible because they are simply close by and easily reached.

By being accessible, community venues and Artico Ensemble’s concerts performed within expand what Christopher Walker calls “the structure of opportunity” (Walker, Scott-Melnyk, & Sherwood, 2002, p. 16), which is so important for arts participation:

The structure of opportunity consists of the programs and events available in a community that match the interests of potential participants and are perceived as accessible by potential participants. […] Accessibility, particularly, can include a host of program and event features, including ticket prices and travel costs, location, physical and social environment, and venue. (ibid.)

Walker also highlights the community and its members themselves as strong paths of engagement, “the ways that individuals become connected to, or engaged with [arts] opportunities” (Walker et al., 2002, p. 16). Community factors, such as these paths of engagement and the structure of opportunity available to members of the public, combined with individual factors such as their motivations and resources to attend, will all determine a person’s level of arts participation. It is easy to see how Artico’s concerts facilitate and enhance those paths of engagement and fit within the local structure of opportunity by making chamber music concerts more accessible to the community members in Brisbane and surrounds.

So far, the study themes have been either generated by the venue or by the ensemble, but the theme of Accessibility is clearly generated by both of those. ‘Accessibility’ is in fact the first theme in which the venue and the ensemble fully intersect and support each-other: the venue’s accessibility combined with the
ensemble’s accessible performances make chamber music accessible to those who’d like to participate in it.

As shown, it is clear that the theme of Accessibility is interrelated with many of this study’s themes; in fact, it is affected by and affects all of the themes! Let’s briefly summarise the themes and look at their interrelationship with Accessibility:

- The accessibility and low-key atmosphere of the venues and of the concerts themselves facilitate connection and interaction;
- The connection and interaction in turn make the concerts much more accessible;
- The intimacy of the concert venues and the concerts make the event more accessible;
- The accessibility of the small community venues, with their easy-going atmosphere, make it easier to establish intimacy;
- The setting and ambience of the venues makes it easier for the audience to appreciate the performance, in a low-key, accessible atmosphere;
- The fact that the concerts are in community venues makes them more accessible to all; more easily reached but also more easily understood and appreciated;
- This in turn enhances the community feel amongst patrons and strengthens the community function of the venues;
- The ensemble’s programme and style of presentation are designed to make chamber music more accessible, more easily understood and appreciated;
- The fact that it is the ensemble’s wish to remain accessible has an impact on their programme choices and informs their presentation style;
- The ensemble’s accessible presentation style enhances the audience’s enjoyment of the performance;
- The fact that the artists (visibly) enjoy their performance makes the performance more accessible to the audience.

Also, the type of ensemble personnel (their charisma and the way they relate to each-other on stage) makes the ensemble and the whole concert experience more accessible to the audience. This concept will be explored later in this chapter, under the theme of ‘Personnel - Group Dynamics & Team Management’. It is important to mention it here already, however, as it is the seventh theme with which Accessibility is interrelated. The final and eighth theme related to Accessibility (and also discussed in more detail later) is that of ‘Hard work – Demanding’. To touch on it briefly here: the fact that the venues’ locations are accessible and close to where (most of) the audience
lives, can make the concerts unfortunately extra demanding for the artists. As Shelli mentioned in her interview, the at times lengthy travel to the suburban venues means that the concert takes up a large chunk of the day, putting extra demands on family and private life. This is the one aspect of accessibility that is a challenge rather than a strength.

By being connected in one way or another to all of the other themes, and most of those relevant to all three study participants, the theme of Accessibility should be interpreted as the strongest current running in this study. I deliberately refrain from calling Accessibility ‘The Main Theme’ or main finding of this study, as the experience of being involved in chamber music in small community venues is clearly so much more complex than that. It is an intricate patchwork of interconnected themes, some of which may be very important to one participant but not so much to another, and one theme could even be more dominant one day and another some other time. Accessibility is, however, the undercurrent in most of the study results.

It is curious, therefore, that it was hardly ever literally/verbally mentioned by any of the study partners. It is more something that occurs, and that is created, something that is striven towards, and something that is experienced by participants. Its significance was quite immediate for the audience and the administrators in this study. For the third partner, the artists, who initiated these events all those years ago and are ultimately the providers of the concerts, it is encapsulated in the ensemble’s motto of wanting to make chamber music more accessible to new and existing audiences.

**Strength 7: These venues (and the ensemble) create and provide access to arts events and make arts events accessible.**

**Theme 8: Personnel, Group dynamics & Team management**

With Artico Ensemble consisting of four musicians, and the administrators and their support teams consisting frequently of several people, the theme of ‘Personnel’ is important in this study. It encompasses elements of artistic or organisational quality and merit, but also elements of Group dynamics and Team management. It poses both strengths and challenges in these types of performance situations.

For the artists, the personnel of the ensemble is an important reason for being a member of the group to start with, and a key component of the level of enjoyment drawn from participating in these concerts. As is common in chamber music, the strength of an ensemble depends on the level and type of connection between ensemble
members, the ability to work together, and the level and ease of intuitive artistic understanding. As Paul said:

Our strength I believe is also being on the same wave-length, musically. We’ve got four musicians, yes, we’re all different, but when we play we understand each other. So we don’t have to rehearse copious amounts of hours, it’s like a good team. (Paul, interview)

Violist Victoria Chiang, long-time member of the Aspen String Trio, also comments on the shared musical understanding that exists between her and her chamber music colleagues: “Playing with the Aspen String Trio allows for an in-depth experience, as my colleagues and I share similar approaches to music, and we have developed a keen understanding of each other’s playing” (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 38).

Not only does there need to be a personal connection between the ensemble members as people, a general level of ‘getting on with’ and appreciation of each-other, but it is also vital that there is mutual respect for each member’s artistic qualities. In a performance situation you hope to be able to at least rely on each-other’s quality of performance in that very moment, and ideally be creatively inspired by them. Having high-calibre personnel in a chamber music ensemble is crucial for the success of these concerts in more ways than one: for audiences to want to come and hear the ensemble, and for administrators to want to book the group, they must be high-quality musicians first of all. Audiences enjoy listening to and being inspired by technically and musically proficient artists. When looking at the intellectual concert descriptors charted in the audience experience chapter, comments such as “Excellent performance”, “Musically excellent”, “Brilliant” and “Admiration of performances” all confirm that musical proficiency is attractive to an audience, and often one of the main reasons for deciding to attend a particular performance. One Redland Museum audience member attended the concert for “the enjoyment of listening to live music performed well” (RM 195), and an Elanora patron relished “a chance to hear performances by top-class musicians” (E 26).

As discussed above in the paragraphs exploring the themes of ‘Programme & Presentation’ and ‘Interaction & Connection’, it is also very important that ensemble members are able to connect with their audience and are personable in their presentation. Shelli highlighted that (in her opinion) this was especially important in this study’s small performance venues:

Because we’re so close to an audience, the audience really needs to be able to connect with you as a person. For me it’s all about them liking
me, rather than just the character I am portraying or the song I am singing … it is as much about our personalities I believe as about our music. (Shelli, interview)

There is therefore a strong link between the three themes of ‘Personnel, Programme & Presentation’ and ‘Interaction & Connection’. All these themes are also interrelated with the fourth theme of ‘Enjoyment & Satisfaction’, and questionnaire participant 60 brought many of these themes together when she offered “I enjoy this group of musicians & the music they play” as her main reason for attending the concert (K 60).

For Artico Ensemble’s audience, the group’s personnel is a big draw-card and a real strength of the ensemble, as expressed most wonderfully in this audience quote from an Elanora audience member, listing some of his highlights of the concert:

Ave Maria (such ease & control), your piano lady (brilliant), also solo items - don't lose clarinet lady also most talented (both playing & compering - well spoken) impressed with gentleman on bass clarinet, both on low & high notes (would be excellent playing Woody Herman's “Golden Wedding”. (E 37)

For the administrators, the artistic quality of Artico’s personnel is one of the reasons of booking the ensemble. It provides them with a level of confidence that their audiences will be interested in buying a ticket to attend, that they will have a wonderful time during the concert and will afterwards be satisfied with the concert experience. Administrators who invited Artico Ensemble for the first time would of course have had to do so based on a hunch or by reading the information available on the ensemble’s website or be guided by the opinion of others who might have heard the group before. Graham from Wavell Heights, for example, had heard about the ensemble from another administrator. Jan from Elanora had heard the ensemble perform once before in a different venue, and in both cases, this prior knowledge gave them the determination and confidence to plan a performance in their venue. For the administrators of the venues the ensemble had visited before, the decision to plan a repeat concert was made much easier. As Pamela from Wilston said: “this is the third performance we’ve had by this group. And that’s why we’ve continued with it because the other performances were excellent and everyone really enjoyed them” (Pamela, interview). Lesley from Ipswich agreed, and was also really aware of the benefits of the ensemble’s concept of travelling to audiences in suburban small community venues: “Just such talented
people, and for them to go around to small venues, and to perform in small venues, and open themselves up to smaller audiences, is just a marvellous thing” (Lesley, interview). Dawn from Kenmore expressed her opinion of the artistic quality of the ensemble, and her subsequent confidence in booking them for several years running, by saying “you just know that it is going to be very professional” (Dawn, interview).

Another component associated with the theme of ‘Personnel’ is that of group dynamics, or more specifically, intragroup dynamics, “a system of behaviours and psychological processes occurring within a social group (intragroup dynamics)” (“Group dynamics”, n.d.). When looking at intragroup dynamics, also called social dynamics or interpersonal dynamics, one investigates the interdependency of the group members and the ways in which the behaviours, attitudes, opinions, and experiences of each member are collectively influenced by the other group members (ibid). The term “group dynamics” was coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin, who noted that people often take on distinct roles and behaviours when they work in a group (“Improving group dynamics”, n.d.). "Group dynamics" describes the effects of these roles and behaviours on other group members, and on the group as a whole. In a group with a positive dynamic, team members trust one another and work towards a collective decision. Researchers have also found that when a team has a positive dynamic, its members are more creative than an average group (ibid.).

Within a chamber music ensemble, important elements to consider are ensemble members’ roles, and group leadership. Communication, group decision-making and conflict resolution are important recurring issues, and a shared vision and a strong awareness of and willingness and ability to cooperate and collaborate are necessary. Available research into the specific social dynamics in chamber music ensembles confirm that these behaviours, processes and experiences need to be positive if the group wants to ensure successful musical collaborations and ensemble longevity. Goodman (2002) states that “ensemble performance is about teamwork: half the battle of making music together (and ultimately staying together as an ensemble) is fought on social grounds” (p.163).

While the role of the leader is vital in determining the group dynamic within an ensemble, the interaction between co-performers is also important. It goes without saying that positive feedback between musicians will inspire high levels of confidence and ultimately help the group perform well together. The social interaction between performers is like a constant working-out process, which can be realised most
effectively during ensemble rehearsal when musicians openly negotiate ideas, handle conflicts and try to reach compromises. (Goodman, 2002, p. 164)

Such open and positive group dynamic can be a matter of good, existing chemistry between four individual artists (which could be sheer luck-of-the-draw), but also of mutual respect and an awareness of the give-and-take synonymous with chamber musicianship. Brieley illustrated this very clearly in her interview, when discussing why she was a member of Artico Ensemble:

It’s been a delightful experience being part of this ensemble, mostly because the people are so terrific. Yeah, finding a chamber music ensemble member that you can work with on a consistent basis can be quite tricky. Social dynamics, it’s a tricky aspect of chamber music, but these guys are very easy to work with. We can get things done and have a good time. (Brieley, interview)

Later, she stresses that “this requires everyone to have a certain amount of input”, which hints at the democratic nature and equality inherent in chamber music. The Artists’ chapter recounting the group’s name change also contains examples of the balanced social dynamics in this ensemble. Shelli, for example, said that “I think it was important for us to find a name that […] we all agreed with” (Shelli, interview), and when it became apparent that Brieley in this case was not happy with the existing ensemble name, Shelli and the others took this on board and gave it serious consideration. Although the data indicates that not all ensemble members agreed with parts of Brieley’s reasoning or shared her concerns, a discussion ensued and a resolution was sought. The study data also contains strong elements of group members working towards a shared goal (in this case that of the ensemble being represented correctly), and desires for growth and moving forward. The open discussion regarding the future of Artico Ensemble, which took place during the ensemble’s group interview (the full transcript of which was presented at the end of the Artists chapter) gives another very good insight into this particular ensemble’s group dynamics. It reads as a direct but respectful and inquisitive discussion, where issues can be brought up and taken on board without the speaker being immediately judged. To my knowledge, this process of communication was part of the group’s natural method of working from the start, due to an easy natural chemistry between the artists, but has also in part been a conscious modus operandi, to allow the ensemble to grow and (musical) relationships to flourish.
The two aspects of Artico Ensemble’s group dynamic relayed above, namely that of direct but respectful and inquisitive discussion, and of the group members working towards a shared goal, are also indicative of the fact that the ensemble is no longer in its initial stages of formation; the stages of ‘getting to know each other’ both personally and musically, and of discovering how to effectively work together. Tuckman (1965) identified a developmental sequence in small groups, and his article in the Psychological Bulletin highlights general concepts about various types of groups, their composition and their development. As a psychologist, he distinguishes between group-therapy groups, human relations training-groups, natural groups and laboratory-task groups, with a ‘natural group’ identified as one that exists to perform some social or professional function, with members having come together to do a job (Tuckman, 1965, p. 385). Such groups may be characterized either by appointed or emergent leadership (ibid), and a chamber music ensemble such as Artico can be viewed as a natural group.

