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Quiet Luxury and Brand Building in Classical Music Institutions

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Abstract This study examines the marketing strategies of classical music institutions through the conceptual lens of quiet luxury. Quiet luxury refers to a paradigm in which status signaling is constructed not through overt ostentation, but through cultural capital, aesthetic sensibility, and intellectual distinction. Drawing upon the cases of the Borusan İstanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO), the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra, the research employs a qualitative content analysis to evaluate how these institutions construct brand identities and implement digital marketing strategies. The findings reveal how classical music institutions reconfigure quiet luxury consumption in digital environments by redefining cultural exclusivity. Although music and festival marketing have become increasingly visible research domains in the international literature, studies addressing the Turkish context remain limited. This study aims to contribute to filling this gap by offering an interdisciplinary perspective to both music and marketing scholarship and positioning itself as a foundational step for further research.

Keywords Classical music · quiet luxury · marketing

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Quiet Luxury and Brand Building in Classical Music Institutions

Arts marketing dates to five decades (Colbert & St. James, 2014, p. 566), and the relationship between classical music and arts consumers has become increasingly complex for classical music institutions in the age of digital platforms and artificial intelligence. Streaming platforms enable opera lovers to attend a performance remotely via online platforms, such as the New York Metropolitan Opera House (Ouazzani et al., 2023, p. 414). Similarly, classical music institutions should face fierce competition from digital platforms and other entertainment categories (Troilo et al., 2014, p. 634). Yet, regional or national symphony orchestras suffer from economic crises in different parts of the world due to declining concert attendance and an ageing concert population (Yavas, 1996, p. 123; Kolb, 2001, p. 15; Rizkallah, 2009, p. 111). In this challenging context, attracting new audiences for classical music, understanding consumer repurchase behavior for classical music concerts, and respecting communities' patterns of an orchestra become critical for a non-profit arts organization like a regional or national symphony orchestra (O'Sullivan, 2009, p. 220; Dobson, 2010, p. 112). Similarly, in response to the adoption of opera streaming platforms, the London Symphony Orchestra introduced smartphone applications to connect with young concertgoers (Gosling et al., 2016, p. 3).

Kolb (2001, p. 16) states that large classical music concerts have been performed since the end of the 17th century, and classical music has represented the Victorian ideal of improving the newly emerging middle class. As surveyed by numerous studies on classical music consumption, from a Bourdieusian "cultural omnivore" perspective, classical music tastes can represent reference points of class-based distinction, such as Blue Danube of Strauss favored by workers and Bach's pieces favored by consumers with higher level of cultural capital (Prior, 2011, p.126; Crawford et al., 2014, p. 486). On the other hand, audiences for live classical concert performances are predominantly older adults, whereas young classical music enthusiasts tend to prefer recorded classical music performances (Dobson, 2010, p. 111). The Bourdieusian "cultural omnivore" perspective may help classical music institutions attract diverse audiences with varying purposes, where a new form of luxury, quiet luxury, can position the related institution in a highly competitive and distracting context of classical music consumption.

As merely reflecting economic welfare, luxury consumption has become an expression of individual identity, aesthetic preference, and cultural affiliation. This transformation has led to a significant paradigm shift, particularly in the understanding of luxury consumption. Traditionally defined by logos, brand ostentation, and material ownership, the notion of conspicuous luxury has increasingly given way to a more introspective form of consumption -one that is symbolically rich and subtly expressed: *quiet luxury*. This new form of luxury offers a prestige model that highlights consumers' aesthetic taste, cultural capital, and intellectual distinction. Thus, consumption becomes not just the acquisition of products but also a silent performance of social position, cultural values, and lifestyle. The concept of quiet luxury has emerged as a novel and compelling phenomenon, especially in the context of contemporary marketing strategies. This transformation, visible in creative industries such as fashion, gastronomy, architecture, and the arts, also influences how cultural and artistic institutions redefine themselves.

Classical music institutions are natural embodiments of quiet luxury due to their historical associations with cultural elitism, intellectual privilege, and refined aesthetics. These institutions now face the need to reconstruct both their brand identities and their modes of engagement with audiences. This study examines how classical music institutions position themselves within the framework of quiet luxury and how they express themselves through digital platforms. The central research question examines how quiet luxury serves as a tool for brand positioning in arts marketing and how this concept is represented through classical

music institutions in the digital age. This study aims to analyse how classical music institutions construct their brand identities, design their digital marketing strategies, and manage a framework of quiet luxury. Through case studies of the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO), the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra, research seeks to contribute to the marketing literature. By focusing on the cases of the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO), the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, this analysis aims to illustrate how marketing strategies rooted in cultural capital are developed in various contexts. Furthermore, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how high culture domains-particularly classical music, which is often overlooked in marketing literature- exerts symbolic influence on consumer behaviour.

