



## TALKING ABOUT AUDIENCES

### Spotlight Conversation 2 Transcript

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and former Vice President, Major League Baseball Productions

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00:00:00 Steven Winn: Well, thanks again to all of you for being here today. First of all, I want to start off by commending the audience for agitating for questions from Alan Gilbert at the beginning which was sort of not in the program. And I thought it was a great metaphor in a way for what we're talking about today. We tend to think of the audience as being this sort of, particularly for classical music, as being this mute mass of people who are meant to be quiet.

00:00:29 And it was sort of great when we're talking about the audience to have the audience sort of talk back to us right away. And just a little piece of housekeeping, we are going to let-give you much more forum for that in the-after we take a break. After this session, there will be questions, and we'll all be out here again, all except for Alan who has other duties today in addition to nursing his wounds about the softball game. I guess we all have to keep talking about that all day long. But there will be more time for questions afterwards so if you'll hold them, but again thank you for being-already teaching us something about audiences before we got started.

00:01:05 Our next guest is Elizabeth Scott who has-is wearing one of her many hats here today, and we're also going to refer to one of her previous hats as well. Her current title is the Chief Media and Digital Officer for the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, but she came there in probably all that as it turns not so improbably from another position as the Vice President for Major League Baseball Productions.

00:01:29           And I wanted to ask Elizabeth to start off by talking maybe about your formerly a little bit and about the kinds of things that you learned about audiences for baseball and how they kind of bridge to the path you've traveled and what we can-what they teach us about audiences for classical music as well and for orchestras.

Elizabeth Scott:       Absolutely. Well, good afternoon. Thank you to all of you for being here and to the San Francisco Symphony for inviting me to join this conversation about audiences, which matter for every kind of entertainment that's out there and certainly something that baseball's focused on all the time, and we in the performing arts have to keep front and center.

00:02:03           Things that I learned in baseball, I spent a good 12 years at Major League Baseball. The first few years in a legal capacity, which actually informs some of the rights issues that are impact a lot of what we're going to be talking about today and have been talking about but for the substantial part of that time as the Vice President of Programming and Business Affairs from MLB Productions. So my perspective is uniquely skewed by that of a storyteller that of someone with responsibility for stewarding and archiving the great history of the national pastime in the archive that was the MLB Productions archive.

00:02:38           And from that perspective I could tell you I had the pleasure of being in and amongst the game for that period of time where digitally a revolution took place at which sport and baseball

particularly was at the forefront. In the period of my time there, the individual clubs aggregated all of their online rights and assets into one space under what you all know as MLB.com probably, Major League Baseball Advanced Media.

00:03:09           And in that position of aggregated content, a stronger, stronger position I think for content than disparate little places, the sport [unintelligible] forward and deployed technology in ways I think we can all agree has been tremendously impactful for engaging audiences. And something that I think performing arts can't do and can look to as we look to make our way in a space where things are just moving so, so quickly.

00:03:39           I like to think of us as juggling or tap dancing in shifting sands or quick sands of ever demin-ever fractionalizing channels, ever multiplying devices. How do we deal with this? And I think one thing I've learned from being at baseball is that being proactive in that space has been essential for the success of sport and will need to be essential for the success-the continued success and relevance of performing arts.

00:04:14           Being able to lev -- not just seeing it as a challenge but actually as an opportunity. Being able to leverage technology in a way to give more ways and impactful ways in to what it is that we do. Sport has absolutely done that. Performing arts can certainly do that and do that more.

Steven Winn: One of the things I wanted to pick up on because it made me think of it at the local connection here. One of the things that you were involved with was the great documentary about the Giants season that you all did. It was HBO I think.

00:04:45 Elizabeth Scott: On Showtime actually, yes. The League's first docuseries reality show. It's [unintelligible] franchise.

Steven Winn: Maybe some of you saw [unintelligible] or were aware of it during the Giant's great run there. It happened to be during their World Series [unintelligible].

Elizabeth Scott: It immediately followed their season as they looked to defend that championship.