Tuckman describes the various developmental stages of groups according to his own conceptual model, now commonly known as Tuckman’s Stages of Small-Group Development (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The first stage is one of meeting and getting to know each other, and of identifying the group’s task and optimal method to achieve it. The second stage is one in which interpersonal conflict and lack of unity is to be expected, as a means of expressing individuality and a general resistance to the group’s task (1965, p. 386). The third identified stage is one of development of group cohesion, which is reflected in Artico Ensemble’s material discussed above:

Group members accept the group and accept the idiosyncrasies of fellow members. The group becomes an entity by virtue of its acceptance by the members, their desire to maintain and perpetuate it, and the establishment of new group-generated norms to insure the group’s existence. Harmony is of maximum importance, and task conflicts are avoided to insure harmony. (p. 386)

At the time of Tuckman’s article written in 1965, few research studies, as he says, had concerned themselves with the developmental sequence in natural groups (p. 393), with many focusing on therapy groups or human relations training groups. Many of the stages described in research involving the latter two groups are in my personal view also valid for natural groups. For example, Coffey et al. (1950), Corsini (1959), and Taylor (1950) describe the development of group cohesion as a stage in which the group becomes unified and is characterized by the existence of a common goal and
group spirit. Stoute (1950) and Thorpe and Smith (1953) identify “a period of unity, support, and freedom of communication” (all as cited in Tuckman, p. 389), elements of which are all again visible and tangible in Artico Ensemble’s data.

Tuckman also identifies a fourth stage, “in which roles become flexible and functional, and group energy is channelled into the task. Structural issues have been resolved, and structure can now become supportive of task performance. This stage can be labelled as performing” (1965, p. 396). Although Tuckman’s performing is of course not specifically music related (although very en pointe!), the stage of development aimed at task performance (which has an outward focus) and the preceding one of group cohesion (an inward focus) are highly relevant to many chamber music ensembles. In later discussions, Tuckman’s stages of group development have been colloquially renamed the Forming-Storming-Norming-and-Performing model. In 1977, together with Mary-Ann Jensen, he added a fifth stage to the existing four stages: that of “Adjourning” (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Let’s assume (and hope) that this will not be relevant to Artico Ensemble.

More recent research on group dynamics, team performance and management comes from Hackman (2004), who discusses the idea of the “self-managed performing unit”, where the team as a whole has responsibility not just for doing work, but also for monitoring and managing how that work gets done (2004, p. 85). A self-managing team might have an assigned team leader, but there is scope for all members to participate in accomplishing the critical leadership functions (ibid.), so that, ultimately, the kinds of functions that need to be accomplished for a group to do well are indeed being accomplished. He points out that “if the leadership ‘wheel’ can rest on multiple shoulders, so much the better” (ibid.), as this increases the chances that the group will be effective. When composing a self-managing team, it is important to pay great attention to ensuring that the team includes members who have the knowledge, skills and experience required for doing the work (Hackman, 2004, p. 86). But Hackman also states that one needs to ensure that the team has a diversity of knowledge, skills, perspectives and experience (ibid., italics added). These diverse skills and talents can complement each other, creating a (more) effective team.

Whether this holds true for chamber music groups is a point of discussion. Irving Janis recognises that diverse points of view can contribute to richly textured, creative performances (Janis, 1972, as quoted in Murnighan & Conlon, 1991, p. 170). Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), however, write that ensemble members’ similar (rather than diverse) musical perspectives can make the preparation of a musical work
proceed more quickly, and may manage musical conflicts more easily (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, as cited in Murnighan & Conlon, 1991, p. 170).

The very thorough study undertaken by Murnighan and Conlon (1991) investigates the internal workings, effectiveness and success of 20 British String Quartets. Several participating quartets claimed that having a blend of varying personalities or a different educational background and playing style was a bonus, and that similarity was not beneficial. They did, however, end up being the less successful groups in this study. The members of the more successful quartets shared similar attitudes to their work and were frequently on good personal footing with each other. Many were friends, and some shared similar learning experiences by hailing from the same university or teacher. Murnighan and Conlon therefore state that “optimal group functioning would balance similarity and diversity, capitalizing efficiently on group members’ similar attitudes while also taking advantage of diverse creative inputs” (1991, p.170)

Elements of group dynamics, or social dynamics, are also evident in the administrator’s data. The interview with Jan from Elanora confirms that she worked within a team with positive group dynamics. Comments such as “I am part of the adult fellowship team, and we said ‘let’s all get behind this, and let’s run with it’” (Jan, interview), and the fact that she uses the word ‘we’ to start most of her answers should all be interpreted as her experiencing managing the concert as a strong and positive team effort. Fellow team members and patrons did view her as a leader in this, as is evident from the statement “they were just coming up and saying ‘when are we doing this again, Jan, when are we doing this again?’” (Jan, interview). From my own personal interactions with her and other members of her team I know that she exhibits very good leadership skills, had a clear event management strategy and is very organized herself, which would all have contributed to the successful concert in Elanora.

Dawn is the clear leader of the Kenmore organizational team. After hosting concerts for several years now they are such a good team that, as Dawn says, “we’ve got to the stage where we can just about run the concerts without having a meeting …” (Dawn, interview). Dawn herself is very methodical in her approach of organizing the concerts and brought a large folder with documents and ‘to-do’ lists to our interview. She heads a large team of at least 20 to 25 people that all have various designated tasks. Dawn recognized that organizing the afternoon tea was not her forte and handed that task over to others. This adds another 15 to 40 people to the team, independently in charge of food preparation. This skill of successfully delegating should be seen as one
of Dawn’s strengths as a team leader. It also means that there are many people in one way or another connected to the event, who will all feel a sense of ownership of that event and are invested in its success. This, coupled with Dawn’s strong leadership will have undoubtedly contributed to the success and longevity of the Kenmore concert series.

Husband-and-wife team Avon and Helen manage the Wynnum house concert series by themselves, without further assistance. The concert series was their shared idea and in the first years they undertook the planning, marketing and managing of it together. As Avon says: “At the start we put an ad in the papers […] and we thought” (Avon, interview); the personal pronoun “we” indicating a shared effort. At the time of the case study concert, however, there seemed to be a stronger task division. Avon was in charge of advertising the concert locally (“I did a particular flyer in the street”) and sending email invites, setting up the room as well as negotiating with Council. Helen was predominantly engaged with preparing the extensive afternoon supper the concerts are also renowned for. By splitting the organisational tasks, they implemented one of the elements of a healthy and successful team: that of creating defined roles and responsibilities by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of team members and assign roles accordingly (“Group dynamics”, n.d.). Although a management duo is of course only a small team (and we should not expect any problems in ‘team management’), this simple role division may mean that the entire task of organising the concerts becomes more manageable, especially on a long-term basis.

In the Wynnum house concert there was also something else at play, in this researcher’s opinion. Although the concerts had been set in motion by the hosts Avon and Helen, their community of friends and acquaintances came on board to support it as patrons and became an integral part of it. On the day of the concert, the audience felt very much part of the event and contributed to the generally positive group dynamic. The appreciation of the audience members acted as reward, motivation and inspiration for the hosts, as evidenced by Avon’s following comment: “To see the smiles and the expression of just amazing, amazing … you know, they’re just so enjoying it. It’s permeating the soul” (Avon, interview). And in turn, comments such as “warm hearted hosts, great atmosphere” and “personal connection with hosts” from audience member 157 indicate that this patron really felt part of the event, and is highly likely to support these events in the future. This positive, mutually supportive interpersonal dynamic is definitely one of the strengths of the concerts in this venue.
Strength 8: The personnel, group dynamics, and team management skills of the partners involved in creating these concerts contribute positively to their success.

Rick from the Redland Museum is a longstanding supporter of Artico Ensemble, having already hosted the group for four consecutive years prior to this case study concert. This has resulted in a personal relationship on first name basis between him and the artists (especially towards Paul and Rianne), and a mutual feeling of respect and admiration. The available interview material with Rick, however, creates a slightly ambivalent image of the group dynamics within his organizational team. He answers many of the interview questions in the first person (“I”), which seems to imply that he does the lion-share of the tasks. This could of course be because the Artico concerts are only some of the many events that the Redland Museum organizes, and his other team members on the events committee may be in charge of different events, leaving Rick solely in charge of performances. This is not quite clear from the interview material. We can, however, not comfortably state that the group dynamics within the Redland Museum’s organizational team are strong.

The interview with Lesley from Ipswich suggests a similar situation. She was given the job, as she says, of organizing this year’s Artico Ensemble concert, after last year’s artist liaison person went on holiday. This change-over of leadership meant that the managerial experience gained in the previous year could not simply be extended into this year, and Lesley had to start afresh. She did not specifically indicate that the experience of managing this concert had been a negative one, or that there had been negative aspects to the group dynamics within the management team. For this research study, however, we cannot draw firm conclusions about the strength of the group dynamics in her team.

Graham and Pamela spoke quite frankly about the challenges they encountered whilst in charge of organizing their concert events. Pamela encountered some opposition and criticism within her community and her team members and explained that “it’s rising above that and finding other people who will actually support this sort of an event” (Pamela, interview). This is clearly a team personnel issue, and it is to be hoped that suitable new team members can be found to assist in the organization of future events. Graham mentions that he felt some resistance from others within his organizational team who delayed finalizing important initial details, which caused his actual practical preparation time for the concert to be reduced quite drastically. Finer details about the personnel make-up of his team or the applied team management...
strategies are not known, but phrases such as “a lot of angst” and “extremely hard slog” do indicate that the group dynamic in his organizational team was not ideal.

The artist’s interviews highlighted that the social dynamics within an ensemble can pose some real challenges as well. As Shelli says:

I think another challenge we have is because we are all very well-established musicians, who have had very different paths to get here, it’s hard to always be on the same page, musically. And there have been occasions where one person has wanted a different speed, a different, you know ... there is a lot of negotiating that goes on the rehearsal process. ‘Cause we are, we know what we like, and it’s all valid, but it is just really … yeah, compromising. (Shelli, interview)

Cellist Joshua Gindele called this “one of the most exciting and challenging dimensions of chamber music: the ability to bring conviction with regard to your own musical ideas, while at the same time be open to the ideas of others in the group” (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 41). Whilst the four Artico members all acknowledge and support that they frequently have different opinions, Rianne elaborates that the main challenge lies in the fact that a general consensus still somehow needs to be reached:

and to be, uhm, democratic about it, that … the juggling of opinions, and .. but then ultimately the decision making, somebody has to make the decision of what it is that you’re going to do next. To do that without one big leader, I think is a challenge, although it is the only way to run an ensemble, that everybody has input. (Rianne, interview)

This is very different to an orchestral or opera environment. In those settings, aesthetic artistic decisions are made by the conductor or choir-master and operational decisions by company management, and performers are simply expected to comply. A chamber music ensemble should ideally be a democratic environment, where all partners’ opinions matter equally, both in aesthetic and operational decisions. This is not always easy to accomplish (and a set “how-to” manual has not yet been invented), which makes this aspect of ensemble group dynamics one of the challenges of this type of music making. Negative group dynamics, friction amongst team personnel or insufficient team management skills can have adverse effects on the performance or the concert organisation process, and ultimately negatively affect the outcome for both the artists and the administrators.
Challenge 2: The personnel, group dynamics, and team management skills of the partners involved in creating these concerts can hamper their success.

The studies of Group dynamics and Team management are both subfields of the much broader disciplines of psychology, sociology, and business and communication studies, and there is a vast body of literature available on both topics. In this research study, these themes have not been selected as the main areas of investigation but have been identified as part of a larger set of themes and findings, and as such it is unfortunately not possible to delve into these topics more deeply at this point. The occurrence and role of group dynamics and team management amongst the partners involved in chamber music in small community venues would, however, definitely be a recommended topic for further study.

Theme 9: Hard work / Demanding

As discussed above, the level of enjoyment and satisfaction gained from being involved in these concerts is an important strength for the study partners. It makes up for some other factors associated with the experience, namely the simple fact that creating these events is hard work, and very demanding. Again, this may seem like a trivial theme, but one that ran strongly through the data for both the artists and the administrators.

For the administrators, the hard work consisted predominantly of the marketing and publicity required to getting bums on seats and get concert tickets sold. Although someone like Jan from Elanora simply stated that her workload involved “letting everybody on the Coast know that this was on” (Jan, interview), one can of course easily imagine that reaching “everybody on the Coast” will take a lot of hard work. Graham openly admitted that “a lot of angst and a lot of hard work” were involved in organizing the event at his church.

For those administrators who were more familiar with all the processes involved, the hard work was seen as less negative, and became more or a familiar routine; still required, but less of a burden. Dawn described her marketing and publicity jobs in a lot of detail, but without feelings of angst or noticeable stress. To her, all the jobs required were simply meant to be executed in a logical order, which would, in her experience, lead to success. Her hard work and persistence in establishing her local concert series for the past few years is now paying dividends, with regular audience numbers in attendance.
For the artists these concerts are certainly demanding. Their data shows the various types of “hard work” associated with these concerts. Aside from the hard work inherent in dealing with the challenges presented by the venue’s setting, ambience and acoustics (as explained earlier in this chapter, under ‘Challenge 1’), the actual physicality of the performance is also described as hard work. Rianne mentions the physical stamina required for the sound check plus performance, and Shelli says that “there is no easy programme in this ensemble, and there’s really no chance for a pause or a break […], we’re all playing the whole concert” (Shelli, interview). This becomes especially evident on days on which the artists may not feel 100% fit and healthy.

Joshua Gindele, cellist of the Miro String Quartet, concurs:

> With just one player to a part, you are personally responsible night after night for delivering your absolute best, and are required to stay in top shape both musically and technically. While challenging, this aspect of chamber music is also incredibly rewarding. (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 41)

Rianne also comments on the fact that these self-managed concerts are demanding because the artists need to do all of the various aspects associated with them; from planning and organizing the event, liaising with the administrators, taking charge of (some of) the marketing and advertising, to programme planning and rehearsing, culminating in performing the actual event. Paul’s additional task, on top of all of the above, is provide music for the ensemble by arranging existing repertoire or composing new work tailored to the group. The fact that this is all really time-consuming demonstrates another aspect of “hard work”: Fitting all these time-consuming elements into a free-lance diary, together with teaching jobs and other performance contracts, is demanding. Shelli also brings the need for a healthy work-life balance into the mix, mentioning that these concerts take her away from her family on weekends, which is not always desirable. Another representation of “hard work” is the need for the artists to maintain the current network of performance venues, and the drive to find ways to expand this network.