Literature Review

The literature on luxury consumption has traditionally emphasized visible status displays. Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption emphasized that individuals signal their social position through the overt ownership and display of luxury goods. Moving beyond material possessions, building on Bourdieu's analysis of taste and class distinction in *Distinction* (1984, p. 6-7), cultural capital can be understood as the embodied knowledge, aesthetic competence, and cultural participation through which social hierarchies are reproduced. A significant transformation in luxury consumption was later noted by Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012, p. 895), who emphasized a shift from ownership to access-based consumption, reflecting the dematerialization of goods and the creation of experiential value. This transition paved the way for forms of status expression that are less visible but rich in symbolism. Eckhardt, Belk, and Wilson (2015, p. 815) formally conceptualized inconspicuous consumption as a new form of elite distinction rooted in subtlety, aesthetic refinement, and cultural literacy rather than brand ostentation. Currid-Halkett (2017, p. 8) further expanded this view by identifying the rise of an aspirational class that signals status through education, arts participation, and lifestyle practices that remain largely invisible to mainstream audiences. From a marketing perspective, brand positioning theory (Ries & Trout, 1986, p. 12) and cultural branding approaches (Holt, 2004, p. 96) explain how brands construct symbolic meaning to differentiate within competitive markets. Aaker's (1997, p. 349) brand personality model demonstrates how sophisticated and intellectual personality traits foster emotional connections with consumers, particularly in luxury positioning. Pine and Gilmore's (1998, p. 66) experience economy framework posits that contemporary consumers increasingly prioritize multisensory and emotional experiences, positioning cultural activities as value-added, luxury consumption. Within the field of arts consumption, empirical studies consistently demonstrate a link between participation in classical music and cultural capital. Research indicates that live concert attendance is still associated with a high-status identity and aesthetic distinction (Dobson, 2010, p. 112), while taste patterns in classical music reflect class-based differentiation (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 485). These insights position classical music institutions as natural embodiments of quiet Luxury -spaces where prestige is performed through refined cultural engagement rather than conspicuous material display.

Together, this evolving literature situates quiet luxury as a multidimensional form of consumption rooted not only in economic capital, but also in cultural sophistication, intellectual refinement, and experiential value -qualities that align closely with the branding and audience strategies of contemporary classical music institutions.

Table 1
Literature Summary

Conceptual Contribution	Key Source
Foundations of conspicuous consumption / visible status display	Veblen (1899)
Brand positioning and symbolic meaning differentiation	Ries & Trout (1981)
Cultural capital and class-based aesthetic distinction	ourdieu (1984)
Brand personality: sophisticated identity in luxury marketing	Aaker (1997
Experience economy / multisensory cultural value creation	Pine & Gilmore (1998)
Cultural branding strategy and symbolic market positioning	Holt (2004)
Classical music audience elitism and symbolic boundaries	Dobson (2010)
Sociological patterns of taste in classical music	Prior (2011)
Shift from ownership to access-based consumption	Bardhi & Eckhardt (2012)
Class-based consumption and classical music engagement	Crawford et al. (2014)
Definition of inconspicuous (quiet) consumption	Eckhardt, Belk & Wilson (2015)
Aspirational class & invisible elitism in cultural consumption	Currid-Halkett (2017)

Luxury consumption practices have undergone a significant transformation in recent years. Moving away from conspicuous and overt forms of consumption, a more refined, symbolic, and culturally grounded understanding -referred to as *quiet luxury*- has come to the forefront. Classical music institutions, due to their historical associations with elitism and aesthetic refinement, have become natural embodiments of quiet luxury. In today's rapidly digitizing world, the brand identity and consumer engagement strategies of classical music institutions are being reshaped by new marketing dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of *quiet luxury* has recently emerged as a significant foundation in the sociology of consumption and marketing literature. Currid-Halkett (2017, p. 8) defines quiet luxury as consumption practices that are low in visibility but high in symbolic meaning, in contrast to traditional conspicuous consumption. The roots of the quiet luxury concept can be traced along the historical trajectory of modern consumer society. While Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption positioned luxury as a visible indicator of status in the early 20th century, Bourdieu's (1984, p. 7) concept of cultural capital later pointed to more symbolic and sophisticated forms of distinction. Especially after World War II, the rise in economic prosperity made luxury consumption more accessible to the expanding middle class. However, the true elites adopted more refined, subtle, and symbolic consumption practices to differentiate themselves (Truong et al., 2008, p. 656). In the 21st century, the rise of sustainability, ethical consumption, and minimalism has further reinforced the logic of inconspicuous luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012, p. 21). In this context, quiet luxury has evolved into a complex combination of economic power, cultural capital, ethical consciousness, and aesthetic refinement. Today, cultural practices such as classical music have become prominent symbolic domains for this multidimensional construction of status.

In this new form of luxury, consumers no longer signal their status through brand logos, but rather through intellectual capital, educational background, participation in cultural events, and aesthetic taste. Cultural production fields such as classical music, opera, literary festivals, and contemporary art events have become central arenas for quiet luxury (Belk et al., 2013, p. 492). In this understanding, consumers' aesthetic sensitivity and cultural literacy become primary determinants. Thus, cultural practices such as classical music serve not only as sources of aesthetic satisfaction but also as markers of intellectual distinction. Participation in classical music concerts has increasingly come to symbolize a specific lifestyle and cultural

capital.