Steven Winn: Exactly.

Elizabeth Scott: Exactly.

Steven Winn: I mean that kind of storytelling, which was technological. It was about sort of breaking down barriers of going places in the clubhouse and places in players' homes. How might that sort of thing work in the arts world?

00:05:16 I mean can you see an analogy there or. . .?

Elizabeth Scott: Absolutely. That's an example of where we at MLB Productions looked to get increased access. Access we didn't have as a matter of right under our collective bargaining agreements. All right. So both sport and performing arts live in that unique world that has a business structure that is formed by the challenges and the realities of union labor negotiations.

00:05:42 So that kind of access was access that needed to be secured. It needed to be won over from the unions. And I can tell you that the -- there was fairly quick recognition on quote both sides as to what the power of giving that kind of access to the consumer could be. It just had to be mediated and negotiated as to how we might do that. But what it means to travel with the team on the road, to have cameras in places that you don't typically have them is to give access to audiences.

00:06:12 Access is a form of status for us. It gives us power as consumers, right. Knowing what goes on behind the script. And that is something that we might look to do in any number of ways with the performing arts. Historically, performing arts have made meaningful access into the rehearsal process a fairly forbidden thing, right? That's highly insensitively negotiated at the collective bargaining agreement table as I understand it.

00:06:42 We might look to experiment a little bit more in that space. An example of that even for sport, this most recent spring training, which I was not associated with as I was in my new role already.

And nimbleness, experimentation I think is an important thing that we can look to adopt as we're finding our way. There was a willingness to experiment with what it might mean for every player to wear a mic during a game in some of this most recently played spring training games.

00:07:13

This is highly fought over, the idea that something might be captured that would be inappropriately communicated. It's that last divide, right, between the personal experience of a player in the game and what he does on the field. And that kind of thing is something that we might give a little bit more access to. What it means to be getting to the point where you all sit relatively passively in that audience and experience what happens on this stage. Being a part of that process getting there can make you feel like you are a participant in it.

00:07:46

Steven Winn: I was thinking about that last night. At the Barbary Coast concert there was some -- I happened to be sitting fairly close and watching some exchanges going on between a couple of cellists, and I'm sure many of you thought this also. What are they saying to each other? What is the conductor saying beyond just giving the beat and indicating certain interpretive nuances and so forth. What's going communicatively up there? We're experiencing communication one way, but there's lots going on up here. And might there be ways of sort of opening that seemingly locked treasure chest of processes?

00:08:16 Elizabeth Scott: Absolutely. I mean have we ever really given voice to musicians or have musicians permitted their voice other than what it is they trained so hard and honed so excellently as it relates to what they do, right? So here's an example of something I've thought about could be a neat parallel. I'm from Boston, so I'm going to give an example that relates to the '04 World Series, which was a very exciting one for me and for fans from Boston.

00:08:43 When we did that World Series film, we offered our -- actually it was another program that was not unlike the World Series film. We offered an alternative sound track where you could choose the narrator of that particular film to be either Joe Torre or Terry Francona, right. But you heard the manager, so you don't normally hear talking. You see them with their funny faces in the dugouts, right? Narrating the experience of that tremendously exciting post season series. What might that mean if we heard a soloist do that in conjunction with the concerto that he's playing this evening?

00:09:19 In a second screen experience that you might have in conjunction with watching a broadcast or that you might have in conjunction with listening to a recording? Or hearing those two cellists talk about what it means? What if we had all of the members of the orchestra miked talking their way through a performance that you could have one way into it that's other than the watching of the playing what they do and the listening to what they do?



Steven Winn: Who knows, the cellists might say things that are more [unintelligible] censorable than the shortstop.

Elizabeth Scott: It's true. It's true.

00:09:46 Steven Winn: Let's talk about -- of course we already talked about audiences. Let's talk about the ways in which sports audiences are similar to classical music audiences and different from classical music audiences and how that informs some of the things that orchestras might do.