The only partner for whom these concerts were not demanding or hard work, is the audience. The audience is shown to benefit from the hard work of the artists and administrators.

*Challenge 3: These concerts require a lot of hard work and are demanding.*
7.2 Introducing the Mind Maps

As seen, the experience of being involved in these kinds of concerts consists of many elements, most of which are interrelated with each with each-other to some degree. This was described in this chapter’s discussion, but the full complexity of these interrelationships and the complete content of ‘the experience’ may be better appreciated when presented visually. To this end, the following pages contain two Mind Maps, which together can be seen as a visual summary of this chapter and of the complete Research Report.

Mind Map 1 shows all the themes, or aspects, relevant to the experience of partaking in professional chamber music performances in small community venues (as discovered in this study), and the ways in which they are interrelated. The interrelationship-lines should be interpreted as ‘is affected by’: a one-way arrow points to the one aspect that is affected by the other, and a two-way arrow shows aspects that affect each-other reciprocally.

The more complex Mind Map 2 additionally presents some of the sub-aspects of the themes, explaining how the theme is relevant to the experience of partaking in these types of concerts. This added complexity also provides an opportunity to show whether the theme should be seen as a strength or a challenge, or (as in two instances) both. It is to be hoped that these Mind Maps and the preceding narrated chapter go some way towards highlighting the extent of the experience of partaking in professional chamber music concerts in small community venues, with all its strengths and challenges …, and go partway towards providing a chamber music-specific answer to Christopher Small’s question:

\[\text{What does it mean when this performance (of this work) takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants? Or to put it more simply, we can ask of the performance, any performance anywhere and at any time, What's really going on here?} \text{ (1998, p. 10, italics in original)}\]
Figure 15: Mind Map 1 - Themes and their relationships
Figure 16: Mind Map 2 - Themes, their relationships, and Strengths & Challenges
Chapter 8. What is Chamber Music?

The definition and meaning of chamber music has changed over time, and in this day and age it may well mean different things to different people. Historically, chamber music was only accessible to the select few, and (perhaps as a result of that) the prevailing general perception of chamber music is one of elitism, of a complex music only understandable to a musically educated in-crowd. However, initiatives by artists such as Artico Ensemble are aimed at challenging and potentially changing that perception, and the cited opinions of Artico audience members presented earlier in this chapter are a testament to this. By creating opportunities for the general public to hear good quality chamber music concerts presented in an accessible way, public perception of what chamber music is, or can be, is definitely broadening.

Chapter 1.3 discussed the term “chamber music” in order to provide a technical definition for study purposes, a delineation of chamber music to specify the research boundaries. As part of this research, the case study artists, audience members and concert administrators were asked to give their personal definition of chamber music. Collectively, their opinions and reflections and those of musicians, authors and academics working in the field form a wonderfully colourful and insightful palette of ideas about the broader concept of chamber music.

Sir Henry Hadow, in his Introduction to the 2nd edition of Walter Willson Cobbett’s *Cyclopedic Survey Of Chamber Music* published in 1963, acknowledges that it is a challenge to come to a fitting definition of the term ‘chamber music’. He does, however, muse on what he sees as its many endearing features:

If we are asked, ‘What is Chamber Music?’, within the currently accepted range of the term, the only possible answer is that of St. Augustine – ‘Si non rogas intelligo’*. All terms of art seem incapable of exact definition; those of music perhaps less than any other, in proportion, as its vocabulary has been more fluid; […] At the same time we know roughly what the term implies, what kind of works we may expect to find in the programme of a chamber concert, and it is on this principle of division rather than that of definition that our expectation is based. […] One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the growing prevalence of interest in chamber music. […] It is an art as pure as sculpture and as enduring; the ideal conditions for hearing it, imply comfort and ease; it seems to fall readily within the comprehension of the average music-lover. There is enough volume of tone to fill the ear
without overcharging it; there is enough variety of texture to incite interest without distracting it; we can hear what every voice is saying and so follow both its part in the dialogue and its bearing on the general plot. No other form of music has such power to engage our attention and keep it unflagging till the end; no other can delight our senses with such exquisite beauty of sound, or display so clearly to our intelligence the intricacies and adventures of its design. (Cobbett & Mason, (Eds.), 1963, p. Introduction)

* “Si non rogas intelligo” should be understood as: *The more I set myself to think of it, the less I understand it.*

Paul, an audience member at Artico Ensemble’s concert at the Redland Museum, found creating a definition quite challenging:

Oh, *my* definition? Well … hmmm, I suppose, would it be a condensed form of a huge orchestra or something, that’s performing certain pieces? Arranged in a certain way? To suit three or four instruments? I don’t know … is that right? Played in a room, a chamber? (Paul, RM)

Moyra from the Redland Museum was more assured in her definition: “OK, music designed … not necessarily designed but music played in a smaller, intimate space, rather than in a large concert hall” (Moyra, RM).

Community-built reference tool Wikipedia provides the following, fairly conventional definition:

Chamber music is a form of classical music that is composed for a small group of instruments - traditionally a group that could fit in a palace chamber or a large room. Most broadly, it includes any art music that is performed by a small number of performers, with one performer to a part. (“Chamber music”, n.d., para 1)

Sybil, audience member at Artico Ensemble’s concert at the Redland Museum, in first instance reflects on the origins of this type of music:

Well, it goes back such a long way, doesn’t it? In the early days where they sat around, the instruments of varying types, … and how a small group sat around in the large homes of England and Europe and the Continent and sat around … that’s what I remember learning about it. Is that correct? […] Well it is, a chamber, sitting in the lounge room of these huge big places, where entertainment was in the homes where it
all started, wasn’t it? The first writers of it, the composers? That’s what I think anyway, small groups. (Sybil, RM)

Helen, another audience member at the Redland Museum, agrees:
Well I don’t know exactly what it is, … you … sometimes I think of it as a small group of performers, working to, like in the drawing rooms and in the chamber rooms of probably, I don’t know what century, but … You know, like rather than in a huge orchestra in a huge venue, chamber music would be more intimate, with just a few people. (Helen, RM)

Cellist, conductor, writer and academic Hans Erik Deckert explains that the term was coined to identify a musical type:
The term musica da camera arose in 17th-century Italy in order to distinguish the new ‘Hausmusik’ of the courts from sacred and dramatic music. It began as the music of the privileged few and, together with other musical types, grew to form the repertoire of musical ‘Meisterwerke’ which are now some of our greatest spiritual assets. (Deckert, 1981, p. 2, italics in original)

Wikipedia provides some more information about its history and development:
Because of its intimate nature, chamber music has been described as ‘the music of friends’. For more than 200 years, chamber music was played primarily by amateur musicians in their homes, and even today, when most chamber music performance has migrated from the home to the concert hall, there are still many musicians, amateur and professional, who continue to play chamber music for their own pleasure. Playing chamber music requires special skills, both musical and social, which are different from the skills required for playing solo or symphonic works. (“Chamber music”, n.d.)

Peabody Institute’s Director of Chamber Music, Michael Kannen, agrees and elaborates on the special skills required to play this type of music successfully:
It's a mode of musical expression that involves intimate one-on-one communication between the musicians and audience, as opposed to the larger, more public experience of an opera or orchestral concert. Because chamber musicians play without a conductor, they have more
interpretive freedom—requiring them to communicate well in order to maintain ‘expressive unity’. (Johnson, 2007, p. 18)

Homer Ulrich first published his tome *Chamber Music: The Growth and Practice of an Intimate Art* in 1948. In his Introduction to the Second Edition (1966) he also focuses his readers’ attention on the ensemble skills associated with chamber music playing:

Chamber music is based upon flawless balance and ensemble, a selfless teamwork, the achievement of which is one of the finest manifestations of the human spirit. Loyalty to the composer's intentions requires the perfection of ensemble that the chamber musician strives for and only the chamber musician can hope to achieve. In chamber music a feeling of intimate contact with the music itself is developed. (Ulrich, 1966, p. 6)

Edward Klorman explores these ideas further in his recent PhD Dissertation, and concludes that “chamber music is a collaborative art in which musical ideas blossom through an animated interchange; each person makes a distinctive, essential contribution” (Klorman, 2013, p. xi). Klorman’s view on the players’ “distinctive, essential contribution” is also reflected in the following comment from Artico Ensemble’s pianist Brieley:

Chamber music is a style of western classical music that is for two to approximately nine to eleven players, where they all play together and form a group as one. And yet they all keep their individuality (laughs…). That’s kind-of text-book “by Ulrich”! […] I guess the most exciting aspect of it is, like I say, the players get to keep their individuality while making a whole. Unlike an orchestra, where the emphasis is on making a whole, and no focus on the individual. (Brieley, interview)

Deckert acknowledges the chamber musician’s individual voice and adds that this comes with an individual responsibility as well: “The chamber musician is a conversation-partner with equal rights. He carries the music, but is also simultaneously carried himself. He acts as an individual within a group, in which everyone has equal responsibility” (1981, p. 2). Eugene Drucker, violinist in the Emerson String Quartet, expresses it thus:
Chamber music gives me the chance to be heard as an individual, and yet also to rely on the strengths and different music personalities of my colleagues. […] This music is my vocation, my life’s work - if it partly defines me as a person, I cannot think of a better single way to identify myself. (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 40)

Cathy, audience member in Wilston, feels that in chamber music the musicians seem to complement each-other: “I imagine chamber musicians are a small group of musicians that complement each-other, with trios, quartets or more, that just handle more delicate pieces? … I don’t know really, but, yeah …” (Cathy, Wil)

During the Artico Ensemble interviews, I made a distinction between a work of chamber music and the performance of it:

There are so many different definitions of chamber music, it’s actually really hard to pin down what chamber music is. And I think for everybody it is very different. Chamber music can either be a musical work (so a piece of chamber music), but it can also be type of musical performance (so an act of chamber music). If you are referring to the musical work, it denotes a piece written for a limited amount of players, anywhere between two and ten or twelve. And if you refer to the performance, it’s a performance by a small group of players, performing un-conducted, that each have an individual, independent part to play. In the act of playing chamber music those individual strands come together, each equally important, to create the piece of music. There is a large volume of chamber music written for ensembles that include strings, but chamber music can be any instrumentation. (Rianne, interview)

My own definition of chamber music put no restrictions on instrumentation. Still, there seems to be no unified view on whether it includes voice. This is evident when comparing a description found in the online American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language with a Wikipedia entry, both cited below:

Compositions traditionally intended for performance in a private room or small concert hall and written for an instrumental ensemble, such as a trio or quartet, with one player for each part. (Chamber music, 2011)

Music written for combinations of stringed or wind instruments, often with a keyboard (piano or harpsichord) as well, and music for voices
with or without accompaniment have historically been included in the term. (“Chamber music”, n.d. Wikipedia - since removed)

Homer Ulrich (1966) does include voice:
In the original sense of the term, *chamber music* refers to any music designed for home performance, as opposed to performance in the church, concert hall, or opera house. From this point of view both vocal and instrumental forms may be identified as chamber music if they are suited to performance in a chamber or small room. (1966, p. 6)

David, audience member in Wilston, feels that chamber music is hard to define and mentions that his view on its instrumentation is changing:
No, I can’t give you such a definition! (laughs…) But I’ll try. Chamber music is music by a small group of musicians, which I always thought traditionally involved strings … you know, violin, viola and so on, maybe cello. But the way it is done with this group (I was thinking during the performance) is the voice taking the place of the strings. So, yeah, that’d be my answer to that. (David, Wil)

Artico Ensemble soprano Shelli agrees:
Well, for me, now that I have been singing chamber music for a while, it’s anything that fits into a small venue. I would traditionally have thought of it as an instrumental ensemble, a string quartet or a piano quintet or something like that. I have never, during my training, considered singing as necessarily part of chamber music, aside from a chamber choir, which is just a small group of singers. But to have the level of communication and just the closeness that we have as a group, that’s what chamber music is to me now. Any music that you can create with a few people, and that will work in a small venue. (Shelli, interview)

Louise, audience member at the Redland Museum, has a more traditional understanding of chamber music, but acknowledges that this may be changing:
Well, chamber music … I have an old-fashioned conception of chamber music, but I accept that chamber music in anything that the artists want to successfully perform, you know, and know that they are appreciated. It’s very hard to give chamber … it used to be Bach, and Schubert and
… but no, I accept anything that comes under the term of chamber music. (Louise, RM)

Wendy and Peter attended the concert in Kenmore and left their details for a follow-up interview. Their interview transcript suggests they may not have had very good experiences with chamber music prior to Artico Ensemble’s concert, and highlights a stigma that may still (for some) be associated with the medium:

Peter: Well, if you had asked me that question quite a few years ago, when I ... before I got a bit more involved in going out to things, chamber music is normally the very boring, staid (and this is not my view now) very boring, staid, very formal, set piece of musicians playing to a very snooty audience in a private home.

Wendy: Classical.

Peter: Now, I’d say chamber music is an intimate small orchestra or a small group, intimate music being played to an appreciative audience in a small venue. End of story, that’s what I’d say. [...] What you were playing was chamber music outside of a chamber as it were, where you’re going out and playing to the audience, whereas one idea of chamber music is ‘No, you’re going along to be seen with the right crowd, you’d dress in tie, coat and tails (etcetera) to go along to this’. And you go along to this either a very pucker venue or a very wealthy private home or a Government venue perhaps, you know, the Government’s Place for example, and they’re playing a very set format, almost incidental music while people are chatting about politics or perhaps dancing, … not dancing, but sitting around.

Wendy: Pretty much background noise.

Peter: And I would say: well, that’s incidental music, pretty boring sort of stuff.

Interviewer: So is that also your view on chamber music, your definition?

