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(Article begins on next page)

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Beyond Class Stratification: The Rise of the Eclectic Music Consumer in the Modern Age

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Introduction

Sociological analysis of social inequalities has paid significant attention to the way culture shapes processes of social stratification. Most notable are works by Weber (1978) on lifestyles and status groups, Veblen (1899) on the leisure class, and Bourdieu (1984) on how cultural preferences serve social classes in creating social distinction and inequality. Contemporary research into cultural stratification pays special attention to the way individuals in groups defined by an economic dimension (e.g., occupational category) often share tastes and consumption patterns in the realm of music (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Bennett et al., 2009; Yaish and Katz-Gerro, 2010).

In this paper we extend the analysis of the association between choice of music and class position into the past. We do this by analysing a unique dataset documenting the purchase of sheet music from a leading publisher in Italy during the period 1814-1823. We seek to understand patterns of the quantity and variety of sheet music consumption and the association of music consumption patterns with class position of the consumers of that period. This extraordinary data provides a glance into a period characterized by significant social changes that

have bearing on the class-culture nexus. These changes include, most notably, the rise of the middle class with more people seeking access to music performances and musical education; music becoming a part of domestic life; the beginning of mass consumption in music; and musicians becoming virtuous superstars (Weber 1977; Taruskin 2006).

This paper offers a twofold contribution. The first contribution is to conceive the breadth of music consumption dynamically, both in terms of time frame and in terms of cultural preferences, at the level of individual consumers. Our time frame provides a snap shot of music consumption during one decade and our approach to measuring musical choice relies on a combination of volume and variety. Rather than apply discrete constructs such as highbrow and lowbrow genre patterns, which are contemporary constructions of cultural stratification, we use a flexible measure of the relationship between quantity (volume) of musical choice and quality (variety or breadth) of musical choice, which avoids presuppositions that stem from theories of taste developed 150 years after the period we study. Thus, we offer analysis that goes beyond a static picture of the state of individual consumption at one moment in time to span a decade, and we avoid a pre-determined hierarchical classification of the diversity of music in favour of a measure of eclecticism in musical choice.

The second contribution lies in exploring the association between the quantity and variety of music purchased and class position of the consumers. Our main question here is whether during the particular historical period that we study, class was already a social dimension that structured the purchase of music by individuals in significant ways. The answer to this question will provide a historical context for contemporary theories on the use of cultural preferences as a social marker in processes of cultural stratification.

Culture and Class, Music and Musicians in the 19th centuries

Research conducted at least since the 1970s portrays elite taste in culture as often associated with specific genres that are considered highbrow culture, like classical music or opera (Bourdieu, 1985; DiMaggio, 1987; Katz-Gerro, 2002). These highbrow genres are perceived as sophisticated, intellectually demanding, and requiring some kind of cognitive competency and status motivation. Non-elite classes often exhibit a taste for lowbrow culture, which tends to be more popular and is characterized as spontaneous, light, simple and unsophisticated (Scitovsky, 1976; Lizardo, 2006; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007; Notten et al., 2015). More recent work shows how elite taste has shifted from highbrow to a more eclectic, open and omnivorous taste, encompassing a variety of lowbrow, middlebrow and highbrow genres (Peterson and Kern, 1996). This shift signals a transition of elite classes from a snobbish narrow taste (also called univorous) to manifestation of cultural competencies in a variety of cultural genres. This phenomenon received several conceptual and operational definitions and was variously described as omnivorousness (Peterson and Kern, 1996), cultural dissonance (Lahire, 2004), or cultural eclecticism (Ollivier, 2008). The eclectic consumer experiences and appreciates a variety of cultural tastes, positioned along the contemporaneous cultural hierarchy to include highbrow, middlebrow, or lowbrow genres.

The distinction between highbrow and lowbrow cultural tastes is socially constructed and did not necessarily exist in the period we study in this paper. For example, from the 17th to the middle of the 19th century opera houses were places for the entertainment of aristocrats, however open to those middle and lower classes who were able to pay for a ticket (Storey, 2003; Santoro, 2010). The line of exclusion was not marked by any symbolism attach to the opera as an art form, but it was drawn on a mere commercial basis. By the second decade of the 19th century, which is precisely the period we analyse, notions of “art” and “culture” had come to refer to

exclusive forms of aesthetic production, free from the commercial rules of the market, withdrawn from the world of entertainment and its cultural entrepreneurs (Williams, 1966). The process of commodification is completed in the second half of the 19th century: with the rise of the bourgeoisie as a dominant urban class, was opera literally reclassified into a form of art worthy of the status of high culture (Levine, 1988). By the 20th century, high culture emerges in opposition to mass, or popular, or even petit bourgeois forms of culture, produced and distributed by the growing cultural industries. The paradox of the commodification of culture we have witnessed is that this same process, on the one hand, is socially inclusive and allows the up and coming industrial bourgeois to access theatres, concerts halls, and art galleries; on the other, it generates an anti-mass and antibourgeois stance which seizes and shapes the public discourse on art around a cultural hierarchy.

