The Gatekeeping Function in the Performing Arts: From Impresario to Showcase Conferences

THESIS

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Abstract

The arts service organization showcase conference operates as an arts marketplace bringing together artist and presenters as well as performing other functions for the field. The functions involved in the implementation of the showcase conference involve gates that artists must go through to be connected to presenters. The operation of these gates and the functions associated with the processes involved in a showcase conference position the arts service organizations as gatekeepers to the arts performance industry. Through a case study of three of these arts service organizations within a geographically delineated hierarchy, this paper identifies and explores the function of gatekeeping at showcase conferences within the performing arts field. Also explored is the shift from individual impresario to organization as intermediary within the context of the arts marketplace. Brief histories of the arts service organizations are provided to add to the less than robust historical archive of such organizations. The gatekeeping function of showcase conferences is investigated in different contexts to understand how each of the three organizations use the conference to facilitate the transactional relationship between artist and presenter as well as to investigate the utility of such functions continuing to take place. This research is explored through the concept of isomorphism, identifying and analyzing how the organizations select artists for inclusion in showcase conferences.
Dedication

This document is dedicated to my family. I am forever grateful for their support, encouragement, and patience.
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Arts Policy and Administration
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research evolved out of an internship that I held with an arts-service organization. While involved in the planning and implementation of their annual showcase conference, I began to question why certain functions were performed and what implications these functions had with regard to the artists affected by these functions. In the context of my then evolving education on ideas such as artistic excellence and organizational theories, this thesis evolved organically as I delved deeper into the processes that were happening around me.

The world of performing arts is a complex web of artists, presenters, intermediaries, audiences, and others that create, perform, distribute, attribute value to, and view the art that is performed. There are many steps and functions that an artist goes through before performing on a stage and being viewed by an audience. One marketplace where artists' offerings in the performing arts can be purchased or booked for presenting is at a showcase conference. These arts marketplaces allow for interactions with the artist, often a small sampling of their offerings, chances for contract negotiation, opportunities for the artists to become familiar with the different types of performance venues and presenters, professional development exercises, and some of these marketplaces allow for industry vendor representation.

A specific purpose and function within the arts marketplace, artist selection for performance at the showcase conference, is reviewed as well as the identification and examination of the roles of the participants. Expectations and functions associated with these roles are explored to illustrate changes that have occurred and how the function is
performed in the different organizations included in this research. These arts marketplaces occur in many parts of the performing arts industry, including statewide, regional, national, and international arenas. This regional categorization of arts marketplaces creates a hierarchy that can influence attendance by artists and intermediaries alike.

The use of showcase conferences as an arena for the transactional relationship between artist and presenter or artist and audience allows for a detailed exploration of the functions that take place to bring these entities together. This investigation also brings to light the changes that took place historically in who fulfilled this intermediary role. A role once filled by the individual impresario is now performed by two entities; the arts service organization and the agent. This research also seeks to identify how each arts service organization; the Ohio Arts Presenters Network, Arts Midwest, and Association of Performing Arts Presenters execute the gatekeeping function of artist selection for performance at showcase conferences differently.

Statement of Purpose

The goal of this research is to identify the gatekeeping function of showcase conferences sponsored by arts service organizations. Through a case study, this research will identify how each arts service organization performs a gatekeeping function within the showcase conference. This research seeks to identify the changes that have occurred between the different organizations in relation to the performance of this function, analyze why the changes occurred, investigate why the changes are not consistent field
wide, as well as explore how these arts service organizations function as intermediaries within the field.

This research seeks to illustrate this internal industry gatekeeping function within the showcase conference process and analyze its utility and ramifications as a continued process. This research seeks to understand why these processes differ amongst the arts service organization. These functions are explored within a historical context of the changing role and definition of the performing arts industry intermediary.

Research Questions

This research explores the question: How do arts service organizations perform a gatekeeping function in the performing arts industry through the planning and implementation of the showcase conference? To attempt to answer this question, several additional questions have been identified:

- How are arts service organizations positioned to perform a gatekeeping function, have they always fulfilled this role?
- Who performed the intermediary role between artist and audience prior to arts service organizations?
- How do the three arts service organizations investigated perform this function?
- What are the multiple gates that exist for artists within the greater function presented?
- How does the performance of these functions align with the organizational theory of isomorphism?
Significance to the Field

This research seeks to add to the available literature by building on current and historical research to improve understanding regarding the performing arts field. As Wyszomirski and Cherbo (2001) note, "we know relatively little about how the services and resources of arts service organizations (ASOs) vary by discipline, by organizational age, or by type of members, nor do we have explanations for these variations" (p. 100). This research provides significant additions in documenting arts service organization history, responding to a lack in collection of historical data in the field. This research also provides an detailed in-depth exploration of the intermediary roles performed between artist and presenter as well as artist and audience; identifying differences among arts service organizations that may be useful information for arts management practitioners, presenters, policy makers, and artists. Also useful to this field of research is the organizational theory lens through which this paper is presented. By exploring how the three arts organizations perform the functions illustrated through the lens of isomorphism, a greater understanding of the performing arts field will occur. By applying this organizational theory to observed practices, this research will bring to light information about how these organizations function. Through the analysis and discussion of the gatekeeping function of showcase conferences, this research provides arenas for discussion in the field as the structure of showcase conferences is re-examined annually by the arts service organizations. I believe this research to be important in the re-evaluation of the structure of showcase conferences as well as in contrasting how the industry performs this function differently among the geographically delineated
organizations. This research adds to the information available on the role of the intermediary in the performing arts field as well as the historical changes that have taken place. This research investigates how the role of intermediary has changed from that of an individual to being split into two roles; one fulfilled by an individual and one fulfilled by an organization. This exploration can then investigate what changes occurred in the performing arts field to necessitate the diversity of the intermediary role.

With an overarching goal of adding to the existing body of research literature in the performing arts, this exploration can benefit the field as a whole. By examining structural functions of arts service organizations within the performing arts industry and allowing for their analysis, this case study seeks to identify best practices and forward thinking opportunities best suited to service the performing arts field in the future. As Keens and Rhodes (1989) write, "Without adequate or reliable data, we are at a disadvantage in our advocacy efforts at all levels, exposed to programs that do not reflect our field's needs or interests, less effective in addressing cultural inequities, and less equipped to anticipate and plan for the future" (p. 75). This research attempts to add to the reliable data needed for the field to be proactive in policymaking and advocacy and recognizes that the field of performing arts is living and constantly changing and documentation along the way contributes to an increase of general understanding about this complex entity.
Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research offers an analytical investigation of the functions implemented in the planning and implementation process of performing arts industry showcase conferences. These functions create gates through which artists must pass to be included in the actual arts marketplace. For the purpose of this study, three arts service organizations were used to identify and compare practices. Geographic context provided the criteria for the identification of the case studies. Ohio Arts Presenters Network was chosen as the state-wide arts service organization because of the author's access to the organization. Ohio Arts Presenters Network exists within a geographical hierarchy of arts service organizations including Arts Midwest, a regional arts service organization, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters at the national level.

One of the obvious limitations to this study is the small sample size. Keens and Rhodes (1989) call for "comprehensive information on the field which has been gathered over time for trend analysis" (p. 75). However, meeting this desire is beyond the ability of this research. I am exploring only one track of a multi-level and complex web of organizations that comprise the performing arts industry. Information about procedures, functions, and the application process for the showcase conferences was obtained through personal observation, interviews, organizational documents, and public sources. Therefore, there are natural limits due to research sources such as availability of documentation, availability and knowledge of those interviewed and willingness to share internal processes. Also important to note is that not all arts service organizations in the performing arts industry take part in showcase conferences and the functions explored in
this research are limited to the organizations included. This research does not assume that organizations outside the scope of this research engage in the same processes or functions in the same way. However, this research is still very valuable in contributing to the knowledge base about internal processes that are often not in the realm of general public awareness. The criteria for selection of impresarios to examine was based on cultural popularity and resulted in exploration of the roles performed by Sergei Diaghilev, Sol Hurok, and Paul Szilard. The historical data relating to these impresarios informed the analysis of organization as intermediary. As such, this research is limited by the information available about the performance of the impresario role by the individual and the how the role was eventually fulfilled by two entities, the agent and the arts service organization.

The organizations were chosen to give different perspectives on how the gatekeeping functions within showcase conferences were performed at the state, regional, and national levels. The purpose of looking at these three levels was to identify overlaps, similarities and differences between the organizations and their processes as well as examine their performance of the intermediary role between artist and presenter. This research although limited to a case study of three organizations, presents a valid and explicit exploration of the gatekeeping functions of performing arts showcase conferences. This research examines an internal function of the performing arts industry in an attempt to understand the greater outer workings of the industry. As Sperling (2003) notes, "if you want to know how the business works, you have to understand what goes on at the conferences" (p.30).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research focuses on a specific function of the showcase conference and identifies the processes associated with that function, examines how the participants perform the processes, and examines the organizations performing the function to create a robust context for understanding the function. This function, or the selection of artists to perform at a showcase conference, can be viewed as a transaction between several different parties that happens within a given time. This function is performed in different ways by each organization. The challenge of understanding this internal function of the performing arts industry is in part due to the field's complexity (Hume & Sullivant Mort, 2010; Keens & Rhodes, 1989). Negus (2002) reminds us that the field has a long way to go before fully understanding all of the functions and processes that take place "in the space between production and consumption" (p. 502). Because of the complexity of the field, this research focuses on the function of artist selection for performance in showcase conferences of three selected performing arts service organizations within a geographical hierarchy to explore how the function is performed in each organization. The performance of this function is then analyzed through an organizational theory lens of isomorphism, analyzing the organizations alignment with this theory.