Elizabeth Scott: All right. Well, the similar ones are probably pretty obvious right off the bat, right? Both forms of entertainment exalt virtuosic-the lives experience a virtuosic performance in a local and location-based environment, right?

00:10:24 It doesn't mean you can't experience that outside of there, but that's what's exalted, right? The being there for the game. The being there for the concert. Audiences are, as we heard in our last panel, for both of these are in sport forms aging, at least in the areas of the traditional touch points so the live attendants and the broadcast. Those are some basic ones that where the differences are existed where we might do some interesting putting a lens on what we do for performing arts and looking through a couple of the things that sport does are offering platforms for engagement and participation by the audience.

- 00:11:08 I think historically and also more recently with technology we've seen a great activity of sport in giving platforms for participation by the audience. Think about it just from the youth standpoint, right. Little league has the mandate of congressional charter in America. Okay? The equivalent for that of course is [unintelligible]. I don't know that we have that here in America yet. But that's one thing right there from the youth engagement standpoint.
- 00:11:41 From even just pre-game, during game and post-game, we've got platforms for participation that exist much more robustly in sport. Pre-game, what's batting practice? Batting practice is a chance to experience the players in a more informal environment to see them make mistakes. That's okay. It's not forbidden to perhaps get an autograph to engage and interact with the players so to speak. I don't know that our pre-concert lectures do that by way of participation.
- 00:12:11 Now they certainly-there's an information flow. That's for sure. But it's not participatory in the same sort of way. I'm not saying it needs to be, but there might be an opportunity for us to do something that's a little bit more participatory. Post-game, we've got the equivalent now in many platforms of talk shows, right? Sports talk shows where everybody's voice is, if not valued, at least authorized, right? Do we offer that through-do we actively facilitate that, curate that as performing arts organizations.

00:12:42           Or are we scared of it? And so that's an interesting space as well. Those conversations are happening anyway, but might we actually want to facilitate them to really have folks feel they have a voice in their experience. And then just things like fantasy camps, fantasy leagues, those sorts of things where there's control exercised by the fan in and around the thing that they have a passion about and participation. I think that's something that not as much of happens here.

00:13:12           The example that was just given of the community music makers is a great -- I think to me that's the example of a fantasy camp, right? For those of you who don't know, a fantasy camp is like when you get to go onto the sacred hallowed field of your team of dreams and interact maybe with a few former great players but to experience that sacred place as your own, right? I feel that when I sit in this audience because when I lived in this great city I had the pleasure of singing with the San Francisco Symphony chorus, and I feel more vested in this hall for having performed on this stage and would had I been a part of the choral community group that came in here.

00:13:51           Just like fans do when they get to do sleepovers in AT&T Park. There's something about that connectivity with the space that gives you participation. It's exciting.

Steven Winn:       That's true. It's very true. I was thinking as you were talking also sort of another area that Major League Baseball, MLB.com -- all the teams have a site, and I go on my team's site, the Phillies and read

sort of woefully and shot-in-Freudily about the team's woes and so forth. I wonder if we could encourage the audience to speak up that way in classical music also?

00:14:21 After the concerts, some sort of forum for -- everybody applauds, and that's one kind of connection we make. But I often feel with myself and with my neighbors also that there's more to be said. There's still -- the connection keeps going. The music keeps ringing as you're going home. What if there were some way to engage the audience further outside the temporal walls of the concert as well?

Elizabeth Scott: Yeah, absolutely. One of the big differences I think between the arts and sport is I don't know that our performing arts organizations, certainly our schools less and less unfortunately, are giving our fans with the vernacular to be able to feel like they can be at that table and talk the same way that people in sport.

00:15:08 And so I might encourage performing arts organizations to be thinking practically about how we can do that, right. And also this historical notion of curation coming from one space, from an expert on high, is something that's being challenged every day with the democratization of entertainment participation that technology offers, right?

00:15:40 So curation 15 years ago may have been more about an expert saying that this is what goes together, and here's your package. Today you might argue that curation is as much -- think about

completely out of sport, completely out of performing arts, it's crowd wisdom, right? It's algorithms. If you like X, you will like Y when you go for the 15th time onto Amazon.com.