We propose to look at the association between class and culture in a certain historical period with a specific interest in the relations between a nascent music mass culture, an emerging music industry and a changing class structure. Music historians maintain that early forms of mass culture emerged already with the rise of the musical masters in the 18th century (Weber, 1977). The term mass culture, characteristic mainly of 19th century social, economic and cultural dynamics, is appropriate for the analysis of sheet music consumption, because it involved a commercialisation of artistic phenomena, profit-seeking activities, the industrialisation of music publishing (assisted by the development of print), instrument manufacturing and concert management (Weber, 1977; Dahlhaus, 1989). The demand for music was met by advances in the publishing industry to create a new market of music played by amateurs at home (Weber 1977). Part of this embryonic form of mass culture and a consumer business was that publishing houses acquired copyright over sheet music (Goehr, 1992).

. One of the most innovative aspect of the 18th century music scene is the growth of amateur musical training, leading to an emphasis on musical education among bourgeois and aristocratic homes (Weber 1977). Music had become personal and a subject for private rather than public contemplation, which was anteceded by changes in aesthetic perceptions and has resulted in significant transformations in the way the public behaved in concerts (Johnson, 1995). A new demand for music was socially constituted, a demand which Johnson (2006) characterises as engaged, one that had shaped how music was performed in the public and private spheres, and how it was listened to. It is then that music came to be a new cultural practice worthy of investigation in the context of the social structure, as we do here (Kramer, 1993).

The transformation of practices affected the profession of musicians. The 1800s witnessed a flowering of new traditions and aesthetics, such as light musical genres in the form of comic opera, operetta or other modernist composition (Jones, 2016). Trying to live on musical commissions and public engagements was extremely difficult for musicians. As part of an infant professional group, composers were subject to new marketing constraints and unstable social forces, but also to new exposure through world expositions (Taylor, 2007).

As a result, musical works and their composers required publishing houses, performing bodies, and a paying public to sustain their worldly existence (Goehr, 1992). The social distribution of audiences also underwent a process of transformation since the middle of the 18th century, when the public display of sensibility was emphasized and new patterns of music listening have developed, continuing into the 1820 and later (Johnson, 1995). The classical repertoire of the 19th century in Europe reshaped musical taste by redefining the difference between entertainment and serious art, later to be termed popular and classical music (Weber,

1977).The period analysed here saw the rise and industrialisation of mass culture, leading to new modes of social difference (Taylor, 2007).

Commentato [rv11]: TALLY: I do not understand what point you are trying to make in this last paragraph

Class Hierarchy and Cultural Hierarchy

To contextualise our analysis in a historical period and to avoid using measures of cultural stratification that were conceived a century later, we are careful about using a predefined hierarchy of genres as a means of classification because boundaries are disputable from an aesthetic perspective and constantly changing (Bennett et al., 2009; Rimmer, 2012). Therefore, we propose to capture the variety or heterogeneity of the items consumed and the frequency or quantities of purchases. This terminology is similar to contemporary notions of "omnivorousness in composition" vs. "omnivorousness in volume" (Warde and Gayo-Cal, 2009), which differentiate between the number of artistic genres consumed and the volume of consumption of each genre. Differently from Warde and Gayo-Cal (2009), our conceptualization of consumption classifies individuals on the basis of both dimensions at the same time. While previous studies typically counted heterogeneity and frequency of consumption over a limited span of time, with little attention to the dynamics of the process, in this paper, we analyse the way each individual developed their distinct path of consumption over time. These methodological innovations allow us to depict a picture of the link between class and culture in a period of the past without imposing notions that were developed based on contemporary hierarchical genre perceptions.

We therefore propose a taxonomy of cultural consumption patterns organized along two axes, quantity and variety of consumption, shown in Figure 1 and dividing the space into four quarters. In the first quarter, near the origin of the axes, we find the area of null or low levels of consumption, often defined by individuals who score low on the items used in this specific

analysis. The second quarter shows limited consumption, but an attitude to test and try different options within a certain range of choices. Both the third and fourth quarters represent a high intensity of consumption, but the former includes a wide range of choices, whereas the latter is typically exclusive and focused on one specific cultural product, as in the case of fandom for popular culture or subcultures[1]. We use this taxonomy to visualize the results of both the static and dynamic analysis of the data, with a particular interest in the way the different consumption patterns are associated with social class. Our depiction of social class also deviates from contemporary discussions of the class-culture homology because our class classification does not include a working class. Ours is a study of low, middle and elite classes as understood in the context of mid-19th century Milan music consumers. We distinguish between consumers who had an aristocracy title, those with intellectual jobs (high bourgeoisie) and those in manual jobs (petit bourgeoisie).

-- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE --

-- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE --

Table 1 summarizes the empirical approach implemented in the paper. We test the extent to which cultural consumption, measured as the purchase of sheet music, is associated with class position and additional demographic characteristics and since we define the type of consumption as the result of two continuous variables, we study how the distributions and the relationships of these two measures are affected by socio-demographic characteristics.

We can thus summarize the focus of our analysis in the following research questions:

RQ1: How are consumers distributed in the proposed taxonomy? Can we identify a relation between quantity and variety of the music consumed?

RQ2: Do socio-demographic characteristics explain the probability of consumers exhibiting specific consumption habits? Or, in other words, is there a consonance between social stratification and consumer preferences?

RQ3: Is it possible to identify a pattern of consumers' behaviour over time and explain it with socio-demographics characteristics?

RQ1 serves to test whether we can observe in the dataset a variety of consumers' preferences and to disentangle the dimensions of quantity and quality. On this basis, RQ2 addresses the question of the socio-economic basis of cultural stratification with a new method introduced in the paper. Finally, RQ3 extends the analysis at the single individual pattern of consumption over time.

Data and Method

The dataset is drawn from bookkeeping records of the Ricordi publishing house. Ricordi is the most famous Italian classical music publishing house, founded by the violinist Giovanni Ricordi in 1808, which during the 19th century grew to become one of the largest music publishers in Europe, with branches in several cities. The Ricordi Historic Archive in Milan is one of the most important private music collections in the world, preserving different documents, manuscripts, libretti, original sheet music, letters, drawings, costumes, photos, and posters dated back to the establishment of the Ricordi Company in 1808. The archive also holds the book keeping accounting records (*libri mastri*) of the Ricordi shop in Milan. The information contained in these records has been transcribed in a dataset that can be considered a significant documentation of sales transactions at Ricordi in Milan between 1813 and 1824 (Baia Curioni, 2011). Baia Curioni (2011) details in his book the specifics of the archive and the validity of the

hand written information. The records go through to 1824, the year when the Ricordi shop changed location and the publishing house opened new shops in Florence and London.[2]

The decision to rely on a measure of composers for analysis of quantity and variety of music choice is unusual, as is the extraordinary data source at our disposal. While the limits of a single measure of consumption heterogeneity are acknowledged, so is the opportunity to follow the customers' purchase behaviour over time…This dataset can be considered as providing a reliable picture of the purchased sheet music landscape of its time for several reasons. First, the observed historical period prevents the observations simply mirroring the effect of mass-media advertising. Second, the decade considered in the dataset is characterised by economic stagnation (Zanetti, 1977), which rules out that the purchased behaviour is merely the result of a change in the average income level. [3]. Third, Milan became capital of the Napoleonic Cisalpine Republic in 1796, and its political role strengthened the cultural activity of the city (Rath, 1941). In the time span considered in our study, music printing flourished mainly in Milan, which overcame Venice in the number of theatres and venues of music production. Ricordi, which was established in 1808, acquired leadership in the reproduction and acquisition of sheet music in Northern Italy, attracted customers from all Italian cities and from major European countries, and purchased some of its competitor publishers in the 1820s (Baia Curioni, 2011).[4] Milan of that period was an important centre of the music industry in general and of lyrical opera in particular. Finally, the dataset encompasses a good number of heterogeneous composers. While nowadays classical composers are considered as a relatively homogenous market segment, in the early XIX century, they covered different areas of consumers preferences and each of them was representative for a specific music genre: Mayr for instance is considered to produce pedantic pieces (Prunieres and Kincaid, 1921); the success of Rossini is driven by its catchy aria tunes (ibid.); Mirecki was very

Commentato [rv12]: TALLY: Is it a suspension or the sentence is finished?

sophisticated and even wrote the first Italian treatise of orchestration (Meucci and Waterhouse, 1996). All in all, these empirical observations seem to provide a sound test-bed for the purpose of this paper.

Composers

The dataset documents sheet music consumption patterns of 1068 individuals from August, 1813 to July, 1824. Table 2 provides descriptive information on the number of customers and transactions per year. We can see, for example, that in the year 1823, 184 customers purchased a total of 623 sheet music items. Some customers purchased one item, while others purchased as many as 30 items. On the whole, customers registered in the dataset purchased 5082 music works.

-- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE –

-- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE --

Table 3 provides descriptive information on the composers whose sheet music was purchased. For about half the sample (N=2401), it is possible to associate single transactions with the name of the composer purchased and this is the subsample of valid observations we will analyse. The choice of composers is very concentrated on a few names since the top 12 purchased composers account for about 60% of valid transactions.

