

Title: Mining and music: terra nova, exploring new territory in the development of music-tourism networks¹

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1.1 Introduction

Participation in networks is now seen as critical to the success of small business, tourism destinations and niche products such as wine tourism, heritage, events, cultural tourism and drive tourism (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006; Gibson, Lynch and Morrison, 2005; Hall et al., 1997; Morrison, Lynch and Johns, 2004, Pavlovich, 1993; Shih, 2006; Stokes, 2005; Tinsley and Lynch 2001). The benefits of participating in tourism networks (Halme, 2001; Lynch et al., 2000; Michael, 2007; Moulin and Boniface, 2001, Saxena, 2003) are well documented and range from the nurturing of social contacts, reputation and legitimization, learning about sustainable tourism, exchange of information about best practise, increased business activity, community cohesion. There are calls for more research into networks given its potential to influence tourism planning and investment decisions (Shih, 2006). To date there has been little research into music tourism networks. This chapter describes three case studies and demonstrates how participation in networks assists and impedes the development of music tourism.

1.11 The growth of festivals and events

Festivals and events have experienced considerable growth in recent years. They are used to attract crowds, generate publicity, enhance education, preserve folk music and offer a structured recreational opportunity to visitors (Getz, 1991; Getz, 1998; Hall, 1992). Government support for festivals and events is justified on the grounds that they form part of a tourism marketing strategy and contribute to economic development (Stokes, 2005).

It is implicit in the literature that festival managers engage in multiple networks for different reasons. Distinguishing between production networks and experience networks (Moscardo et al., 2008) is useful in understanding network outcomes. People connect with other people to enrich their artistic practices, socialize and renew friendships. Growing attention is being paid to the potential of festivals and events to strengthen social networks (Van Zyla and Botha, 2004; Matheson, 2005). Festival production depends on informal networks of volunteers, sponsors and firms supplying goods and technical services (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006). Festivals are rigorously planned and controlled by artistic directors (Henderson, 1991) who act as gate-keepers by making judgments about aesthetic quality (Greenfeld, 1988). The literature on festival and events is primarily normative but it is opening up to different perspectives. In recent discussions of events (see Moscardo et al., 2008 for a literature review), two key themes appear to be emerging – the importance of analysing stakeholder perspectives and interactions (Larson, 2002; Getz, Andersson and Larson, 2007) and the building of social capital (Arcodia and Whitford, 2007; Gursoy, Kim and Uysal, 2004).

Despite the well established literature on festivals and events, there is limited application of social network concepts to festival networks. Key network constructs are strength or weakness of ties (Burt 1992, Granovetter 1973, Uzzi 1996). According to Granovetter's (1973) seminal 'strength of weak ties' thesis, weak ties, such as contacts with acquaintances, are invaluable to career development as they yield greater variety of information. Strong ties, such as contacts with family and friends, are important as these actors are strongly motivated to help one another. There are four dimensions of strength: amount of time spent interacting network players; emotional intensity; intimacy (or mutual confiding) and reciprocal services

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(Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). In the literature on project management (Grabher 2004; Grabher and Ibert, 2005), personal ties are seen to promote learning, problem-solving and access to labour markets. This type of network is generally homogenous, cohesive and local and different from formal organizational arrangements. This line of enquiry is important since festivals can be classified as projects, where resources and people are organised around a specific task in a fixed period of time. Strong ties are often used as a short-hand for social capital (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006; Putnam, 1994). In a business context, strength has been equated with intimacy, trust, long duration and high frequency of interaction; openness and willingness to share information and coordinate activities (Gilsing and Nooteboom, 2005; O'Donnell, 2004). Researchers argue that optimal networks consist of weak and strong ties since the former yields novel information and latter helps transmit tacit knowledge (Uzzi, 1996; Pavlovich, 2003). The general conclusion is that one can influence network outcomes depending on the types of ties cultivated.

In the tourism context, it is hypothesised that networks are different from those in manufacturing, being more mobile, more unstable and spatially dispersed. Contrary to the literature, Baerenholdt and Haldrup (2006: 214) argue that much of the creative work in tourism is performed through non-local, albeit, weak contacts. Festivals trade on their uniqueness or freshness. Festivals are often 'themed' (Bryman, 1997), which means that theatrical elements are either added to, or eliminated from, the 'product' in order to differentiate festivals in a crowded marketplace. According to Janiskee (1996), program diversity can be important in offering greater entertainment value and more choices to visitors. Although creativity is valued in the field of festival management, what is not evident from the literature is the link between creativity and network ties.

