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The Uniqueness and Commonality of American Symphony Orchestra Organizations

by

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EDITOR'S DIGEST

The Uniqueness and Commonality of American Symphony Orchestra Organizations

As the following essay unfolds, Paul Judy shares with readers the contemplations which resulted in the formation of the Symphony Orchestra Institute.

Within Symphony Orchestra Organizations

In a fascinating recital, the essay leads readers through a series of exercises which explore the "unique" or "common" nature of symphony orchestra organizations. After outlining the organizational characteristics of a symphony orchestra, the author concludes that comparisons are difficult, rejecting several which are frequently drawn and suggesting such comparatives as an air traffic control room or a major fire fighting effort!

Because the Institute was formed to investigate the organizational behavior of symphony orchestra organizations, with a stated goal of improving "effectiveness," the reader is introduced to such concepts as homophily and propinquity, and step-by-step, is asked to consider the various roles which people play in American symphony orchestra organizations. Examining each individual or group of symphony orchestra organization participants, the essay poses a long list of questions for thought and research.

An External View

Following the review of the complex leadership and management roles found in most symphony orchestra organizations, the author steps back to offer a view of these organizations as they exist in a larger context, and again asks if symphony orchestra organizations are "common" or "unique."

This larger context includes many dimensions. The essay describes symphony orchestra organizations as local, service institutions which are affected by a range of economic and market forces, feel the impact of competition and stratification, and suffer unfavorably from boosterism and celebrityism. This section of the essay encourages the reader to reach beyond familiar answers, and issues a challenge to agree or disagree with each conclusion.

Months of preparation were invested before this essay saw the light of day. It was critiqued, rethought, revised—quite literally put through the mill. The author (and Institute's founder) is a tough-minded, albeit retired, senior corporate executive. He expects a great deal of himself, but truly welcomes response. We have purposely kept this digest brief to encourage you to read, reflect, and respond.

The Uniqueness and Commonality of American Symphony Orchestra Organizations

Introduction

Millions of people love classical music performed by symphony orchestras. Many thousands of these people have occupations requiring knowledge of organizational behavior; and this group must include individuals who are directly involved with symphony orchestra organizations. It is therefore curious that so little has been written about the organizational dynamics of these fascinating and unique institutions.

The primary purpose of this essay is to put forth views about and analyze the uniqueness of symphony orchestra organizations as compared with other organizations and organizational systems. At the same time, I will examine what these organizations have in common with the rest of the organizational world, and how they must cope with and compete in that world. Finally, I will point up the need and various opportunities for research into the dynamics of symphony orchestra organizations.

A second purpose of this essay is to encourage thought and written expression by participants in these organizations: musicians, staff, volunteers, and music directors and conductors. If we love and wish to preserve beautifully performed symphonic music, we need strong and forward-looking orchestral organizations. We need to think, write, read, and learn more about them. What human resources are required? How are these resources integrated through structure and process? How effectively and valuably? With what artistic and economic implications? Despite our individual biases and limited points of view, engaging in thought, expression, and dialogue will result in deeper insights, reflection, and a basis for steady improvement in organizational effectiveness.

In addition to the insights and experience of participants, we can also learn from scholarly observation. Thus, a third purpose of this essay is to acquaint the academic reader with the uniqueness of these organizations, in this author's view, and to provoke scholarly curiosity. I believe these institutions merit more attention and study, with resultant insights reported, especially if filtered through the lens of modern organizational theory and practice. I hope the Symphony Orchestra Institute can help in this endeavor.

Basic Architecture: A Business Organization

On first impression, the internal structure of the typical symphony orchestra organization mirrors the form of many business organizations.

- ◆ A group of employees makes a product (as with a manufacturing company) or directly provides defined services to customers (as with a service company).
- ◆ Another group of employees assists the product- or service-generating employees by providing:
 - direct support (setting up the work area, providing supplies, and assisting directly in various ways); and
 - indirect support (maintaining the general environment and facilities in which the work takes place).
- ◆ Both groups of employees are assisted and supported by a central staff engaged in product/service programming and delivery, work scheduling, external service contracting, and a range of marketing, control, financing, and administrative functions.
- ◆ These three groups and their activities are directed by general management.
- ◆ A board of directors oversees general management, operating results, and financial condition, directly or through committees.

Voluntary Service Organization Overlay

As nonprofit service organizations, symphony orchestra organizations actively involve volunteers. This results in a major departure from a business organization in terms of both structure and process.

- ◆ Direct service volunteers, in various capacities, perform work employees would do in a business.
- ◆ Volunteers make up the board of directors; thus, volunteers carry out overall governance responsibility.
- ◆ Many board members and direct-service volunteers are personally involved in raising funds to finance the organization. In corporate terms, these board members and other volunteers combine the work of internal treasury office employees and external investment bankers.

All volunteer services are provided without compensation. The market value of such services is significant relative to the staff expense of a symphony orchestra organization. In most symphony orchestra organizations, active volunteers outnumber paid staff, substantially so in smaller budget organizations.

Thus far, symphony orchestra organizations appear to be structured and to operate about the same as a wide range of nonprofit service organizations in the United States. As broadly recognized, the existence and role of voluntary

associations in America is unique in the world, and their organizational patterns are well established. The basic architecture of these voluntary associations has tended to follow that of profit-making corporations, modified to integrate and depend upon volunteers for governance, fundraising, and some direct service.

As one looks more closely into most symphony orchestra organizations, however, some rather unique features emerge.