To offer a convincing interpretation of the data, we should note the specific social and historical context of that period at the beginning of the 19th century, as artistic fields are quite manifestly set within class struggles and social transformations. At that time, sheet music was purchased for two main motivations. The first was for educational purposes, as indicated, for example, by the name of Bonifacio Asioli appearing in Table 3. Asioli's treaties and exercises

were adopted in music schools, by teachers, and by students who attended private lessons. For example we can mention Antonio Maria Nava, a not particularly known Italian singing teacher and guitar player, who worked almost exclusively in Italy but whose performances are well known in Italy, Germany, France and England (London). In 1808 he inaugurated the catalogue of Ricordi, which produced his four solo sonata guitars with the title The Seasons of the Year. In the time covered by the dataset he bought 52 different items, including 11 of his own works.

The second reason for purchasing sheet music was for private performances at home or in parties, and for performance in public spaces, like opera houses and concert halls. The list in Table 3 includes many composers who wrote music for the opera, the ballet and the historical dance. We mentioned that at the beginning of 19th century opera houses were still places of cross-social interaction (Zelechow, 1993; Santoro, 2010) and the transformation of opera into a high-cultural aesthetic experience was completed only later. The evolution of dance performances followed a different path in the process of commodification. Dance culture was an essential part of celebrations and recreation of the time (Zbikowski, 2012), although, over the 18th century, there was a clear separation between the complex dance performed in the aristocratic palaces and the simple music that accompanied dance for the masses. At the beginning of the 19th, the practice and perception of dance changed dramatically, moving this artistic form outside the pantheon of the auratic musical works (Zbikowski, 2012:162). Contrary to opera, which stepped up in the cultural hierarchy, dance became a social practice associated with the bourgeoisie, shifting performances from dance chambers, placed in the palaces of the aristocracy, to dance halls, open to a broader audience. Dance as a higher form of art was losing its value for the elite as a means of distinction, and physicality was progressively detached from the legitimate music discourse.

The data analysed here provide evidence of a unique moment in the history of culture, namely, the birth of a music star. A young Rossini appeared abruptly on the music scene in 1810 and in a few years won the favour of Italian and European audiences shaping music tastes across countries, cities and classes.[5] The emergence of a new composer is quite a rare event, disruptive for the market being not only successful among existing consumers, but also attracting new segments of demand (Guerzoni and Nuccio, 2014). The dataset shows *ante litteram* a long-tail effect (Anderson, 2006), where Rossini covers 25.7% of sheet music transactions whose composer is documented, but unfortunately the name of the music piece is only mentioned in 30% of the sample.[6] Among the ten best sellers, we find six works by Rossini, including the celebrated *La Gazza Ladra* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* whereas *La Vestale* and *Giovanna d'Arco*, by Viganò, represent two hits of dance music of the time. Rossini's fandom was quite prominent and originating from heterogeneous cultural background and classes. For example, we may find female professional singers like Ercolina Bressi who bought 5 Rossini pieces out of 7 purchases over the considered period, or an amateur artist like Mr. Rossi who bought 7 works by Rossini out of 9 purchases. The Marquise of Aragon, Viscount Gerardini Triulzi, bought Rossini but also Viganò while Mr. Zesi, a simple customs officer, collected 6 different works by Rossini.

Commentato [rv13]: p.11, the end of the last paragraph in the 4.1 section (on composers) lacks a deduction (e.g. how to interpret the purchases of the Marquise d'Aragon and fellow customers in the perspective of this paragraph core claim — which has to be clarified — ?), and perhaps a transition to the section 4.2.

We use the composer as the unit of the analysis to measure variety. When studying music preferences, scholars have often preferred a higher aggregation level like music genres, but in this case it was not possible. It is hard to group authors in genres within an historical analysis since we do not really know how they were perceived by the consumers at that time. However, composers represent well the heterogeneity of the market, since each one stood for a specific music taste ranging from the pedantic up to the most sophisticated, from opera arias to music for the ballet. On the other hand, we do not go further in the disaggregation and we disregard

information on the single work of each composer. Indeed, the work of a composer is perceived representative of its own style and it would be impossible to argue that a consumer has taste for variety when it buys a lot of different works of the same composer. Moreover, we have missing data since the work was not always reported.

Commentato [rv14]: Add here a response to a comment made by the editor: you differentiate between different pieces of one and the same composer – which points to one of the problems of addressing variety through composers. All this requires more systematic treatment and methodological discussion in section 4.1. At the moment that section does not properly discuss composers in relation to variety as such (and the discussion on the differentiation of dance has to be better related to your overall argument

Consumers

The dataset also provides information about the customers. For each entry on the ledger (*mastrino)*, Ricordi registered their name, home town, and often gender (88.6%), and class (65.5%). Purchasers were largely male (81.3%) and often worked in the music field (45.9%) in positions such as opera singers, composers, or theatre managers. We can also find women who were somehow related to the music field like Giulietta Ricordi, daughter of Giovanni. There are 12 records under her name, in particular four music sheets from the "Elisa and Claudio" by Mercadante, who gained a European reputation in the opera buffa following Rossini's style. With few exceptions, customers resided all over the former Italian states; however, 67% were from Milan and more than 80% lived in the Lombardy-Venetian Kingdom, created in 1815 under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

-- TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE –

Table 4 shows the distribution of customers across classes defined by occupational category. Out of 1918 customers, we have information on the purchased composer for 1068 customers, and among those, we have information on class position for 700 customers. This information enabled us to classify the customers into four class categories: Artists, Nobles, High Bourgeoisie and Low Bourgeoisie. The lower classes, comprised of servants and workers, are not

represented in our data because they were not typical consumers of sheet music and hence not part of the phenomenon that we are studying.