A key debate in the literature concerns the overall structure of the network (Pavlovich, 2003). Structure refers to the 'architecture' of the network such as the number of partners, its hierarchy or stability (Rutten, 2004). There is complex argument on whether ties between actors in networks should be sparse and weak (Granovetter, 1973, Burt 1992) or dense and strong (Coleman, 1988; Gilsing and Nooteboom, 2005). The literature on cultural industries suggests that dense networks are a sign of vitality and are critical to the production of a cultural good (Scott, 2000; Kong, 2005). Cultural production, such as film production, relies on dense networks of interdependent, small and medium sized firms. Dense networks draw on local labour, use a wide variety of skills, promote trust and cooperation and support flows of information between producers. Furthermore dense networks combined with strong ties help counter the inherent risk in cultural production (Kong, 2005). A problem with density is that it creates pressures to conform and compromise (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983). In discussions on projects, it is observed that the multi-dimensionality of networks gives rise to diverse loyalties, conflicts of culture and professional identities (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006; Grabher, 2004; Grabher and Ibert, 2005). This line of enquiry is important since the arts are encouraged to prove their public value and deliver measurable outcomes. There are arguments that instrumentalism – the engagement with the practical potential of the arts to contribute to society - could undermine artistic excellence (Glow et al., 2005; O' Kelly, 2007). A dominant theme in the literature is that the commodification of festivals thwarts attempts to engage with the local community (Quinn, 2005; Matheson, 2005). Therefore two opposing forces – conformity to norms and conflict – are present in networks.

1.111 Aim of the study, research questions and conceptual framework

The aim of this paper is to explore the significance of density and strong/weak ties for event management. Key research questions are as follows: What types of networks are used by festival managers? What are the outcomes of network participation? What are the incentives and disincentives for entry into networks? What impact do weak ties have on festival program uniqueness? The debates in the literature show that these research issues are worthy of exploration. If there is an understanding of how networks operate and how actors interact,

then one can assess which networks are most productive and seek to optimize network outcomes. Figure 1 proposes a conceptual framework. This framework outlines the network perspectives of interest in this study:

- (1) The analysis of relationships, specifically the strength or weakness of ties.
- (2) The analysis of the structure the network, specifically density and sparseness.
- (3) The analysis of network outcomes, such as the spread of norms, creation of social capital and entrepreneurial opportunities.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

2.1 Research Methodology

An inductive case-based approach was taken drawing on the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is the antithesis of the positivist approach, it is ethnographical in nature, subjective and subscribes to the view that truth is not provided as a single reality but is based on multiple realities.

Although many network-based studies use quantitative techniques, there has been a growth in studies that examine small networks qualitatively (Pavlovich, 2003; Gilsing and Nooteboom, 2005). Baerenholdt and Haldrup (2006: 212) call for more explorative approaches in studies of networks in order to “come to terms with the temporalities and spatialities of networking practices.” A comparative case-based approach was used since it is well suited to describing how networks operate in real-world settings, and this approach can be justified given the limited understanding of what types of network ties are important, when, why and how these social relationships are beneficial (or harmful) to event organisers.

2.11 Research Design

Data for this paper was drawn from interviews undertaken between December 2006 and February 2007. At each case study site, a key informant, the festival manager, was identified and was the subject of a one-hour, face-to-face semi-structured interview. Snowballing led to follow-up interviews being undertaken with a representative of a City Council, Tourism Queensland, Queensland Events and Arts Queensland. These stakeholders helped the author explore the influence of the state on the networks as well as assessing the validity of claims made by the primary interviewees. A total of ten interviews were conducted. A variety of secondary sources (i.e., websites, festival brochures and leaflets, newspaper articles, visitor surveys, tourism reports) were used to provide context and give the researcher an insight into the key relationships formed.

The interviewees were encouraged to talk freely about the event, covering its history, any tensions or trade-offs made over the course of its development; incentives and disincentives for entry into networks and positive and negative outcomes associated with different types of relationships. In order to measure the construct of strong ties and capture network outcomes, the author was guided by Brian Uzzi’s (1997) study on the significance of social ties (embeddedness) in inter-firm networks.