The Orchestra

The orchestra is the core group of employees who together with the conductor produce the primary work output and achieve the central purpose of a symphony orchestra organization. In almost all such organizations, the orchestra comprises a majority of the total employment. Although most chamber orchestras range from 25 to 40 musicians, North American symphony orchestras have between 60 to approximately 100 musicians. In industrial terms, this employee group is made up of a number of smaller and larger teams, each with specialized training, skills, and tools.

- ◆ Individuals in the larger teams (the five string sections) usually perform their tasks simultaneously and in unison, and on similar instruments. Further, reasonably similar training and skills are involved.
- ◆ Individuals in the smaller teams (other sections), due to the distinctiveness of their instruments, perform tasks which are quite different from those of the larger teams, and quite different from each other. Furthermore, individuals in the smaller teams usually perform discretely and only occasionally in unison with each other.

In the total universe of organizations, a large, relatively distinct group of employees working in variously composed teams within a somewhat larger total organization, and together producing that organization's services to customers, is somewhat out of the ordinary. However, "professional" or "technical service" organizations exist in the commercial world, and could be similarly described. Such organizations would include many architectural, law, accounting, consulting, and some specialized financial service firms.

However, on closer examination and within the framework of a professional/technical services organizational format, the truly unique structure and functioning of an orchestra as an employee group emerges.

- ◆ At least in medium to larger scale orchestras, player configurations within the large and small teams frequently change within the same program of music.
- ◆ Everyone follows a detailed script (score).
- ◆ Work is accomplished and the product generated by close and contemporaneous physical and intellectual effort toward the goal of an intensively unified presentation.

- ◆ Individual and team performance is expected to be both perfect and aesthetic.
- ◆ One person directly and visibly leads the whole group. This person is responsible for the rhythmic, dynamic, and aesthetic interpretation of the script, and the attainment of a cohesive and balanced sound.

Further, this relatively large group of employees and its leader

- ◆ Prepare a final work product through repeated rehearsal, also in close physical and intellectual proximity, toward the time when
- ◆ the final product is consumed as produced—in real-time—by an immediate group of listening and observing customers.

Comparative Observations

Orchestral musicians begin vocational training at a very early age, starting down a long road of physical, emotional, and intellectual development. In contrast, most persons in professional and technical service occupations do not begin vocational preparation until much later in life, and the preparation is singularly intellectual. Most all professionals continue to advance their skills and competence throughout their working careers. But professional musicians, given the physical aspects of their work, must practice regularly and intensively just to maintain skills, and to the extent possible, to advance them. Ultimately, physical decline takes place. Some of these factors may contribute to patterns of human behavior within symphony orchestras; research into these areas would be instructive.

It is difficult to identify other occupational groups which have the structural and work patterns of a symphony orchestra. Of course, other performing musical groups have similar patterns:

- ◆ Opera orchestras, as we know from a number of examples, can stage a fine symphony orchestra. But overall, opera organizations have a different purpose from that of symphony orchestra organizations. The orchestras within opera organizations are not central and singular to that purpose as is the case with symphony organizations' orchestras. Symbolically, opera orchestras are not so prominent, either aurally or visually, in their organizations' presentations.
- ◆ Ballet orchestras perform fine classical music, but their primary mission is to support another performance art, and they are not central and singular to their organizations.
- ◆ Chamber orchestras are often central to their organizations and many can perform an important portion of the symphony orchestra repertoire. The dynamics of independent chamber music organizations containing larger, conducted ensembles are probably quite similar to those of symphony orchestra organizations. For smaller ensembles, the performing groups' lesser size and the pressure on individual

performance begins to change organizational dynamics. For conductorless ensembles (which of necessity must be small), shifting responsibilities, more heightened performance pressure, and player ownership further alter organizational dynamics. Independent chamber orchestra organizations, however, have much in common with symphony orchestra organizations, the differences stemming primarily from the size of the orchestras they encompass.

In light of the similarities, but especially because of the differences, research into the dynamics of opera, ballet, and especially chamber orchestra organizations as compared with symphony orchestra organizations could prove to be very fruitful.

Somewhat more broadly, one might compare symphony orchestras as work groups to performing employee groups within theater, dance, and other performing arts organizations. Orchestra and most theater and dance presentations are similar in that each is based on precise instructions that a creative person (composer/author/choreographer) gives to performers in a special language and style. And, observing, listening customers consume the final product even as it is produced. But beyond these similarities, there are obvious differences in the nature of language and performance skills; the contemporaneousness of individual performance; the nature of interpretative leadership; and the size and structure of performing groups.

Can organizational issues in the radio, television, and film industries teach us anything about symphony orchestra organization dynamics? Some activities in these fields are nonprofit in nature and are high-arts. As in the case of opera and ballet, some activities incorporate symphony orchestras, but not usually in a primary role. Most all presentations in these fields are scripted. Many are live performances which, like symphony orchestra presentations, are expected to be perfect.

But it is hard to identify in these fields a performing employee group as central and significant as the symphony orchestra is within its overall organization. Other organizational features do not compare, as well.

Some observers suggest that symphony orchestra and university organizations have features in common. The heart of the university is its faculty, a core of which is tenured. A management and staff support system backs the faculty. Quite often, a volunteer governance structure oversees the institution. But the comparison stops rather abruptly. Among other differences, the faculty does not operate as a cohesive group presenting a scripted performance with a direct leader (far from it!). Audiences are only slightly similar to student bodies. And the financial constituency and direct service volunteer component of most universities and colleges is not as local and community-centered as that of symphony orchestra organizations.