Wendy: Uhm, when I heard (before I heard you the first time) that it was chamber music, I thought: ‘Aargh, I got a season ticket, and chamber music … aargh, I hope they play something palatable!’ (laughs…) That was my…, I did it the first time because they were short
of people coming and so I thought, felt: ‘right, I’ll do it, I’ll go’. And I had such a great time! And I said to Peter, ‘Oh, you missed a great concert!’

Peter: I think perhaps it’s an unfortunate term because it denotes (to some people) four tired old ladies, one with a double bass, a viola …thing, violin, and I don’t know what else, a piano playing something out of the …

Wendy: It would have to be dirges, the old Bach dirges I’d say!

Peter: … beginning of the 19th century I’d say, it’d be nothing lively, … but it would be played technically beautifully and it would have a very limited audience of people who just happen to like that sort of music. Or it might even include pieces that are set pieces, or pieces designed for playing from students or advanced students to Master-type thing … it’s not designed for entertainment, … (Peter and Wendy, K)

The late English musicologist and author Roger Fiske (1910 - 1987) also touches on the fact that chamber music, to some, may seem quite tame and not that entertaining. He states that this may in fact depend on the size of the rooms in which it is frequently played:

Orchestral music is written to entertain an audience, but until recently chamber music was written to entertain those who played it. This, far more than the alleged lack of loudness and colour, is what sometimes makes it seem ‘difficult’. We who listen may feel intruders on a private conversation about something we do not understand. The players are talking to each other instead of to us. […] The supposed lack of loudness in chamber music is an illusion born of a modern practical problem. […] Chamber music, in the surroundings for which it was intended, is loud, quite as loud as orchestral music in the Albert Hall. The illusion of tameness comes from the modern habit of playing it in concert-halls much too large for it. (Fiske, 1969, p. 5-6)

Bess, audience member in Wavell Heights, envisages chamber music as a performance in a small hall:

I think I always thought it meant it was a small group of musicians. Mainly thinking about it that they’d just be performing at a smaller
venue, a smaller hall. I always thought, that’s what I imagine chamber music would be … (Bess, WH)

Alan and Treacy attended Artico Ensemble’s concert in Wynnum and participated in this study’s follow-up interviews. A discussion on the essence and nature of chamber music ensued, which encapsulates many of the comments heard earlier in this chapter:

**Treacy:** Okay, so a chamber for me means a room, it's not going to be an overly large room. So that gives a kind of sense that the volume of this music is going to be lower. It's not going to be crashing and booming, you know, huge percussion section or... The character of the music is probably going to be a more lyrical quality. It’s, often chamber music I find, it's this interplay between a small number of players. It's almost like the melody moves around, comes back, it's an interplay between the characters in that group.

**Alan:** If you look back some hundreds of years, I would have thought of chamber music as being stuff which a lot of it would have been … (what's the word? When you ask someone to compose something for you) … commissioned for royal courts and things like that, where they probably had a grand ballroom or something like that, and they may have had an audience of a hundred or something like that and perhaps 10 or 20 musicians. That's what I think of as its roots. And bringing that into a modern context, I would think of it more where you get people performing away from mainstream things, where you might have a performance in a church, or a school of arts or some of the little theatres. So yes, it's a smaller scale.

**Interviewer:** Is it also a style of music?

**Treacy:** You see, I would have said a scale, because this would have been pre-microphones, pre-electronics, pre-electricity; so if you were trying to project a sound you would have a limitation on that. I'm just thinking of like church music: it seemed there was no limitation on organ music in churches, cathedrals, but that's a different style. Is it a particular style? Yes, I do think it’s a particular style. I tend to think of it as gentle.

**Alan:** And probably more strings … the softer winds.
Treacy: Very portable instruments.

Alan: Probably not much percussion. If brass is involved it's fairly muted, and if there's voice involved it could just be soloists.

Treacy: Not massed, instruments or voices. (Alan and Treacy, Wyn)

To Rhoda, an audience member from the Wynnum house concert, it includes strings and woodwinds and evokes a pleasant feeling:

Well chamber music, I would … I think of being a small group of people with woodwind instruments and strings basically, chamber music. Maybe a piano, maybe a singer, but basically, personally I would think of strings and woodwind. […] To me, it just brings the thought of a very pleasant sort of … I feel as if it’s more like afternoon sort of music, it's funny. […] Drawing room music, you know, and sort of more or less relaxing music. (Rhoda, Wyn)

Jan Drury, concert administrator from Elanora, echoes that same sentiment: “For me it’s a magical experience. It is a calming experience, it’s just such a wonderful, wonderful performance, the chamber music”. (Jan, private interview)

Catharina, an audience member at Jan’s concert in Elanora, highlights what she sees as the warm intimacy of chamber music:

I think in Dutch they say kamermuziek (‘room music’ - RW) and I always felt that it is music that you could play in a room. It is far more … how can I say that? Chamber music, for me, is only a few people that are playing beautiful music, and it doesn't belong in a big orchestra. It is for me a warming … you know what I try to say? It warms. It's a very good, intimate feeling, for me more than a big orchestra. So kamermuziek (what it says, a ‘kamer’ is a room), it is a … to me it's smaller and more intimate. (Catharina, E)

Nick, audience member in Wavell Heights, describes a feeling of being drawn into the music:

It might sound very strange, but it's like a personal acoustic. You … like when I’m listening to chamber music I usually don’t hear people around me, it’s music in me. So that would be … the definition would be a personal acoustic space. (Nick, WH)
Homer Ulrich’s reflections on the nature of chamber music describe a sense of pleasure and enjoyment:

Chamber music is a bountiful source of pleasure to those who know the field. It is at once one of the most enjoyable and the most dignified of literatures. The musical amateur often makes it his hobby and considers it the mainspring of his musical existence. The experienced layman finds himself richly rewarded for his intelligent listening. The professional musician turns to it for relaxation and for a kind of pleasure that no other field offers. It has challenged the greatest composers to their best efforts. […] The string quartets of Mozart and Beethoven, for example, and the quartets and quintets of Brahms are among the most profound and moving works in the entire literature of music…. (Ulrich, 1966, p.2)

Ulrich is very complimentary about the quality of the repertoire, and Joshua Gindele, cellist with the Miro String Quartet, echoes his sentiment:

There are so many phenomenal things to love about chamber music, and I would be lying if I didn’t say I was hooked from a very early age. Of course, one does not need to look any further than the repertoire itself. Many of the greatest composers chose chamber music to write their most intimate and deeply personal musical statements (Cahill & Scott, 2015, p. 41).

Author Lucy Miller Murray, in her Introduction to Chamber Music: An Extensive Guide For Listeners, wholeheartedly agrees:

The definition of chamber music as ‘one player to a part without a conductor’ has never really said it all for me although it bears a certain accuracy. My personal definition of the form is simply “the music for which the best composers save their best writing. (Miller Murray, 2015, p. xii)

Catherine Drinker Bowen coined the phrase “Chamber music - a conversation between friends” (“chamber music quotes”, n.d.). This now-famous quote blends Richard Walthew’s 1909 expression of it being “the music of friends” (Bashford, in Stowell (Ed.), 2003, p. 328), with Goethe’s 1829 description of chamber music, especially string quartet music, being like “four rational people conversing” (Bashford,
in Stowell (Ed.), 2003, p. 328). Samuel Cottell reiterates this intimate conversational paradigm in his blog in Sydney’s Omega Ensemble’s newsletter:

A lot has been said about Chamber music over the past few centuries, and it stands to reason. It is the core of all Western art music and provides the foundation for all musical forms that follow it. Chamber music is the intimate negotiation and the art of musical conversation, performed to audiences in intimate settings. It is a musical conversation between friends and shared with audiences. It is the ultimate in musical democracy. There is no conductor, sometimes one person leads and sometimes they accompany, each sharing and dividing the roles in constant musical dialogue. (Cottell, 2017, Para 1.)

Artico Ensemble bass clarinettist Paul feels that sense of conversation also in his relationship with the audience:

Unlike symphonic, large ensemble music, where you have always inevitably some sort of a barrier between the audience and the performer on stage, chamber music is a discussion. It’s an engagement, a conversation with your audience. People are gathered around you, not away from you, they are in your circle of art-making. Whereas the other form is more like a presentation, like a lecture. And to me, that sort of music making is the most honest, the most pure way of making music. (Paul, interview)

Honesty and purity is also something Artico Ensemble soprano Shelli strives for when performing chamber music: “Chamber music to me means taking a piece of music, whatever it has been written for, and scaling it down to its purest form, its most truthful form” (Shelli, interview).

The definition provided in the online Encyclopædia Britannica (whose primary contributor on the subject is Homer Ulrich) associates chamber music once more with intimacy, and speaks of refinement and subtlety:

An essential characteristic of chamber music results from the limited size of the performing group employed: it is intimate music, suited to the expression of subtle and refined musical ideas. Rich displays of varied instrumental colour, and striking effects produced by sheer sonority, play little part in chamber music. In place of those effects are
refinement, economy of resources, and flawless acoustical balance. (Ulrich, n.d.)

Donald N. Ferguson, in his book *Image And Structure In Chamber Music* (1964), tries to pinpoint what he sees as chamber music’s unique value:

Seasoned participants in chamber music — and these, to an exceptional degree, are the listeners as well as the performers — are convinced that they enjoy the deepest pleasure that music can offer. The opera can portray more violent passions; the symphony, with its huge volume of sound, its more intricate texture, and its far wider palette of tonal color, can attain to a more imposing grandeur; and the solo literature — especially that for piano— displaying the overwhelming virtuosity of the performer as well as his striking individuality of temperament, may transport an audience to heights of enthusiasm and admiration which chamber music does not even attempts to evoke. But for such displays the audience is more a spectator than a participant; and the peculiar participation of the chamber-music lover arises out of a value which that music somehow possesses in unique measure and which for him transcends all the others. There is no precise name for this virtue. Its nature can perhaps be suggested by the word intimacy… (Ferguson, 1964, p. 3)

Jill, audience member in Elanora, would agree. She also noticed some of the special skills required of the performers, which were mentioned earlier in this chapter:

I think the word chamber denotes in a chamber, it's not an open-air or very big venue that's required, and it's very intimate. I think chamber music is more intimate than most other music and it usually just consists of two or three, like a limited number. And it seems like they have a special affinity for each other. It's like they practice and practice and get it just right and then knowing when to come in, it's very intimate, it's a very intimate thing really. (Jill, E)

Aside from providing a conventional definition of chamber music, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra’s online blog (2015) steers its readers towards the skills associated with chamber music playing as well:

What is chamber music? Traditionally, it is a form of classical music that is composed for small groups of instruments, normally three to four players. The
idea was that the ensemble could fit in a palace chamber (small room) and only one instrument would be assigned to a specific musical line. Chamber music has often been described as the ‘music of friends’ because of its intimate nature. Since the music tends to adapt to the personality of the players, the music is often likened to listening to people having a friendly conversation.

The intimate, exposed and solo-like quality of chamber music can create an intricate and often risky balance for the players. They constantly have to listen for balance, ensemble (how together they are) and intonation (accuracy of note pitches) among many other external factors. How do the players manage to do all this and still create beautiful music? This is simply just part of the job! (Chamber music - the music of friends, 2015, para. 1-2)

Gabriela, a young audience member at Artico’s Redland Museum concert, was asked whether she perhaps could give her definition:

Hmm, that’s a tricky one. I’d have to say, like, music for an orchestra, but, like, uh … uhm, not really. I’d have to say, like, musicians that are really like experts in their chosen instrument, and yeah, it’s just kind of a collaboration of all their previous studies, and, yeah… (Gabriela, RM)

Suzanne was a first-time audience member at Artico’s concert in Kenmore, and mentioned she had been unsure what to expect, especially regarding the repertoire:

I don’t actually know a lot of chamber music, it was my unknown. It was definitely the concert of my unknown. […] Chamber music to me is quite … I would call it very boutique, because it is. It’s like concise, because it’s got only a few people and a few different instruments, but they really make a nice lot of noise, put it that way. (laughs…) Uhm, very classical, but at the same time … that was my first exposure to the Australiana piece which took me to a little bit of a different area, because I wouldn’t have put that as chamber music? That to me was a bit left field of chamber music. (Suzanne, K)

Ian, audience member in Elanora, was quite decisive that the term generally signifies classical music:

My definition of chamber music is a group of musicians, smaller than an orchestra and that's playing classical music, generally speaking. That would be my definition of chamber music. […] I wouldn't call jazz
musicians in a small group chamber music, or rock musicians. They’re not chamber music - not to my definition of chamber music. Its classical music. (Ian, E)

Graham Blackman, concert administrator of Wavell Heights, takes a broader view:

My personal definition …? It lacks sea-shanties! I shouldn’t say that, edit that! My personal definition is really what it is, classic to contemporary. And small group orchestra, uhm, you know, traditional, uhm, traditional what I would call semi-classical. That’s it really. (private interview)

Anna, audience member in Wilston agreed:

It’s not something I’ve given a lot of consideration to, the definition of chamber music in 2012. But I would think that it is music in an intimate space, a chamber, for people to listen to. And so therefore the actual music that you play could be almost anything. (Anna, Wil)

Mary Jo Capps, CEO of Australia's oldest independent professional chamber music organization, Musica Viva, agrees that chamber music in this day and age can include a diverse range of music and attract a wide audience, and is positive about its future:

To summarise – chamber music today is looking more diverse and more broadly patronized than ever in its history in this country. Its secret weapon is its flexibility, allowing a wide range of music to be performed in an even wider range of contexts, easily toured and adapted. (Capps, 2005, p.36)

Conclusion

In this chapter, we were introduced to a diverse range of people, who all expressed their own (similar or differing) view on chamber music. Several musicians and academics speak of what it entails to perform chamber music. They discuss the special musical skills required, the sense of communication between the performers and between the performers and their audience and is interesting to read audience members’ accounts that show they had indeed perceived all of these things in the chamber music performance they had attended.