The Performing Arts Service Organization

The National Endowment for the Arts (1984) defines arts service organizations as entities that "exist not to produce, present, or preserve art, but to help others do so. . . [by providing] information, opportunities to communicate, advocacy, public education,
professional and volunteer training, and various forms of technical, managerial, and support services" (p. 109). The arts service organizations explored in this research are the Ohio Arts Presenters Network, Arts Midwest, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. Each organization offers itself to the performing arts field as a network provider for services to artists, presenters, and other entities that help to make the performing arts field operate in both the non-profit and for profit arenas.

The Ohio Arts Presenters Network is a membership organization comprised of artists, agents, and presenters. The organization describes itself on its website as, "a professional association that provides a forum for developing business relationships, partnerships, and cooperative ventures among organizations that present arts and entertainment programming as well as performers, arts service organizations, and artist management agencies doing business in Ohio and nearby states" (Ohio Arts Presenters Network, 2012). Ohio Arts Presenters Network is membership based and offers a showcase conference annually, traditionally in October.

Arts Midwest is one of six regional arts organizations in the U.S. originally created to "transcend state boundaries and give citizens access to a greater variety of arts experiences" (Arts Midwest, 2012). Arts Midwest does not offer membership, hosts an annual showcase conference in the month of September, and is a grantor for other non-profit arts organizations. Arts Midwest as the regional arts service organization, offers support, professional development and networking opportunities for the Ohio Arts Presenters Network members and administration. As Keens and Rhodes (1989) offer, regional arts organizations are vital within the network of arts service organizations.
because they differ from state arts agencies as non-governmental, affording great flexibility in services and offerings.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters defines itself on their website as, "the national service and advocacy organization with more than 1400 members worldwide, dedicated to developing and supporting a robust performing arts presenting field and the professionals who work within it" (APAP, 2012). The Association of Performing Arts Presenters produces the annual Association of Performing Arts Presenters showcase conference in New York City. These arts service organizations provide important processes within the performing arts field, offering a professional infrastructure that contributes to the functioning of the field as a whole (Wyszomirski & Cherbo, 2001).

Of particular interest to this research is how these arts service organizations are performing the gatekeeping function through their respective showcase conferences. Are the processes involved similar or different from one another? Dimaggio and Powell (1983) state that, within a similar environmental context, organizations will adopt the practices and structures of organizations similar in the field that are perceived to be more legitimate or successful, replicating function and procedures. This process is termed isomorphism.

Isomorphism

Within a similar environmental context, organizations will adopt the practices and structures of organizations similar in the field that are perceived to be more legitimate or
successful. Within the non-profit sector, larger organizations with well-connected artistic directors or executives create the models for smaller emerging organizations, resulting in a tendency to minimize variance or diversity within the field. Although isomorphism does not necessarily improve efficiency, organizations are often rewarded for assimilation. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain two types of isomorphism, competitive and institutional. Competitive isomorphism explains bureaucratization, niche change, and fitness measures in a free and open competitive market which is not relevant to this exploration. However, institutional isomorphism is descriptive of the modern organization and relevant to this research. The authors define institutional isomorphism as the homogenizing process of an organization by other surrounding organizations due to the competition for resources, power, and legitimacy.

Institutional isomorphic change uses three types of mechanisms; coercive, mimetic, or normative (DiMaggion & Powell 1983). Coercive isomorphism results from political influence and an organizations search for legitimacy. Pressure is exerted on an organization by other organizations upon which they are dependent, including governmental organizations. These organizations become centralized around “rituals of conformity to wider institutions” (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150). Mimetic isomorphism is the result of uncertainty stemming from goal ambiguity or an uncertain environment. This results in the process of modeling or mimicking the appearance, structure, and or practices of another successful or well-received organization. Normative isomorphism results from professionalization. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) stress that increased isomorphism results in virtually indistinguishable organizations within a given
field. Through the process of this research, it will be investigated whether isomorphism exists in the performance of organizational functions within the showcase conference context relating to artist selection and the implications of the findings will be discussed.

The Showcase Conference

So what is a showcase conference? If you type that phrase into the Google search engine, you get some hits on organizations that offer showcase conferences but no hits on definitions or images of what one looks like. The organizations that host showcase conferences offer short narratives of what happens at the conference but a robust definition of the showcase, or booking, conference can be difficult to find. Sperling (2003) offers a concise explanation, "A booking conference is a marketplace for the performing arts where artists, managers, and agents "sell" their product to presenters, the people who book performers for theaters or other venues. It's a place to forge relationships" (p. 30). It is an inner working of the field that members in the industry are supposed to know and understand; little information is provided to help the public comprehend the intricate workings of the showcase conference. The showcase conference is much more than the industry trade show offering the latest and greatest talent, it facilitates relationships between artists and agents as well as artists and presenters. The showcase conference is about more than selling product to buyers. However, Keens and Rhoades (1989) do caution that booking conferences can "place the artist outside the relationship between the manager and presenter, where he or she is more susceptible to being treated as an incidental" (p. 69). Due to the membership structure of many arts
service organizations, the focus of who is served at the showcase conference depends on the organization.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters in its conference program defines their showcase conference as, "the world's largest, most inclusive marketplace for the performing arts and our industry's destination for discovery, knowledge, connections and leadership. In five exciting days attendees connect with more than 3,400 colleagues nationally and internationally, meet with artists and more than 350 exhibitors, choose from more than 1,300 showcases, attend full-length and festival performances throughout New York City" (APAP, 2012, p. 2). The Association of Performing Arts Presenters conference is cited as being "a huge, unwieldy conference that itself plays host to many complementary state, regional, national, and international meetings" (Smith, 2009, p. 7). Arts Midwest describes the exhibit hall at its showcase conference as the "Marketplace" where "presenters, artists, managers, and agents meet and explore booking options together. More than 4,000 artists and ensembles are represented by organizations exhibiting in the Marketplace each year" (Arts Midwest, 2012). The Ohio Arts Presenters Network describes its annual showcase conference as, "a productive, affordable marketplace for arts and entertainment booking, as well as a valuable forum for networking and professional development" (Ohio Arts Presenters Network, 2012).

As an arts marketplace, the showcase conference also fits within the economic definition of market where there are roughly two broad groups divided by function into buyers and sellers in a collection determining price "through actual or potential interactions" (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2009, p. 7). The sellers or providers of the product
can be identified as the artists. The consumers or buyers of the product can be identified as the presenters. Keens and Rhodes (1989) warn that this transactional context can focus too much on the economic rather than the artistic transaction and that booking conferences were originally designed to offer many values beyond their "commercial trappings" (p. 69). These authors recognize the showcase or booking conference as a place for exchanges of communication for those interested in artists and art forms. They cite the most successful showcase conferences as those that "incorporate performances and provide strong professional development opportunities for presenters, artists, and managers" (p. 69). The way in which each organization constructs their arts marketplace through the selection of artists to perform is the focus of this research.

*The Artist*

Kay and Butcher (1996) define artists as culture creators and the range of artists as, "architects to dancers, authors to actors, sculptors to musicians . . . creating work spaces, homes, music, books, magazines, ads, artwork, television programs and movies." Performing artists are identified as, "actors/directors, musicians/composers and dancers" (p.85). These authors also recognize the irregular work cycles and work availability of these artists. The artists recognized in this research align with this identification and include those that are and are not members of the various artist unions. The artists in this research include those that work part-time in the performing arts as well as those that are employed full-time, looking at the labor force as a whole, providing or creating the product that is on the supply side of the transaction taking place at the showcase
conference. In relation to this research and the process involved in selecting or allowing
artists to perform at showcase conferences, one must keep in mind the labor market
within which performing artists operate. As Kay and Butcher (1996) note, "performing
artists face a cluster of labor market obstacles, ranging from a shortage of full time jobs
to a lack of steady income from their profession to the limited geographic areas where
work is likely to be found" (p. 110). The showcase conference acts as an intermediary
between artist and presenter or artist and audience. The showcase conference provides the
opportunity for the artist to create relationships with those that will bring their product to
the public. However, the organization producing the showcase conference is not the only
intermediary providing a service for the artist.

The Agent

The artist manager or agent fulfills the other part of the role once held by the
traditional impresario. Just as the arts service organization acts as an intermediary
between artist and audience or artist and presenter, the agent also fulfills part of this
intermediary role. Agents are responsible for protecting the business interests of the artist
and for helping them to build their careers in the field. "These managers serve as an
informational resource and a partner in the presenting and touring process," (Keens &
Rhoades, 1989, p. 70). The services provided to the artist by the agent and the arts service
organization often overlap at times with some agents connecting artists to presenters and
some arts service organizations taking more of an individualized approach with artists.
Keens and Rhodes (1989) provide a robust definition for the presenter recognizing that "function, not form determines who is a presenter" (p. 19). These authors cite the necessity of diversity in the field identifying the many types of presenters from nonprofit presenting organizations, university presenters, churches, clubs, galleries and arts centers to municipal governments and music or arts societies and even festivals. However, Keens and Rhodes (1989) also offer that these organizations as presenters have less differences and more in common than what might appear at first glance. Performing arts organizations often operate as not-for profits with scarce fund allocation (Hume & Mort, 2010; Sullivan Mort et al., 2003). The constrictive budget creates a tension between fulfilling mission and balancing economic issues. A 2002 study by The Urban Institute on how performing arts presenters book their programming cite the majority of organizations select artists based on merit but also consider financial goals. Not surprising, only one in five presenting organizations base artist selection solely on artistic merit. For presenters in the smallest budget category, financial goals are the primary motivation behind booking decisions. The Urban Institute study referenced also assumes that booking conferences play a secondary role in decision making when compared to personal experience, references and promotional materials. However, this same study also showed that presenters with the smallest budgets were the ones most likely to attend showcase conferences and that in the field of performing arts presenters as a whole, there is a predominance of small budget presenting organizations (Hager & Pollak, 2002). This study gives a clear understanding that the market of presenters has a large number of
small budget organizations that are motivated by budget concerns in booking artists for programming. Showcase conferences become the primary way in which these presenters find and book talent for their venues. The role of intermediary between artist and presenter as fulfilled by the arts organization becomes highlighted in importance. The small presenter relies on the showcase conference to find talent to present.