Three comparative cases were selected and classified using the taxonomy proposed by Paleo and Wijnberg (2006). All three events were well established and had received funding from the Queensland Events Company (QEC) under the Regional Development Program or Significant Regional Events Scheme. The QEC is a government-owned company responsible for managing the government’s events policy (see QEC, 2007 for further details). The events differed in important ways. Opera in the Outback is a for-profit event in a single venue with a single track program. It does not offer a competitive component and has only a regional

profile. The Ten Days in the Towers event is an amateur competition that promotes Australian country music, it has a national profile and uses a range of venues with multiple events on the program. Finally, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AFCM), like Opera in the Outback, is based on a European cultural tradition. It has a complex program, uses varied venues and has an international profile. These variations in characteristics offer some potential to identify different types of networks and relationships. Table 1 profiles each event.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

2.III Data Analysis

Interviews were taped and transcribed shortly afterwards. The general analytical strategy was to identify common themes and patterns in the data (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989) by using a grid matrix. Table 2 identifies the key themes revealed through the fieldwork.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The analysis of the cases identified a complex set of relationships between the network actors. Table 3 provides a summary of the analyses.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

3.1 Implications of dense/expanding networks: resource acquisition

Dense networks summon up the resources needed to stage events such as equipment, image, finance, artistic talent, venues, etc. The festivals drew on local resources where available, although the development of non-local contacts with international artists helped legitimize, and build an image for, the events, in particular Opera in the Outback and the AFCM. All three events were engaged in networks that extended well beyond the state's geographical boundaries. At the same time, attempts were made to merge local with non-local acts in order to appeal to a local audience.

The membership of the networks was very heterogeneous, and included volunteers, local music clubs, educational institutes, the local Visitor Information Centre, the media and journalists, restaurants, hotels, coach tour operators, a mining company, a regional airline, a marine science institute, local food producers and competing events.

3.11 Implications of dense networks: spread of institutional norms

Strong norms were diffused within festival networks such as the view that events should demonstrate direct economic impacts and increase access to the arts. The analysis showed that state bodies can be a positive force for change. According to a spokesperson from Arts Queensland:

“From Arts Queensland perspective, we are very interested in matching supply with demand. We want to support good quality supply, with high quality acts, but we want there to be a demand for that so we are really interested in matching creative aspirations with market opportunities. So we want organizations to be imaginative in programming and to be enterprising in their demand-inducing activities so they can be appealing and accessible to audiences; also, to be innovative and challenging; overall, to make sure that the organization is financially sound.”

There were substantial differences in revenue reported between the three events and in the case of Opera in the Outback, management was seeking to introduce elements that would enhance economic benefits including the addition of a local Farmer's Market and the increased use of accommodation in surrounding areas.

Current thinking on democratizing the arts influenced the growth of networks. The AFCM was, and still is, positioned as a highbrow festival, yet over the years its strategy has changed, and it has invested time and energy into converting audiences to chamber music and making it more accessible to a broader population. Every year students from schools and the local University participate in master classes and perform concerts. The festival developed an Outback Tour which features a chamber music concert in a mine, combined with transport, food, accommodation and sightseeing. It was designed to make 'high culture' more accessible to a rural community, attract visitation and enhance the tourist experience.

3.111 Value Clashes

The analysis shows that the dissemination of institutional norms into the network had ramifications for some network participants. A good example of the gulf between music and tourism is the Ten Days in the Towers Case. Funding bodies were keen to capitalize on the potential for tourism growth and encouraged festival managers to become more professional in their approach to event management. Professionalism was assessed in various ways: use of business plans, event managers or consultants, success in securing corporate sponsorship, plans to share resources with other events (i.e., web-sites, on-line ticketing systems, databases, or supplies), use of famous performers, generation of local trade or demand for music-related services. While some of these tactics could well increase revenue, they also run the risk of undermining the morale of a volunteer committee, reducing the participation of local, amateur musicians and increasing rivalry between events.

There was some evidence that the emphasis of government funding agencies on tourism gains could undermine the local networks and elements that contribute the most to these events. The organisers of Ten Days in the Towers valued the inclusive nature of the event in line with the Australian spirit of "having a go". While amateur performances given by children eschewed a public audience, the committee believed that support for young artists helped strengthen the tradition of Australian country music. Some stakeholders see the festival as almost immutable to change and cite conservatism, lack of time and expertise as factors inhibiting change and threatening survival. The committee has anxieties about change and argue that attempts to copy other, more commercial country music festivals would result in the loss of local idiosyncrasies. In recent years, the event has had to grapple with a decline in audience figures. Some form of change became a necessity. The name Ten Days in the Towers was conceived and today it operates as an umbrella brand for three different festivals. The packaging of the events for tourist consumption was designed to secure grant-aid. In effect, one group wrestled control of branding from other parties which is at odds with the notion of co-operation, partnership or community cohesion.

