Background and Methodology

- The overarching purpose of the research was to help H+H become more relevant to people of color who enjoy classical music. Key objectives were to:
  - Explore the relationships people of color (POC) have with classical music and concerts
  - Determine the primary barriers to H+H attendance among communities of color
  - Identify strategies to motivate attendance and increase engagement among communities of color

- The extensive, multifaceted project included two phases:
  - **Qualitative:** personal interviews, concert attendance, post-concert surveys/interviews – Fall 2017
  - **Quantitative:** online surveys – Summer 2018

- Prescott & Associates partnered with Vision Strategy and Insights, multicultural team of researchers specializing in diverse audiences, for the qualitative research.

- Following is a summary of overall research findings and strategic recommendations from the learning.
Qualitative Research Methodologies

**PRE-CONCERT INTERVIEWS**

In-person, in-depth interviews

- N=24; Hispanic, African American, Asian, Caucasian
- Enjoy classical music, attend arts at least occasionally
- Explored arts/leisure habits/preferences, relevance of classical music, awareness/perceptions of H+H, barriers to attendance, media habits

**ATTENDANCE AT ONE OF FOUR H+H CONCERTS**

Post-concert surveys

- N=50; Hispanic, African American, Asian, Caucasian
- Overall experience, enjoyment, relative to expectations
- All respondents completed within 2 days of attending concert

Follow up phone interviews

- N=39; Hispanic, African American, Asian, Caucasian
- 15-20 minutes in length
- Deeper dive into concert experience and likelihood to return
- Gain further understanding to develop testable strategies for reaching and connecting with these audiences
While participants like classical music, it’s not typically their preferred type of music

- All seemed to have an appreciation for classical music — even if it is not music that they listen to frequently.
- Almost all indicated attending a classical concert, although in many cases it was a year+ ago. For most it is not that they haven’t considered attending a classical concert, but rather they enjoy other activities far more.

“(Music you listen to) Classical music I listen to at home these days...that or jazz for background music. I will play Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, John Williams. I will play a particular composer.”

“The reason why (I don’t go to classical music concerts) is that a lot of my friends are not into it. They don’t want to pay the price, they’re so expensive.”
Although most participants described the audience as being “different” they still felt quite at home

- **Audience was described as older and not very diverse** (with exception of Amadeus). Nevertheless, **respondents seemed to bond with other concert-goers through a love and enjoyment of the music.**

- Sometimes the **connection was overt**, featuring conversations with other patrons, but more often the connection was **created by participants simply witnessing other patrons enjoying the performance.**

“In terms of diversity, it was slim. There were mostly Caucasians. I felt pretty normal. **It didn’t make me feel uncomfortable at any point.** It was something I noticed right away, but it didn’t take away from the enjoyment of the experience.”

“We talked a little to the lady next to us. (The audience) seemed older. There were some young people, but not many. You got the sense that it was Boston blue bloods...people I would normally not meet.”
Participants reported enjoying their concert much more than anticipated

• Many respondents did not overwhelmingly believe they would enjoy the experience. However, most found that they enjoyed the concert much more than anticipated. **Attending seemed to remind them how enjoyable a classical concert could be.**

• Vast majority felt environment was **extremely/very welcoming.**

“The music was lovely. **It was exhilarating, high energy.** It was Mozart and Beethoven, which are my favorites.”

“I really enjoyed it. I thought Symphony Hall was a very cool space. Performance was great, and very visually interesting... **watching their body language as they performed enhanced the experience.**”

“I wasn’t sure how I would like it, but I was pleasantly surprised. **I had a really good time.** I am interested in music and I love performances...but this is not something I would typically go to. I have seen advertisements. I have walked by them, it’s not something I had been interested in going to.”
Implications For H+H

Results strongly indicate a significant opportunity for H+H to expand its audience into communities of color.

➢ Respondents enjoyed the performances and did not feel “left out” once they were there, despite the homogenous makeup of the current audience

➢ Many found the inclusion of non-traditional performers and performers of color in the programming compelling and appealing

➢ Participants responded positively to the unique historical perspective of the concerts including the period instruments

➢ After exposure to a concert, a majority (particularly African Americans) were enthusiastic about returning for other performances

It is important to note, however, that this will require a substantial investment of time and resources in the areas of education, exposure, relevance, and motivation in order to develop a lasting relationship with audiences of color.
Quantitative Research Methodology

- Online surveys conducted in July 2018.
- Sample was drawn from consumer online panels targeting households within a 25-mile radius of the Boston Symphony Hall zip code.

