

## Artistic Integrity and Innovation vs. Selling Out (Part I)

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The typical musician wants to be successful. However, the meaning of success will likely be different for various artists: Is success defined as producing an artistic product that the musician finds aesthetically pleasing? Is success defined as being recognized by a wide following (being popular)? Is success defined as monetary gain? Or, are all of the above needed? Can all of these be achieved, and how do these decisions influence the artistic making process? These are important questions to consider. When an artist produces a musical work with the primary purpose of financial gain, above aesthetics, this is often colloquially referred to as “selling out.” Different individuals possess various views on what this may be and/or if this demeans or degrades the artist.

Chuck Mangione’s [Feels so Good](#) written in 1977 reached no. 4 on the pop charts. I believe Mangione enjoyed his composition; the song became popular, and he made money.

Heinz Karl Gruber’s [Exposed Throat](#) written in 2000 is a very demanding piece that requires the trumpet soloist to create various sounds on the instrument. I believe Gruber valued his music. The song does not contain much commercial value.

Assembled in this section you will find a wide range of sources: a few articles, videos, and pictures – including selections from a wide range of your faculty’s musical experiences.

First, in “Pop and Pornography,” are producers selling music or sex? Is sexuality just an extension of the musical product? Knowing the thoughts of a leading songwriter may provide some insights. Next, there have been many efforts to popularize classical music. In “Classical Music and Pop,” again, is human beauty being used to sell music, or is this just part of a complete artistic product? The question is asked: “should the performer overshadow the musical product?”

Dr. Terry Ewell provides a novel version of *Flight of the Bumblebee* that has been quite popular on YouTube. Is this an interesting way to showcase the bassoon to greater audiences or a frivolous use of technology that detracts from the musician’s artistry?

Read the mission of Genghis Barbie, an all female French horn quartet comprised of highly trained musicians. Does their mission present music in an interesting new light and expand classical music to greater audiences? Or, are these highly trained musicians with degrees from America’s greatest conservatories demeaning themselves?

A series of performances and videos follow. *Dead Elvis* is a classical composition by a major 20<sup>th</sup> Century composer. The entrance of the soloist dressed as Elvis is striking in any performance of Michael Daugherty’s work. Because there is an artistic purpose to this costume, is this Elvis impersonation more acceptable aesthetically than others?

Trumpeter Maurice André produced approximately two hundred solo recordings. He was a legend and finished his career as an EMI recording artist. View the recording of Maurice André performing the final movement of Marcello’s *Concerto in D minor* for a live audience. There were no classical music videos at the time. The current trumpet artist with EMI is Alison Balsom, an outstanding soloist from England. She performs a beautiful version of Niccolò Paganini’s *Caprice No. 24*. Does the ambiance and presentation of the video add to the aesthetic appeal, or is this just a blatant attempt to market the music? By the way, both of these recordings feature transcriptions. These are works performed by a different instrument than the composer originally intended. Some musicians or critics do not feel performing transcriptions is as legitimate as performing an original composition for the instrument.