In the case of the AFCM, its attempts to build connections and exchanges with tourism, leisure and entertainment industries gave rise to tensions. Care had to be taken to ensure that the new festival programs did not obscure the core audience that it addressed. The underlying priority was always to maintain high artistic standards, but some argued that chamber music was being compromised by attempts to popularise the festival program and create new audiences.

3. IV Implications of dense networks and weak ties with other events, arts organisations and local business: branding, learning and support

One theme that emerged from the analysis was the importance of networks for branding and the packaging of events for tourist consumption. Packaging in the context of this study refers, not simply to packaged tours, but to themes, images and concepts that seduce visitors and engender strong emotions. The promoters of Opera in the Outback wished to deliver an unforgettable experience to the audience. They developed an alliance with the state opera company, whose reputation was crucial as regards setting quality standards and attracting a larger audience. As mentioned previously, the branding strategy developed by Ten Days in the Towers was designed to appeal to the tourist market and it signalled that an array of experiences was available over a 10 day period. Likewise, the AFCM developed new concepts to enrich tourism experiences and a comment was:

“I think that these days, in the world that we live in, people want options, people want to do different things. The festival has been going for a long time. You need to introduce new things, to give people options, to ensure that the program every year is different and interesting...”

Entry into networks was also important for learning, especially about ideas for the development of the festival program. The manager of the Ten Days in the Towers event, for example, spent time at other country music festivals volunteering in order to gather ideas to bring back to his own event. The analysis shows how forging contacts with the local business community enhanced the viability of the event. In order to build goodwill, the manager organised free live music performances for hoteliers during the year. In return, locals showed their support in numerous ways: sponsoring the festival, organising their own talent quests and themed dinners, dressing up in cowboy regalia, decorating shop windows. This engagement with local business helped ensure that there was a good atmosphere and led to spin-off events.

3.VI Implications of strong ties within artistic networks

The festivals were founded by individuals who were passionate about music. One of the biggest challenges for any arts festival is its entrance onto the international music stage. In most cases, it is not simply a question of earning money but of prestige and recognition. In the case of the AFCM, the founder had strong personal networks which were crucial to the development of the festival. The General Manager spoke about the importance of understanding artists, for example their need to rehearse, rest between performances and have time to go sightseeing. In the case of Ten Days in the Towers, the event has led to increased music activity in the town on a year-round basis. Strong ties with local country music groups helped nurture the talent needed for the event and encouraged artists to continue to support the event. According to the Manager of the Opera in the Outback event:

“We have become such good friends with all of the Opera singers and performers. Their opera singers absolutely loved the event, they raved about it. They go back and say how wonderful it is all is”.

Differentiating characteristics of the artistic network were as follows: problem-solving; gate-keeping/assessing creative work; information-sharing; friendship and word-of-mouth advertising.

4.1 Implications of weak ties: production of an innovative festival program

The data shows that the cultivation of weak ties facilitates the development of an innovative festival program. In the case of the AFCM, the interaction between the board of management and the local business sphere was a key inspiration for the development of the program. A strong board helped connect the artistic director with people who would not otherwise be

connected. Over time the network expanded to include actors from mining, marine science and hospitality.

Chamber music, as a music genre, tends to target the educated and affluent, thus it is often depicted as elitist. As Walle (2003) notes, “serious” art festivals are often shunned by a large percentage of the population, which in the process, discourages sponsors. Cognisant of these limitations, the AFCM incorporated an educational theme and non-music elements into the festival program. Examples of innovation include themed dinners (Chef’s in the North), guest speaker talks on current issues (Reef Talks). A good example of horizontal networking was the Outback Tour which brought together a diversity of services: transport, food, accommodation and chamber music. This tour was designed to appeal to visitors from Southern Australia who wanted a winter escape to the tropics. Innovation is also shown in formation of new artistic partnerships and fusion of different musical traditions. The festival has featured performances from the local ‘Dance North’ company and from well known indigenous (didgeridoo) musicians. Themed concerts (Symphony under the Stars, Concert on Orpheus Island) were also introduced, which appear interesting and seductive and evoke romantic imagery of an idyllic tropical island. In practical terms, staging productions outdoors poses challenges such as potential demand to equipment from salt water, acoustics, transportation, etc. Given the inconvenience to artists, this initiative was subsequently abandoned even though it was commercially viable. These attempts to enrich the festival program and communicate local identity were acknowledged by Arts Queensland. A comment was “...the festival is distinctive and unique to the region...it connects thematically with the location, with its environment and history.”