Several academics (and performers) write in lush language about the beauty of chamber music and profess their love for the medium. Ulrich is perhaps most lyrical of
all, writing “To know chamber music is to revere it; to hear chamber music is to enjoy it” (1966, p. 4).

It is heartening to see that same love for the beauty of this music reflected in many of the audience’s comments. Words and themes such as intimacy, connection, communication, repertoire, and small groups in small halls shine through the material. Many of these were proven to be (part of) the overarching themes of this research and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Overall, defining what chamber music is has proven to be quite a challenge, as it appears to be many things to many people. The more traditional image of a string quartet comes through quite strongly, but some people feel this may no longer be the only type or representation of chamber music. To some of our participating audience members this appeared to be a good thing, as they conveyed they did not particularly enjoy the more traditional form of chamber music. To others, however, chamber music in any shape, form, instrumentation and context meant pleasure and enjoyment. To some, the edges of what chamber music is were quite blurry, and audience members who attended an Artico Ensemble concert for the first time expressed that they had not quite known what to expect, let alone provide a definition of chamber music.

Such differing views of chamber music are clearly demonstrated in this study. They are important to understanding the benefits that concerts such as these bring to their audiences. They have the capacity to raise awareness (and through that, potential appreciation) of this type of music, the many facets of which have been a source of enjoyment and fascination for practitioners, patrons and academics throughout the centuries. To cite Mary-Jo Capps once again in closing, chamber music’s diversity, flexibility and adaptability may help to see it remain part of our cultural life for many years to come.
Chapter 9. Conclusion

This case study was undertaken between 2011 and 2017, and its findings were true and relevant at that point in time. The research set out to investigate chamber music performances in small community venues in the wider Brisbane area. By means of a mixed-method ethnographical case study of Artico Ensemble (a chamber music quartet specialising in such performances) the research investigated the experience of partaking in this type of performance from the viewpoint of the three partners involved: the artists, the audience and the venue administrators. The study’s second line of enquiry was to highlight what participants perceived as the strengths and challenges of this medium and distil these down to their underlying themes.

In the first chapter of this dissertation the rationale behind the study was presented, and my position as researcher as well as performer and case study participant was explained.

Chapter two explored the setting and context of this particular study within the available relevant literature and aimed to review the many angles latently present in the research topic. This study’s selected research methods were explained in detail in chapter three.

The data from the artists, audience and administrators was presented in three chapters (4-6) each headed “Research Report.” The Artists’ findings were presented first in chapter four. The musicians were introduced, individually and as members of case study ensemble Artico Ensemble, after which the discussion-style format of the research report allowed each artist to first of all give their opinion on the experience of being involved in chamber music concerts in small community venues. The experience proved to be substantially different for each artist and branched out in the following directions: thoughts about ensemble personnel, associated social dynamics and ensemble members’ roles were put forward, but also about having to adapt to venue logistics, and how that affects each artist differently. The subject of Intimacy was broached, and the closeness and connection in artist-audience relationship, but also amongst the artists themselves was mentioned. Subtle differences in performance venues were analysed, and whether and how that affects the performance itself was discussed, with a main emphasis on venue acoustics but also on programme choices. Accessibility in repertoire selection and style of presentation was emphasised, and the discernible level of interaction and communication with the audience was explained. The discussion flowed on to marketing, and ensemble branding and identity.
A more detailed discussion about the perceived strengths and challenges of performing chamber music concerts in small community venues listed the artists’ performance standard and musicianship, professionalism, versatility, experience and team-mentality as a highly important strength. The group’s programming and presentation, unusual instrumentation and awareness of audience engagement were considered valuable. The intimacy of the experience was seen as a strength, and the broader topics of interaction and connection (amongst the artists and with the audience) were once again mentioned. The special value of the smaller venue in creating and negotiating this was highlighted. The ensemble’s shared desire to bring chamber music to an audience, providing accessibility and a win-win situation for the group, the venue and its audiences was listed as arguably the most important strength of Artico Ensemble.

Challenges were also in abundance: the artists mentioned they felt the presence of and need to fight the chamber music myth of tediousness and/or elitism amongst audiences. They listed the hunt for performance outlets and avenues, and the ongoing marketing to attract and maintain audiences as a real challenge and discussed performance costs and the need to balance remuneration with accessibility. They spoke of identifying a satisfying shared vision for the ensemble, of negotiation and compromise, and about creating a democratic team environment. The group discussion ventured into the specific logistical challenges of the small community venues, and the recurring physical demands of the performances and the performer’s life. And although the Artico Ensemble’s instrumentation was rated a strength, the need for the host venue to have a piano (preferably in good playing condition) for the group to use in performance proved to be one of the most difficult challenges for this ensemble, with far-reaching consequences.

Overall, however, there proved to be a positive balance between the strengths and the challenges, led by the shared feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction with the performances and the musical journey, hinting at elements of value and the worthiness of the cause.

Chapter five presented the findings from the second study partner, Artico Ensemble’s audience. Statistics created a demographical profile, showing that the majority of the audience study participants were between 50 and 80 years of age; 76% was female and 24% male, listing a range of professions as well as retiree-status as occupations. 58% of concert attendees lived in the concert venue’s suburb or the
neighbouring suburb, with 42% residing further afield. Half of the participants travelled ten minutes or less to get to the performance, and 90% arrived by car.

Whilst the study results showed significant percentage variations for each venue, the audience members’ connection to the case study venue was most frequently through them being a member of the host community, or by them having friends or family members in the host community. As the final strictly demographical finding, each venue’s concert notification methods were charted, highlighting how the audience had become aware of the concert. All venues attracted a significant amount of audience through a simple, personal approach. Announcements in the venue and printed notices from the venue, host emails, and information passed on by family and friends were most successful.

The audience report also provided insights into participants’ concert attendance and general music listening habits. The vast majority (75%) of participating audience came with an attendance partner. Of those attending alone, most anticipated to meet friends at the concert. 93% listened at home to recorded music of some kind, with nearly half of respondents selecting classical (and light-classical) music styles as well as others. The atmosphere at a live performance, the visual impact, and the level of (emotional) engagement were seen as the most significant differences between concert attendance and listening to recorded music.

Audience participants attended (or had attended) a wide range of other performances. Patrons had an attendance preference for orchestral, chamber, choral and jazz performances, and explored world music, pop, new music and other uncategorized concert events in near-equal measure. More than half of the audience in this study attended three to six times a year. They visited a wide range of venues (76 different ones in total), ranging from large commercial venues to small community venues. The large venues such as QPAC and Griffith Theatre were visited most, with the small community venues second-most.

A combination of statistics and qualitative interview material presented the audience’s reasons for attending the case study concert and explored their experience in doing so. Of all of this study’s participating audience members, 40% had been to an Artico performance before, and 60% were novices, although these figures varied significantly between the case study venues. Participants attended the concert generally to enjoy the social occasion or join family and friends, to support the organization hosting the concert, and to simply enjoy the music. Again, figures and attendance reasons varied from venue to venue. Repeat visits to the group (interpreted as loyalty to
and affinity for Artico Ensemble) proved to be a solid attendance reason in the ensemble’s repeat venues, and support of the good cause a defining attendance reason in those case study venues that marketed this concert as a benefit concert.

Several Emotive, Intellectual, and Emotive Intellectual concert descriptors were identified, which acted as motivating factors for this study’s audience participants’ concert attendance. Audience members described the concert venues as intimate, having good acoustics, as being comfortable, and suited to this type of music.

The audience also described what they perceived to be the specific strengths and challenges of Artico’s concerts. Study participants listed the intimacy of the venue, its informal and friendly atmosphere, and the venue’s convenient accessibility most frequently as the main differences between the case study venue and other attended venues. When watching and analysing this thesis’ accompanying documentary footage (presented as appendices with this dissertation) for visual and linguistic clues, it became clear that what participants saw as the main differences could confidently be interpreted as strengths of this type of concert venues.

A lack of comfortable seating, or lack of that ‘special occasion’ feel, and the fact that the case study venue was in fact more formal than others that had been visited, were three perceived challenges. The fact that this was simply a smaller venue, with a different audience demographic, was also voiced. These findings were interpreted as neutral comments, neither a strength nor a benefit.

As closing comments for the audience findings, concert admission prices were highlighted. With ticket prices varying between $15.00 and $25.00, 44% of participating audience considered the entry fee to be good value for money. Curiously, the vast majority of respondents (82%) answered that the ticket price had not influenced their decision to attend. Further investigation of the data suggested that this concert’s ticket price was considered to be in the “affordable/value for money” category for most people, and therefore had not affected the decision; in other words, had it been more expensive, the decision whether to attend or not would have been more affected. The affordable admission price was therefore considered an additional strength of these types of events.

The third segment of the research report presented the findings from the final study partner, Artico Ensemble’s concert Administrators, in chapter six. Their experience of organising the concert spoke of a large amount of administration, marketing and publicity. To those new to the task of concert organising it felt like very hard work, but the more experienced administrators felt it was manageable. Some
administrators mentioned they had received positive support from local media, whereas others found the support lacking, or even restrictive. Most administrators organised these concerts with a strong focus on the social community experience, and deliberately combined music with refreshments. It was felt to be a team effort, ultimately bringing a lot of personal satisfaction and enjoyment.

The administrators identified several specific strengths of these concerts, which formed part of their reasoning of being involved in organizing them. They stated that these concerts comprise a high-standard, quality performance offered locally, which makes this style of music, chamber music, available to different (or new) members of the public who may not (be able to) access it in the mainstream venues. They rated the instrumentation, repertoire and style of presentation of the ensemble highly, and mentioned that they felt that the combination of the music/musicians and the space they perform in creates a wonderful experience.

The administrators found that having concerts in in their small community venue provides opportunity for intimate interaction between audience and artists, and for interaction between attendees. And by being accessible (read: easy to enjoy, low threshold), it was felt that these events ultimately make the venue a place of the community.

As mentioned above, the general organising of these concerts required a lot of hard work, and the marketing and advertising of these concerts in particular was challenging. For many, it was a challenge to get a sufficient number of tickets sold, and those managing an ongoing concert series told of their challenge to balance ticket prices, in order to ensure that events are viable but remain affordable. The administrators’ stories highlighted that the organising of these types of events as part of an events team can cause difficulties amongst personnel, and it was shown that managing concerts in a suburban residential setting can cause its own particular challenges.

By placing the three partners’ study findings next to each other, the relationships between the partners’ experience became visible, and themes containing the essence of the findings were presented in chapter seven. This chapter’s Discussion showed how each theme affects the artists, the audience and the administrators, and made connections with literature introduced in this thesis’ Rationale and Literature Review. The overarching themes of ‘Connection & Interaction’, ‘Intimacy’, ‘Community’, ‘Programme & Presentation’, ‘Enjoyment & Satisfaction’, ‘Accessibility’, and ‘Setting,
Ambience & Acoustics’ were crucial to the experience and stated to be the strengths of this type of performance.

The latter theme of ‘Setting, Ambience & Acoustics’ also contained challenges, especially for the artists. The theme of ‘Personnel, Group dynamics & Team management’ was another such theme that constituted both a challenge as well as a strength, mainly affecting the artists and the administrators’ experience. The fact that being involved in these performances was hard work and demanding was an additional challenge, again recounted only by the artists and administrators.

Most of the overarching themes are mentioned or visible in this thesis’ accompanying two documentary trailers, which can be found as appendices. The Mind Maps presented at the conclusion of chapter seven provide a complete, visual representation of this study’s themes and sub-topics, and reflect their many connections and inter-relationships.

Following the Discussion, chapter eight, titled “What is Chamber Music?”, provided definitions, reflections and opinions on chamber music from study participants and others working in the field. The chapter exemplified the breadth of the medium and the joy and admiration it provokes in those engaging with it. It also, however, showed lingering elements of the chamber music myth alluded to by Artico Ensemble’s artists. Several audience members described their concert expectations, voicing they had been unsure what to expect, or had even expected to hear a performance they would not necessarily immediately enjoy. The term ‘Chamber music’ evoked for many a fairly traditional image. Although most audience interviewees said they had really enjoyed the concert and the “lovely/warm/intimate” music, many hinted that they’d been surprised to do so. If this is the general perception amongst attendees, it stands to reason that amongst members of the general public (so, those not currently present at a concert of this type) awareness of what chamber music is or can be will still be significantly under-developed. It would be wonderful if, through the activities of Artico Ensemble and the many other excellent, active and innovative chamber music groups in the wider Brisbane area, the public’s understanding and appreciation of chamber music could gradually come to be on par with that of its practitioners.

As shown in this dissertation, many of the strengths and the positive aspects of the broader chamber music participant experience were shared across all three study partners. This can highlight why all three partners choose to continue to be involved in this type of performance, and what they must see as the value of continuing to be
involved in it. For the audience, these performances were highly positive all-round, whilst the challenges and the more negative aspects of the experience were shouldered by the artists and the administrators. One would conclude that focusing attention on finding ways to alleviate these partners’ challenges would generate a wholly positive concert experience for everyone.

By preserving and building on the identified strengths, and finding ways to alleviate or eradicate the challenges, a perfect climate for ongoing successful concert performance in local, small community venues could be created and maintained. It would therefore be highly valuable to design a five-year plan based on this study’s findings and implement it using Artico or any other (similar) ensemble, to see whether the above assumption is correct.

And it may very well be true, or, be true for a while. However, as most working in the industry will know, over time a whole set of variables come into play, potentially impacting on the artists, on the audiences and on the administrators. Ensembles may undergo personnel changes or experience a shift in (forced or self-chosen) priorities. Some concert series (or incidental concerts) may fold for lack of ongoing audience support after the initial novelty wears off. Administrators may encounter resistance or personal hardships or choose or be forced into a change in direction to ensure their concert series’ continued existence. And although Mary-Jo Capps championed the flexibility of the chamber music medium (Capps, 2005), the necessity to be constantly flexible can be strenuous, and even too high a demand for some.