The Urban Institute study suggests that the idea of presenters choosing their programming based on outcomes other than economic gain, focusing perhaps on impact, departs significantly from traditionally accepted rationales of booking agents and presenters (Brown & Novak, 2007). Hume and Sullivant Mort (2010) remind us that in order to compete for market share within the current economic situation, presenting organizations are motivated in their booking decisions by customer feedback and choices. Castaner and Campos (2002) state that the programming in arts organizations have a tendency to favor works that are less risky, with a commercial appeal, over those works that may be considered more innovative. Keen and Rhoades (1989) caution against focusing on the many differences among presenting organizations, instead recognizing, "all of these presenting organizations have much more in common than they have differences. Issues of artistic integrity and representation, of access and programming, of audience development and marketing, of mission, funding and governance--these are important to virtually every presenter" (p. 20). Through the showcase conference, presenters are connected to artists or agents. The agents and the arts service organization together fulfill an intermediary role that was once performed by the impresario.
**Intermediaries**

Brown and Novak (2007) recognize that as the expectations of presenters change in the flux environment of the performing arts, the role of the presenter has evolved, "from one of simply marketing and presenting to one of drawing audiences into the experience through a combination of education, outreach, marketing and interactions with artists" (p. 21). The role of intermediary can also be considered a *cultural entrepreneur* who balances internal and external relationships in the industry while supporting *creative collaboration* (Napier & Nilsson, 2006). Caves (2000) defines intermediaries also as gatekeepers, operating in a realm that selects artists to be presented to the market. Presenters can be intermediaries between the artist and the audience. However, the intermediary roles relevant to this research are those between artist and presenter and between artist and audience. The roles fulfilled by arts service organizations examined in this research act as mediators between the artists that create the symbolic material and those that circulate the content, such as presenters and those that consume the content, such as the audience (Zwaan & Bogt, 2009). The organizations in this research act as facilitators, providing support for artist as well as presenters. How each organization creates opportunities for the artist to reach presenters and audiences through the showcase conference is the focus of this research.

**Impresarios**

Before organizations fulfilled part of the intermediary role between artist and presenter or artist and audience, individuals fulfilled the role. These individuals were
called impresarios. Peterson (1986) defines impresario as a person that exhibited "traditionalistic authority, charisma, and entrepreneurship" in a leadership style that still had the ability to relate with people on a personal basis. The impresario was detailed oriented and provided "selfless devotion" to the art he was representing (p. 162). The impresario as intermediary was anecdotally devoted to the art form but he was still responsible for the construction and continuance of the market. As Negus (2002) points out, "cultural intermediaries shape both use values and exchange values, and seek to manage how these values are connected with people's lives through various techniques of persuasion and marketing and through the construction of markets" (p. 504). He posits it is at this very point of connection between production and consumption that the power sits, at "the connecting point" (Negus, 2002, p. 513). Impresarios were very important in the performing arts field as not only responders to the market but also as constructors of the market. The individual impresario approached the process of connecting artist to presenter in ways that both mirror and contrast the performance of the role by organizations. This role is explored further in Chapter 4 illustrating the evolution of the role of intermediary from impresario to organizational fulfillment of the function.

*Excellence, Artistic Merit and Innovation*

In the arts marketplace, how do presenters decide what artists they will sign, or book, for a transaction? As reviewed above, some presenters specifically determine their seasons based on their budget, not taking into much consideration the innovation or artistic merit of the artist. However, most presenters still use artistic merit, excellence or
innovation as a determining factor in whether or not to purchase the product of the artist (Hager & Pollak, 2002). These determining criteria are also used by the jury panels in selecting artists to perform at the showcase conference. One might ask how artistic merit, excellence, or innovation can be measured. What criteria are used to define such terms? Brown and Novak (2007) posit, "some works of art are more powerful than others, and thus are more likely to draw audiences into the consciousness of receptivity and openness required to fully benefit from a performance" (p. 11). Excellence is a subjective term difficult to define and often based on a comparison with something else. Honig (2008) explores a definition of excellence that recognizes the "aesthetic quality attaching to an individual work of art [that] can be quantified and translated into monetary terms" (p.103). The National Endowment for the Arts also comments on artistic excellence recognizing the term as referring to "the quality of the art that is made or presented" (NEA, 2012).

Definitions of artistic merit can be just as subjective or ambiguous. The National Endowment for the Arts interprets artistic merit, "to include a range of factors that go beyond the technical proficiency or standards of a work. Artistic merit might include, for example, the potential influences or effects of a project, the ability to carry out the project, the degree to which a project preserves an important cultural tradition, or the fact that a project reaches an artistically underserved community" (NEA, 2012). This definition of artistic merit can be applied to works of artists in revealing whether the works have the potential for influence or impact, whether the work highlights or preserves a cultural tradition and if the work can reach or include an underserved
community. Innovation has definitions that are more explicit. Castaner and Campos (2002) concur with Becker (1982) that innovation identifies work that is new to the field, "a complete departure from the existing conventions" (p. 32). These authors posit that innovation can take place in both content and form and those in the arts marketplace must use field wide referents to determine if a work is innovative.

A work is not innovative simply because your group is just now performing in a certain way when others in the field have done it before. True innovation brings something new to the entire field, not just to a particular artist or work. Brown and Novak (2007) note that there are multiple variables in determining how the work is received by the audience and so the merit or excellence of the performance still remains highly subjective, even within the context of innovation. The National Endowment for the Arts (2010) provides criteria to determine the innovation of a project, "they are likely to prove transformative with the potential for meaningful change…They are distinctive, offering fresh insights and new value for their fields . . . they have the potential to be shared and/or emulated, or are likely to lead to other innovations" (p. 14). This definition still leaves a point of consideration in determining innovation, what is the benchmark that the judgment of innovation is measured against? If the determination of excellence, artistic merit, or innovation remains a subjective arena, how are artists chosen objectively to perform at the showcase conference? How do jury panel judges decide what artist to showcase when considering all of the variables including artistic innovation, artistic merit, artistic excellence, as well as price? How presenters identify these variables and what value is given to these variables influence which artist is then booked by the
presenter at the showcase conference. All of these considerations are important to contextualize the function of artist selection for performance at showcase conferences.

Gatekeeping

The performing arts industry is a field made up of organizations that exist in vertical and horizontal relationships. As Kawashima (1999) notes, the networks and circles created by these organizations with shared values and opinions have an effect on what art works are chosen or allowed to showcase. Formal selection procedures for determining which artists will perform at the showcase conferences are a focus of this research. These processes of selection identify those performing the function as gatekeepers or decision makers for the performing arts field. Caves (2000) identifies intermediaries that function as selectors of artists as gatekeepers within the broader arts marketplace. He defines a gatekeeper as ones who, "base their selections not just on some ineffable kernel of talent but also on the artist's personal qualities, which are important for collaborating with other artistic and humdrum inputs and for developing her career as a promotional investment" (p. 33). These personal considerations about the artist become highlighted in importance for the presenter. As Brown and Novak (2007) remind us, the presenters role has changed, requiring outreach and interactions with the audience. An artist that is difficult to manage or deal with becomes a liability in successful presenting. The arts service organization producing the showcase conference and the manager representing the artist keep these objectives of the presenter in mind when considering artists to perform at showcase conferences. Negus (2002) states that gatekeeper is a universal term for
identifying that "key personnel control access to cultural production" (p. 510). The gatekeeper decides if the artist is worthwhile for investing time, energy and money. Not only is talent considered, but also how easy the performer is to work with, and what other value is brought to the table. As Sperling (2003) cites, "[is the company] going to be needy, or have last-minute demands, like asking for a babysitter, an interpreter, a pianist for class, or more time in the theater?" (p. 30).

Where does the gatekeeper's power come from? Negus (2002) states, "the central strength of the notion of cultural intermediaries is that it places an emphasis on those workers who come in-between creative artists and consumers (or, more generally, production and consumption)" (p. 503) This recognition of the gatekeepers place in the transaction as providing the power re-iterates the transactional nature of the showcase conference and the market exchange between supply and demand or artist and presenter. The gatekeeper sets the possibility of the transaction taking place. The power of the intermediary comes from being involved in the networks of the artists and presenters as well as having the knowledge about the artists and the presenters.

Value

As an intermediary, the arts service organization attempts to mediate the transaction as a matchmaker between the artist and the presenter. As the arts service organization plans and implements the showcase conference, the organization attempts to respond to the presenters demand for talent by offering artist works at the showcase conference. How artists are chosen to perform is the main focus of this research. In the
chase of jury panel selection, value is assigned to artists to determine whether or not they will perform at the showcase conference. Those with high value will be allowed through the gate to be made available to those interested in purchasing the product. Lewis and Miller (2003) question how value is determined and who determines that value. Is value based on arts industry criteria and what criterion is used? Or is value based on criteria provided by presenter demand?