5.1 Discussion

Attempts were made by festival organisers to draw on, and communicate, local resources and values, in the festival program, which contributes to social capital building. This finding is consistent with the literature which shows a clear pattern linking the degree of local resident involvement as participants, organisers and audience members to the magnitude and range of positive impacts (Derrett, 2003; Moscardo, 2005).

The analysis shows the importance of weak ties for novel festival programs and of cultivating local contacts for communicating ‘local identity’ and ‘local values’ (Green, 2002; cited by Quinn, 2005: 249). The board of management plays a key role in connecting people one would otherwise not expect to be connected and in providing a festival with the skills and expertise to stage new events. This is an example of “bridging social capital” which refers to open networks and to our connections with people who are unlike us (see Patulny and Svendsen, 2007, for a review). The importance of weak ties for access to greater variety of information (Granovetter, 1973) is shown in this study. Distant contacts play a crucial role in the diffusion of innovation (Granovetter, 1973) since they are privy to information that one’s immediate circle does not have. Nooteboom (1999) has put forward a similar argument, claiming that weak ties can lead to greater ‘cognitive distance’, in other words, different ways of seeing, interpreting and dealing with the world. Another argument in favour of weak ties is linked to the transient nature of festivals. As Walle (2003: 78) notes, festivals can suffer from the “out of sight, out of mind” syndrome during the year, which can undercut the raising of funds. Festivals are short-term events that aside from memories leave little in their wake (Gibson and Connell, 2003). Attempts have been made to extend Granovetter’s notion of weak ties (Grabher, 2004), and in the context of cultural tourism, weak-and-lasting ties are linked to the sustainability of cultural tourism projects (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006).

This study is consistent with the literature on cultural enterprises that associate dense networks with the attraction of resources (Scott, 2000; Kong, 2005). An important finding is that increasing density demands time, a commodity that is short supply for community-

driven, volunteer-dependent festivals. The analysis revealed pressures on festival managers to adopt institutional norms and frictions between tourism and community interests, which is consistent with the literature. Scholars highlight the fragile nature of networks (Baerenholdt and Haldrup, 2006) and show how the multi-dimensionality of networks can present conflicts and power struggles (Larson, 2002). Likewise, the literature on festival tourism reveal tensions between community and commercial perspectives (Gibson et al., 2005; Quinn, 2005) and conflicts over national and place identity (Gibson and Davidson, 2004). This study is valuable because it helps powerful stakeholders, those who exert financial clout, understand what is happening in the network and sensitizes them to conflicts, and in this way also suggests ways of managing networks, perhaps by adopting the role of mediator and mentor rather than the voice of authority.

5.11 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to reveal the types of relationships and networks that underpin music tourism. This study highlights that the future of arts festivals is enhanced by a practical engagement with the locality. Relationships within the local business and social spheres create a greater interest in, and audience for the festivals, which in turn, contributes to the vitality and viability of festivals and events. The link with the locality is important because it is a source of differentiation and gives a festival uniqueness. On a policy level, if direct economic impacts are privileged over the socio-cultural impacts, this shift runs the risk of creating a gulf between music and tourism, generating pressures towards compromise, which, in the long-run, could result in local support falling away.

Table 1: Profile of festivals

Case	The Undara Experience (U)	Ten Days in the Towers (T)	The Australian Festival of Chamber Music (A)
Music genre	Opera	Australian Country Music	Chamber Music
Management group	Private sector/entrepreneur	Community-led committee	Board of Management
Estimated Attendance	300	7 000	11 000
Audience base	Domestic	Domestic	Domestic and international
Primary purpose for holding the festival	Profit-driven	Economic development and cultural benefit	Cultural benefit
Estimated economic impact on region	Limited economic flows to region (worth up to 90,000€).	Up to 2 million euros	Up to 4 million euros

Table II: Grid Matrix with an analysis of the three festivals against network constructs