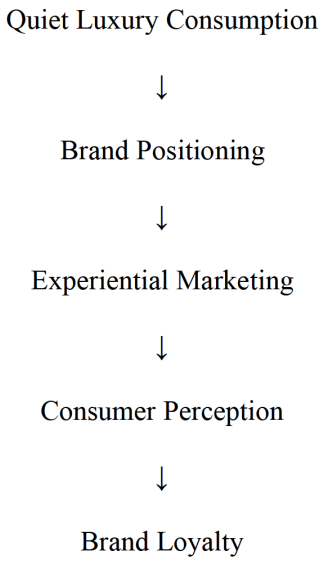
Brand positioning theory is a core concept in marketing, explaining how brands are perceived by consumers and how they differentiate themselves from competitors (Ries & Trout, 1981; p. 29). Positioning occurs not only through product features but also through symbolic meanings constructed in the consumer's mental map. In the case of classical music institutions, brand positioning generates a layered perception that simultaneously evokes artistic quality and cultural exclusivity. Perceptual mapping, in this regard, can be used to visualize the relative positions of different music institutions in the market. For example, the Berlin Philharmonic combines elitist cultural authority with digital innovation; the BIFO (Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra) represents modern, accessible sophistication; and the IKSV (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts) is positioned between festival experiences and cultural elegance.

Aaker's (1997, p. 347) brand personality model proposes that brands, like people, embody specific personality traits. These traits play a central role in forming emotional and symbolic connections with consumers. The brand personalities of classical music institutions are often shaped around dimensions such as sophistication, intellectualism, tradition, charisma, and timeless elegance. Brand identity is not only reinforced through communication materials but also through experience design, spatial atmosphere, artist selection, repertoire construction, and social media content. In this way, classical music institutions construct their brand identities by transmitting cultural capital, thereby cultivating a loyal and discerning audience.

Pine and Gilmore's (1998, p. 67) concept of the *experience economy* emphasizes that modern consumers seek holistic experiences rather than merely purchasing products or services. Classical music concerts offer audiences a multidimensional experience that encompasses spatial aesthetics, artistic quality, intellectual satisfaction, social prestige, and emotional fulfillment. In experiential marketing approaches, elements such as concert hall acoustics, visual design, programming booklets, artist interactions, and even intermission refreshments are conceptualized as integral parts of the brand experience. These factors play a critical role in enhancing brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction.

Digitization has significantly transformed the marketing strategies of classical music institutions. The concert experience is no longer limited to physical venues; instead, global and multilayered access is enabled through digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Spotify, and the Digital Concert Hall. Digital content not only attracts younger audiences but also makes cultural elitism more visible to broader publics (Dobson, 2010, p. 122). Through algorithmic recommendation systems, consumers are offered personalized content based on their aesthetic preferences, while institutional brands gain new opportunities to engage with next-generation consumers. Online storytelling, behind-the-scenes videos, artist interviews, and backstage content help humanize the brand and soften its personality. This theoretical framework offers a foundational analytical structure for understanding how classical music institutions adopt distinct strategic positions within today's marketing ecosystem. The conceptual model of the study is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Quiet Luxury Marketing Model



Methodology

This research was designed using qualitative research methods to understand how classical music institutions engage in brand positioning and manage the framework of quiet luxury. A multiple case study approach was adopted. The study includes the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO) and the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) from Türkiye, as well as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for international comparison. These institutions represent different contextual implementations of how the concept of quiet luxury is integrated into marketing strategies. During the data collection process, promotional materials from the past three years (e.g., posters, program brochures, ticketing websites), official websites, and digital content shared on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify were systematically examined. Additionally, social media posts were analyzed in detail. All visual and textual data were evaluated using qualitative content analysis. The analysis was guided by concepts predetermined through literature: forms of quiet luxury representation, brand identity and personality, perceptual positioning, and experience design. Both visual components (e.g., design elements, color palettes, minimalist details) and verbal components (e.g., slogans, content language, social media messages) were analyzed together. To enhance the validity of the findings, direct excerpts from institutional content were included.

Since the study relied exclusively on publicly available institutional content and did not involve human participants, personal data, interviews, surveys, or experimental procedures, Ethics Committee approval was not required. The primary limitation of this study is its reliance solely on publicly available data; internal strategic documents and managerial decision-making processes were excluded. However, this limitation reinforces the study's focus on marketing analysis through media representations.

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select representative cases that embody diverse expressions of quiet luxury branding within the classical music field. In this study, the selected institutions- the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, and the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra- were chosen to comparatively examine how classical music organizations position themselves within different cultural contexts. The Berlin Philharmonic serves as a benchmark case due to its pioneering role in digital transformation and its ability to maintain

cultural authority through subtle luxury strategies in digital environments. The London Symphony Orchestra embodies emerging forms of elite consumption through its historical prestige, combined with digital access initiatives targeting young, culturally engaged audiences, such as the Student Pulse program. In the Turkish context, IKSV operationalizes elite cultural capital performance at the institutional level through a corporate-patronage-supported cultural ecosystem and its Lale Kart membership program. Meanwhile, the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra bridges its institutional brand identity with contemporary visual communication and digitally integrated audience engagement, adapting classical music's cultural prestige codes to a younger and global listener profile. Collectively, these four cases provide a broad comparative framework across global–national, public–private, and historical prestige–emergent elitism axes, enabling a multidimensional analysis of how quiet luxury is constructed within the field of classical music. Thus, the sample was strategically selected to ensure both theoretical depth and contextual diversity.