Nobles (30.9%) are distinguished by an explicit peerage in the name (county, marquise, cavalier, baroness, etc.); High Bourgeoisie (13.9%) come mainly from the professions, for example doctors, lawyers, journalists, notaries, officials, etc.; Low Bourgeoisies (9.4%) are merchants, retailers and artisans, self-employed or working in a shop (hairdresser, shoe maker, clock maker, typographic operation, jeweller, baker, carpenter, etc.). Finally, under the label Artists we included higher educated professors, maestros and performers, who are the most represented group (45.9%) and, although they do not constitute a social class *per se*, are indicated in a separate category, since, differently from the others, they purchase music both for consumption and production purposes. We chose to treat artistic workers in a distinct category for three main reasons: they are a group of consumers endowed with a specific form of cultural capital; they buy music as an input for their work activity and not only for leisure or education; and because of their symbolic capital and their role as gatekeepers of the music field they can affect the taste of other individuals. In summary, this is a study of middle and upper classes in a period where lower classes were just being formed and certainly were not consumers of sheet music. At the same time, musical performances for small groups in people's salons became popular events and musical education became increasingly important.

-- TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE --

The cross-tabulation analysis of top composers purchased by class of the customer (Table 5) reveals two statistical features of our sample. First, the consumption of music represented in the dataset is very concentrated on one superstar (Rossini) and a few best-sellers, mirroring a market structure that is common in many art and cultural industries. The six most sold composers

account for a percentage of total purchases between 44% for High Bourgeoisie and 52% for Low Bourgeoisie. Second, the distribution of composers purchased by customers with missing values on social class does not significantly differ from the distribution among customers for whom we have information on class. In other words, this aspect confirms that the subsample of valid observations is not biased as far as consumptions choices are concerned.

Empirical Analysis: Cultural Stratification in the nineteenth century

Definition and statistical property of variables

To answer RQ1 we depict musical taste as comprising two dimensions. We measure quantity as the count of sheet music bought by each consumer:

$$Quantity_i = \sum_{j=1}^{N} N_{ij}, \qquad with\ i\epsilon(1,N)\ \ and\ j\epsilon(1,M), \tag{1}$$

where N_{ij} is the number of sheet music of composer *j* bought by individual *i*. We measure *variety* with an index that grasps the heterogeneity of a consumer's music collection. To construct such an index for each individual *i*, we first compute the Hirschmann–Herdfindahl index (*HHI*) over their whole consumption history:

$$HHI_i = \sum_{j=1}^{N} \left(\frac{N_{ij}}{\sum_j^M N_{ij}}\right)^2, \qquad with\ i\epsilon(1,N)\ \ and\ j\epsilon(1,M). \tag{2}$$

The denominator is the sum of all the sheet music of the *M* composers purchased by an individual and the numerator is the number of sheets of each composer *j* bought by the same individual. Therefore, HHI is the sum of the squared shares of each artist in the individual *i*'s music collection. The HHI index ranges from *1/M* to 1, when a consumer purchased one composer only[7]. We then normalized the *HHI*, so that it ranges from 0 to 1:

$$NHHi = \begin{cases} \frac{HHIi-1/Mi)}{1-1/Mi}, & for\ Mi > 1 \\ 1, & for\ Mi = 1. \end{cases} \tag{3}$$

Since *NHHI* is an index of concentration, we define the variable *variety:*

$$Variety_i = 1 - NHH_i. \quad (4)$$

Variety ranges from 0 to 1. It is 0 when a consumer purchased one composer only and it increases with the growth in diversity of each consumer's music collection. The variables *Quantity* and *Variety* describe the consumption of each customer in the dataset. In addition, we use the variables *Gender*, *Home Town*, and *Class*. *Gender* is a dummy variable, coded 1 for male and 0 for female. *Home Town* is coded 1 for customers from Lombardy-Venetia and 0 otherwise. *Class* is a categorical variable including the class positions discussed above: Artists, Nobles, High Bourgeoisie, and Low Bourgeoisie. Table 6 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the variables *Quantity and Variety*.

-- TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE --

-- FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE --

-- FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE --

Typically, research in this area tends to cluster consumers based on the level of their cultural behaviour, for example by using latent class models to estimate the effects of various socio-demographic characteristics on the probability of consumers to be assigned to a specific class of consumption (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007; Katz-Gerro and Jaeger, 2013). We opt for a different approach, which minimizes the loss of information at our disposal: since we define the type of consumption as the combination of two continuous variables, quantity and quality, we study how the distributions and the relationships between these two measures are affected by socio-demographic characteristics.

Figures 2 and 3 depict the Kernel Distributions of quantity and variety, respectively, stratified by the customers' class.[8] The variable *Quantity* is left-skewed and shows that most

consumers made a small number of purchases while a few made a very large number of purchases. The distribution is remarkably similar across social classes, with an almost unnoticeable tendency for the Low Bourgeoisie to touch a higher peak around 1 item purchased and of Artists to display a fatter right tail up to 60-80 purchases. The distribution of the variable *Variety* is bimodal, where one group of consumers shows a low degree of variety in its music collection (value is around 0) while a second group exhibits a moderately high variety of choices (value around 0.5-0.6). Very few individuals appear to be in-between these two groups. Once again, the distribution across social classes is remarkably similar, with an inclination for Artists, whose density curve is higher for values in the middle, to belong more to the group of moderately high variety.

By crossing the two density graphs, we are able to portray empirically the taxonomy that includes quantity and variety. Figure 4 depicts the joint density distribution as a heat-map of the variables *Quantity* and *Variety*: light grey and white areas are associated with a higher density of observations. This depiction shows that a majority of consumers made few purchases. With an increase in purchases, variety shows a steep growth up to a certain upper boundary. The upper right area identifies voracious omnivores, who combine intensive consumption activity and high variety. The shape of the probability density functions, which is similar across social classes, indicates that the omnivore–univore dichotomy is present in various social classes, even in the period studied, at the beginning of the 19th century. This makes it worth exploring the dataset in more detail.

-- FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE –

On the relation between quantity and variety of purchases

Quantity and *Variety* are associated: each act of purchase, which by definition increases quantity, can result or not in an increase in the breadth of a consumer's music collection, and thus in *Variety*. For this reason, it makes sense to test whether *Variety* can be estimated as a function of *Quantity*, to analyse the shape of its graph and to study whether it is affected by the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual. As a first step, we estimate the relationship of consumers' *Quantity* and *Variety* of purchases at the aggregate level. Thus, we consider the quantity and variety of each individual at the end of the period of observation and estimate the relation:

$$Variety_i = \alpha + \beta\, Quantity_i + \gamma\, Z_i + \varepsilon_i, \qquad (5)$$

Z stands for the matrix of the socio-demographic variables *Gender*, *Home Town*, and *Class;* α, β, and γ are the coefficients to be estimated; and ε is the error term. Since the graphical analysis of Figure 4 suggests a logarithmic relationship, we also test the same regression with the log of *Quantity*:

$$Variety_i = \alpha + \beta \log(Quantity_i) + \gamma\, Z_i + \varepsilon_i. \qquad (6)$$

Table 7 reports the estimation of both linear and linear-log regression models of the *Variety* variable. Although there exists a robust positive effect of quantity of purchases on V*ariety*, the linear-log model fits the data much better than the linear model and explains about 50% of the variance of *Variety* (R^2=0.494). A logarithmic estimation with a positive coefficient corroborates the graphical intuition that *Variety* grows with the *Quantity* at a decreasing rate. In other words, the empirical analysis detects a propensity of *Variety* to grow slowly over time until it reaches an upper limit. The coefficients of the linear-log regression can be interpreted as the unit change of 0.2 points in *Variety* when *Quantity* increases by about 1%.[9]

In response to RQ2, socio-demographic characteristics do not seem to exert a sound impact on *Variety*: gender does not have a significant effect and the effect of living in the Lombardy-Venetian Kingdom compared to elsewhere is significant but the coefficient is weak. Dummy variables for social class show very weak effects, which become insignificant for high bourgeoisie in the second model specification. This evidence indicates that belonging to specific social classes does not explain consumers' pattern of consumption. The strongest result among the generally weak effects appears to be for Artists.

Artists serve as the reference category and we thus have to interpret the negative coefficients of nobles, high bourgeoisie, and Low Bourgeoisie as a downward shift of the relation between quantity and variety compared with the Artists. This is depicted in Figure 5, which shows estimated regression lines for artists and the Low Bourgeoisie. Nobles and High/Low bourgeoisie do not differ much from each other and show little or an insignificant impact on the shape of the graph.

-- FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE --

In the previous analysis we considered the cumulative consumption of each individual, observing their behaviour without accounting for differences in time (cross-sectional data). This means that the estimated coefficients result from the average comparison among individuals and do not reflect the large unobserved heterogeneity between them. To answer RQ3, we apply a more powerful approach to estimate the relationship between *Quantity* and *Variety*, by comparing the specific consumption history of *each* consumer and examining how *Quantity* and *Variety* changed over time at the individual (rather than aggregate) level. In other words, in the following section we exploit the panel nature of the dataset by considering the $Quantity_{i,t}$ and $Variety_{i,t}$ consumption of individual *i* at time *t*. By doing so, we can track the consumption path

of each individual and observe whether there are common patterns among individuals and differences dictated by social class.