Some have compared symphony orchestras with professional sports teams. Teamwork certainly applies to both. Musicians must have physical stamina and

dexterity, and they encounter physical and intellectual stress, just like athletes. But the physical demands on most professional athletes' bodies substantially shorten the productive life of athletes as compared with musicians. Fielded athletic teams are generally much smaller than orchestras. Improvisation within patterns describes the work task of a team athlete versus the orchestra musician's task of perfectly and repeatedly performing scripted directions. In this sense, professional athletes are more like jazz musicians, and teams are more like combos! Overall, the comparison is titillating and perhaps merits research, but I do not think the findings would be very illuminating.

Are there other types of organizations, or even networks of small groups that function like an organization, which we might compare with symphony orchestra organizations? In searching, one might look for organizations or networks with the following characteristics:

- ◆ A relatively large number of individuals and teams are engaged in intense, physical, rapidly evolving, and coordinated work.
- ◆ Work occurs at one location under on-site direction.
- ◆ A lot is at stake: top performance and near perfection are required; stress abounds.
- ◆ The group's progress is being closely followed by nonparticipants.
- ◆ Participants and observers feel exhilaration upon project completion.
- ◆ Performers are part of a broader organizational system; their intense work takes place periodically within a more regular flow of total organizational activity.

With these organizational system criteria, what comes to mind? The following occurred to me:

- ◆ A naval ship (perhaps a submarine?) during battle;
- ◆ A large-scale surgical operation which is being televised;
- ◆ An air traffic control room in communication with a number of cockpit crews, particularly during bad weather or emergency conditions;
- ◆ A manned satellite control room during launch or difficulty; or
- ◆ A major fire-fighting effort.

Despite important and obvious differences between these organizational operations and those which take place in symphony orchestra organizations, it may be instructive to think about the similarities. Research into these activities and the organizational issues they raise might have useful application to symphony orchestra organizations and advance insights into their behavioral dynamics.

Homophyly

All through the years, volunteers, staff, musicians, musical leadership, and core audiences of symphony orchestra organizations have shared a deep devotion to classical music, and more particularly, symphonic music. They have created institutions which support, perform, and preserve this music. In the parlance of sociologists, symphony orchestra organizations are “homophylic”; they consist of a group of people with strongly similar interests and beliefs who initiate and perpetuate an association. In symphony orchestra organizations, a deep associative bond develops, the force of which alone keeps some entities alive and minimally functioning, despite tremendous adversity. Ironically, the same devotion, enhanced by a basic, generous feeling for arts and artists, has also perhaps lessened attention to structures and practices which limit organizational effectiveness.

Propinquity

Homophylic groups are not unique in American society. A common, binding forces energizes many nonprofit associations and most all nonprofit cultural arts organizations. However, looking within symphony orchestra organizations, especially those of medium to larger size, another force becomes apparent—a natural kinship of musicians intensified by continuous, close working relationships and conditions. I would like to label this phenomenon the “propinquity” of the orchestra.

In a symphony orchestra we find a large, core group of permanent employees who almost always perform their organizational work jointly and simultaneously, reading from a unifying score, under unifying leadership, producing a unified sound, and executing all this athletic and intellectual work repeatedly, in close physical proximity, in rehearsals and performances.

Organizational scientists have observed that special social relations and communications develop among employees who work in close proximity, and that they exert special influence on each other. A symphony orchestra is a prime example of such an employee group, given the intense intellectual, emotional, and physical togetherness of their work and work place, buttressed by a commonality of training. It would also seem that the natural communication attraction among musicians within an orchestra would almost inevitably create a natural communication gap (or barrier) between them and other participants in the overall organization, offset somewhat by the homophylic dedication of everyone.

This is an interesting area for research, and findings might illuminate these communication patterns.

Shared Stressful Experience

Periodically, symphony orchestras prepare and perform especially demanding, fast-moving, and complex scores, filled with potential pitfalls. The score might be a well established but particularly difficult composition, with a range of instrumental solos, or a challenging new composition. It may be that, over time,

successful completion of such intensive performances has some of the same group-binding effects on orchestral musicians as are observed in survivors of dangerous and stressful events. These occasional phenomena would strengthen the natural kinship of orchestra musicians.

Separate and Distinct Work Spaces

In most symphony orchestra organizations, the natural communication gap between orchestra members and all other members of the overall organization is reinforced by physical separation of work spaces—the stage and locker area for the orchestra, and administrative offices for other organizational participants. This separation is not unusual in a manufacturing company; the fabricating floor and the general offices are typically separate. But it is unusual for the work spaces of most professional service organizations.

This separatism carries a hint of social stratification, at least in some symphony orchestra organizations. It is further symbolized, in many cases, by the orchestra working at ground level in cramped stage and support facilities, while the balance of the organization operates in more finished, sunlit floor space, usually in upper floors. Musician and staff lounges are typically separate, thereby reducing informal, employee interaction. Interestingly and not surprisingly, musicians are often very friendly and in good communication with stage and house crews.

The configuration of work spaces, as with basic orchestra propinquity, is inherent in symphony orchestra organization activities. But, to my knowledge, little thought has been given to the attitudes and group behavior which might be expected to result, or to practices which could alter or mitigate such attitudes and behavior and increase organizational interaction.

Unionization

Unionization of the orchestra, with the segregation of the economic interests of its membership from those of the balance of the organization, further exacerbates the separateness of the orchestra and widens the communication gap so prevalent in many symphony orchestra organizations.

Summary

The symphony orchestra is a unique work group which defies comparison with most all other work groups or systems. It is the core component of a symphony orchestra organization, and fulfills the organization's main purpose. But, by its scope and propinquitous nature, the orchestra creates particularly challenging dynamics within the symphony orchestra organization as a whole. These dynamics are heightened by normal physical space arrangements, unionization, and, as will be later described, management, leadership, and attitudinal issues.