- Respondents were qualified as:
  - Adults, 18-74 years of age
  - Enjoy listening to classical music
  - Attended at least one arts performance in the past 12 months

- A total of 690 HHs completed the survey with two cells of respondents:
  - People of Color \( N=376 \) – Asian (160), African American/Black (102), Hispanic/Latinx (84), Other (30)
  - Caucasian/White \( N=314 \)

- Areas covered:
  - Arts & Entertainment interests
  - Role of classical music and classical music preferences
  - Brand awareness and attendance
  - Attendance motivations and barriers
  - H+H perceptions and concert experiences
  - Reactions to H+H positioning and communications
Overall Arts Attendance
Number of Performances Attended in Past 12 Months

The majority of both samples are lighter arts attenders (≤4 in the last 12 months). Approximately half of POC HHs have attended 2 or fewer in the past year.

Q: About how many arts performances such as theater, dance, opera, or classical music have you attended in the past 12 months?

Just 17% search for info on upcoming A&E on a very regular basis.
Q: In general, how much do you enjoy attending classical music concerts or think you’d enjoy if you haven’t been to one?  
Q: How familiar would you say you are with classical music?
Q: Here are some area arts organizations/events; which of these are you aware of? (Click all that apply.)
Q: Based on your experiences or perceptions, which of these statements regarding H+H would you strongly agree with? [Click all that apply]

- Is a highly respected organization: 48%
- Has an excellent orchestra: 41%
- Is a source of pride for Boston: 39%
- Presents concerts of the highest artistic quality: 36%
- Has a strong presence in the Boston community: 36%
- Is outstanding entertainment: 33%
- Has an excellent chorus: 33%
- Is for people like me: 31%
- Provides music education for young people: 29%
- Is an organization I don’t know much about: 27%
- Gives consistently rewarding concerts: 26%
- Is making early music relevant for today’s audiences: 23%
- Is an organization I feel strongly connected to: 17%
- Is not really relevant in my life: 11%
- Performs a type of music I really don’t care for: 10%

The fairly low response across all attributes suggests a lack of familiarity with H+H among POC HHs aware of the brand. Few POC HHs strongly agree that H+H isn’t relevant or performs music they don’t care for.
H+H Concert Enjoyment and Expected Enjoyment
Recent Attenders and Nonattenders

H+H Concert Enjoyment – Attenders

- Enjoyed extremely: 6%
- Enjoyed very much: 47%
- Enjoyed somewhat: 47%
- Haven't enjoyed: 6%

C/W: 55% / 40%

Expected Enjoyment – Nonattenders

- Would enjoy extremely: 8%
- Would enjoy very much: 10%
- Would enjoy somewhat: 39%
- Would not enjoy that much/at all: 43%

C/W: 10% / 43%

Q: Overall, how much have you enjoyed your H+H concert experiences?
Q: H+H is an Orchestra and Chorus that performs primarily at Symphony Hall. Based on any assumptions you might have, how much would you expect to enjoy their concert performances?
Perceptions of H+H Audience
POC Sample

Q: Based on your perceptions, how would you describe the audience for H+H concerts?

Top-two box on 5-point scale

- Very knowledgeable: 62%
- Dressed up: 55%
- Very friendly: 77%
- Relaxed: 60%
- Mostly white: 49%
- Mostly old: 33%
- Serious: 41%
Attenders and Non-Attenders tend to believe the H+H audience would be very knowledgeable about classical music and dressed up. **Non-Attenders are much more apt to see the audience as mostly white, old, and serious while Attenders characterize it as very friendly and relaxed (rather than stuffy).**

Q: Based on your perceptions, how would you describe the audience for H+H concerts?
H+H Attendance Inhibitors
POC Sample

Q: What kinds of things are apt to hold you back from attending H+H concerts?

Numerous inhibitors to H+H attendance including financial concerns, uncertainty/risk, lack of interest/other preferences.

Uncertainty/risk, lack of interest, environment/atmosphere, lack of relevance all higher than C/W Sample

Environment/Atmosphere

- Asian: 32%
- African American: 45%
- Hispanic: 43%
- Caucasian: 21%
H+H Ticket Price Perceptions
POC Sample

POC HHs have a broad range of H+H ticket price perceptions. On average, perceptions are much higher than actual ticket prices.

Actual Single Prices
Less exp. $24-$29
Mid-range $50-$56
More exp. $74-$80
Top price $98-$104

Q: About how much do you think individual tickets for H+H concerts generally cost?