Key network constructs	Case U	Case T	Case A
Theme 1: Implications of a dense/expanding network			
Resource acquisition	Yes	Some	Yes
Spread of institutional norms	Yes	Yes	Yes
Value clashes	No	Yes	Some
Co-branding/packaging of festival for consumption	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme 2: Implications of strong ties within artistic networks			
Nurturing of talent	Some	Yes	Yes
Sustaining local musical traditions	Some	Yes	Some
Word-of-mouth advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme 3: Implications of weak ties			
Retaining local business support	Some	Yes	Some
Innovative and diverse festival program	Some	Some	Yes

Key:

No = no clear evidence

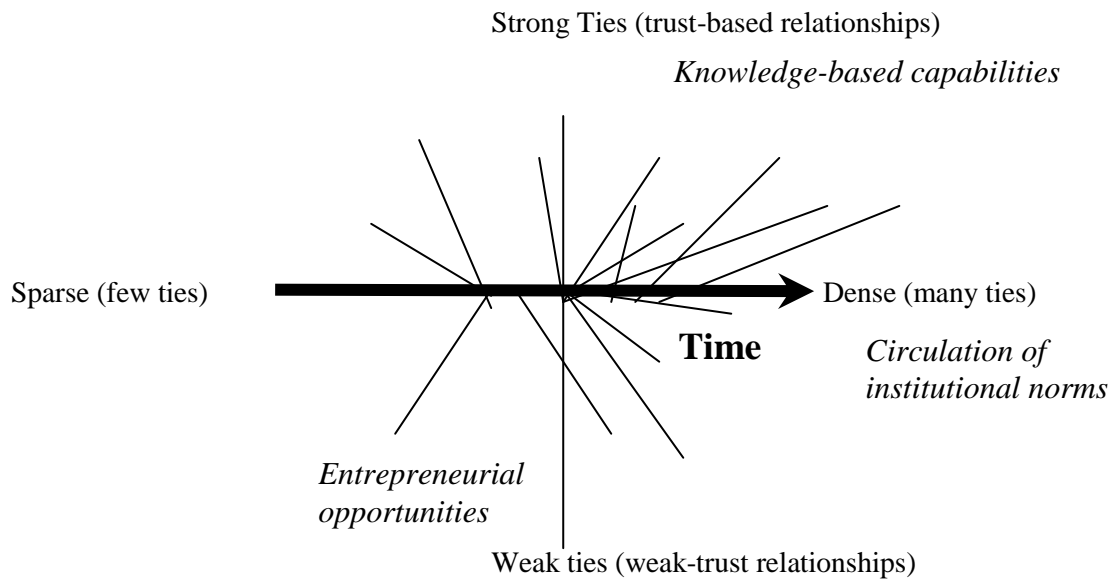
Some = some evidence, largely indirect

Yes = some clear evidence

Table 111: Strength/Weakness of Tie: Summary of Criteria for Analysis

Network Actor	Tie	Level of Interaction	Outcomes/Key Differentiating Factors
Artists and performers	Strong	Intensive	Problem-solving; gate-keeping/judging creative work; information-sharing; friendship; word-of-mouth advertising.
Government Agencies & Public Sector Institutions	Weak	Sporadic	Eligibility for Grant-Aid. Sponsorship.
Board Members	Strong	Extensive	Appropriate Persons to Turn to For Advice. Influence on Strategy
Local business and industry	Weak	Sporadic	Influence on Festival Program, diversity and uniqueness. Sponsorship. Building Goodwill. Keeping Local Music Traditions Alive
Music Clubs, Music Departments in Schools & Universities	Strong	Extensive	Nurturing of Talent. Music Appreciation. Master Classes
Other events and other arts organisations	Weak	Sporadic	Co-branding, marketing and learning

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: density, strong and weak-tie connections



Source: Burt (1992), Granovetter (1973), Uzzi (1996), Pavlovich (2003).

Key

Density = Each actor has a large number of ties or contacts; refers to the extent to which actors in the network know each other; if everyone in the network knows everyone else, this leads to information exchange, strong norms of behaviour, legitimacy, conformity, constraints.

Sparseness = Fragmented nature of ties leading to less efficient information exchange, some actors have reduced access to resources, fewer opportunities for building legitimacy and strong norms.

Strong ties = Intense, intimate, strong trust-based relationships. Tightly knit ties, contacts with others within a connected group; support, knowledge-building

Weak ties = Superficial, casual, weak trust relationships, arms-length ties. Contacts with people in the more distant environment, unconnected group; novel information

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