There are many authors that weigh in on the value debate and whether or not cultural value can be determined separately from economic value. Frey and Pommerehne (1989) posited that artistic quality is measurable in market terms. In their study on determining value in performing arts, Hume and Sullivan Mort (2008) found that value is influenced by many variables such as assurance, trust, and reliability relating to the performance of the artist. They also recognized perceived value as a high predictor of satisfaction, inferring that value for those purchasing the product was price-driven. Mirowski (1990, 1999) argues that value is socially constructed and cannot be separated from cultural context. Recognition occurs in multiple studies that value has yet to be objectively and absolutely transferrable between culture and economics. Throsby (2008) states that there is a distinction between cultural value and economic value, and that cultural value is multi-dimensional and lacking a standard accountable unit. Economic value can be measured using economic indicators or what the artist's work sells for when it is bought or sold. Economic value is often thought of as the completed account of the value of the artist's work but Throsby (2008) argues here that this understanding of economic value is based on an assumption that value is equal to or represented by money.
When considering cultural value, the worth of the artist's work is based on criteria of aesthetics, artistic, and/or cultural units of measure that may or may not correlate with monetary value. Throsby (2008) posits that, "no common units of account exist for cultural value" (p. 77). This statement brings to light an important point when considering the arts marketplace, if there is no common unit of account to determine value, how are works attributed value that corresponds to the multiple value considerations of the presenters or the audience? Economic value, cultural value, aesthetic value and entertainment value can all be considered by the presenter and audience when assigning value to an artist work. How do jury panels determine the value that is of most significance when selecting artists to perform at showcase conferences?

Although the reviewed literature provides a general contextualization for all the pieces that make up the process that is under review for my research, there does not appear to be any significant literature that explores the actual function of my research. An exploration of the intermediary role was presented to attempt to position the role within the greater function that will be investigated in this research. In the following exploration and examination of the gatekeeping function of showcase conferences, a more robust understanding of the function and processes involved will be presented. Also under examination are the roles and expectations of those involved in the process of artist selection for showcasing at the conferences as well as how that process is implemented in the different arts organizations. Finally, the gatekeeping function will be contextualized within the performance of the function in each organization explored in this research and analyzed comparatively to one another. The performance of this function within each
organization will be illustrated and identified to explore the organizational theory of isomorphism. These areas of exploration identify the current voids in the literature and the following research will attempt to help fill those voids.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Immersed in one of the arts service organizations during my thesis research, the methodological approach to my research organically presented itself as a case study. In order to provide a context to my initial case study, I expanded my research to include the regional arts service organization and national arts service organization associated with my original case study organization. The functions and processes that I review in this research have been performed for many years and although slight changes happen every year in the organizations, the processes presented in this research provide a generally realistic picture of ongoing showcase conference procedures.

Case studies are effective at exploring real-life situations and processes and have been a trusted research method across disciplines (Yin, 2005). Case studies are conducive to investigating and analyzing processes because this method allows researchers the flexibility to interview participants, observe the processes and collect data, collect and analyze documents related to the processes being investigated all within the context of the process. Case study can be defined as, "a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context" (Grosshans, 1990, p. 6). Case studies are qualitative methods of research that identify and analyze specific happenings. As Stake (1995) notes, "the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well" (p.8). The purpose of this case study of three organizations is to identify the processes and construct a comprehensive understanding of the processes artists must go through to
be included in showcase conferences in the performing arts industry. In order to illustrate a complete picture of the function performed by these arts service organizations, a triangulation technique is applied. Triangulation is achieved by looking at the same data or process through multiple sources. In this research triangulation is obtained by observing the process, analyzing documentation related to the process, and applying data obtained through interviews to investigate the process; in other words observation, document analysis and interview. The multiple routes of research used to identify and analyze the process produce a robust understanding of how the function is performed as well as how it may be perceived. Extensive description of the function is an integral part of the case study.

For my research on the gatekeeping function of performing arts showcase conferences I utilized several different combinations of data acquisition depending on my access to the organization. At Ohio Arts Presenters Network, data was available in many forms due to my internship with the organization. Historical documentation examination as well as oral history collection was utilized to gain a general understanding of how the organization came to be, what its mission and vision were, how the organization serviced its members, what was included in a showcase conference presented by Ohio Arts Presenters Network, as well as how artists were chosen to perform in the showcase conference. I was able to use current conference programs and current artist applications to analyze how the documents supported the functions related to identifying artists that would perform at the showcase conference. I was able to personally observe the application and jury deliberation process for determining the showcase participants. I also
attended the showcase conference and was privy to a lot of information regarding the processes and functions within the implementation of the conference.

For the other two organizations that are included in this case study, I did not have direct access. I used artist applications and conference programs combined with interviews from staff to gather the data on the functions and processes and gather additional historical data of Arts Midwest and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. Historical data was important to collect as part of this research project because within the performing arts industry a robust archived history is often missing. This research sought to add to existing historical documentation of the arts service organizations founding, development, policies, functions and services. Arts Midwest and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters were chosen specifically because of their hierarchical relationship with Ohio Arts Presenters Network. Within the large web of arts service organizations, Ohio Arts Presenters Network is the state wide organization that presents an annual performing arts industry showcase conference. Arts Midwest in conjunction with the Midwest Arts Alliance presents the Midwest Arts Annual Showcase Conference and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters hosts its own Annual Showcase Conference. This lineup of nested case study participants allows for examination of functions and processes at the state level, the regional level and the national level.

The research process began with my question: How do arts service organizations perform a gatekeeping function in the performing arts industry through the planning and implementation of the showcase conference? Within this question are several different
research points to consider and examine before being able to fully approach the question in its entirety. My first point of research was to understand what an arts service organization that presents a showcase conference looks like, who they serve, and why the organization was founded. I utilized historical documents, available research that included historical data relating to the organizations I had identified for the case study, as well as interviewing one person at each organization with knowledge pertaining to the above mentioned subjects. After gaining an understanding of how the organizations were founded and what services they offered, I then explored how each organization designed, planned, and implemented their showcase conferences with a specific interest in how artists were chosen to perform at the conference. This research took the bulk of my time because each organization had a different way of selecting artists for the conference and because this function is the main focus of this paper. I also explored how the functions performed by these organizations classified the organization as an industry intermediary. This positioning as intermediary led me to inquire how this role was performed prior to the founding of these organizations. I also explored how the performance of this function evolved from the role of an individual who acted as an intermediary to not only match artists and presenters, but also who often acted as presenter. I was also interested to investigate how this singular position evolved to be that shared between the agent and an organization making the artist available to the presenter in an arts marketplace or showcase conference. This role once performed by a single intermediary or impresario was split into two roles, one filled by the agent and one filled by the arts service organization. I then investigated the function of choosing artists to perform at showcase
conferences by organizations in developing supply for arts marketplaces. The exploration
of this function led me to question how it differs between the organizations. The
exploration of difference made me question the organizational theory of isomorphism. At
first glance, one would expect all three organizations to perform this function in relatively
the same way because they are all arts service organizations that exist in a geographical
hierarchy. The performance of the functions were explored and differences highlighted.

The interview questions I used were open-ended and inquired about objective
material such as historical knowledge of the organization and information about how
artists were chosen to perform at the showcase conference. Each interview used different
questions because each organization had varying degrees of public information already
available regarding organization history and as mentioned previously, each organization
performs the process of artist selection differently. At Ohio Arts Presenters Network, I
worked with the Executive Director in planning and implementing the annual showcase
conference. A large amount of research on the process associated with artist selection was
recorded under my personal observation. I was present at the artist selection process and
sat in observation of the jury panel during deliberation. I designed the rubric for jury
panelists to grade artists in an attempt to provide an objective instrument to assist in artist
selection. The analysis and result of using this rubric is discussed in Chapter 6. The artist
application for the conference was also used to determine how the application process
aligned with the artist selection process, examining what information was provided on
and included with the application. The artist application process involves the use of
technology; the artists do not perform live for the jury panel. A complete description of
the artist selection jury panel process for Ohio Arts Presenters Network is available in Chapter 5. The board members of Ohio Arts Presenters Network were made aware of my intent to use my internship as a vehicle for collecting and analyzing data in regards to my research. All participants in the artist selection jury panel process were made aware of my intent in sitting in on the process and were informed that the process would be part of my research. I do not include subjective comments made by the jury panel participants, nor do I include scores or results of the panel with regard to which artists were chosen to perform. I am only interested in how the function of choosing artists was performed, not the outcome itself. I explore all of the related data to the process of how the artist goes through the application procedure to be considered to fill a slot in the showcase conference.

To gain interviews with the other two organizations, I emailed contact persons listed on the respective websites. I received quick responses and was provided with contact information for staff members responsible for the showcase conferences associated with each organization. All of the entities were gracious about the interviews and also sent conference materials, artist applications, and any other materials that related to the artist application process for my review. At both Arts Midwest and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, I interviewed conference assistants who had personal knowledge of how the artist selection process was performed as well as having a general knowledge of organizational history. Very few history facts were required from the interview process for Arts Midwest and the Association for Performing Arts Presenters due to the large amount of historical information provided online by the organizations.
themselves as well as other entities. Interviews were contacted via telephone and lasted approximately one hour each for the two organizations. I provided each interviewee with the questions before our conversations to provide each of them an opportunity to think about the questions and to give them a chance to prepare their answers. As mentioned previously, the interview questions were different for each organization based on how or whether they use a process to select artists to perform at their annual showcase conference. Conference programs and artist applications were also examined to determine what additional factors influenced artist access to being chosen or available to perform at the annual showcase conference.

