

Peer Review

Ji, Laetitia. 2026. "Who Gets Heard From the Top? A Longitudinal Study of Access and Representation in Elite Youth Classical Music." *Journal of High School Science* 10 (2): 176–205. <https://doi.org/10.64336/001c.161756>.

Dear author,

Please find attached, a chatgpt output of my proposal.

I read your paper. Right now, its results and conclusions are not entirely unexpected and maybe even self-obvious. This implies marginal contribution to the field. Your paper shows persistent structure but does not propose mechanisms to change it.

With the addition of "A set of experimentally testable rubric modifications designed to alter selection distributions and repertoire diversity", I anticipate that your paper will make a contribution in this field.

Best,

Shireesh Apte

Dear author,

You are welcome. A similar movement is taking place in Chess, where pieces can be randomly arranged initially. This places much less emphasis on years of training and more emphasis on ideas, non-obvious patterns, and disruption of bayesian stochastics.

You want to show that because the pattern has shown no sign of changing (as your manuscript already shows), this is what must be done to bring about change.

Best,

Shireesh Apte

Thank you for addressing my comments. You still need a mathematical framework so that it is implementable, falsifiable and objectively measurable.

1. You still need a rubric redesign presented as a formal mathematical model so that the proposals are empirically testable and expose assumptions. To that effect, please insert Appendix F (attached file) into the manuscript. The math is straightforward; however, if you have not taken any math classes, please ask one of your math teachers to explain it to you. Make sure you understand the logic.

2. You then need a paragraph included in the main manuscript (insert into section 5.5) to seamlessly bridge the main text with Appendix F. See below for this paragraph

To clarify how such changes could affect observed outcomes, the selection process can be viewed more explicitly as a scoring function that maps applicant characteristics into selection decisions. In its current form, this function appears to place substantial weight on technical proficiency and alignment with canonical repertoire, both of which are strongly associated with access to long-term, resource-intensive training pathways. Appendix F formalizes this intuition by introducing an augmented scoring framework that incorporates additional dimensions capturing repertoire, interpretive, and structural innovation. Within this framework, modifying the relative weights assigned to these components provides a concrete mechanism through which institutional rubric design can influence selection outcomes. In particular, increasing the weight placed on innovation-related dimensions is expected, under plausible assumptions, to reduce the dependence of selection probability on socioeconomic advantage and to expand the range of competitive submissions. Importantly, these innovation-related dimensions need not rely solely on subjective human evaluation; they can be operationalized using computational methods applied to audio or symbolic representations of performances, where features such as tempo trajectories, dynamic variation, articulation patterns, and harmonic structure are compared against reference distributions derived from canonical works. Such approaches allow for consistent and scalable estimation of deviation from established norms, thereby reducing reliance on purely subjective judgment while preserving

reproducibility. This formalization also generates a set of testable predictions linking rubric changes to measurable shifts in both repertoire composition and the socioeconomic distribution of performers' hometowns, thereby connecting the descriptive findings reported here to a structured, empirically evaluable intervention framework.