So although the findings of this study are true and relevant at the time in which this study took place, the ever-changing world and cultural climate surrounding this case study also highlight some of its limitations; an exact same case study performed now, at the time of final publication of this thesis, could very well produce differing results due to a multitude of reasons. And although the results presented here might well apply to a broader context, it is worth acknowledging that this study took place in South-East Queensland and is therefore most particularly relevant in that particular area. For example, Brisbane is a city where all of the larger arts venues are located in the CBD area, whereas for example in Sydney and Melbourne some of the outer suburban areas also have major performing arts venues. This could easily create a different image surrounding several of the themes discussed in this thesis. The fact that this research (only) included the case study locations available to Artico Ensemble within the timeframe of the doctoral study can also be seen as a limitation to the study, and the
specific and unusual instrumentation of the group could be viewed as affecting the transferable knowledge of this research.

Furthermore, although my double role as researcher and case study artist (and its inherent risk of potential bias) was negotiated by enlisting documentary maker Derryn as assistant interviewer for some of the interviews, there were clearly some disadvantages to this strategy. As discussed in depth in chapter 3.4.1, the interview questions were not fully identical throughout the study interviews, and I as the main researcher had less control over the study data produced than if I had been the only interviewer throughout. This is on the one hand a limitation of this research’s study design, but on the other hand could very well have allowed for a richer layer of data to emerge.

Implementing this current research design into a study featuring a different ensemble would bypass several of these limitations, and would be an excellent avenue for further research. Duplicating an Artico Ensemble case study in a different region within Australia would further broaden our knowledge, and a longitudinal study investigating chamber music in small community venues over a sustained period of time would allow for shifts in the cultural climate and in participants’ circumstances to be included.

Alternatively, the findings of this Artico Ensemble case study could also be utilised as a base from which to undertake focus groups with other artists and/or ensembles working in the wider Brisbane area. Aside from establishing a broader and more transferable view of the strengths and challenges of chamber music performances in small community venues, the combined thoughts and experience of this team of experts-in-the-field could be used to develop strategic recommendations for action.

The data from this Artico Ensemble case study (potentially augmented by input from focus group participants as suggested above) could be utilized to develop a register of small community venues that are suitable for chamber music performance. This mapping of local small performance venues would take into account key logistical elements and requirements as identified by participating artists. It would be worthwhile to ascertain whether the existing, collated performance venues are evenly spread out over the wider Brisbane area, as this would provide access for all community members by placing most people in suburban Brisbane (reasonably) close to a performance venue.

Depending on the outcome, the mapping of local performance venues could be extended by undertaking a reconnaissance of additional potential performance spaces,
especially in those suburbs in the wider Brisbane area that might prove to be undersupplied.

A specialist study focusing on house concerts in the Brisbane area could also be a logical extension of this Artico Ensemble case study. Whilst broadly aligning with the remaining case study venues, the themes, strengths and challenges discovered in the Wynnum data show that there are additional elements of interest in the experience of house concerts. Potential neighbourhood troubles and Council involvement (as briefly highlighted in this study) could lead to specific and restrictive rules and regulations, whereas the experience of house guests as described in this case study proves that it is a more than worthwhile undertaking that brings a valued extra layer of cultural engagement to our local Brisbane performance circuit. A specialist study, undertaken in cooperation with experienced associates engaged in them, could lead to the creation of guidelines for house concerts, easily accessible to those with an interest in joining (and thereby expanding) the circuit.

And as mentioned earlier in this study’s Methods chapter, the statistical audience participation data could be further explored, or contribute to more expansive arts participation studies. Overall, it is to be hoped that this study’s findings will add another layer to the available research highlighting the sub-field of chamber music in particular and contribute to the discussion on how we can build on its inherent strengths whilst staying connected with a music loving audience.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Selected case study venues

This research comprised case study performances in seven small community venues in the wider Brisbane area. A detailed profile of the selected venues follows below.

Redland Museum

The Redland Museum in Cleveland was opened in 1970 and is a medium sized, professionally-run museum with an indoor floor space of 2700 square meters. It is located on a wide and relatively quiet street in suburban Cleveland, just outside the main residential area. Aside from their permanent historical exhibition, the museum hosts visual art exhibitions, lectures by guest speakers, dinners and fairs, exhibits displaying research projects, as well as concerts. The building consists of several rooms and halls in various sizes, and the gallery wing in which concerts are held is a semi-enclosed space that can seat approximately 100 people. Air-conditioning units are situated high on the walls. There is no fixed seating and plastic foldable chairs are brought in for each event. The rectangular modern space has a high, domed ceiling, white plaster walls, bright but warm lighting and stone flooring. Due to the hard wall, ceiling and floor surfaces the acoustics are very sympathetic to classical chamber music performance, but the use of a microphone is recommended for spoken introductions, to ensure and enhance clarity. The performance wing features an upright Yamaha piano in excellent condition. Visuals are good for most of the audience, with the exception of the last few rows.

One of the administration’s meeting rooms can be utilized as a green room for visiting performers. The room is a very good size and located a short distance from the concert space. Bathrooms can be accessed from the green room without disturbing performances. Musicians waiting their turn to perform during the concert might be able to warm up quietly in the green room, although some sound might potentially be heard in the venue.

There is ample street parking, and the venue is wheelchair accessible.

Elanora

Located at the end of a cul-de-sac in suburban Elanora, the Elanora Uniting Church building is fairly modern in appearance and consists of several spaces. The worship space accommodates approximately 250 people in fixed bench seating. By opening concertina doors to the adjoining church hall, the area can be enlarged to host
approximately 500 people in total. The building is not air-conditioned. The worship space in which the performance was held has a wide rectangular shape, with a raised but irregularly shaped stage on the long side. This stage area has limited depth, which puts some restrictions on ensemble set-up, and an awareness of a large part of the audience being seated on the side of the performers (rather than in front) is required. The church community recently purchased a Baby Grand Piano, which is positioned on the left-hand side of the stage. The opposite long side of the space features a wall of glass windows, and the room is carpeted, with a medium-high ceiling. The acoustics are true, clear and friendly, without being overly-favourable to classical chamber music performance. Lighting is practical but ambient. If the hall is filled to capacity, the use of a microphone is recommended for spoken introductions (although not altogether necessary). Due to the raised stage, visuals are good for the whole audience.

The kitchen area and/or the minister’s room can be utilized as a green room for visiting performers. The kitchen area is of a good size, the minister’s vestry quite small. Bathrooms are located in a different part of the building but can be accessed from the green room without disturbing performances.

There is ample parking in the church car park, and the venue is wheelchair accessible.

Kenmore

The Kenmore Uniting Church is an architect-designed building with a semi-modern interior seating approximately 170 people, in a mixture of fixed and moveable bench seating and loose occasional chairs. It is located on a main road in Kenmore. The building is not air-conditioned. Seating is positioned in a semi-circle, all facing a slightly raised stage /altar space in the opposing corner. The roof above this stage area is shaped in a large, high cone, and the ceiling in the rest of the space is lowered by means of wooden ceiling boxes. Both of these architectural features create less-than-ideal acoustics for classical chamber music performance. Visuals, however, are very good with audience being able to sit close to the performers. The room and stage are carpeted, and the wall opposite the stage area consists of large glass panes. Lighting is friendly and bright, and the use of a microphone is recommended for spoken introductions if (some of) the attendees are hard of hearing. The church community has an older upright piano in less-than-average playing condition as well as a full-size electric keyboard for services and concerts.

One of the administration’s meeting rooms can be utilized as a green room for visiting performers. This green room is quite a good size. Bathrooms are located in a
different building and can be accessed from the green room without disturbing performances.

There is sufficient parking in the church’s car park as well as across the road, and the venue is wheelchair accessible.

Ipswich

St Thomas Anglican Church is an intimate redbrick building featuring a dark wood-panelled interior and beautiful stained-glass windows. Established in 1889, the heritage building has high arched ceilings with wooden beams and can seat approximately 100 people on fixed wooden pews. The voice carries easily in this small space and microphones are not necessary for spoken introductions. Lighting is ambient and warm, enhancing the flat ‘stage’ area in front of the altar. The hardwood surfaces afford very good acoustics for classical chamber music performance. Although the stage is not raised, audience visuals are very good, with people seated very close to the performers. The church community uses a small upright acoustic piano of reasonable quality for their services and events. The instrument did, however, have some technical/mechanical problems on the day of the case study performance. The small minister’s room can be utilized as a mini green room for visiting performers, but it is very small and only just adequate: ensembles with more or larger instruments than those of Artico would not be able to fit inside. Bathrooms are located in a different building and are not accessible from the green room without disturbing performances. Musicians waiting their turn to perform during the concert are not able to warm up in the green room, as any sound will be clearly heard in the venue.

The heritage building is not air-conditioned, but there is ample street parking and the venue is wheelchair accessible.

Wynnum

The architect-designed, modern living room of the home of Helen and Avon Phillips in Wynnum is named ‘The Imperial Room’, in honour of the large Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand Piano it houses. Normally tucked away in the corner, the instrument gets wheeled into the front centre of the room and all existing home furniture moved out of the way, to make room for a maximum of 80 people on small foldable chairs. The room features hardwood flooring and glass bi-fold veranda doors, and the side walls consist of angled glass panes especially designed to aid the acoustics of the room. The room is climate-controlled by means of a specially designed reduced-noise air-conditioning system in the ceiling. The home’s open kitchen in one corner of the
room reduces the performance space slightly, and the first rows of seats are very close to the performers. The ceilings are standard head-height, but the hard floor and wall surfaces create an acoustic space that is very sympathetic to classical chamber music performance. The tone of the imposing Imperial Bösendorfer more than fills the room. Lighting is quite bright but ambient. Visuals are good for all but those in the very back rows, and the outlook through the bi-fold doors onto greenery beyond provides a beneficial backdrop. Microphones are not needed for spoken introductions. As this is a private home, one of the bedrooms is utilized as a green room for visiting performers.

A few parking spaces are available in front of the home, with further parking available (by negotiation) in the local golf course car park at the end of the street. The venue is not wheelchair accessible.

**Wavell Heights**

The Kairos Uniting Church in Wavell Heights is located on a main road in suburban Wavell Heights. It is a sizeable rectangular building that can seat approximately 200 people comfortably. Seating is arranged in individual upholstered chairs with a central aisle, and the altar/stage area is raised and situated on the top end of the rectangular space. Ceilings are high, the white plaster walls have many high windows and the flooring is hardwood. The building is not air-conditioned. Lighting is bright and warm, and although the performance space is long, visuals are still good for the audience due to the raised stage. The church has an older upright piano in reasonable condition for services and events. The stage area is fairly deep, allowing for some freedom in ensemble set-up. Although this stage area is carpeted, the high ceilings and wooden floors in the remainder of the church space assist to create a true and friendly acoustic for classical chamber music performance, without being overly favourable. Awareness of projection is required to remain in contact with the last few rows of audience, and the use of a microphone is recommended for spoken introductions.

The spacious minister’s vestry can be utilized as a green room for visiting performers, but musicians waiting their turn to perform during a concert are not able to warm up in this green room, as any sound will be clearly heard in the concert space. Bathrooms, however, can be accessed without disturbing performances.

There is sufficient street parking, and the venue is wheelchair accessible.
**Wilston**

St Alban’s Anglican Church in Wilston is a lovely older style redbrick building featuring beautiful stained-glass windows and a high, timber arched buttress ceiling. The interior has a heritage feel, with a raised altar/stage situated on the top end of the rectangular space. A brick arch frames the performance space, which has enough depth to allow for easy ensemble set-up. Lighting is warm and atmospheric, and the space is not air-conditioned. The church does not have an acoustic piano but uses an electronic Clavinova keyboard for their services and events, and the space can seat approximately 100 people in fixed pews. Although the altar/stage area is carpeted, all other hard surfaces and the high ceiling assist in creating an acoustic space that is very sympathetic to classical chamber music performance. The use of a microphone is recommended for spoken introductions only if (some of) the attendees are hard of hearing, and due to the raised stage visuals are good for all of the audience.

A small minister’s vestry adjacent to the stage area can be utilized as a small green room for visiting performers, but it is only just adequate in size. Bathroom facilities are located in a separate building and are accessible from the green room without disturbing performances. The church is located on the corner of two suburban streets in leafy Wilston, with ample street parking and wheelchair access.
Appendices B & C: Artico Ensemble documentary 1 & 2

Introduction to visual footage

All of the Artico Ensemble case study concerts were visually recorded on video. As mentioned, this visual material was used for data gathering and verification, but it was also intended for the creation of documentary footage, as a (additional) representation of study findings. Appendix B and Appendix C feature two documentary trailers, each of which contain excerpts from the extensive video material available. The trailers were shot and compiled at different stages of this research study.

Documentary 1 features footage recorded during Artico Ensemble’s concert in the Redland Museum, which was part of the first pilot stage of this research study. All audience members that day were given the option of participating in the questionnaire, and the vox-pop style interviews follow the survey questions quite closely. Artists Shelli and Brieley were also briefly interviewed, and discussions with administrator Rick are presented in closing.

As is expected from footage taken at the start of the study, the general feel of the video is that of ‘questioning’, of exploration. What is the topic we are dealing with? What elements form part of the experience of being involved in chamber music in small community venues, or even, what is chamber music?

Documentary 2 includes footage taken in four other case study venues (Wynnum, Wilston, Ipswich and Elanora), and introduces the viewer to administrators David, Lesley, Helen, Avon and Pamela. Interview segments with audience members of their venues have been included, and relevant, related material from the pilot study footage has been brought in (such as part of the brief conversation with Redland Museum’s administrator Rick).

This documentary touches on many research themes that started to emerge later in the research, such as community, intimacy, access, interaction, and enjoyment. It also presents the concert as a social event, explores elements of what it is like to be part of a live performance (in contrast to recorded performance) and being part of an audience, and highlights some of the differences between chamber concerts in small venues, and those in larger concert halls.