Organizational Leadership and Management

The basic organizational structure of America's larger symphony orchestra institutions was established from the middle 1800s through the early 1900s. The organizational structure reflected an integration of the dominant role of the

maestro, as developed in Europe, with a mix of American business and social service organizational patterns.

General organization philosophies during this period emphasized clear hierarchal structure, command and control management, and work step specialization and measurement. Then existing patterns for the management of nonprofit social or other cultural organizations, including the duty of board members to be providers and raisers of funds, were carried over into symphony orchestra organizations. A top civic, social, or business person became the nominal leader of the symphony orchestra organization, chaired the board meetings, and became the person to whom the maestro could look for confirmation of musical plans and financial assurances. A business manager supervised the organization's small staff, responsible for administrative and financial affairs.

The typical structure of top management and leadership roles in today's medium- to larger-sized symphony orchestra organizations has evolved since the turn of the century but still reflects a unique amalgam of titles, roles, and responsibilities.

The Board Chairperson

The member of the board of directors (or trustees) who is elected "chairman of the board" (or sometimes, "president") often has the additional title, "chief executive officer." This is also common in business. Since few nonprofit organizations have descriptions of the responsibilities of each officer, it is commonly assumed that the responsibility of a chief executive officer is the same as in a business organization: final decision-making authority on all matters not considered to be board (or board committee) matters.

In business, granting final decision-making authority to an individual as chief executive is a significant corporate decision. The qualifications for the job are demanding; compensation is substantial. Years of step-by-step preparation are not unusual. Acceptance obligates the recipient to stay highly informed about the industry and socioeconomic environment in which the organization operates; key personnel and their development; and a wide range of operating matters. The chief executive must regularly display, even daily, excellent judgment, fairness, and leadership. Often, persons who fulfill this role in the corporate world do so for periods of seven to ten years, sometimes longer.

In contrast, board chairs and chief executive officers of symphony orchestra organizations often serve for a term or two, at most for four to six years at a time. Preparation for the clearly part-time job typically is not extensive, the selectee usually being otherwise employed and service to the orchestra being a civic duty. The role is demanding and stressful. Devotion to community and classical music helps, but the position is too often a labor of love from which many an occupant has happily exited. Needless to say, the position is uncompensated.

The person selected for chairperson may not have extensive leadership skills or management experience. Even with these attributes and extensive board service, the candidate is unlikely to have the same deep knowledge of the symphony orchestra organization's activities that a prospective corporate chief executive would have about his or her organization's affairs. Then, by the time the recently elected chief executive is beginning to understand the intricacies of the symphony business, the term of office expires.

The Executive Director

In symphony orchestra organizations, the senior compensated staff officer, who quite often has the title "executive director," generally has the apparent duties associated with the title in business of "chief operating officer." All employees report directly or indirectly to this office and all operations are under its direction.

However, it is my view that the typical orchestral executive director makes many decisions and recommendations for board decision that in business organizations would be made by the chief executive officer. This is a matter of necessity, and is understandable in light of the earlier discussed role and tenure of the typical symphony chairperson. In most cases, undoubtedly the executive director reviews plans and decisions with the chairperson, and does obtain advice, but does not ask for or obtain substantive direction. In most cases, we can thank executive directors for taking the initiative and forging ahead. But accountability for results is therefore unclear.

The executive director, occupying a central position between the board and the rest of the organization, is a gatekeeper for the flow of communications between these groups. Some executive directors foster many channels for such communications; others are more limiting. This range is similar to what one finds in business organizations. But, as a rule, board members are fundamentally knowledgeable about the activities of corporations they govern and have many ways to become informed in detail. In recent years, corporate directors have insisted on greater organizational involvement and knowledge. I am not so confident about the breadth and depth of symphony orchestra board members' knowledge of their organizations' affairs. Given all the circumstances, the communications philosophy of the orchestral executive director is key to how well informed the board is and therefore how able to carry out its oversight.

The Music Director

I am not familiar with the first use of the title "music director" in American orchestral organizations, nor with the duties then associated with the title. Perhaps someone has researched and documented this progression. The title and role may have been used in Europe before the first American orchestras were formed, and may have derived there from the title and role of "maestro." Or perhaps this took place in America, when the duties of early maestros or "conductors" expanded to a level where a new, broader title was appropriate. Perhaps it had to do with the growing nonresidency of the maestro/conductor and the increased use of visiting (guest) conductors.

Today, the music director is often described as responsible for the overall musical development and artistry of the organization. This responsibility includes being the principal conductor and musical inspirer of the orchestra, along with having final authority or substantial influence over musicians' employment: original engagement, retention after a period of probation, and termination in the event of musical incompetency. The music director's duties include making repertoire selections, choosing soloists and guest conductors, planning longer-range repertoire development, and setting artistic policy. Quite often a music director's contract and contacts with particular recording companies introduce those companies' services and interests into organizational plans.

As with other roles in many symphony orchestra organizations, the music director's duties are not always described in detail in corporate records, or even in the music director's employment contract. Authority and powers with respect to musicians' employment are usually expressly defined in the union contract, but the broader artistic role of the music director is left to tradition and to the working out of details through experience, especially through the music director's relationship with the executive director.

After a search process that may well involve a collective of staff, musicians, and volunteers, music directors typically are "retained" by and thereafter "report" to the board of directors. It usually is unclear exactly what this means. Music directors of medium- to larger-sized organizations most often are retained in multi-year contracts for year-round service. However, they usually are physically present and resident in the community, and available to their top management associates and the board of directors, and their musician colleagues, for only one-third to one-fourth of the year. In smaller organizations, a year-round, resident conductor may provide top artistic leadership, but even in these organizations, two or three orchestras often share part-time services of the same person.