While researching how these organizations conduct the process of artist selection, it became apparent that the entities were performing an intermediary role that was previously performed by an individual. The organizations are acting as a middle man apart from the artist's agent to bring the artist to the presenter in the arts marketplace. Part of my research focus was redirected to include an exploration of how the intermediary role was performed by individuals prior to the founding of these organizations. It was necessary to explore how this role was performed historically by individuals to fully understand how the role evolved and was now the fulfilled by the organization. This understanding of the changes in the role of intermediary speaks to how and why the functions regarded as gatekeeping in this research are an important point of exploration.

Several sources were consulted to determine a robust understanding of the meaning of gatekeeping and how that meaning translates to use in the performing arts industry with regard to the processes used to select artists for the showcase conferences.
In order to understand the functions utilized by the industry, it was also necessary to understand how the industry was using the functions and for whose service they were intended. An examination of the mission statements of each organization provided the information to determine to who the functions are designed to serve and also allowed for a greater understanding of why the organization offers showcase conferences. Combined with the literature review, this exploration of data informed the context for the use of showcase conferences, who they serve, and how the processes to select artists for participation are implemented.

Finally, the research directly related to the process of artist selection was analyzed, compared and contrasted investigating how the function is performed differently by each organization, in what context, and in relation to each organizations mission statement. This specific process was then examined through an economic lens, reviewing the process in a transactional context and explored using both positive and normative analysis to examine what is influencing the purchase of artists' work in the performing arts industry through the use of the showcase conference. This analysis involved understanding what drives presenters to purchase or book artists' work and how the industry attributes value to the artists' work. This motivation of presenters was then identified as demand in the arts marketplace. In order to determine a robust analysis of such attributions of value, I reviewed basic concepts of supply and demand. The artist work then becomes the other side of the transaction, or the supply. I also applied positive and normative analysis to the arts marketplace in an attempt to identify what forces and tensions are applicable to the transactional nature of the artist/presenter relationship in the
context of the performing arts industry showcase conference. However, this analysis did not bring to light any new information regarding the performance of the gatekeeping function. Instead, what I observed was that the performance of the function defied my original expectations. I thought the function would be performed in similar ways because all three organizations were part of the same industry and were aligned in a geographical hierarchy. This revelation about my incomplete focus and changed understanding led me to abandon my original economic lens and switch to an organizational theory lens. I investigated the theory of isomorphism as presented by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and examined how the performance of the artist selection process within each organization created a dissonance with this theory.

I present this research to offer a perspective on a process common in the performing arts industry arts marketplace and bring to light differences in how different organizations implement the function for a similar purpose. The observations of how differently the organizations perform the function contradict the concept of isomorphism. The lack of isomorphism between organizations performing similar functions that exist within a specific network is explored and analyzed.
Chapter 4: Background

Organization Histories

Ohio Arts Presenters Network is a statewide arts service organization founded in 1960 by a group of college and university concert managers. It was incorporated in 1980 and held its first annual showcase conference in 1988. Ohio Arts Presenters Network is a membership based organization and has evolved to include artists, agents, and presenters of performing arts. Ohio Arts Presenters Network does not fund artist or arts organizations; its focus is the annual showcase conference. However, professional development opportunities and network establishment are other member services offered. Ohio Arts Presenters Network is supported by grants, conference and workshop fees, advertising revenue in the conference program, and membership dues. Ohio Arts Presenters Network began its website in 2001 and continues to use technology for promotion and member communication. The Ohio Arts Presenters Network is based in Columbus, Ohio and holds its annual conference in October (Ohio Arts Presenters Network, 2011).

Arts Midwest was formed in 1985 as the result of a merger between Affiliated State Arts Agencies of the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Arts Alliance. The purpose of Arts Midwest is to offer technical assistance to programs for performing and visual arts touring, rural presenter development, increased exposure of minority artists and markets for individual artists, as well as block booking, state art agency staff and board development, arts and tourism linkages, strong arts advocacy networks, conference for arts and education and the development of arts resource directories. Arts Midwest's main
event is the Midwest Arts Conference in conjunction with Midwest Arts Alliance that takes place annually in September in a different location each time. The annual showcase conference began in 1988. Arts Midwest is supported through memberships from state art agencies, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, corporations & foundations, and through individual donations. Arts Midwest offers grants to presenting organizations for performing arts touring as well as administering several NEA national initiatives such as *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *The Big Read*, and *Jazz Masters Live*. Arts Midwest does not fund arts organizations outside of its nine state regions, unless the organization/program falls under the national initiative. Also, Arts Midwest does not offer funding for individual artists. Arts Midwest’s headquarters is in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Arts Midwest, 2011). Ohio Arts Presenters Network is within the geographical service area of Arts Midwest. Arts Midwest recognizes Ohio Arts Presenters Network as a member organization.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters began in 1958 also as a network of college and university concert managers. The organization was originally named the Association of College and University Concert Managers (ACUCM). In 1973, the organization changed its name to the Association of College, University and Community Arts Administrators (ACUCAA). In 1986, ACUCAA recognized the need to expand arts organization networks nationally instead of remaining mainly focused on university presenters. The name changed to the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in 1989 to reflect a more diverse membership. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters is membership based, offers an annual showcase booking conference that includes
professional development opportunities and a trade industry marketplace. The annual showcase conference was first held in 1959. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters funds initiatives to broaden international access for presenting organizations, supports the innovative programming of university presenters, funds industry wide research, and is a national arts advocacy partner. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters is located in Washington, D.C. The showcase conference is traditionally held in January in New York City. The organization markets its conference as “the world’s leading forum and marketplace for the performing arts” (APAP, 2011). Arts Midwest and the Ohio Arts Presenters Network are recognized by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters as part of the network of arts service organizations.

Showcase Conferences

Ohio Arts Presenters Network creates relationships among members. Their stated purpose is, “to build a statewide network to explore mutual concerns, to encourage cooperative ventures and partnerships, to further professional growth, and to empower presenters, artists, and concerned individuals to inspire in others a love for the arts” (Ohio Arts Presenters Network, 2010, p. 6). This network fulfills this purpose mainly through their annual showcase conference. It is an opportunity for the members to be in the same place at the same time to share ideas and develop or nurture relationships. Ohio Arts Presenters Network arranges the accommodations for the showcase performances, creates networking and professional development opportunities including round table discussions, speed meetings, and seminars. The round table discussions facilitate the
exchange of best practices and new or innovative ideas in the industry. The speed meetings allow the presenters to highlight their venues to the artists and the artist to speak more about their capabilities and experience to deepen the presenters’ knowledge past the showcase performance. By providing the venue for all of this interaction to take place, Ohio Arts Presenters Network is fulfilling the role of intermediary, utilizing their knowledge of both sides of the relationship to help nurture the development of relationships between artists and presenters.

Arts Midwest describes its annual showcase conference as the place where, “each year, performing artists, artist managers/agents, performing arts presenters, and service organizations gather to meet in person to strengthen business contacts and enhance their professional knowledge . . . where attendees come together to connect and collaborate” (Arts Midwest, 2009, p. 3). This statement illustrates how Arts Midwest views itself as an active part in bringing together different members of the arts industry to collaborate and create together. Art Midwest uses its annual showcase conference to fulfill the intermediary role.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters describes its conference as an opportunity to “connect with colleagues from around the world, take advantage of more than 1300 performance showcases and participate in more than 50 professional and leadership development sessions and meetings” (APAP, 2011). The organization also uses its showcase conference as a means to fulfill its intermediary role, bringing together “presenters, producers, agents, managers, artists, educators, consultants, vendors, funders, donors, foreign government and cultural institution representatives, and volunteer
leaders” (APAP, 2011). Again, by offering a venue for all of the different performing arts professionals to assemble, as well as opportunities to interact in smaller groups through professional development seminars or artist jams, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters brings different sides of the performing arts industry, connecting them through relationships for mutually beneficial purposes. Just as Ohio Arts Presenters Network and Arts Midwest, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters uses its annual showcase conference as a way to fulfill its intermediary role between artist and presenter as well as artist and audience, creating and maintaining relationships to further the industry.

**Individual as Intermediary**

This intermediary role was originally performed by an individual called an impresario. Sol Hurok, Sergei Diaghilev, and Paul Szilard are recognized as world-renowned 20th century impresarios. Their influence on the performing arts industry changed touring, production, and the industry itself. The arts marketplace artists and buyers of performance, presenters of performance, and audience of the performance eventually became too broad to be serviced by individuals. The role of the impresario changed from being the realm of the individual to organizations filling the role of intermediary between the artist and the presenter. In order to understand how the intermediary role has evolved to become one fulfilled by an organization, one must first understand the role’s past.
Barnes (2002) gives an endearing bow to the role of impresario, identifying the individual as one who, "presents, but first has to choose; a man who encourages, but first has to discern, a man who spreads a message that he first has to receive…..To some extent, like a critic, he is a parasite, but , even more than the critic, he has to be symbiotic with his host. He has to help others before he can help himself. And he also lives a hell of an interesting life" (p. 12). The impresario was fully engaged with artists and their works; they were fully invested in the performance, often financially as well as emotionally. Robinson (1994) explains that the impresario, especially Hurok, had a "delicate personal concern for the artist's welfare and whim" (p. 425). Impresarios were responsible for bringing the arts to new audiences but in many cases, also for contributing to cultural exchanges between the United States and different countries such as the Soviet Union.