Findings

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: Digital Sophistication and Cultural Authority

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), founded in 1882, is recognized as one of the most authoritative institutions in the world of classical music (Berliner Philharmoniker, 2023). Its *Digital Concert Hall* initiative, launched in 2008, has positioned the institution as a pioneer of digital transformation in classical music. Especially during the pandemic, this platform significantly expanded its global reach, reinforcing the orchestra's role as a cultural leader. Through its digital platforms, the institution offers not only concert broadcasts but also educational content, masterclasses, and music documentaries, creating a unique ecosystem that appeals to audiences with a high level of cultural capital. The Berlin Philharmonic stands out as one of the most refined embodiments of quiet luxury. Through the Digital Concert Hall, the orchestra transcends spatial boundaries and connects with a global audience. The posters often feature black-and-white minimalist geometric patterns and elegant typography, representing understated yet highly cultivated aesthetic sensibilities. For example, the 2023 winter season poster featured a simple yellow line and piano-like patterns on a black background, evoking a sense of modern yet timeless elitism. On social media, the orchestra frequently shares content focused on artist biographies, rehearsal footage, and historical analyses of musical works. The YouTube channel includes conductor interviews and analytical discussions of compositions, targeting an audience with musical knowledge and high cultural capital rather than the casual listener.

Photo 1
Berlin Philharmonic Concert Performance



Source: Official Website of the Berliner Philharmoniker, 2024

The promotional photo shows (Photo 1), a live performance scene from the Berlin Philharmonic concert stage: The musicians' traditional concert attire, minimalist stage design, and the atmosphere of intense concentration illustrate how the institution reflects its values of cultural elitism, aesthetic elegance, and the concept of quiet luxury. This image offers a direct representation of the spatial and aesthetic codes of quiet luxury within the physical concert experience.

The minimalist graphic design below (Photo 2), limited color palette, and simple geometric forms in the photo are concrete examples of the aesthetics of quiet luxury in digital corporate communication. The institution integrates its digital outreach to an intellectual audience with a prestigious and refined visual language.

Photo 2

Berlin Philharmonic Digital Concert Hall 2026 Promotional Photo



Source: Berliner Philharmoniker Oficial Website, 2025

Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO)

The Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1999 as part of Borusan Holding's support for the arts. It has earned a distinctive place among corporate-sponsored arts institutions in Turke (Borusan Art, 2023). Since 2010, BIFO has become increasingly active on social media and digital platforms, producing strategic digital content targeting younger generations through new media tools such as Spotify, YouTube, and TikTok. Beyond its concerts, BIFO brings the accessible elitism dimension of quiet luxury to young professionals through online playlists, interactive broadcasts, and behind-the-scenes footage. BIFO is repositioning the concept of quiet luxury for a younger, digitally integrated audience. Especially through playlists and digital campaigns on platforms like Spotify and YouTube, the orchestra transcends spatial boundaries and reinterprets classical music elitism. The slogans featured on BIFO's concert posters reflect this strategy: "The refined form of music applauded on world stages." The poster designs are characterized by geometric forms and soft pastel tones. An analysis of social media interactions shows that audiences particularly praise the ease of digital access. BIFO's efforts to reach younger audiences are especially evident

in its humorous content on TikTok. For example, viral videos featuring a cat during rehearsals have received thousands of shares and interactions. These types of content showcase a more approachable and authentic side of the institutional brand.

Photo 3
BIFO Promotional



Source: BIFO Official Website, 2025

This promotional photo (Photo 3) of the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra exemplifies how the institution embodies the aesthetics of *quiet luxury* in a local yet globally resonant context. The carefully staged composition, formal concert attire, and the refined visual tone communicate an image of cultural sophistication and intellectual prestige without resorting to overt display. The visual language -emphasizing artistic discipline, architectural harmony, and minimal distraction- aligns with the brand's effort to construct a modern yet elitist identity accessible to younger, culturally literate audiences. In this sense, the photo serves not only as a representation of a musical performance but also as a symbolic assertion of aesthetic taste, cultural capital, and refined lifestyle. This image serves as a powerful representation of the spatial and aesthetic dimensions of the concept of *quiet luxury*. Architectural elements with historical references, symmetrical design, gold-toned ornamentation, and crystal chandeliers construct a space of privilege rooted not in ostentatious display, but in cultural capital. The stage design and atmosphere portrayed in the image reflect the intellectual depth and aesthetic refinement of classical music, offering the viewer not merely a concert experience but a sense of belonging to an exclusive lifestyle. In this context, the notion of luxury conveyed is not minimalistic, but rather aligned with a discreetly displayed prestige and cultural authority. If this image is used within the promotional strategy of the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, it can be interpreted as serving the institution's objective to position itself as a sophisticated and intellectual brand aligned with international cultural standards.

Image 1

BIFO: Bartók, Enescu, Kodály, Martinu Album Poster



Source: BIFO Official Website, 2025

The cover image (Image 1) of the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra's recording album featuring works by Bartók, Enescu, Kodály, and Martinu combines minimalist typography with abstract modern art illustrations, translating codes of cultural prestige and artistic refinement into a visual language. The discreet and understated placement of the brand logo on the album cover exemplifies the humble yet distinguished communication style characteristic of quiet luxury.

Photo 4

Poster for the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra's United Kingdom Tour



Source: BIFO Oficial Website, 2025

The full-stage photograph (Photo 4), featuring all orchestra members, emphasizes a sense of institutional belonging and collective identity, while the use of a black background and minimalist typography aligns with the aesthetic codes of quiet luxury. The inclusion of tour dates scheduled for prestigious European venues serves as a key visual element that reinforces the orchestra's international brand identity.

Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)

Founded in 1973, IKSV played a pioneering role in Istanbul's cultural life and hosted numerous major art festivals (IKSV, 2022). The Istanbul Music Festival is one of the foundation's most long-standing and prestigious events, significantly contributing to the city's cultural branding. IKSV's sponsorship strategies -supported by major local patrons such as the Eczacıbaşı Group and Koç Holding -have strengthened the festival's financial sustainability (Cultural Policies Report, 2020). The diversity of festival venues -such as the Atatürk Cultural Center, Hagia Irene, and Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall- serve as tangible indicators of the spatial aesthetic codes of quiet luxury. These venues are not only concert halls but also symbolic sites that contribute to Istanbul's global cultural prestige. IKSV positions the concept of quiet luxury primarily through the aesthetics of cultural festivals. Especially in the posters designed for the Istanbul Music Festival, floral patterns, soft pastel tones, and minimalist typography convey an elegant and upper-class visual language. The 2024 festival poster, featuring the slogan *"One night, an eternal trace,"* stands out as a striking example of experiential marketing.

The Lale Kart membership program, launched by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), functions as a strategic cultural loyalty system positioned within the framework of quiet luxury. The program offers tiered membership categories, including Kırmızı Lale Kart, Beyaz Lale Kart, and Siyah Lale Kart, each granting varying levels of privileged access such as advance ticket purchasing, discounted entry to cultural events, special invitations, and affiliation-based benefits in partnered institutions. These privileges reinforce cultural capital as a determinant of access, thereby transforming participation in festivals, biennials, and artistic events into a socially distinctive form of consumption. The brand communication of the program intentionally avoids overt demonstrations of luxury; instead, it emphasizes refined accessibility and cultural belonging, aligning with the understated exclusivity that characterizes quiet luxury discourses. Moreover, by building a long-term relational structure between audiences and the institution, Lale Kart enhances brand loyalty and constructs a culturally conscious community identity, while simultaneously maintaining selective accessibility through paid membership tiers. In this sense, the Lale Kart initiative exemplifies how cultural institutions can mobilize membership-based models to convert symbolic prestige into sustained audience engagement within the contemporary cultural economy.

Image 2

50th Istanbul Music Festival – 2022 Poster



Source: IKSV Official Website, 2025

Image 2, the combination of geometric abstract patterns with warm color tones visually conveys the festival's brand identity, rooted in aesthetic elegance and cultural diversity. The use of minimalist typography and stylized representations of the city's iconic landmarks points to a form of cultural prestige aligned with urban aesthetics- an embodiment of quiet luxury.

Image 3, the simplified silhouette design set against a gradient, pink-toned background highlights Istanbul's cultural and geographical characteristics through imagery of a piano and seagulls. With the theme *'Unusual',* this visual points to the festival's experiential and exclusive atmosphere, serving as an example of the metaphorical and poetic visual codes of quiet luxury.

Image 3

45th Istanbul Music Festival – 2017 Poster



Source: IKSV Oficial Website, 2025

The 2017 poster (Image 3) for the Istanbul Music Festival presents a striking visual representation within the framework of quiet luxury and brand marketing. In line with the principles of quiet luxury, the design avoids exaggeration and instead opts for a simple and elegant aesthetic. The use of pastel tones, combined with the silhouette-like depiction of the piano and human figures, contributes to a refined visual language that reflects a notion of luxury grounded not in ostentation but in cultural capital. The centrally placed piano serves as a symbol of classical music, foregrounding cultural depth and intellectual value. Moreover, the bilingual presentation in both Turkish and English indicates a brand strategy that appeals to both local and international audiences. The image reinforces the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)'s long-established association with sophistication and intellectualism, while also highlighting reliability and institutional partnerships through the display of sponsor logos. Thus, the poster demonstrates a coherent alignment with the aesthetics of quiet luxury, while simultaneously illustrating how IKSV builds its brand value through cultural capital.

London Symphony Orchestra

The London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) stands as one of the leading classical music institutions that strategically transforms digital innovation into a subtle marker of exclusivity, thereby redefining the framework of quiet luxury within arts marketing. The orchestra's *Student Pulse* application-designed to attract culturally literate young audiences-functions not merely as a ticketing mechanism but as a prestige-coded digital channel that cultivates a discreet yet powerful sense of belonging. Through personalized access features, loyalty rewards, and minimal yet refined brand visibility, the app embeds classical music consumption into everyday life while preserving high cultural thresholds associated with elite taste. Empirical findings emphasize that this mobile platform increases both engagement frequency and the perceived intellectual community surrounding the brand, reinforcing quiet luxury codes such as aesthetic understatement, cultural capital, and intellectual exclusivity. In this sense, similar to the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall strategy, LSO extends its reach in the digital sphere while maintaining a symbolically elevated status through low-visibility yet high-prestige communication practices (Gosling et al., 2016, p. 14).

Student Pulse is a dedicated mobile application developed to encourage student attendance at classical music performances in London. Operated collaboratively by several major orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the platform provides discounted student tickets, digital event information, and a reward system that incentivizes repeat attendance. Designed specifically for university students, it integrates ticket purchasing, concert details, and mobile membership features into a single accessible interface, making classical music participation more seamlessly embedded into the daily lives of young audiences (Gosling et al., 2016, p. 7). In this context, the London Symphony Orchestra's Student Pulse program represents a distinctive model of quiet luxury, in which accessibility is reinterpreted as an exclusive privilege reserved for culturally engaged students. Through membership-based discounted ticketing, loyalty points, and a digitally centralized concert experience, the platform strengthens brand loyalty while maintaining cultural capital as the primary status marker. Rather than removing elitism from classical music consumption, Student Pulse democratizes it selectively for a future cultural elite, thereby integrating quiet luxury into digital youth engagement strategies (Gosling et al., 2016, p. 8).