00:16:11           And it's experts. And maybe our notions of curations are going to be impacted by that. There might be something a little scary about the idea that crowd wisdom is going to be influencing these things, right? I mean social media is in many, many ways about, and whether we want it to happen or not, it is about the seeding of brands in some ways to the customer. The customer is increasingly in charge. How will that find a way or how might that be impacting how we're going to be curating?

00:16:44           Steven Winn:           Yeah, I was thinking of a discussion with my daughter who is 20, and she and her friends have nothing to do with restaurant critics. Yelp is where-that's where the wisdom of the crowds is.

Elizabeth Scott:    Exactly.

Steven Winn:        Might that somehow come over into the -- well, let's talk a little bit about what you're doing because your charge at Lincoln Center is about the digital realm and the media. Let's talk about some of the things that you're thinking about and how you're starting to push the envelope at Lincoln Center.

Elizabeth Scott: Yeah, well I can tell you that the digital strategy there is an evolving one. Just the mere creation of this role, a Chief Digital and Media role, is a new one for the performing arts generally at an executive level and certainly new for Lincoln Center.

00:17:22 I can tell you that the priorities for Lincoln Center as it's moving forward is to really be using technology in the following ways. We must-we have a mandate to be deploying, leveraging technology to engage our audiences. Take those people who are already existing audiences, whether casually or whether avid, passionate fans, and giving them new points and increased ways of accessing that content.

00:17:54 We have a mandate to be using that technology to be growing audiences, to be finding audiences where they have not existed before. This means beyond the barriers of whether it's socioeconomic for being able to find your way to a hall that way or even geographic and then certainly educationally, right? So those are going to be key parts of what we're doing. I think the-I think just -- I'll say it over and over when I'm talking about what technology can do and what we are doing -- is offering additional ways in.

00:18:29 And we'll be experimenting as we do it. Is it with free webcasts for certain things? Is it with -- yes, it will be. Is it taking the traditional way that we have given audiences access by way of public television and upping that ante with second-screened experiences

that allow some of the things I talked about at the beginning, right? Ways in and engagement with artists in ways that they haven't had a chance to before. Absolutely.

00:18:59           And then just data is also a real huge like holy grail of digital strategies right now. So making priority out of getting that data and mining that data for your audiences at least a couple ways to be able to reach and segment and target your audiences and to allow those folks in turn to be able to meaningfully mine and make sense of what it is you offer [unintelligible].

Steven Winn:       Yeah. One thing technology is so much about is about speed and immediacy and the sense of being there almost before the event happens and certainly while it's happening.

00:19:33           Whereas in the classical music field, technology has tended to be things that are sort of polished after-the-fact products, LP recordings, CDs, digital downloads, great performances kinds of things. How can those two sort of seemingly distant points come together? I mean you talked about -- I mean might we have seen -- might there be a way to break the sort of the union stranglehold and some of the other traditional restraints on that sort of thing and for - - some of the Barbary Coast concert could have been live streamed, for example.

00:20:06           I mean are those kinds of things where you have a sense of it's happening at Davies right now, and I'm at home right now, and I

want to be there. I'm seeing a little bit of it. I'm getting a taste that's going to drive audiences here more. Is that one place we might be going?

Elizabeth Scott: Absolutely. There's an interesting irony actually if you think about this perfectionism and excellence that has animated media releases. I like to call it the polishing of your brand or your audio legacy, right?

00:20:34 This idea that we're not going to let live anything that wasn't this close to perfect. When actually what we're in the business of on a daily basis is live performance where things can and do go wrong, right? The horn might [unintelligible] the. . .solo.

Steven Winn: The cell phone might go off in the middle of the [unintelligible].

Elizabeth Scott: [Unintelligible]. The cell phone might go off, exactly. And so it's a funny dynamic, right? But it's a baggage that we bring from a media standpoint as to what has been a priority.