_Hurok_

Perhaps one of the most famous intermediaries in the performing arts world is Sol Hurok. He was the first to receive the ACUCM Award of Merit in 1959. Sol Hurok entered the ballet scene in America “when dance in America was struggling to define itself as an art and establish itself with the public.” Sol Hurok is said to have had a “commanding influence on the ideology and social positioning of American dance in its formative decades as an art form” (Garafola, 1996, p. 170). Mr. Hurok recognized an underserved need in his community and through networks he established began presenting classical musicians and opera singers in a Sunday series. He was not the only intermediary in the performing art world; however, he is portrayed as “one of the very
few to make money at it” (Garafola, 1996, p. 171). He was supplying high art at popular art prices, appealing to the masses, and bringing that high art to audiences other than high society. Hurok knew his audience, knew his performers, and was able to join the two in a mutually beneficial transaction. He was an intermediary because he knew both the audience and the artist and was able to create a relationship between them. Robinson (1994) writes, “He was solely responsible for exposing U.S. audiences to major international musicians, dancers, and singers” (p. 16). Hurok believed that the arts were essential to life, living without them was not an option. He loved bringing the arts to audiences and profit was not his main motivation, although as noted earlier, he was one of few impresarios to profit well from his career (Robinson, 1994).

Hurok knew the volatility of arts support was strengthened through relationships and networks, and he continually nurtured those relationships. He was responsible for bringing international talent to America and ensuring its success. Hurok was often criticized for neglecting new talent and only concentrating on the promotion of the big names on his list. However, Hurok is credited for discovering several new artists based on the recommendations of his established artists (Robinson, 1994).

**Diaghilev**

Sergei Diaghilev is described as "a grandee of café society, yet a man of classless class, who wore his cultural and intellectual distinction as casually as a subtle aroma of cologne" (Barnes, 2002, p. 11). Poesio (2011) recognizes Diaghilev as "the man who bestowed star-like prominence to what had historically been a secondary administrative
role, namely that of the impresario" (p. 169). This author goes on to recognize that Diaghilev evolved the vocation of impresario to include duties and responsibilities beyond that of an artist manager. Diaghilev was known for his uncanny ability to raise money to support art projects and productions. His relationships with backers and societal elite allowed for many opportunities for art otherwise unavailable. Diaghilev is most recognized as a dance impresario, producing the Ballets Russes beginning in 1909, but he also was responsible for organizing exhibitions of Russian art in Paris, Russian music concert series, operas in Paris, as well as the tours of Ballets Russes. "Ballets Russes were central to the creation and the promotion of radical trends and ideas, which had a significant impact on various art forms" (Poesio, 2011, p. 167). Diaghilev furthered the role of impresario with his management of Ballets Russes, pairing his role as administrator with that of artistic director. Poesio (2011) explains, "As the man responsible for fundraising and finding backers--something he excelled in--he could constantly canvas the desires and the opinion of some of his most influential viewers. Such knowledge allowed him to keep abreast of the aesthetic trends that informed the artistic choices operated by the company, on which he always had the final say" (p.170). In this way, Diaghilev took the role of impresario to the next level, fully investing his time, energy, and knowledge in his projects. He used his role as impresario to fully make use of his knowledge of the market for the performing arts to respond to and shape the market.
Paul Szilard is perhaps most well known for representing the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre for thirty years. Szilard (2002) gives an overview of the impresario role in his own words, "I am both impresario and producer because I both book the attractions and invest money in the productions. The difference between a booking agent and an impresario is that the impresario produces the show and takes financial responsibility" (p. 73). Szilard was born in Hungary and danced ballet himself. After World War II, he began work as an impresario to help companies and solo artists travel internationally. Fulfilling the role of impresario also meant oftentimes acting as a friend, pseudo-parent, counselor, and advocate to an artist. He states, "There are always unexpected problems with dancers on tour and they always came to me to solve them. I'm the fix-it man" (Szilard, 2002, p. 75). Szilard's (2002) memoir about his life as an impresario shows the intimate emotional connections he had with the artists that he presented. Jamison (2002) reminisces, "Paul has had so much to do with creating arenas for other people to shine in. For me, that's his greatest accomplishment--allowing so many artists not just to be seen worldwide, but to thrive" (p. 18).

The role of intermediary can also be considered a cultural entrepreneur who balances internal and external relationships in the industry while supporting creative collaboration (Napier & Nilsson, 2006). Hurok, Diaghilev and Szilard were cultural entrepreneurs because they not only created relationships between audience and artist, but through those relationships, they were supporting particular art forms and their proliferation. As cultural entrepreneurs, they maneuvered the arts industry to promote
artists to audiences. Napier and Nilsson (2006) assert a “critical task for the cultural entrepreneur is to recruit and nurture talent” (p. 273). This careful attention to the development of relationships and an attention to the actual lives of the artist became a well know value associated with the individual impresario. However, the individual impresario began to buckle under financial responsibility and industry change.

Organizations as Intermediary

The growing arts industry spurred by public money after the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts changed the context of role for the impresario. The increase of presenting venues and the largeness of the industry required a new kind of intermediary, the organization. The cultural entrepreneur role evolved and became the job of service organizations. The individual could no longer handle the upfront financial costs associated with the production of the artists' tours. The growing arts industry was full of performers and there were not enough experienced and talented impresarios to handle so many acts. In addition, the increasing number of venues were no longer passive entities, awaiting a manager or impresario to rent it for a performance or series. The venues (the presenters) began to be more aggressive in the cultivation of their own seasons as early as 1960's (Kozinn, 1989). The necessity for presenters to fill their own seasons as opposed to waiting for the individual impresarios to approach them became a driving force for the already established networking groups to grow and serve their main membership, the presenter. A shift occurred from the individual impresario managing and producing artists to organizations that represented presenters fulfilling part of the
intermediary role through the production of the showcase conference. The organization representing the presenter became the cultural entrepreneur. Napier and Nilsson (2006) describe the function of cultural entrepreneur as possessing certain processes and routines. The cultural entrepreneur creates the framework and methods for bringing together individuals or groups for collaboration and creation. Napier and Nilsson (2006) relate this role to that of an architect, “to design and develop flexible and combinatory processes through practice” (p. 276).

Organizations like the Ohio Arts Presenters Network, Arts Midwest, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters orchestrate the opportunities for agents and presenters, or artists and presenters, and sometimes even artists and agents, to collaborate and develop working relationships with one another. Now, these organizations also help to facilitate bringing arts to audiences through these interactions. Through professional development, network opportunities like the annual conferences, as well as encouraging the sharing of information among members, these organizations help to nurture the relationships between these different groups in the arts industry. This role used to be fulfilled by the individual impresario. Now the agent along with the membership organization fill this role.

As Wyszomirski and Cherbo (2001) note, "common services provided by membership associations include job postings and professional credentialing services; professional development and technical assistance programs; conferences and forums, publications, calendar information on programs and projects of members, legal and insurance services, political/policy representation; information gathering and research;
public education efforts; and contacts with other service, funding, and representational organizations" (p. 105). Through showcase conferences, these arts service organizations perform half of the intermediary role once filled by individual impresarios. Agents fulfill the other half of the role. Together these two entities attempt to provide for artists the support and guidance once supplied by the individual impresario. The arts service organizations serve as intermediaries between artists and presenters within the arts marketplace. The description of the functions performed in relation to artist selection for showcase conference performance are explored in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: Findings

Historically, individual impresarios were the intermediary that connected artists to presenters and artists to audiences. They created opportunities for the artist to perform by establishing relationships with presenters and finding financial backers for the productions of the works. At other times, the impresario took on the financial burden of the production. As the role evolved to be performed by the combination of the agent and an organization, the financial responsibility of the tour moved away from the intermediary role. The organization functions as an intermediary in the connection between the artist and presenter or artist and audience but does not necessarily take on a financial responsibility. Also, the organization only fulfills half of the traditional impresario role. The organization is not often concerned with the business interest of the artist past what is beneficial for the presenter. The organization does not often cultivate a day-to-day relationship with the artist, this is the part of the role fulfilled by agent.

*Gatekeepers*

Ohio Arts Presenters Network, Arts Midwest, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters all host annual showcase conferences as a way to bring arts professionals together to collaborate and build relationships. These arts service organizations are intermediaries between the artists and presenters, providing an opportunity for both parties to meet, build relationships, and possibly create business transactions through bookings. Just as the individual intermediary before was responsible for bringing talent to audiences, these organizational intermediaries act as vehicles through which relationships are constructed and business transactions are completed. This research identifies how the
artists are selected to perform at the showcase conferences through the functions of the arts service organization.

Application Process

All three organizations use an application process for artists to either apply to compete for a spot in a juried showcase or to apply for inclusion in the exhibit hall or showcase program book thus earning an opportunity to showcase independently. The processes regarding application are different among all three organizations. The Ohio Arts Presenters Network accepts applications from artists to be considered for one of 36 spots for performances during the annual showcase conference. Arts Midwest accepts applications for one of eight showcase opportunities as well as sells space in the exhibit hall of the conference for those artists who desire to showcase independently. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters does not have juried showcases, all artists showcase independently but the artists are required to align with other expectations in order to perform at the conference. The processes are outlined below.

The Ohio Arts Presenters Network uses an application for artists to apply for a limited number of spots during the showcase conference. The application asks for artist general contact information, brief history, marketing materials and an audio or video file that shows an example of the artist performing. For the 2011 annual showcase conference, there were 84 applicants for 36 openings. The 36 spots are broken down into genres to encourage a more even distribution of artists. Ohio Arts Presenters Network identifies four categories into which artists are divided; dance, music, theater and beyond, and young audience. Eight spots are reserved specifically for the young audience
category. The remaining genres are split as evenly as possible amongst the open showcase spots. Spots are also available for alternates in each genre identified.

The applications from the artists are collected and presented to the jury panel consisting of members of the organization. The five judges on the jury panel are professionals in the performing arts industry. The jury selection process typically takes a whole day. The five judges are identified by the executive director of the organization and no previous jury panel experience is required. The judges do not receive an honorarium but they are provided with breakfast, lunch and beverages.