Table 8 lists the descriptive statistics for the panel data, and Figures 6 and 7 graphically describe consumption patterns of the individuals in the dataset all-together and divided by social classes, respectively. It is remarkable that the logarithmic nature of the process – meaning a positive relationship between quantity and variety but with a decreasing coefficient for higher value of consumption -- seems to be confirmed also at the individual level (Figure 6). However, we observe that the similarity in consumption patterns across social classes is not as pronounced as for individuals since groups endowed with allegedly higher cultural capital, here represented under the label Artists and Nobles, purchase both more items and more diverse items.

-- TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE –

-- FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE --

-- FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE --

Thus, we re-estimate the relationship between the two variables and run the new following panel regression:

$$Variety_{it} = \alpha + \beta \log(Quantity_{it}) + \gamma Z_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}. \quad (7)$$

In this case, we smooth the variable *Variety* by taking a 3-year moving average, and for *Quantity*, we exclude this from the dataset of consumers who bought only one item of sheet music.

Usually, the estimation of a long-term relationship is performed with a *between* model, computing averages of the variables over time and discarding the intragroup variability. The first column of Table 9 reports the output of the *between* model. However, if the aim is to discard individual unobserved variability, the *within* estimator is more suitable. The *within* estimator is

equivalent to taking the first difference of the variable and, thus, it levels out all the unobserved effects that are constant over time. For this reason, the *within* estimator cannot take into account the socio-demographic characteristics since they do not change over time. Being interested, however, specifically in the effect of the variable *Class*, we opted for running different *within* estimations on each level of *Class*. Table 9 reports the results for the five estimates. The output corroborates the logarithmic functional form found at the cross-sectional level and the four *within* models show a much better fit of the data to the regression line than the *between* model: the Adjusted R-squared increases from about 0.36 to over 0.5 in all models.

Although Figure 7 points to some possible different patterns in consumption across social classes, both the *between* and the *within* estimations of model (7) reveal a negligible effect of *Class*. In the between model, the difference between social classes can shift the curve upwards or downwards, but the only significant detected effect is for the Nobles (see Table 9) and consistent with the aggregate models (5) and (6) both for size and magnitude. In the within model, the maximum difference of the coefficients is between Artists and Low Bourgeoisie (a 0.04 unit change of *Variety* for a 1% increase in *Quantity*), whereas the difference between Artists and nobles is unnoticeable.

-- TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE –

The logarithmic growth of V*ariety* over Q*uantity* depicts that elite consumers are characterized by more variety, but only because they have consumed more, probably due to higher disposable incomes. Evidence does not support any class-specific behaviour other than an average higher consumption of the Artists. Consider, for instance, Mr. Triberti, a doctor in Milan, who bought 31 items of sheet music from 25 different composers, among which were the light and catchy operas of Gioachino Rossini, pedantic pieces by Mayr, and sophisticated

compositions by Francesco Mirecki. Similarly, Mr. Troubetskoy, a prince from Turin, bought 15 works of music between December 1821 and January 1822, including the usual best-seller Rossini, but also the cryptic opera "Annibale in Bitinia," the heroic drama by Giuseppe Nicolini, a minor master of chapel in the service of Archduchess Mathilda of Austria. Finally, Mr. Bertolotti, who is a hairdresser, seems quite eclectic in his taste, choosing 10 different composers out of 12 times his purchases were recorded on the Libro Mastro.

Addressing RQ3, pattern analysis supports the hypothesis that, independent of social class, the level of variety depends on the past consumption history of each individual rather than on class affiliation. In this respect, Figure 8 is a graphical representation of the *between* estimation and reveals the underlying mechanism. Each line ends at the maximum level of observed *Quantity* for each level of *Class* (for instance 10 for the Low-Bourgeoisie and 76 for Artists). The similar shapes of the curves demonstrate the negligible class effect in the estimation.

-- FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE --

Discussion

In this paper we looked into the association between class and musical choice within a specific population, customers of a music publisher in Milan, at the beginning of the 19th century. Looking to the past and trying to gain new insight on cultural stratification, we propose a research framework with three emphases. First, we stress the importance of both quantity and variety to assessing patterns of cultural consumption (RQ1). Second, we track the evolution of the association between music purchase patterns and socio-demographic characteristics of consumers like class, gender, and place of residence (RQ2). Finally, to overcome the weakness

of using aggregate measures of consumption that can only show a static picture of consumption at a certain point in time, we offer an analysis of the relations of the two dimensions of quantity and variety to unfold their dynamic interaction in the purchasing behaviour of consumers (RQ3).