Less expensive: $24-$29
Mid-range: $50-$56
More expensive: $74-$80
Perceptions of Symphony Hall
POC Sample – Symphony Hall Lapsed/Non-Attendees

Q: Which of these do you associate with Symphony Hall? Click all that apply.

- **Classy**: 61%
- **Formal**: 60%
- **Beautiful**: 58%
- **Special occasion**: 48%
- **Expensive**: 48%
- **Exciting**: 29%
- **Welcoming**: 22%
- **Comfortable**: 16%
- **For people like me**: 10%
- **Intimidating**: 18%
- **Stuffy**: 11%

73% had been to Boston Symphony Hall 0-2 times in past three years
Recent Symphony Hall attenders are much more likely to see it as beautiful, exciting, welcoming, comfortable, and for people like me. They are also less apt to see it as formal.
Suggestions for Attracting People of Color to Classical Concerts

POC Sample

Q: What do you think orchestras could do to attract more people of color to classical concerts? Open-ended question

Feature **more artists of color** and play music by racially diverse composers

Have **more musicians of color**...especially in the orchestra which tends to be mostly white.

Incorporate more POC players, conductors, board members. Perform works by POC composers.

They can have **more African American conductors**. Maybe have an orchestra based on a film that's **based on African American culture**, and make tickets affordable for inner-city residents.

Advertise where people of color live

Photos and **video showing people of color performing and attending**

Ads in **local papers and community centers**

**Partner with community organizations** to present music in the community.

Connect with Community organizations in order to **perhaps perform in various community auditoriums**

Promote outreach and **chances for ethnically diverse children to experience the music**, play instruments, and get to know the musicians.

Lower prices and **less formal locations that can intimidate some**.

Have **comfortable places for them and not be judged by others** that are next to them.

**Fusion! Comfortable/casual settings, multilingual events, relate it to cultural heritage in some way.**
Here are several images from H+H’s brochure for the upcoming season.
Recent Attenders would find H+H concerts highly appealing, with a slightly higher score among C/W than POC HHs. A little over half of Lapsed/Non-Attenders say the same.

Q: Based on what you see here, how appealing do you think H+H concerts would be for you?
Interest Value of Period Instruments and Repertoire
Lapsed/Non-Attenders

The majority of Non-Attenders think H+H’s use of period instruments is extremely/very interesting.

Q: How interesting are the following aspects of H+H performances to you? Performs with period instruments; Focuses on Baroque and Classical periods
Q: Here are a few ads for H+H concerts.

Note: Split sample design: respondents saw either the two color ads or the two B&W ads in randomized order.
H+H Print Ad Ratings
As Way of Promoting Concerts to the Individual

African American and Hispanic segments reacted somewhat more positively to the Beethoven Soloists and Handel Hercules ads.

Q: What’s your overall reaction to this ad as a way of promoting this concert to you?
Q: What most catches your attention in a positive way?

Title with Beethoven symphony no 9 and oddly, the photo of the bass-baritone -- I guess I’m not used to seeing African Americans in classical music, but it’s great.

I am pleasantly surprised to see people of color, and diverse hair types represented.

Diverse soloists!

Inclusion of talent from both genders and the multi-racial/multi-cultural cast

the diversity of the performers catches my eye.

The diverse group of singers! How refreshing!

Nice to see a Black with braids.

The photos of the singers are friendly and inviting.

I love the young diverse faces.

The variety of reviews and the wide range of demographics on this ad.

Mini bios of relevant people

Very eye catching in the graphic presentation how it promotes the performances plus how diverse are the performers.
Q: What most catches your attention in a positive way?

The apparent **power and emotion of the singer**.

The singer presented in the brochure is in action, and **seemingly full of energy for his performance**.

The image of a **vocalist putting his all into it**.

The power and poise of the imagine matched perfectly with the description of "some of the most powerfully dramatic of all Handel’s music".

The gentleman performing

**It’s not a white guy for once.**

The ad has an African American male which tells me that its a very diverse show and will make me feel comfortable to attend as an African American female.

I like that it **features a person of color**.

An **African-American male singer which is something you don’t see much.**

The Gramophone quote they used.

“The most powerfully dramatic”

Handel Hercules

absolutely everything.
Q: What most catches your attention in a positive way?

I love the woman holding the violin, she looks confident and proud.

The way she is standing and holding the violin. It looks like she saying “I am going to blow your mind with this performance”

Flair of the artist.

The person with the red hair and a red outfit. That tells me that it’s not a show for stuck up people and they’re reaching out to the younger audience.

The hair color in this ad. Because it tells me that they are welcoming towards all kinds of people.

The spunk of the violinist and her very non-classical appearance - refreshing!