For the 2011 jury panel, a rubric was designed to attempt to allow for tracking and measurable criteria for artist selection. The rubric asked the judges to assign values to the artists in five categories: artistic skill and technique, creativity, promotional materials, overall professionalism, and overall artistic quality. Each category was scored out of twenty points and with five judges, artists could score at highest one hundred points in any category. To begin the selection process, the pool of available acts by artists were discussed in an open forum and the number of applicants were reduced by more than half. The rubric was applied to the remaining applicants.

The judges were played a two-minute section of the audio and/or video files provided by the artist for the purpose of the jury panel selection. The judges were permitted to write comments and score on the rubric electronically using their laptops. Physical promotional and/or marketing materials were then passed around for the judges to observe. The artists that applied for the young audience genre were scored separately for the eight showcases specifically reserved for that genre. After the first round, scores
were tallied and the top 28 acts by artists were chosen for consideration for the remaining showcase spots. Any artist that had performed in a showcase at the annual conference in the last three years was removed from consideration and some artists with lower scores were moved up to be considered. After each showcase spot was filled, the showcase schedule was presented to the Board of Directors of the organization for final approval and then the artists were notified of their showcase opportunity at the annual conference. If an artist refuses the spot or is unable to fulfill the obligation, the alternate artist will perform in the showcase.

Arts Midwest is not a membership organization like Ohio Arts Presenters Network. Artists applying to perform at the showcase conference do not pay a membership fee. There is an application fee to be considered for the juried showcase spots. The online application was new for 2011. The application online is open from January until March. The application is made up of short narrative questions, it asks for a brief synopsis of the artist, a genre classification, what specific pieces the artist plans to showcase, descriptions of touring experiences, and information about school outreach programming or residencies. The artist must also provide 3 hard copy examples of promotional materials and a 3-5 minute DVD showing a sample of their work. It is recommended that this DVD contain several short segments of different performances to align with judges preference. Musicians can also submit a CD.

The jury panel is made up of 5 jury members. Most of the review of the artists being considered for the juried showcase performances takes place in the onsite meeting. Some hard copy materials are sent to jury members along with links to website for their
viewing prior to the jury selection meeting. Some members of the panel have previous exposure to particular artists due to receiving materials early. There are not previously determined numbers of showcases available dependent on genre. The "best" works are chosen regardless of genre unless there is a specific theme for the year. In 2010, the conference theme was dance and the juried showcases reflected the theme. The first round of the selection process is silent. The jury writes down comments to support scores that are given on a 0-5 scale. The scale is not linked to particular variables. A score of 5 from a juror means that the artist is excellent. The jury panel member subjectively scores each artist. The scores are averaged. After the first round, the jury panel members reduce the pool of applicants down to 45% of the original number. Once artists are selected, they are informed of the fee to showcase. This is a flat fee that does include some provision for tech for the performers. However, if additional technology is required for the artist's work, there is a fee. There is a fee for exhibit space in the exhibit hall. Any artist is allowed to exhibit or have an independent showcase, but all must be represented in the exhibit hall. The Midwest Arts conference has 18 juried showcase spots allowing for 9 performances at the conference each night. Artists that have performed in a juried showcase in the last 4 years are not eligible to apply for a juried showcase spot. Each year, no more than 2 artists form one agent/manager can be granted a showcase.

After the jury process, the artists are provided with feedback on artistic ability as well as on the quality and production of the work samples. Panelists are from a wide variety of backgrounds to help offset the influence of personal taste. To be selected as a juror, a person can self-nominate or be nominated for the process. Applicants for jurors
are people who regularly attend the conference, work in the performing arts field, or who have sat on panels in the past. Jurors serve one year and are not permitted to serve the following year. On the panel, sit 2 presenters, 2 agents and 1 either manager/artist/or presenter. Normally, an independent artist does not sit on the panel due to conflict of interest. Juror applications are retained for several years to make best use of the available pool of interested participants. Panelists still pay the conference fee and their names are kept confidential. Arts Midwest does pay for travel, lodging, fees, and an honorarium.

The jury panel convenes in early to mid April. After the 18 juried showcase spots are filled, artists are notified by telephone by the end of April or beginning of May. The edited comments from the deliberation process are distributed to artists by the end of May. The jury panel process is a result of an evolution guided by focus groups and surveys. The shift to an online application is a direct result of this process.

Artists that choose to showcase independently are encouraged to share costs with other artists. New artists that have not showcased at the Midwest Arts conference before are discouraged from attempting an independent showcase without partnering with a more experienced artist. Arts Midwest encourages mentorship and pairs up new attendees with others who have offered to mentor. Conference orientation is available onsite before the conference takes place. Independent showcases can be very expensive for an artist. Expected costs include the rental space, stage build out, catering for attendees, and technology costs.

In 2010, there were over 100 independent showcases at the Midwest Arts conference. Independent showcases are attended by presenters during the expected times.
Independent showcases are not guaranteed lack of conflict with other showcases. Only juried showcases are guaranteed against conference conflicts.

At the Association for Performing Arts Presenters showcase conference in New York City in January, all showcases are self-produced. It is entirely up to the artist and/or agent to put on the showcase incurring all of the costs for its production including venue rental.

Artists can showcase at different venues around the city including at the conference hotel. The artists that showcase at the conference hotel are traditionally represented by long standing agencies. Each showcasing artist is provided with a FAQ sheet with tips and a list of venues so they know who to contact and how to reserve a space for the showcase performance. Most showcases are 15-20 minutes long. In 2010, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters have record of 1300 showcases in the showcase listing book.

As noted above, the application process can pose barriers for artists to perform at showcase conferences. Artists are faced with a financial barrier to access in the application costs. The juried panel provides more barriers to access as artists are required to provide marketing materials and audio and/or video materials. Aside from the financial cost, additional barriers exist with the juried artist selection process. The implications of this procedure are discussed in Chapter 6.
Additional Cost Barriers

All three organizational showcase conferences require additional costs for the artists that are associated with showcasing. Whether the artist is showcasing independently or as part of a juried showcase. Artists are responsible for all travel, lodging, meals, additional equipment necessary for the performance and any additional technology required for the performance. Artist have costs associated with their performances that are required when their performance is taken on the road, whether it be costumes, supplies, shipping of equipment, and/or additional workers for set-up and tear down. Showcasing at a conference does not guarantee bookings from presenters. Artists can come to the arts marketplace but many leave the showcases without being signed or booked by a presenter. The role of the organizational intermediary ends with the provision of a place for artists to showcase, these intermediaries do not negotiate contracts, aid in selling particular artists, nor do they require attending presenters to book any artist at the showcase conferences. These organizations do not systematically follow up with artists to track bookings that occur outside of the showcase conferences.

The three organizations involved in this nested case study perform the artist selection function for the showcase conference in different ways. All three organizations produce showcase conferences where artists and presenters come together in an arts marketplace to negotiate the performing arts industry through performances and bookings. The artists are selling their works and the presenters are purchasing, or booking, the shows. The Ohio Arts Presenters Network offers only juried showcases and artists must apply and be selected in order to perform at the annual showcase. There are
38 showcase spots. The Midwest Arts annual showcase conference offers 18 showcase opportunities. Applications for these showcases are also juried. However, independent showcases are available for those artists who have the experience or desire to produce their own performance outside of the conference hotel. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters annual showcase conference only provide opportunities for independent showcases.

As mentioned previously, these three arts service organizations exist in a network of which there is a geographical hierarchy. The Association of Performing Arts Presenters is recognized as the national showcase conference for the performing arts industry. Members and administrators from Ohio Arts Presenters and Arts Midwest frequently attend the national conference. The Midwest Arts annual showcase conference is recognized as the regional showcase conference. Ohio Arts Presenters Network is part of Arts Midwest's region. Members and administrators from Ohio Arts Presenters Network attend the Midwest Arts conference.
Chapter 6: Discussion

Why did the change from individual impresario to organizational intermediary happen? Robinson (1984) quotes Hurok as saying, "Today, there is very little room left for independent managers because of the expenses you have to carry" (p. 440). Even Hurok recognized that as the performing arts industry expanded and more opportunities were available for the artists, the costs associated with producing the artists were becoming less manageable for impresarios. The role of the individual impresario was then broken down and spread between agent/manager and arts service organizations. The role that was originally filled by one person was then split into two roles. The arts service organizations could provide the possibility for artist and presenter to come together in a mutually beneficial space for the transaction of business but the organization did not fulfill the personal benefit roles for the artist once performed by the individual impresario. The agent/manager took on the more personal responsibilities with regard to the artist even though the presenter became involved in concerns regarding artist personality and ease of working together.

The change from individual impresario to organizational intermediary was also a result of the presenting organizations taking a more active role in determining their seasons as a response to changing economics as individual impresarios passed away or were unable to continue financially in the business. Venues were empty and presenters found it necessary to fill their buildings with acts themselves (Kozinn, 1989). The presenting organizations formed networks to share ideas about artists and provide opportunities for networking and dissemination of best practices. The showcase
conference was a way for these organizations to effectively and efficiently shop for their seasons. Presenters became the producers instead of the individual impresario. The question is whether the artist is being serviced as equally as the presenter or do showcase conferences focus benefit toward presenters? Ohio Arts Presenters Network and The Association of Performing Arts Presenters have membership majorities of presenters. Although artists and agents are also members at both organizations, they are a significant minority. At Ohio Arts Presenters, more than 70% of its members in 2010 were presenters. Presenter interest is at the forefront of these membership organizations and this has consequences that result in gatekeeping with regard to artist selection for the showcase conference. Artists do not historically sit on the jury panels for either Ohio Arts Presenters Network showcase conference or for the Midwest Arts showcase conference. Artists are judged on criteria such as artistic excellence, merit, and innovation. However, veteran artists are not judging other artists; presenters are judging artists. The jury selection process for determining which artists perform at showcase conferences becomes a gatekeeping function not only limiting artist inclusion, but it can also be seen as serving presenter interest over artist interest.