Image 4

Londra Symhony Orchestra's New Concert Hall



Source: LSO Official Website, 2025

The London Symphony Orchestra's planned new concert hall, the Centre for Music, can be interpreted not merely as an architectural investment but as a spatial reproduction of the institution's quiet luxury strategy. This project transfers a high-prestige brand positioning -rooted in cultural capital -into the physical realm, aiming to reconstruct classical music elitism beyond the boundaries of digital platforms. Simon Rattle's emphasis on the acoustic and capacity limitations of the current Barbican Hall when advocating for the new venue serves as a direct indicator of the orchestra's commitment to sustaining its artistic authority and ambitions for a superior repertoire. The underlying motivation appears to center on maintaining classical music's claim to cultural leadership and intellectual distinction through the performance of monumental works. The ongoing debates surrounding the Project -including concerns about public funding, economic uncertainty in the post-Brexit period, and the perception of classical music as a consumption practice serving elite audiences- make visible the sociopolitical complexities inherent to quiet luxury. On one hand, the orchestra seeks to remain competitive in the international prestige arena; on the other, critics argue that such financial resources should instead be devoted to improving the deteriorating state of music education. This tension reinforces Currid-Halkett's (2017, p. 65) argument that contemporary forms of elitism are constructed not through conspicuous display but through the performance of cultural capital.

Moreover, the planned venue is designed not only as a concert hall but also as a hub for educational initiatives, publicly accessible spaces, and contemporary cultural activities. This multifunctional approach exemplifies the selectively inclusive nature of quite Luxury-appearing accessible while in practice operating through knowledge, taste, and cultural affiliation. In doing so, the LSO aims both to strengthen its spatial brand identity and to enhance its institutional legitimacy through a narrative of cultural citizenship.

In summary, the Centre for Music project represents a strategic initiative through which the LSO reinforces the chain of artistic authority to spatial prestige to cultural capital transmission. This demonstrates that classical music continues to function as one of the most powerful representational fields of quiet luxury in contemporary cultural markets. Each institution constructs a distinct strategy that balances cultural capital, digital accessibility, and selective inclusivity within its own context. In doing so, they reproduce consumption practices that are unostentatious yet highly prestigious.

Table 2

Perceptual Positions of Institutions within the Scope of Quiet Luxury

Dimension of Quiet Luxury	Institutional Reflection	Common Thread
Cultural Capital	Highly knowledgeable audiences, historical authority, and exclusivity	Status is determined not by logos but by cultural literacy
Aesthetic Refinement	Minimalist communication, prestigious venues, artistic excellence	Prestige that is subtle yet powerful
Selective Accessibility	Digital content targeting younger audiences, but with high cultural thresholds	Appears open to everyone, yet not everyone can fully access or decode it

Although all four institutions operate within the symbolic domain of classical music, their positioning strategies reveal different mechanisms of prestige production. Rather than amplifying luxury through visual excess or material hedonism, each organization structures its brand identity around the silent authority of expertise, cultural legitimacy, and meticulously curated experiences.

- The Berlin Philharmonic reinforces its status by converting excellence into a protected cultural asset - access is allowed, but full appreciation demands superior cultural fluency.
- The London Symphony Orchestra frames participation in classical music as a future-oriented status investment, where young audiences acquire cultural fluency not as consumers but as emerging insiders.

- BIFO constructs a localized pathway to prestige**,** translating the codes of high culture into contemporary lifestyle aesthetics, and signaling that sophistication can be lived rather than observed from afar.
- IKSV emphasizes the rituals of belonging within the urban cultural sphere: being present at festivals becomes a symbolic gesture of membership in a refined metropolitan identity.

In sum, the positioning of these institutions suggests that quiet luxury in classical music is not a static label but a performative space in which audiences continually negotiate their place in a cultural hierarchy. Prestige here is produced not through exclusion alone, but through the promise of access to meanings that remain partially concealed. The deeper the audience's interpretive capacity, the more luxurious the experience becomes.

Table 3

Strategic Quiet Luxury Positioning of the Four Institutions

Institution	Strategic Code of Quiet Luxury	Brand Narrative
Berlin Philharmonic	Digital exclusivity + intellectual depth	Silent yet globally authoritative
London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)	Cultivating the digital young elite	The club of the cultural future
Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO)	Accessible elitism + social media integration	Modern, dynamic prestige
Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts(IKSV)	Spatial-market aesthetics + festival culture	Urban cultural aristocracy

The list below (List 4) visualizes a direct comparative representation of the differing quiet luxury strategies and marketing positions of the three institutions. It helps to understand both the differentiation in brand positioning and the segmentation of their target audiences. From a marketing perspective, such perceptual maps are highly effective tools for analyzing how brands position themselves within the market. The relative positions of the institutions in the context of their quiet luxury strategies are illustrated:

Table 4

Perceptual Positions of Institutions within the Scope of Quiet Luxury

Institution	Cultural Elitism	Accessibility	Target Consumer Profile	Summary of Digital Strategy
Berlin Philharmonic	Very high (historical authority and artistic exclusivity)	Moderate (digital access but high cultural threshold)	Highly educated, culturally elite global audiences	Digital Concert Hall/ YouTube/ Instagram
London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)	High (repertoire prestige and institutional reputation)	Improved through student-focused digital offerings	University students, young cultural elites	Instagram/ Facebook/ X/ YouTube
Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO)	Relatively high (international collaborations and repertoire)	Very high (youth-friendly platforms & content)	Young professionals, urban modern audiences	Spotify/ YouTube / TikTok
Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV)	Upper-middle level (festival diversity and prestige)	Very high (public access, venue variety, digital visibility)	Broad but culturally aspirational audiences	Instagram /X/ TikTok/ Festival websites

According to the content analysis conducted, distinct positioning strategies emerge among the four institutions under study:

- Berlin Philharmonic (BPO) demonstrates a model of *global authority and digital exclusivity*, leveraging its long-standing institutional prestige and its Digital Concert Hall platform to affirm cultural leadership in the classical music field.
- London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) combines *heritage prestige and youth-digital engagement* by aligning its historical reputation with targeted digital access initiatives aimed at younger, culturally literate audiences, thereby re-configuring elite consumption through contemporary media channels.
- Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO) embodies *accessible elitism and a youth-oriented digital experience*, reinterpreting cultural-prestige codes via streaming services, social video platforms and TikTok to engage urban professionals and modern audiences.
- Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) positions itself through *experiential festival aesthetics and cultural elegance*, utilising public-facing festivals, architectural venues, and broad-based social media strategies to cultivate refined consumption among a heterogeneous audience segment.

Together, these differentiated positions illustrate how the discourse of quiet luxury is constructed across multiple strategic surfaces within the marketing communications of classical music institutions. The institutions' digital platform preferences and dominant social media usage patterns serve as manifestations of their contrasting brand positioning logics.

Table 5

Institutions' Dominant Social Media Usage

Berlin Philarmonic Orchestra	Youtube/ Instagram
London Symhony Orchestra	Instagram/ Facebook/ X
IKSV	Instagram / X / Tiktok
BIFO	Spotify/ Youtube/ Tiktok

The social media platforms and digital content channels preferred by the institutions within the scope of their digital marketing strategies are illustratively presented in Table 5. The Berlin Philharmonic**,** through its *Digital Concert Hall* platform, targets a global audience seeking intellectual depth, while also offering a limited but curated selection of content via its YouTube and Instagram accounts. The Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra (BIFO) employs an innovative digital strategy targeting younger audiences, offering specially curated playlists on Spotify and dynamic, humorous content on TikTok. Additionally, its YouTube channel features concert recordings and artist interviews, fostering an intellectual dimension of engagement. The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) utilizes social media channels, such as Instagram and Twitter, to convey the festival atmosphere to a broad audience, while the official festival website provides detailed program information and ticketing services. These platform preferences reflect each institution's mode of communication with its target audience and reveal the Holistic Brand Building That Supports Their Respective Quiet Luxury Strategies.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate how classical music institutions construct unique interpretations of *quiet luxury* within their marketing strategies. The Berlin Philharmonic appeals to a global elite audience by combining high cultural capital with intellectual depth and digital exclusivity. BIFO represents a model of accessible elitism through its innovative content strategies targeting younger demographics and digital accessibility**.** IKSV, on the other hand, transforms aesthetic elegance, spatial experience, and cultural prestige

into a festival brand, serving as a strong example of experiential marketing. These findings align with Currid-Halkett's (2017, p. 9) conceptualization of quiet luxury: in contemporary cultural consumption, intellectual capital, participation in cultural events, and aesthetic distinction now play a more central role than overt display. Classical music institutions have placed this distinction at the core of their marketing strategies, constructing their brand identities around symbolic meanings. From the perspective of Aaker's (1997, p. 353) brand personality theory, all three institutions exhibit varying degrees of brand personalities along the axes of *sophistication*, *intellectualism*, *timeless elegance*, and *elite charisma*. The Berlin Philharmonic portrays a brand personality focused on high intellectual elitism, while BIFO occupies a position of modern and accessible elitism that resonates with younger generations. IKSV, in contrast, is positioned within the axis of graceful cultural prestige. With the rise of digital marketing, quiet luxury is being redefined not only through physical spaces but also across digital platforms. This development aligns with Pine and Gilmore's (1998, p. 15) experience from an economic perspective. Consumers today do more than merely attend concerts; they engage in holistic, multisensory experiences involving program booklets, artist interviews, and behind-the-scenes social media content.

However, the findings also suggest that despite increased digital access, a form of stratification based on cultural thresholds and knowledge requirements persists. As exemplified by the Berlin Philharmonic, digitalization may broaden access, but the complexity and intellectual depth of content continue to target individuals with high cultural capital. This supports Dobson's (2010, p. 111) argument that musical preferences play a significant role in the construction of personal identity.