Female performer highlighted

Mozart + Beethoven

Taglines: Genius of Mozart, Grandeur of Beethoven, and the mastery of H+H.

Design, not very wordy, conveys the important info quickly and efficiently.
Likelihood of Attending H+H This Season

The majority of POC Recent Attenders reported being very likely to attend this season and almost 40% of POC Lapsed/Non-Attenders reported high likelihood.

Q: Based on the information and concert programs you’ve just seen, as well as other attendance considerations, how likely do you think you’d be to attend and H+H concert next season?
Research Conclusions/Implications

- Overall findings from the qualitative and quantitative research suggest potential for diversifying the audience base to more people of color, who enjoy classical music.

- It is recommended that H+H develop a multi-pronged, organization wide strategy:

  - Minimize Barriers
  - Leverage Strengths
  - Motivate Trial/More Frequent Attendance
  - Create Lasting Emotional Connections
Research Conclusions/Implications

Minimize Barriers

1. Practical
   - Other A&E preferences; light arts attendance
   - Less involvement in classical (esp. African Americans)
   - Many are fairly unfamiliar with classical repertoire
   - Lack of classical concert companions
   - Time, family, financial constraints

2. Informational
   - Many aren’t actively searching for A&E activities
   - No dominant media sources
   - Very low H+H brand awareness
   - Little meaning in ‘Handel and Haydn Society’
   - Price perceptions much higher than actual

3. Emotional
   - Fairly low expected H+H enjoyment/uncertainty
   - Questions about atmosphere/environment
   - Not-like-me audience perceptions (older, white)
   - Highly knowledgeable and serious about classical
   - Exclusive hall (formal, expensive, unwelcoming)
   - Expect few people of color onstage
Research Conclusions/Implications

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**Leverage Strengths**

1. **Appealing Brand/Communications**
   - Brand strategy resonates with POC
   - Interest value in period instruments
   - Communications are highly appealing (messaging/visuals)
   - Ethnic/age/gender diversity in ads suggests welcoming org.
   - Ethnic diversity in advertising elicits surprise and affirmation

2. **Compelling Performances/Musicians**
   - Appealing repertoire (esp. classical-early romantic)
   - Passionate, energetic musicians
   - Masterful performances
   - Visually and aurally stimulating experiences
   - Age/gender mix, some ethnic diversity favorably received

3. **Engaging, Satisfying Concert Experiences**
   - Highly enjoyable concerts that exceed expectations
   - Positive hall experiences (welcoming, exciting, comfortable)
   - Personal experiences reduce emotional barriers
   - More favorable audience imagery (very friendly, relaxed)
   - Bonding with audience in the music, shared experience
   - Virtually no outright post-concert H+H rejection
Research Conclusions

**Strategies**

1. **Exposure**
   - Build awareness of and exposure to H+H
   - Shift perceptions of expected concert experiences

2. **Engagement**
   - Establish greater connections to up engagement
   - Incentivize trial

3. **Experience**
   - Enhance concert experiences via DEI lens
   - Assess and refine efforts
## Research Conclusions

### Strategies

1. **Exposure**
   - Build awareness of and exposure to H+H
   - Shift perceptions of likely experience

2. **Engagement**
   - Establish greater connections to up engagement
   - Incentivize trial

3. **Experience**
   - Enhance concert experiences via D&I lens
   - Assess and refine efforts

### Tactics

- Use demographic appends for testing targeted mailings
- Test targeted locational advertising (e.g. posters)
- Build concert awareness at education/community events
- Include cross-sell efforts at all community performances
- Create word-of-mouth opportunities (personal, social, group)
- Consider H+H descriptor to improve brand understanding
- Strong diversity across communications (performers/audience)
- Heavy use of engaging concert visuals (welcoming, happy, relaxed)
- Test messaging to correct ticket price misperceptions

- Develop stronger community partners (educational, civic, cultural)
- Assess potential for Ambassador’s Circle (POC patrons, partners)
- Highlight diverse performers (e.g. interviews with soloists)
- Leverage education programs to attract parents to concerts
- Identify key community influencers to endorse H+H
- Test group efforts/offers (e.g. churches, cultural associations)
- Target classical-early romantic concerts for test programs

- Increase diversity onstage (programs, musicians, chorus)
- Develop collaborative programs with affinity orgs
- Staff diversity & inclusion training (welcoming environment)
- Encourage cross-cultural conversations (Millennial/first-timer events)
- Enhance familiarity with concert pieces (pre/during concerts)
- Monitor patron satisfaction, perceived inclusion, demographics