00:21:03 And it certainly made sense 10, 20 years ago. Getting everyone to re-think what the power of media is in this day where even if we forbid someone or the capture of what it is we're doing at home, it's happening anyway. And it's funny. It's way out there, right? Many of you may remember the La Scala a season or so ago, the booing off of stage by a tenor. This was up on YouTube.



00:21:32 Steven Winn: It was all over YouTube.

Elizabeth Scott: All over YouTube with dozens of postings, not just a single one. This is the new world we live in. If we take the approach to media to intellectual property -- and I come from a background of intellectual property law. If we take the founding fathers' notions of what ownership of content means to an age in which anybody and everybody can put it all out there, we're going to lose opportunities I think.

00:22:02 Now it's not a simple snap of the fingers. It really isn't. And I don't even think it's as easy as saying let everybody do what they want to in halls. Although I will tell you, I was out at the National Association of Broadcasters speaking on a Society of Motion Picture Television Engineers conference or something a week or two ago. And on an alternative content in theatres and cinemas set of panels where you had the scandalous and sacrilegious statements of the heads of cinemas saying, "You know what? In a few years' time, what you may be hearing before you start your movie is not please turn off your mobile devices but please turn them on."

00:22:44 And so what kind of world might be that one that we live in? And I think about this stuff a lot. I mean we all talk about tweet seats and does it make sense to have that in halls. And the funny thing is we actually have to be thinking way past that. All right. On the Lincoln Center campus in conjunction with our great resident organization, the New York Philharmonic, we have the challenge of

a hall renova-I mean an exciting opportunity of a hall renovation ahead of us several years down the line.

00:23:15            Tweet seats will be as old in that age as I don't even know what to liken it to. Maybe it's 8-tracks today, right? So really it will be. We talk about oh, the distraction of screens in the hall. You've all read the article where Google glasses are going to let us, without any distraction to anybody else, have all kinds of information coming into us that you can't even -- you may be doing it right now without me knowing it, right?

Steven Winn:        I am indeed.

Elizabeth Scott:    You're reading your script.

Steven Winn:        I'm watching a ballgame right now.

Elizabeth Scott:    Exactly. And a number of husbands will be doing that. No, I'm kidding.

00:23:45            In hall, that's how we're going to build our audience. I'm kidding. But that's -- we have to get past this thinking about literally what is happening today. That's one of the challenges for our industry is being reactive. We have to be proactive. We have to -- we know that we are in midst of a mobile and tablet explosion right now. Right in the middle of 2014, there'll be more mobile tablets in production than combined laptops and desktops.

00:24:13           What are we doing to be there? What are we doing now as a performing arts organization to be there, not to respond to it once it's happened. Baseball was one of the first to be in the app space, right? It was one of the first to release the MLB At Bat app, and it remains the number one sports app. What's the equivalent of that for us? Now again, as non-profits, we don't have the leisure of being able to spin down a whole bunch of dead ends or anything like that.

00:24:44           But it doesn't excuse us from being proactive.

Steven Winn:       Yeah. Yeah. I mean all we have to do -- it's a great point about technology is that whatever you think you're dealing with now you won't be dealing with. I mean all you have to do is think about the resistance to supertitles not so very long ago.

Elizabeth Scott:   Perfect example.

Steven Winn:       Within the last 30 years. And now I mean it's just-it's the battle long since past over that turns out to be great. That's technology for the audience that absolutely enhances the experience. Why couldn't it be about we don't know yet?

00:25:12           Elizabeth Scott:     That was a back-of-seats digital distraction that was going to happen quote over my dead body said great maestros of yore. It happened over their bodies, and they were not

dead and arguably has revolutionized the art form at least for Americans for whom. . .

Steven Winn: Even The Met which was sort of the National League holding out against the designated hitter. Even they fell eventually. There's so much more to talk about. We hope you will come back. This whole question of audiences is fascinating, and we will indeed hear more from you when we come back.

00:25:47 So we'll be back in about 15 minutes. Thanks.

Elizabeth Scott: Thank you.

[Applause]

[End of recorded material.]