Table 6

Consumer Segmentation

Consumer Segment	Description
High Cultural Capital Holders	Culturally elite individuals with strong knowledge of the arts and classical music
Young Professionals	Early-career individuals seeking social prestige and open to digital engagement
Symbolic Consumers	Status-driven individuals focused on visibility and social approval

Based on the study's findings, three primary consumer segments have been identified as being targeted by classical music institutions within the framework of quiet luxury (List 5**).** The first group, High Cultural Capital Holders, refers to an audience characterized by strong artistic knowledge, intellectual depth, and a refined aesthetic perception of classical music - typically educated individuals associated with cultural elitism. The second group, *Young Professionals*, represents consumers at the early stages of their careers who seek cultural prestige and social capital, and are receptive to digital platforms and experiential marketing. The third segment, *Symbolic Consumers*, consists of individuals who participate in cultural events primarily for visibility and as a marker of status, engaging in cultural consumption as a means of gaining social approval and recognition. This segmentation requires institutions to manage the multilayered nature of quiet luxury by acknowledging the heterogeneity of their target audience in their marketing strategies.

Conclusion

This study examined how classical music institutions construct quiet luxury as a cultural branding strategy in the digital age. Through the comparative analysis of four institutions -Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts -the research revealed that quiet luxury operates as a symbolic tool through which cultural elitism, aesthetic refinement, and intellectual capital are selectively communicated. Rather than relying on overt prestige markers, these institutions establish exclusivity through coded communication, curated

repertoire, spatial prestige, and digital storytelling. Thus, the findings demonstrate that classical music remains one of the most influential arenas where status, cultural value, and identity are subtly negotiated.

The results highlight that quiet luxury is not deployed uniformly; instead, each organization adapts it according to its cultural context and audience strategy. The Berlin Philharmonic activates quiet luxury through digital exclusivity and global cultural authority, positioning its brand around intellectual depth. The London Symphony Orchestra cultivates a future cultural elite via selective youth engagement, embedding prestige into mobile, digitally mediated experiences. The Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra operationalizes accessible elitism by blending high cultural codes with contemporary digital aesthetics to expand its youthful base. Meanwhile, IKSV transforms festival spaces into aspirational cultural settings that reinforce an urban identity of refined cultural belonging. Collectively, these variations show that quiet luxury in the arts is a performative space, where prestige is co-constructed by both institutions and audiences.

The study contributes to the arts marketing literature by establishing quiet luxury as an emerging conceptual bridge between arts marketing and luxury consumption theory. The findings contribute to understanding how cultural participation itself can function as a marker of symbolic status -aligning with contemporary debates on inconspicuous consumption, cultural omnivorism, and the experiential economy. In this respect, classical music institutions not only sell artistic services but also mediate a socially recognizable performance of cultural capital within competitive digital media environments.

However, the research is limited by its reliance on publicly available visual and textual communication materials, excluding internal strategic decisions and audience perception data. Future studies could deepen insight into quiet luxury in the arts by employing audience-based research designs -such as consumer surveys, experimental perception analysis, and ethnographic fieldwork- to map how different consumer groups decode prestige cues, negotiate accessibility, and form brand loyalty. Additionally, cross-market comparative research could reveal how cultural policy frameworks, national identity, and socio-economic dynamics shape quiet luxury strategies globally.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that classical music institutions strategically reformulate exclusivity in a manner that aligns with evolving cultural hierarchies and the expectations of digitally connected audiences. Quiet luxury becomes a tool not only for sustaining institutional prestige but also for cultivating future cultural elites through aesthetic richness, selective accessibility, and intellectual refinement. These findings suggest that as the boundaries between cultural participation and luxury consumption increasingly converge, classical music institutions will continue to serve as essential laboratories for the silent reproduction of symbolic power in contemporary society.

Building upon the conceptual and strategic insights revealed in this study, it is essential for future research to extend these discussions to the audience side of cultural consumption and to the economic infrastructures that sustain quiet luxury branding. To further validate the conclusions presented here and enhance generalizability across cultural contexts, more diverse empirical investigations will be required.

Future studies should place audience perspectives at the center of analysis to better understand how quiet luxury is interpreted and decoded by different consumer groups in classical music settings. Although the findings of this study indicate that symbolic forms of prestige are communicated through digital and visual strategies, empirical evidence is needed to measure how audiences perceive cultural capital cues, intellectual exclusivity, and aesthetic refinement during live and digitally mediated concert experiences. Survey-based designs, experimental studies manipulating visual and spatial cues, and psychographic segmentation models could provide valuable insights into how cultural hierarchy is reconstructed on the audience side of the consumption process.

Additionally, while digital platforms enable broader accessibility, they simultaneously produce selective cultural thresholds where audiences must possess certain levels of knowledge and aesthetic literacy to fully appreciate institutional content. Future research could explore how digital recommendation systems, platform interface design, and content complexity influence perceived exclusivity and audience stratification. Such studies would help to determine whether digital transformation genuinely enhances democratization in classical music consumption or whether it reinforces quiet forms of elitism through invisible filters embedded in digital experience design.

Finally, future inquiries should analyze the role of sponsorships, patronage, and partnership structures in sustaining quiet luxury strategies within cultural institutions. Investigating the relationship between corporate branding and cultural capital production would offer a deeper understanding of how symbolic prestige is financed, circulated, and legitimized in the classical music market. This approach could also illuminate the tensions between commercial interests and cultural authenticity, particularly in contexts where luxury branding intersects with public cultural policy and accessibility mandates. A political economic perspective would therefore help to map the material foundations of inconspicuous consumption in the arts and reveal how cultural prestige is strategically mobilized as a form of economic and symbolic power.

By expanding the analytical scope to include audience perception, digital stratification, and the economic foundations of cultural prestige, future studies can build a more comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding how classical music institutions will continue to shape evolving structures of quiet luxury in the cultural field.

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