There is little question that many music directors profoundly and positively impact the artistic development of the orchestras with which they are affiliated, and provide great conducting and inspiration. However, in the total universe of organizations, it is rare to find a person—so vital to the quality output and careers of a large group of central employees—to be physically present and working with those employees only one-fourth to one-half of their working year.

Direct Service Volunteer Leadership

As noted earlier, the women's association or guild or league of the typical symphony orchestra organization is quite often a large, important, and semi-independent group of volunteers. This group represents a sample of the organization's constituency and is usually active in fundraising, special events, and music education. The group usually elects its own leaders, and they quite often serve *ex officio* on the overall governing board. Although the position is

very demanding, time-consuming, and requires professional staff support, the top leader usually only serves for a one- or two-year term, part-time.

Summary

The top governance/professional/musical/volunteer leadership of medium to large symphony orchestra organizations typically is shared by one full-time and three part-time people. One part-time person, quite often the organization's chief executive, is resident, chairs the board, and principally oversees the decisions and leadership of the executive director. The executive director, full time and resident, is in effect the chief executive of the organization, but often without title, ultimate authority, or accountability. The music director usually is hired by and reports to the board, and thus nominally to the board chairperson, but in fact works most closely with the executive director. Although perhaps year-round in touch with the organization's executive office, the role can only be characterized as part-time, with the music director usually visiting the community for weeks, not months, at a time. The direct service volunteer chief motivates and supervises a semi-independent ancillary organization and usually works most closely with the staff of the executive director.

Based upon many interviews, it appears that the above group of persons seldom assemble around a table—even occasionally and for just a few hours—to discuss the activities, performance, and direction of the organization, despite their key roles. In almost any other organizational setting involving similar roles, this would be most unusual.

Mention was earlier made of opera organizations and how they might compare with symphony orchestra organizations. Some observers have pointed out that some opera organizations have a management structure which is distinctively different from that traditionally found in symphony orchestra organizations. This is a further reason for comparative research of these organizations.

Orchestra Leadership and Administration

As earlier discussed, the orchestra is a unique group of employees within a symphony orchestra organization. Similarly, the leadership and administration of this employee group has unique aspects.

In most organizations, a group of employees clearly working together has a supervisor (the “boss”) acknowledged as such by each group member and usually appointed to that role by senior management. A group of such supervisors in turn has a senior supervisor.

In a 60- to 100-person orchestra, if you ask the routine question, “Who is your boss?” you typically receive uncertain if not conflicting answers. These confused answers are justified since each of a number of persons in a variety of roles has something important to do with the employment, retention, inspiration, general and specific direction, scheduling, evaluation, compensation, career development, and termination of musicians in an orchestra.

Conductors Other Than the Music Director

If the earlier question was changed to, “To whom do you look for leadership?” musicians would likely interpret it in musical terms and the answer would be “the music director” or “the conductor,” meaning “in general” or “the current conductor.” Then, depending on the musician’s personal opinion of the music director or current conductor, the musician might add a positive or negative bias. But at least the uncertainty created by the earlier question would be reduced.

As noted earlier, the music director’s responsibilities are broad, directional, developmental, and inspirational, but also include very specific and significant player personnel responsibilities. In addition, the music director actually conducts the orchestra typically in substantially more programs than any other conductor, but still, in medium to larger orchestras, less than perhaps 40 percent of all programs.

Other conductors handle the balance of the season; their titles incorporate various adjectives, including principal guest, associate, assistant, resident, etc. This means many orchestra musicians have to relate to from 10 to 15 conductors on the podium per season.

This pattern of regularly changing the “boss” of a major, central, service-producing employee group points to further uniqueness of symphony orchestra organizations. Perhaps someone can suggest an analogy?

I don’t want to suggest that the pattern of having many conductors of a symphony orchestra over a season is good or bad. Perhaps conductor diversity is the spice of an orchestral musician’s life. But the practice merits thought and perhaps research as to its implications for organizational behavior, especially in conjunction with other unique aspects of symphony orchestra organizations.

The Personnel Manager

In medium to large symphony orchestras, the role of personnel manager adds a further dimension to musician leadership and administration.

Most persons familiar with for-profit companies would associate personnel managers with personnel recruitment, compensation and benefits administration, records, etc. In the usual symphony orchestra organization, however, the personnel manager is primarily responsible for fair administration of the agreement with the musicians’ union. These duties include determining which musicians play which performances, arranging substitutes, coordinating auditions, determining payroll inputs, and making other recommendations or decisions that relate to mutual compliance with the trade agreement.

The personnel manager works closely with the current conductor, since it is the personnel manager who knows and can influence exactly which musicians will be available for performances, or whether the conductor’s rehearsal plans comply with the musicians’ contract.

The personnel manager is the main conduit for direct administrative relationships between management and each musician and/or the orchestra

committee. He is the first line arbitrator/mediator of disagreements or disputes between a musician, or, in due course, the orchestra committee or the local union office, and the management/employer, and, in due course, the operations or general manager, or the executive director.

The personnel manager is essentially the paymaster of the musicians, with an office quite often near the locker rooms or stage entrance: visible and easily accessible to musicians. As such, and because the position was (and still is in many cases) filled by a musician or former musician, the personnel manager often is a “confessor” figure to many musicians, the person in management who has the most understanding of the work and life of the orchestral musician.