This documentary trailer is mainly presented as experienced through the eyes of the audience. It would be highly desirable to allocate time and resources to the addition of footage highlighting the artists’ and the administrators’ experience, in order to create a complete, full-length documentary portraying the viewpoint of all partners.
When viewing either or both of these documentaries, it is important to realize that they were created at the very start and in the middle of the doctoral research study respectively. As such, they do not represent the conclusion of this dissertation, nor do they show the ‘complete picture’.

They do, however, provide the viewer with a strong sense of the setting of the study, introducing him or her to the case study ensemble and its operations, as well as their audience and concert administrators as partners in this study. They also highlight the rationale of this study, and present evidence of the interviews that formed part of the study method. In the case of the pilot study footage, it even shows some of the interview sub-questions, experimenting with presenting them on-screen rather than them being experienced through the sequence of answers (this method was not continued in the later footage, as it was felt this interrupted the narrative of the story).

Overall, these two visual appendices complement and enhance the written dissertation and assist in trying to answer the overall research question. There is the potential for the creation of a full feature-length documentary about the experience of being involved in chamber music performance in small community venues by combining these trailers with other selections of the recorded visual material, but circumstances did not allow for this during the course of this study.

Appendix B - Artico Ensemble Documentary 1 can be found on https://youtu.be/zd1JXNYYiRk

Appendix C - Artico Ensemble Documentary 2 can be found on https://youtu.be/n5m98e8jDlA

NB: At the time of the pilot study, Artico Ensemble was still operating under its previous name of ‘the Australian Chamber Musicians’, which can be heard at the very start of documentary 1.

Also, at that point in the study the research question still utilized the words ‘small, non-mainstream venues’, which has subsequently (on recommendation) been changed into ‘small community venues’.
Appendix D: Ethics Clearance and informed consent package

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
15-Nov-2011
Dear Ms Wilschut
I write further to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR: Filming of a documentary featuring the Australian Chamber Musicians in concert at the Redland Museum, on November 20, 2011. This is a pilot study for a future documentary, and will include interviews with artists, audience members and event organiser" (GU Ref No: QCM/22/11/HREC). This project has been considered by Human expedited review 1.

The Chair resolved to grant this project provisional ethical clearance, subject to your response to the following matters:

This application has been reviewed administratively by the Office for Research via a mechanism for research that has been assessed as involving no more than negligible risk.

Given the nature of the research and the potential participant pool, it was not felt that a higher level of review was required.

It is recommended that copies of an audience information sheet be available on tables / stands outside the venue.

It is recommended that the researchers consider the use of an email or web-based newsletter as a way of keeping interest audience members informed about the progress of the research.

Please update the listed URL of the University’s Privacy Plan to http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffithuniversity-privacy-plan

It may be possible to later extend and otherwise modify this clearance to cover the main phase stage of this work.

The contact officer signing sF1 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

The primary supervisor signing sF1A of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

An appropriate authorising officer, who is not a member of the research team, completing and signing sF2 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

This decision was made on 15-Nov-11. Your response to these matters will be considered by Office for Research.

The ethical clearance for this protocol runs from 15-Nov-11 to 20-Nov-11.

Please forward your response to Dr Gary Allen, Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research as per the details below.

Please refer to the attached sheet for the standard conditions of ethical clearance at Griffith University, as well as responses to questions commonly posed by researchers.

It would be appreciated if you could give your urgent attention to the issues raised by the Committee so that we can finalise the ethical clearance for your protocol promptly.

Regards,

Dr Gary Allen
Manager, Research Ethics
Office for Research
G39 room 3.55 Gold Coast Campus
Griffith University
ph: 3735 5585
At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xupdatemonth/e7852d226231d2b44a25750c0062f457?opendocument

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This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the use of the addressee(s) and may contain information which is confidential or privileged. If you receive this email and you are not the addressee(s) [or responsible for delivery of the email to the addressee(s)], please disregard the contents of the email, delete the email and notify the author immediately.
Dear Assoc Prof Tomlinson

I write further to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR: Creating chamber music in small venues" (GU Ref No: QCM/16/12/HREC). This project has been considered by Human expedited review 1.

The Chair resolved to grant this project provisional ethical clearance, subject to your response to the following matters:

Given the nature of the research and the potential participant pool, it was not felt that a higher level of review was required.

Provision of any verbal recruitment script, or email script to be used to attract participants.

It is unclear what will happen to interview recordings therefore Clarification of whether digital [video/audio] recordings are to be erased/deleted following transcription / analysis. This should be discussed in the informed consent materials and specific consent sought for any proposed retention and use beyond transcription / analysis.

Clarification as to whether the audience will be given a written survey to complete, if this is the case a splash page (short form information sheet) is available for this purpose.

The contact officer signing sF1 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

An appropriate authorising officer, who is not a member of the research team, completing and signing sF2 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

This decision was made on 24-May-12. Your response to these matters will be considered by Office for Research.

The ethical clearance for this protocol runs from 24-May-12 to 29-Jul-13.

Please forward your response to Chris Rose'Meyer, Policy Officer, Research Ethics and Governance, Office for Research as per the details below.

Please refer to the attached sheet for the standard conditions of ethical clearance at Griffith University, as well as responses to questions commonly posed by researchers.

It would be appreciated if you could give your urgent attention to the issues raised by the Committee so that we can finalise the ethical clearance for your protocol promptly.

Regards
Chris Rose'Meyer
Policy Officer, Research Ethics and Governance
Office for Research
G39 3.56 Gold Coast Campus
Griffith University
ph: +61 (0)7 5552 7227
fax: +61 (0)7 5552 9058
email: c.rosemeye@griffith.edu.au
web:
Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting
This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the use of the addressee(s) and may contain information which is confidential or privileged. If you receive this email and you are not the addressee(s) [or responsible for delivery of the email to the addressee(s)], please disregard the contents of the email, delete the email and notify the author immediately.
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
25-May-2012

Dear Assoc Prof Tomlinson

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the provisional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR: Creating chamber music in small venues" (GU Ref No: QCM/16/12/HREC).

The additional information was considered by Office for Research.

This is to confirm that this response has largely addressed the comments and concerns of the HREC.

This decision is subject to:

The contact officer signing sF1 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

An appropriate authorising officer, who is not a member of the research team, completing and signing sF2 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

However, you are authorised to immediately commence this research on the strict understanding that these matters are addressed and that you provide details of how they were addressed.

Please note that failure to provide a timely response to these matters may result in this authorisation being suspended or withdrawn. The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

It would be appreciated if you could give your urgent attention to the issues raised by the Committee so that we can finalise the ethical clearance for your protocol promptly.

Regards

Chris Rose'Meyer
Policy Officer, Research Ethics and Governance
Office for Research
G39 3.56 Gold Coast Campus
Griffith University
ph: +61 (0)7 5552 7227
fax: +61 (0)7 5552 9058
email: c.rosemeyer@griffith.edu.au
web:

Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students.

You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting


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Dear Assoc Prof Tomlinson

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the conditional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR: Creating chamber music in small venues" (GU Ref No: QCM/16/12/HREC).

This is to confirm receipt of the remaining required information, assurances or amendments to this protocol.

Consequently, I reconfirm my earlier advice that you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

Regards
Chris Rose'Meyer
Policy Officer, Research Ethics and Governance
Office for Research
G39 3.56 Gold Coast Campus
Griffith University
ph: +61 (0)7 5552 7227
fax: +61 (0)7 5552 9058
email: c.rosemeyer@griffith.edu.au
web:

Cc:

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Information Sheet and Informed Consent Package: Interview

Chamber music in small venues: A study investigating the experience of creating, performing, organising and attending professional chamber music concerts in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds.

INFORMATION SHEET

| Chief Investigator: Assoc Prof Vanessa Tomlinson | Student Investigator: Rianne Wilschut | Independent Film maker: Derryn Watts |
| Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University | Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University | 0404 76 9090 |
| (07) 3735 6367 v.tomlinson@griffith.edu.au | Doctor of Musical Arts | derrynwatts@me.com |
| | (07) 3890 0426 wilkop1@bigpond.com | |

Why is the research being conducted?

This research is being conducted as part of a Doctor of Musical Arts study at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University. This research will investigate the experience of creating, performing, organising and attending professional chamber music performances in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds. Central to the investigation will be a case study of Brisbane ensemble the Australian Chamber Musicians, consisting of interviews with artists, an audience questionnaire and individual follow-up interviews with audience members, and individual interviews with venue administrators. Study findings will be presented in documentary format, accompanying a written Thesis.

In addition to the case study, a review will be conducted investigating the current extent of chamber music activity in small community venues in and around Brisbane. At the completion of the review, active chamber music artists and venue administrators will be invited to participate in this research through interviews and a focus group discussion, with the aim to highlight the experience, strengths and challenges of this type of music making.
What you will be asked to do

Participation in this study will see you reflecting on your experience of creating, performing, organising or attending today’s concert. Involvement will see you be a part of a video/audio interview consisting of several questions that will last no longer than a total of thirty minutes in duration.

The basis on which participants will be selected

Participants have been selected due to the fact that they fit into one of the following three participant groups:

Group 1: the artists
Group 2: the administrators/organizers of a chamber music event in a small community venue
Group 3: the audience

The expected benefits of the research

The main benefits that may be drawn from this study are the discovery of overarching aspects of the experience of participating in professional chamber music performances in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds, and the strengths and challenges of this type of music making for all involved.

Risks to you

The information being gathered and reflected on during interviews may be seen as personal and sensitive to participants. If at any time a participant feels uncomfortable disclosing this information they are free to withdraw from the study with no further explanation.

Participation has been made entirely voluntary, and every attempt will be made to maintain confidentiality prior to consent.

The researcher is aware of the risk issues associated with the interviews and will actively seek to minimise these wherever possible.

Your confidentiality

Identifiable data from interviews will be collected through video and audio recordings. This data will be kept entirely confidential until consent for its use in the study is given by the participant. Identifiable data will appear in a documentary, accompanying a written Doctoral Thesis. This documentary will be shown to academics and supervisors at the
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, as part of the Doctor of Musical Arts course. In the event of subsequent use within or outside of Griffith University, your further consent in writing will be sought.

**Your participation is voluntary**
Participant involvement is entirely voluntary and participants may opt to withdraw from the study prior to, during and after the interview has been conducted.

**Feedback to you**
All case study interview participants will be given a copy of the documentary footage before this will be made more public within Griffith University, and changes to the footage will be made where possible if requested. All further interview and focus group participants will receive access to the research findings upon request.

**Questions / further information**
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research (2007). If you have any concerns or complaints concerning the manner in which the research project is conducted, these may be directed to the researcher.

If an independent person is preferred, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on (07) 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

**Privacy Statement**
The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes, in which instance your anonymity will be safeguarded at all times. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 5585.
CONSENT FORM
Chamber music in small venues: A study investigating the experience of creating, performing, organising and attending professional chamber music concerts in small community venues in Brisbane and surrounds.

Research Team

Student Researcher: Rianne Wilschut
Film maker: Derryn Watts
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
Senior Investigator: A/Prof Vanessa Tomlinson (supervisor)
Contact email: v.tomlinson@griffith.edu.au
Contact Phone: 07 3735 6367

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include interviews;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary (this decision will in no way impact upon the service I receive from the researcher or their grades);
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 5585 (or http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

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Chamber music in small venues: A pilot study highlighting the experience of creating, performing, organizing and attending professional chamber music concerts in small, non-mainstream venues in and around Brisbane.

INFORMATION SHEET

Chief Investigator: Vanessa Tomlinson
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
(07) 3735 6367
v.tomlinson@griffith.edu.au

Student Investigator: Rianne Wilschut
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
Doctor of Musical Arts
(07) 3890 0426
wilkop1@bigpond.com

Independent Film maker: Derryn Watts
0404 76 9090
derrynwatts@me.com

Why is the research being conducted?

This research is being conducted as part of a Doctor of Musical Arts study at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University. The main research project will investigate the experience of creating, performing, organising and attending professional chamber music performances in small, non-mainstream venues in and around Brisbane, and will include a case study of Brisbane ensemble the Australian Chamber Musicians (who specialise in such performances), which will be presented in documentary format.

The present pilot study will consist of the filming of a short documentary featuring the Australian Chamber Musicians in concert at the Redland Museum on November 20, 2011, as a trial session for the future case study. This trial documentary will address the experience of participating in this type of chamber music, through long-distance (anonymous) filming and personal interviews with selected artists, audience members and event organisers, with the aim to assess whether it is possible to visualize discovered aspects of this experience in documentary form.
What you will be asked to do
Participation in this pilot study will see you reflecting on your experience of creating, performing, organising or attending today’s concert.
Involvement will see you be a part of a video/audio interview consisting of several questions that will last no longer than a total of twenty minutes in duration.

The basis on which participants will be selected
Participants have been selected due to the fact that they fit into one of the following three participant groups:
Group 1: the artists (Shelli Hulcombe - soprano, Brieley Cutting - piano, Paul Kopetz - bass clarinet, and Rianne Wilschut - clarinet).
Group 2: the administrators/organizers of this particular event
Group 3: the audience, randomly selected

The expected benefits of the research
The main benefits that may be drawn from this pilot study are the discovery of preliminary aspects of the experience of participating in professional chamber music performances in small, non-mainstream venues, and establishing potentially successful ways in which to visualize these discovered aspects in documentary format.

Risks to you
The information being gathered and reflected on during interviews may be seen as personal and sensitive to participants. If at any time a participant feels uncomfortable disclosing this information they are free to withdraw from the study with no further explanation.
Participation has been made entirely voluntary, and every attempt will be made to maintain confidentiality prior to consent.
The researcher is aware of the risk issues associated with the interviews and will actively seek to minimise these wherever possible.

Your confidentiality
Identifiable data from interviews will be collected through video and audio recordings. This data will be kept entirely confidential until consent is given by the participant for its use in the study. Identifiable data will appear in a pilot documentary, created from the footage
gathered during this study. This trial documentary may be shown to academics and supervisors at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, as part of the Doctor of Musical Arts course. In the event of subsequent use within or outside of Griffith University, your further consent in writing will be sought.