Do the benefits of working within the current structure allow for artistic excellence and innovation to break through the barriers previously presented? Under the individual impresario model, new and emerging talent often had a difficult time finding representation that would put the artist in the best production houses and in the best performance opportunities. Often a new or emerging artist had to be spoken for by a well-known and respected artist before they received a chance to break into the field. Under
the organizational intermediary structure, individual artists have the ability to perform at showcase conferences and be exposed to presenters to who they might not normally have access. However, in any of the three arts service organizations explored here, there are still barriers to entry for the individual artist. These organizations are acting as gatekeepers to the industry just as the individual impresario did, creating a gate based on arbitrary variables that stand in the way of artists having access to performance opportunities. Even at the national level where the Association of Performing Arts Presenters allows anyone to showcase individually, the large cost barrier can prove problematic for the individual artist. Without financial means to pay for all of the costs associated with individual showcases, a new and emerging artist would have difficulty participating in the conference.

At the state level with Ohio Arts Presenters Network, the juried showcase provides a fantastic opportunity for an emerging artist to be exposed to the industry. However, the artist is still subject to financial barriers in the application process as well as in the showcase production. The application for consideration in the jury panel process requires artists to submit marketing materials including audio/video files for the judges to view. Even with technological advances, new artists could have difficulty providing the level of media product the judges require. There is still a large difference between a video shot with a home video camera compared with a video produced professionally. If the artist submits substandard recorded material, the performance comes off poorly and consideration to be included in the conference suffers. As a membership organization, the Ohio Arts Presenters Network requires anyone showcasing to be a member of the
organization and members pay to attend the conference. For artists showcasing at the conference, there is a long list of financial responsibilities on top of the application costs to be considered for inclusion in the showcase.

At the Midwest Arts conference produced by Arts Midwest, the artist has options whether to apply for the juried showcase or showcase independently. Aside from the barriers of cost involved with either the application process for the juried showcase or showcasing independently, the legitimacy of the independent showcase is diminished because of the contrast to the juried showcase within the same conference. Juried showcases have no competing events during the conference. Those that have been awarded a juried showcase can expect a large audience because there are not additional events to attend. An artist that is producing an independent showcase does not have that luxury. Any number of conference events and additional independent showcases are occurring at the same time as that artist's showcase, creating a significant competition for the presenter's time and attention.

Just as with the other two showcase conference experiences, artists are faced with large financial barriers in independently showcasing as well as being part of the juried showcase. Financial concerns include travel cost, lodging, and food on top of any costs directly associated with the showcase conference. For example, even if an artist is showcasing independently, they are still required to have a space in the exhibit hall and must pay for this space. If the artist requires additional equipment for their showcase other than what is provided by Arts Midwest for the juried showcase, the artist must pay to rent additional technology/equipment. All three organizations present financial barriers
for artists to perform at the showcase conferences, whether the selection process is juried or not.

Why do these organizations perform the artist selection process for the showcase conference in different ways? The concept of isomorphism tells us that organizations that are nested like Ohio Arts Presenters Network, Arts Midwest, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters would be expected to perform the function in very similar if not exactly similar ways. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state, "In the initial stages of their life cycle, organizational fields display considerable diversity in approach and form. Once a field becomes well established, however, there is an inexorable push toward homogenization" (p. 148). All three of these arts service organizations are well established. The Ohio Arts Presenters Network just celebrated their 50th year in the industry. As a researcher, I expected the three organizations to have more similarity in how the function of artist selection for performance at the annual showcase conference was executed. All three organizations have similarities but the national organization has taken a more inclusive route to artist selection, not prohibiting any artist from showcasing, as long as they can afford the cost associated. The national organization has a less structured gatekeeping role. The barriers to the arts marketplace for artists are centralized around financial gates and do not include the juried panel process.

However, this way of performing the artist selection function has not been adopted fully by Arts Midwest and not at all by Ohio Arts Presenters Network. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state that the process of isomorphism can be predicted by the level of dependence on an organization on another organization. Since the Ohio Arts
Presenters Network and Arts Midwest are independently organized and administrated separately from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, there is no coercive isomorphism occurring. The two smaller organizations are not being pressured by a parent company to homogenize in process to increase efficiency. However, even though efficiency may not be the motivating factor, inclusive service to the field would seem to be a main concern for all three organizations. With these processes in place, it would appear that the organizations are servicing presenters at a higher degree than artists. Even the national organization benefits presenters over artists. Artists have a high cost to attend the national conference and they often have to share showcases with another artist to cover the fees. Presenters benefit because the national conference has so many artists for the presenter to see that they can often book their entire season in the one trip.

The interesting point about the lack of homogeneity with the Association of Performing Arts Presenters lies in the legitimacy factor. The national showcase conference association performs the function a certain way yet the regional and state conference associations do not follow suit. At the Association of Performing Arts Presenters annual showcase conference, 1300 individual showcases took place. This means there was an enormous amount of artists on display for presenters to negotiate with in the arts marketplace. This robust field representation, although still prohibitive due to costs associated, allow more inclusion for any artist that can afford to go. There is no weeding out by a jury panel of who is not allowed to perform. There is not pre-judging by a panel of presenters on the artist that inhibit their ability to be present in the arts
marketplace. The national conference allows more inclusion and recognition that the field needs to decide for itself what is excellent, innovative, and full of merit.

Ohio Arts Presenters Network and Arts Midwest are still providing extreme gates to access for artists and attempting to limit emergence into the field through the use of juried showcases. If Ohio Arts Presenters Network and Arts Midwest opened their conferences to all independent showcases, more new and emerging artists could attend and showcase, especially because costs incurred would be reduced. Ohio artists would have less travel cost than attempting to go to New York City, lodging costs would be lower, and by producing an independent showcase, anyone that wanted to perform for presenters would be included. The increased participation by artists would in turn attract more presenters to the local arts marketplace.

If Arts Midwest changed its annual showcase conference format to include only independent showcases, artists could be chosen on merit, excellence, and innovation as determined by the market instead of by 5 judges on a panel. There would not be selective legitimacy applied to certain showcases during the conference. The availability to the market for artists would increase participation and access at the regional level.

Is the Ohio Arts Presenters Network stuck in tradition? If legitimacy is a result of isomorphism, it is interesting to note that Ohio Arts Presenters Network has not fully adopted the way the Association of Performing Arts Presenters executes its artist selection function. As a statewide organization, the Ohio Arts Presenters Network consistently struggles to provide attending presenters with a wide array of artistic talent. The organization is perceived to cater to Ohio artists and only a few artists outside of
Ohio apply to showcase at the annual conference. Many artists and presenters instead attend the Midwest Arts conference due to its balance between access to many artists and presenters and affordability. Arts Midwest has moved away from mostly juried showcases to only a small number of juried showcases. Now Arts Midwest has over 100 independent showcases each year. There is less opposition to access to the field at the Midwest Arts conference than at the Ohio Arts Presenters Network conference even though the cost to travel and attend may be higher.

Even though the three organizations do not completely align in how they perform the gatekeeping function associated with artist selection, certain processes and structures are isomorphic. All three organizations still produce a showcase conference. This mimetic isomorphism or copying of process illustrates that conference attendees, or presenters desire the systematic display of available talent. It is also interesting to note that artists, agents, and presenters alike attend these showcase conferences, mimicking other artists, agents, and presenters in the field. The isomorphic process of the showcase conference is a necessity to attend to the size and diversity of the field. By having alike processes for observing available talent, presenters are able to efficiently book their seasons. Without a nationalized process such as the showcase conference, small presenters would not be able to afford to visit multiple artists to determine performance seasons.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that organizational isomorphism is not necessarily favorable, as it does not increase efficiency or effectiveness. However, in the case of these three arts service organizations it would be interesting to explore how
organizational isomorphism would improve the execution of the function of artist selection for performance at annual showcase conferences and reduce the gatekeeping functions present at the annual showcase conferences. With the current processes in place, artist works that may be controversial, risky, or are deemed low in entertainment value are automatically weeded out by the juried selection process. Artists that have not been extremely successful are not able to afford to showcase independently. The jury selection process coupled with the high cost barriers for the showcase conference provide gatekeeping to the arts marketplace. Presenters are observing talent that has already made a certain cut, these artists have already come through a filter and are deemed more acceptable than those that are not performing at the showcase conference in any capacity. If all artists were able to showcase independently at the conference that meets their needs without going through the juried selection process, the industry could be strengthened with talent that would not otherwise have been shown in the arts marketplace.

The arts service organization showcase conference brings together artist and presenter as well as artist and audience through the performance of an industry intermediary role. The functions involved in the production of the showcase conference create gates, filtering out artist works and preventing access for artists to the arts marketplace. Three arts service organizations were explored in this case study to give a realistic portrayal of the design and implementation of functions limiting artist access to the arts marketplace. The performance of industry intermediary by the individual impresario was highlighted and the change to this role being fulfilled by organization and agent was explored. This exploration brought to light the necessity for further research in
the performing arts and the arts service organizations. Data collection about how the showcase conference impact artist booking opportunities is needed to investigate how artists are being served by this function of the industry. Additional research about internal processes within the industry is also needed to add to the histories available.
Reference List


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