The genesis of the personnel manager role goes back to the day when musicians’ services were “contracted” by a union officer known as a “contractor.” In due course, the contractor’s role was subsumed into the orchestra; a musician took on the added role of “personnel manager” and received double pay. Through the years, the role evolved from being the extra duty of a musician to being a separate staff position. Even more recently, persons who were not formerly orchestral musicians have become personnel managers.

In summary, it is fair to say that, in most medium to large symphony orchestra organizations, the personnel manager has the strongest, most regular contact and relationships with orchestra musicians. As such, the person in this role can substantially influence attitudes of musicians towards their work, management, and the organization as a whole, as well as the attitudes which management and conductors have toward the orchestra and individual musicians.

The Section Principal

Historically, a section principal was responsible for the overall professional development and performance of section players. In modern times, however, it seems the typical section principal’s only leadership duties are in solo performance example and musical interpretation and secondarily, general behavioral example. Although considered in some situations, orchestral experience, leadership skills, and personal maturity have not generally been factors in principal chair selections. Although there are surely exceptions, principals shy away from responsibilities other than artistic interpretation, under the guidance of the conductor.

The Orchestra Committee

Finally, in the unionized orchestras, there is an elected orchestra committee, which oversees the union contract and may negotiate it, although some orchestras have separate negotiating committees. If there is no orchestra union, the committee function is quite often fulfilled by the nearest office of the American Federation of Musicians. Musicians’ basic wages are established through collective bargaining as are a range of work conditions and procedures. The week-to-week operations of an orchestra quite often run up against such conditions and procedures, or specific personnel issues arise out of them. Usually, these matters can only be resolved by involvement of the chair of the orchestra

committee, if not the whole committee. This adds another dimension to administrative processes which impact a musician's work and attitudes.

Performance Appraisal, Rewards, and Recognition

Musicians receive day-to-day rehearsal commentary from conductors, directed to individuals but heard by all colleagues. Depending in part on the conductor, there tends to be—by the nature of rehearsals—more negative than positive commentary. Music directors sometimes have private consultations with musicians, but they are infrequent.

To my knowledge, there is no tradition and little practice within the symphony orchestra world for periodic performance reviews with musicians, not only regarding their musicianship, but also more broadly regarding general employment expectations and performance. Without such reviews, musicians miss a chance to express views and ask questions about how they are doing in their work; how their section, the orchestra, or the overall organization is progressing; and how the operation of the orchestra and organization could be improved. Managements miss the opportunity to review expectations, convey goals, discuss the musician's performance, and provide motivation. Such a periodic dialogue would be normal in a well-run commercial enterprise, especially with employees as central as are musicians in a symphony orchestra organization.

Performance reviews in industry are usually linked with compensation discussions. Employees are motivated and satisfied in their work for various reasons, but rewards and recognition, including compensation, certainly play an important part. I do not think that most musicians are an exception. Although unionization has essentially leveled the compensation of many orchestral musicians, more than one-half of the musicians (all principals and most all non-string section players) in many orchestras receive overscale compensation.

Even though the music director is empowered to hire, retain, and discharge musicians subject to procedures and limits in the musician trade agreement and organizational policy, the executive director is usually the decision maker with respect to overscale compensation. The music director may be consulted with respect to proposed individual changes, and may in fact initiate the consideration of some changes. But music directors are not generally involved in reviewing the complement of musicians and their compensation and thinking about and participating in decisions regarding levels, structure, and equity.

Even so, it would appear that overscale compensation adjustment discussions would provide a logical opportunity for the executive director and the musicians involved to have the performance review dialogue above described, but this is apparently not the practice in symphony orchestra organizations.

Summary

Symphony orchestra musicians look to a wide range of leadership and administrative roles for inspiration, direction, compensation, praise or critique, and administrative decisions. These roles include the music director; this week's

(or program's) conductor (if not the music director); the executive director; the personnel manager; the section principal (to some degree); and, the orchestra committee and/or its chair. As part of his or her weekly routine, a musician must establish or maintain a relationship with many bosses.

This diversity of people with whom musicians must relate and respond as part of their jobs may serve to enhance their performance both as musicians and employees; it may add spice to their lives. On the other hand, in most professional service organizations, this array of leadership and administrative relationships impacting on the central core of professionals would be considered unusual and confusing. Some professional service organizations employ a sophisticated and complex "matrix" form of organization which does permit multidimensional reporting and communication patterns, but I am doubtful this approach addresses the needs of symphony orchestra organizations.

Despite the wide range of administrative contacts with musicians, the practice of regular, personal, musician-by-musician, two-way communication, expressing expectations, evaluations, and feedback, is not generally used in symphony orchestra organizations.

Musician Involvement, Engagement, and Commitment

Musician Involvement and Engagement

Much is written in today's organizational science journals and management magazines about employee empowerment, engagement and involvement, self-governance, learning organizations, etc.—just to name a few topics. As one of its main objectives, the Symphony Orchestra Institute wishes to bring information about these theories and commercial practices to the attention of symphony organization leaders and participants.

I would like to summarize briefly some impressions I have about the ways employees of symphony orchestra organizations, in particular musicians, are becoming involved in processes that influence the direction of their organizations as well as impact their own destinies. I will look at typical circumstances of this involvement, and how these practices compare with industrial organizations.

First, musicians are joining in significant organizational discussion and process through membership on committees, be it a task committee, an ongoing non-board operating committee, a board committee, or the board itself. Involvement of musicians in such group processes has resulted primarily from union request and negotiation, especially when the organization has faced difficult financial conditions. When there is no request and no immediate financial crisis, there is little evidence of an independent, positive move by management or the board to invite and expect musicians to participate in substantive, long-term organizational decision making.