Your participation is voluntary
Participant involvement is entirely voluntary and participants may opt to withdraw from the study prior to, during and after the interview has been conducted.

Feedback to you
All interview participants will be given a copy of the pilot documentary footage before this will be made more public within Griffith University, and changes to the footage will be made where possible if requested.

Questions / further information
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research (2007). If you have any concerns or complaints concerning the manner in which the research project is conducted, these may be directed to the researcher.
If an independent person is preferred, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on (07) 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Privacy Statement
The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan or telephone (07) 3735 5585.
CONSENT FORM
Chamber music in small venues: A pilot study highlighting the experience of creating, performing, organizing and attending professional chamber music concerts in small, non-mainstream venues in and around Brisbane.

Research Team
Student Researcher: Rianne Wilschut
Film maker: Derryn Watts
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
Senior Investigator: Vanessa Tomlinson (supervisor)
Contact email: v.tomlinson@griffith.edu.au
Contact Phone: 07 3735 6367

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include interviews;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary (this decision will in no way impact upon the service I receive from the researcher or their grades);
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 5585 (or http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
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Please be advised that filming will take place during today’s performance by The Australian Chamber Musicians as part of a pilot study for a Griffith University research study into chamber music in small community venues.

By being part of the audience in today’s performance, you agree to potentially being filmed in long-distance, anonymous footage.

In addition, you may be approached for participation in brief personal interviews, which are entirely voluntary. An information sheet with further details about the research project will be made available, and your consent for the use of the film footage will be sought.

Please notify Rianne Wilschut (ACM clarinettist), film maker Derryn Watts or Mr Rick Thomason of the Redland Museum if you do not wish to participate in personal interviews.
Appendix E: Audience Questionnaire.

The first questionnaire, containing 23 questions, was used as research instrument in the first case study in Elanora.

The second (amended and extended) questionnaire, containing 26 questions, was used as research instrument in all subsequent case study concerts.

ACM audience questionnaire

Concert date: __________________________________________________________

Concert venue: __________________________________________________________

1. What is your age?
   - □ 10 – 19 yrs
   - □ 20 – 29 yrs
   - □ 30 – 39 yrs
   - □ 40 – 49 yrs
   - □ 50 – 59 yrs
   - □ 60 – 69 yrs
   - □ 70 – 79 yrs
   - □ 80 + yrs

2. What is your gender?
   - □ Male
   - □ Female

3. What is your occupation?
   __________________________________________________________

4. What is your country of origin?
   __________________________________________________________

5. Which suburb do you live in?
   __________________________________________________________

6. Approximately how long did you travel to attend today’s performance? ____________ minutes

7. How did you hear about today’s performance?
   __________________________________________________________

8. Did you come on your own today? (yes/no) ________________
a. If you answered yes, were you anticipating to meet friends/acquaintances at the concert? (yes, no) ____________________________

b. If you answered no, who did you come with? (i.e. partner/family/friend/…)

9. Do you attend concerts regularly? (yes/no) ____________

a. If yes, what types of concerts do you attend? (Tick as many as applicable)

- [ ] Orchestral
- [ ] Chamber music
- [ ] Choral
- [ ] New music
- [ ] Jazz
- [ ] Pop
- [ ] World music
- [ ] Other, namely _______________

b. If yes, can you name some of the venues where these concerts are or were taking place?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

b. And if yes, how many concerts do you attend per year, on average? ________________

10. Do you listen to recorded music at home/at work/in the car? (yes/no) ________________

a. If yes, how often do you listen to recorded music?

- [ ] Every day
- [ ] Several times a month
- [ ] Several times a week
- [ ] Occasionally

11. Could you name some styles of music (or artists, performers, or composers) that you enjoy listening to?

________________________________________________________________________
12. In your opinion, what are some of the differences between listening to music on the radio or on a CD and attending a live concert?
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

13. Do you participate in any type of music making yourself? (yes/no) ______________________

   a. If yes, would you be able to briefly elaborate?
      ___________________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________________

14. Did you in the past ever participate in any type of music making? (yes/no) ______________

   a. If yes, would you be able to briefly elaborate on your past experience?
      ___________________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________________

15. Have you been to a concert by the Australian Chamber Musicians before? (yes/no) _________

16. Have you been to a concert in this venue before? (yes/no) ______________

17. What were your main reasons for attending today’s concert?
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

18. If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe today’s concert, what would those be?
19. Were there any pieces on today’s program that you enjoyed more than others?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

20. In your opinion, which of the following best describes the admission price today?
(Please tick one, or several)

☐ Too expensive          ☐ Expensive
☐ Cheap                 ☐ Good value for money
☐ Reasonable            ☐ Normal/Affordable

21. What admission price did you pay today? $ __________________

22. Overall, were you satisfied with today’s concert experience? (yes/no) ______________

23. Could you suggest specific changes that would improve your ACM concert experience in the future?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

Hereby I would like to thank you for your time and effort in filling out this questionnaire today. Completed questionnaire forms can be deposited in the large red box at the entrance.

(Please see over for some more information)

Kind regards,
Rianne Wilschut
Would you be interested in participating in a private interview discussing your experience of attending today’s performance by the Australian Chamber Musicians? These interviews will be recorded on video, and selected footage will be used in the creation of a research documentary about the ensemble, titled “The Australian Chamber Musicians: Creating chamber music in small venues”.

If you are interested in participating, please enter your name and contact details below so that the research team can set up a convenient interview time and place with you.

Name: ______________________________________________________________

Best contact telephone number: _________________________________________

Email address: _______________________________________________________

Preferred contact method: _____________________________________________

I thank you in advance for your contribution to this research, and look forward to meeting you.

With regards,
Rianne Wilschut
ACM audience questionnaire

Concert date: __________________________________________________________

Concert venue: ________________________________________________________

1. What is your age?

☐ 10 – 19 yrs ☐ 50 – 59 yrs
☐ 20 – 29 yrs ☐ 60 – 69 yrs
☐ 30 – 39 yrs ☐ 70 – 79 yrs
☐ 40 – 49 yrs ☐ 80 + yrs

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. What is, or was your occupation? ______________________________________

4. What is your country of origin? ________________________________________

5. Which suburb do you live in? __________________________________________

6. By which mode of transport did you come to today’s performance? __________

7. Approximately how long did you travel? _________________________________ minutes

8. Was the travel time or distance to this venue a deciding factor in attending today’s concert?

______________________________________________________________________

9. What is your connection to this venue? _________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

10. How did you find out about today’s performance? ___________________________

______________________________________________________________________
11. Did you come on your own today?  (yes/no)  _________________
   
a. If you answered yes, were you anticipating you would meet acquaintances/friends at the concert?  
   ________________________________________________________________________

b. If you answered no, who did you come with?  (i.e. partner/family/friend/……)  
   ________________________________________________________________________

12. Do you attend concerts regularly?  (yes/no)  _________________
   (If no, go straight to question 13)
   
a. If yes, what types of concerts do you attend? (Tick as many as applicable)
   
   [ ] Orchestral          [ ] Jazz
   [ ] Chamber music        [ ] Pop
   [ ] Choral               [ ] World music
   [ ] New music            [ ] Other, namely _________________

b. How many concerts do you attend per year, on average?  _________________

c. Can you name some of the venues where these concerts are or were taking place?
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

   [ ] How does the experience of attending a concert in this venue today differ from the other venues you visit?  ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

13. Do you listen to recorded music at home/at work/in the car?  (yes/no)  _________________
   
a. If yes, how often do you listen to recorded music?
   
   [ ] Every day          [ ] Several times a month
   [ ] Several times a week [ ] Occasionally
14. Could you name some styles of music (or artists, performers, or composers) that you enjoy listening to?
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

15. In your opinion, what are some of the differences between listening to recorded music and attending a live concert?
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you participate in any type of music making yourself? (yes/no) _________________________
  
  a. If yes, would you be able to briefly elaborate?

  ______________________________________________________________________________

  ______________________________________________________________________________

17. Did you in the past ever participate in any type of music making? (yes/no) ______________
  
  a. If yes, would you be able to briefly elaborate on your past experience?

  ______________________________________________________________________________

  ______________________________________________________________________________

18. Have you been to a concert by the Australian Chamber Musicians before? (yes/no) ____________

19. Have you been to a concert in this venue before? (yes/no) ______________

20. What were your main reasons for attending today’s concert?

  ______________________________________________________________________________

  ______________________________________________________________________________

  ____________________________________________

  ____________________________________________
21. If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe today’s concert, what would those be?

__________________________________________________________________________

22. If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe this concert venue, what would those be?

__________________________________________________________________________

23. Is there any relationship between your experience of today’s concert and this concert venue?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

24. Were there any pieces on today’s program that you enjoyed more than others?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

a. Would you be able to explain or describe why you enjoyed those more than others?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

25. In your opinion, which of the following best describes the admission price today?
   (Please tick one, or several)

   [ ] Too expensive
   [ ] Expensive

   [ ] Cheap
   [ ] Good value for money

   [ ] Reasonable
   [ ] Normal/Affordable

26. Did the advertised ticket price influence your decision to attend today’s concert? _________________
Hereby I would like to thank you for your time and effort in filling out this questionnaire today. Completed questionnaire forms can be deposited in the large red box at the entrance.

(Please see below for some more information)

Kind regards,

Rianne Wilschut
36 Greenslade Street
Tingalpa 4173

Would you be interested in participating in a private interview discussing your experience of attending today’s performance by the Australian Chamber Musicians? These interviews will be recorded on video and/or audio equipment, and selected footage will be used in the creation of a research documentary about the ensemble, titled “The Australian Chamber Musicians: Creating chamber music in small venues”.

If you are interested in participating, please enter your name and contact details below so that the research team can set up a convenient interview time and place with you.

Name:  _______________________________________________________

Best contact telephone number:  ___________________________________

Email address:  ________________________________________________

Preferred contact method:  _______________________________________

I thank you in advance for your contribution to this research, and look forward to meeting you.

With regards,

Rianne Wilschut
Appendix F: Interview Questions

ARTICO Full Case study interview questions with individual artists

1. About you, the musician – history and career so far
   a. How and where did you start voice/piano/clarinet lessons? Can you share some early music memories?
   b. Can you briefly map out your professional music career so far since graduating? An overview of your CV?
      (i.e. highlights of professional engagements to date, different types of voice/piano/clarinet related work you’ve done)

2. About you, the musician – current
   a. Can you describe the range of voice/piano/clarinet related work you do currently?

3. About you, the member of ARTICO
   a. How long have you been a member of this ensemble?
   b. (Only for Paul…) You started this group, is that right? ……Why?
   c. Could you describe your experience of being part of ARTICO Ensemble?
   d. How is the experience of an ARTICO concert different to performing in a large concert hall?
   e. What are some key characteristics of creating chamber music in our small community venues?
   f. What effect does the small size have on your concert experience, and what effect does the fact that it is not a mainstream venue have on your concert experience?
   g. In the past season, ARTICO has played in churches, a private house and a museum – are there differences in the concert experience, from your point of view? ……….. Any favourites?
   h. The group went through a name change – why?
   i. Could you describe what you see as the strengths of ARTICO (the group)…., and ARTICO concerts?
   j. Could you describe what you see as the difficulties or challenges of ARTICO (the group)…., and ARTICO concerts?
k. Why are you a member of ARTICO?
l. (Paul only…..) do you still have the same energy and drive for the group?
m. Where and how do you see the future of the group?

4. Lastly, could you give a personal definition of chamber music?

**ARTICO group interview questions with artists**

Discuss

a. 3 i The strengths of ARTICO (the group)…. and ARTICO concerts
b. 3 j The challenges of ARTICO (the group)…. and ARTICO concerts
c. 3 m The future of the group

- Q 3c and 3d are similar. 3c is more after a descriptive feel of the experience, 3d after key words.
- Some of these questions were also touched on in the pilot doco filming at Redlands a year ago. If you want to say the same again, great, if you want to answer differently, great as well.
Full Case study documentary Interview questions

Audience

After the performance*

• Could I ask you for some comments on today’s concert?
• How did today’s concert make you feel?
• Is the experience of attending this concert here today different than attending one in the concert hall?
  If yes, in what way?
• If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe the experience of attending today’s concert, what would those be?
• Would you be able to give a personal definition of “chamber music”?

* These questions can be asked at interval as well, if that works better for time management, but only if preceded by:
"After hearing the first half of the performance ....", or "It is currently interval - can I ask you ...."
Interview questions

Concert Administrators

Before the performance:

• What motivated you to invite the Australian Chamber Musicians to perform today?
• What was involved in organising this concert?

After the performance:

• Could I ask you for some comments on today’s concert?
• Were you pleased with how it all went today?
• If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe the experience of organising today’s concert, what would those be?
• Would you be able to give a personal definition of “chamber music”?
Pilot study documentary Interview questions

audience

(after performance)

• Could I ask you for some comments on today’s concert?
• How did today’s concert make you feel? Was there a particular moment that stood out?
• How did you hear about today’s performance?
• Have you been to any other concerts by this group before?
• Did you come on your own today?
• Do you attend concerts regularly?
• Do you live in this area?
• Would you be able to give a personal definition of “chamber music”??
• If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe today’s concert, what would those be?
Interview questions

administrator

(before performance)

• What motivated you to invite the Australian Chamber Musicians to perform today?
• Would you be able to give a personal definition of “chamber music”? 
• Could you comment on what was involved in organising this concert?

(after the performance)

• Could I ask you for some comments on today’s concert? 
• If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe today’s concert, what would those be?
Interview questions

artists

Brieley, Shelli, Paul, Rianne (before performance)

• Do you look forward to the performance today?
• What do you think of the venue?
• How does it compare to other venues your ensemble has played in?
• Would you be able to give a personal definition of “chamber music”?

(after the performance)

• How does performing in this venue differ from performing in a large concert hall? How does/does this affect your own performance?
• If you had to choose a few words that, to you, best describe today’s concert, what would those be?