The paper employs a measure of consumption that accounts for the relationship between quantity (or frequency) and quality (or variety). This approach allows us to conceptualize a pattern of music preference in a continuum of consumption activities over time, while avoiding a clustering of individuals who score above or under a certain threshold within a single time observation. A majority of the sample has bought a small number of sheet music and those were of a limited number of preferred composers. Nevertheless, there is a distinct group of consumers who purchased more frequently and chose a different composer each time. Quantity and variety are not linearly associated and the latter grows less than proportional to the former.

The main empirical finding of this paper is that choices in cultural consumption at the period we study can hardly be reduced to some form of class affiliation. We have been able to map patterns of individuals' purchases of sheet music over time and found choices to be biased by social class insofar as class explains the actual purchasing opportunity in terms of quantity, but not in terms of the musical variety. Although classes show different levels of quantity, the structures of consumption are similar and draw a logarithmic relationship between quantity and variety both at the aggregate level and at the individual level. Our results show that the variety of music selection is not unlimited, but has an upper bound of a remarkably similar size for any individual: more than a class attribute or a rational attempt of social belonging, eclectic music purchase behaviour appears as an individual attitude, a "*practical disposition*" (Lizardo and Skiles, 2012) to explore cultural fields before concentrating on a limited number of preferences. This behaviour is consistent with both the theoretical prediction and the empirical evidence

offered by the learning-to-consume theory as described in evolutionary economics: consumers new to the market experience a phase of exploration in which they develop a taste for variety up to the point they reach a level of satiation (Chai, 2017).

To sum up, on the basis of unique data on music consumption—historically set at the beginning of the 19th century and geographically localized in one of the capitals of European music—this research identifies an eclectic pattern of music consumption within each class in a hierarchy that includes Artists, Nobles, High Bourgeoisie and Low Bourgeoisie. The eclectic pattern means that interest in music consumption in the period studied was varied rather than limited and this variety is similarly characteristic of the different classes, thus cannot be associated with a specific elite class. This could be evidence of a gradual process of enculturation of the so called masses in which they are transformed into some approximation of the bourgeoisie (Brantlinger, 1983). It would be only later that the distinction between classical and popular music and the defence of elite and nobility will find full expression. We find that class has a negligible effect on breadth of consumption and seems to explain only differences in levels. Differently from contemporary eclecticism and omnivorousness, which is considered bounded to the dominant classes (Peterson and Kern, 1996), this form of historical eclecticism is not linked to class stratification.

The empirical analysis hints at a pre-Bourdieusian framework: while in modern and post-modern society cultural goods are attached to symbolic values that mirror social affiliations, finding class differences only in quantity but not in variety, we argue that this symbolic value was much weaker in early capitalism. From the perspective of cultural and historical sociology, we see that the symbolic value of cultural goods is conferred by their progressive commodification and their transformation into cultural industries starting only in the second half

of the 19th century. A possible interpretation of our findings is that commodification and class-based stratification of art – and therefore artistic legitimacy and distinction – rise only with the establishment of a bourgeois society in the European countries starting with the liberal Revolutions of 1848 aimed at subverting the conservative order.[10] Nevertheless, the generalization of these results should consider the specific socio-historical context analysed and the fact that our data cover only the consumption of music consumption and not other cultural products and only a subset of the class structure with the omission of the most important comparison with the working class.

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[1] Fandom is defined as "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (Sandvoss, 2005: 8).

[2] For more information about Giovanni Ricordi (the founder) and the history of Casa Ricordi see: http://www.archivioricordi.com/en Retrieved 6/12/17

[3] Endogeneity is a bias in the specification of a model of causation which may come from different forms of errors deriving from the omission of a relevant confounder or a loop of causality affecting both independent and dependent variable.

[4] Already in 1825, Ricordi, which owned 2,200 catalogued titles, and certainly more than its competitors, set the premises of its further success, since its business was not only concentrated in Milan, but also included different Italian states and European capitals (Baia Curioni, 2011: 51).

[5] Rossini completed thirty-six operas over a period of twenty years between 1810–1829 (Jones, 2016).

[6] We are unable to analyze specific scores because the Ricordi records only document the titles of the work, and sometimes purchase refer to single parts of an opera, such as an overture or an aria.

[7] We could have used other indices, such as simple counts of different artists, the entropy index, or the Shannon index. However, we opted for the HHI and, as a robustness check, controlled for the Shannon Index, which gave similar results.

[8] Kernel Distribution is nonparametric representation of the probability density function (pdf) of a random variable.

[9] It is common to estimate a log-log model as well, since its coefficients have the easy interpretation of elasticity. However, we omit the log–log specification since the minimum of Variety is zero and it is not possible to make the logarithmic transformation without further unnecessary assumptions.

[10] The political upheavals of 1848 were the most widespread revolutionary waves in European history and foreshadowed the II French Empire (1852) and the national unifications in Italy (1861) and Germany (1871).