Such a pattern is understandable. Board members and managements have traditionally taken the view that it is their task to govern and manage; staff employees are to assist and support; and musicians are to play music. Many

trustees and managements feel that musicians do not want to be involved in institutional issues and direction; “musicians want to be left alone” so they can concentrate on music making. In addition, it is not clear under union and personal employment contracts how such involvements would be characterized.

For various reasons, a number of musicians do not wish to be involved in organizational activity other than instrumental performance. But others want and welcome involvement, have good insights and ideas, and feel frustrated because they are not invited to participate, or when they do, that their views are not taken seriously.

Musician union leaders have been generally ambivalent about musician involvement. When and if an organization is failing financially, heavy involvement is okay, if not necessary, right up through substantial board membership. But such participation is not viewed as personal, but as representing the union. For this reason, there is a conflict which all practices recognize. Can musicians maintain a duty of loyalty and care to the institution and at the same time serve union interests?

On the other end of the spectrum, there are a few American examples of self-governing orchestras, where orchestra members have majority legal control over the institution and are active or lead in many or all phases of direction and operations. The Colorado Symphony Orchestra rose out of the ashes of a defunct predecessor and, in a sense, is the ultimate example of employee involvement after a financial crisis. Other examples include chamber orchestras founded and always operated as self-governing “cooperative” institutions.

There are to my knowledge very few, if any, symphony orchestra organizations of any scale which are pursuing musician involvement programs as a basic long-term organizational policy. This too is understandable, in that employee involvement concepts, even in industry, are relatively new. There is a lack of clarity or even discussion among board members, managements, music directors, and musicians as to why greater involvement should be considered, what kinds of involvement might be fruitful, and how to go about such a new direction.

A further concern about employee involvement arises out of my observation of successful industry programs and practices. Most successful employee involvement programs (broadly defined) are comprehensive and total-culture in character; employees become “engaged” as well as “involved.” The effort is not fulfilled by placing a few line employees on each operating or project committee as a matter of form, or even when the program is serious and substantial. There is greater breadth in the successful industrial programs; there is a noticeable change in the top management mind-set. How symphony orchestra organizations might adopt this more comprehensive approach should be a matter of thoughtful research and careful experimentation.

Musician Commitment

Closely akin to the issue of employee involvement and engagement is the issue of musicians’ commitment to their employing organizations, in terms of both

time and intellect.

Board members of orchestra organizations sometimes comment how orchestra musicians only work 20 hours a week, have six or so vacation weeks, and are often not on stage for the entire program or week. They mention that many musicians pursue other performance work and instrumental or classroom teaching during the other half of a normal work week, gaining additional income, and devoting time and energy to pursuits other than those of their main employer.

It would be useful to research the preparation, skills, and practice needed, musical and other diversity required, stress and other health factors faced, amount and nature of time devoted, and instrument investment involved in being an orchestral musician, as well as the amount and nature of compensation, benefits, and other rewards received, for a range of musicians, in many sections, organizations, and communities. Such research would better inform all of us as to the life and economics of the orchestral musician.

At the same time, perhaps musicians should be more conscious of the questions orchestral constituencies are asking about the musicians' work, productivity, and job definition. Constituencies are also questioning musicians' commitment to their organizations. Is low commitment the flipside of low engagement and involvement? Are times changing so that it is reasonable to ask and expect more and more varied work from musicians?

Such questions are not particularly unique to symphony orchestra organizations. Throughout industry and other sectors of society, smarter, more varied, and more involved—if not greater—work effort by all is the trend. And in many instances, employees become substantially more productive, engaged, self-directed, and happier as a result of organizational redefinition.

Perhaps this can happen in the symphony orchestra world, in spite of its uniqueness.

Staff and Volunteers

Administrative structure and processes in orchestra organizations are substantially the same as in other nonprofit and for-profit organizations. The structure and processes involving volunteers are also comparable to other nonprofit organizations, noting however the unusually significant role played by a women's volunteer group associated with almost every symphony orchestra organization. Among cultural arts organizations, the scale and involvement of women volunteers in direct service and fundraising for symphony orchestra organizations is probably unique.

Supervisory staff employees are generally intimately involved in setting the direction of their organization. Depending on the degree to which an executive director delegates, staff supervisors can be active decision makers in many areas. More broadly, they often provide support for more than one board committee and are active participants and observers in committee meetings. Usually junior

employees help prepare materials and ideas for these meetings; greater involvement and engagement of these employees would probably benefit many organizations.

All in all, the administrative patterns of symphony orchestra organizations are not much different from those of many nonprofit organizations. Staff and volunteers are generally substantially more involved than musicians in the overall direction of most organizations.

Summary

The structure of top leadership and management within a symphony orchestra organization is reasonably complex. Accountability is not clear. In some ways, the relationships among the board chair, executive director, and music director appear similar to the “office of the chairman” in industry. This arrangement presumes close daily or weekly communication and coordination by a small group of executives working together as a central management team, typically with well defined roles and rules. The team meets relatively often. Personal working relationships often go back for years. The arrangement is often adopted during a limited period of management transition. The typical symphony orchestra organization management situation doesn't have these characteristics.

Leadership and management of the orchestra as a whole and of musicians as individual employees is multichanneled. This diversity and complexity overlays the propinquity of the orchestra which is heightened by unionization and often by physical separatism. These complicated patterns affect the flow of interpersonal communications within a symphony orchestra organization. It is likely that these patterns impact organizational effectiveness and measures that would improve such effectiveness. All these matters merit systematic research by organizational scientists working in collaboration with forward-thinking practitioners.

The unique patterns of symphony orchestra organization structure and process have a historical basis related to the nature and development of symphonic music and extended by tradition. Hopefully, research and writings can better acquaint us with the evolution of these patterns and help pinpoint the time and circumstances under which they emerged. We could then question whether the same circumstances prevail or whether alternative approaches might be valuable. In particular, both increased involvement of the musician in organizational direction and a correlative review of the musician's job description merit fresh examination.

An External View

Having intently looked inside symphony orchestra organizations, I will now stand back and view these institutions as members of a community of organizations operating in a local, national, and world society and economy. How unique or common are they from this point of view?

Small, Local Organizations

From a basic perspective, these organizations are composed of individual human beings whose behavior is some amalgam of individual self-direction, group participation and norms, and leadership response. In the total scheme of organizations, almost all symphony orchestra organizations are relatively small, with fewer than 200 employees and fewer than 300 total active participants, including volunteers. Many are even smaller. In most orchestral organizations, the majority of musicians, staff, and volunteers live in the same town and work together in the same physical structure.

Characteristics often ascribed to small organizations are informality, adaptability, flexibility, and capacity to change “on-a-dime.” America is replete with relatively small, local businesses which have some organizational complexity. Many of these organizations have achieved high levels of organizational effectiveness providing excellent value to their customers and owners. Leadership is visible, right there on the scene; everyone knows everyone else on a first-name basis. Competitive challenges, new directions, expectations, performance, etc., are discussed and assessed, quickly, face-to-face. Action is immediate and concerted.

From this perspective, notwithstanding the unique and historically based patterns in symphony orchestra organizations, they should be able to realize the benefits of smallness and localness. Increased effectiveness should not be hard to achieve. If there is a will, there should be a way.

Service Organizations

In an industrial classification system, symphony orchestra organizations would be categorized as consumer service organizations, providing a range of services (musical, artistic, educational) to consumers in their communities and sometimes to broader society. An evolving body of theory and practice addresses design of organizational structure and process in service organizations to achieve greater effectiveness and customer value. Symphony orchestra organizations might benefit from these insights. How to apply them to the business of symphony orchestra organizations would require thought, but at least a basic framework does not have to be created.

Economic and Financial Entities

Even though society views symphony orchestra organizations as, primarily, “cultural” or “arts” organizations, they are also clearly “economic” entities operating in a number of markets. They own tangible and financial assets, and have valuable goodwill. They incur expenses and liabilities; they receive operating revenues, contributed funds, and investment income. They realize financial surpluses or deficits; their net worths grow or decline. They provide employment; business cycles affect them. Small businesses in the broadest sense, they are nonetheless significant economic entities within their communities, especially in terms of the charitable dollars absorbed.

Increasingly they compete for customers with other local and nearby

performing arts and educational organizations, with for-profit entertainment enterprises, and with a proliferation of home entertainment products and services.

Perhaps even more significantly, they compete intensively for individual and institutional charitable support with a wide range of other nonprofit entities. In many communities, the charitable support base is broad and public, and, contrary to days of old, few symphony orchestra organizations can depend on a few individuals, families, businesses, or foundations for sustenance.

As economic entities, these organizations compete for funds in various marketplaces and are expected to be increasingly accountable to those who support them: ticket-buying audiences, charitable contributors, and volunteers who contribute valuable time and know-how and on whom the organization depends for the flow of charitable funding and the propagation of goodwill. Just as businesses must be increasingly competitive, the mood is that orchestral organizations must be increasingly effective.

Market Position

Despite the various forms of competition, symphony orchestra organizations hold a special market position in their communities. Usually there is only one central symphony orchestra organization in a single community. This institution has had a relatively long existence and is supported and maintained in its singular, relatively secure, and mature position by tacit agreement among the community's cultural, philanthropic, business, and civic leadership. Unionization of the orchestra, under law, buttresses the organization's local near monopoly. There is no "ease of entry" into the symphony business in most communities; this is true even in major metropolitan centers. In fact, the market position of most central symphony organizations is so widely recognized that smaller symphony orchestra organizations don't even think about making a challenge.

Of course, market boundaries change, and alternative and substitute services and products emerge, giving new competition to symphony orchestra organizations. Greater competition for charitable funding has also eroded the long-held market share of symphony orchestra organizations in many communities. Some symphony organizations have suffered from the complacency and false sense of security that a near-monopoly mentality engendered.

Boosterism, Rivalry, and Real Competition

As discussed earlier, the business of most symphony orchestra organizations is very localized. Most customers and contributors, and employees and volunteers, live in the community. There is no head office, or a branch, or a facility in another community. The symphony orchestra is a hometown team, just like a local high school, college, or professional sports team. The orchestra is one of the prides of the community and helps lift the community's self-esteem. The boosterism of the orchestra helps maintain a flow of financial support.

Though they are regional, national and international touring orchestras act as goodwill ambassadors. They are export products of their home cities. City

leaders feel the orchestra enhances the image of their community—even their state—as a place to visit and do business. This may be so, and such touring may also boost the artistic level of the orchestra. But these activities take the orchestra away from its supporting community. In addition, such touring often subtracts from rather than adds to the financial condition of the orchestral organization.

Orchestra organizations in some cities have rivalries with organizations in other cities as to musical reputation. However, only a few such rival organizations actually compete head-to-head for customers and contributors, and only to a limited degree, for employees, including musicians. Competition for key principals exists, but the tenure system and the natural desire to settle down decrease musician mobility after a certain age, even among prominent principals. For most classically oriented musicians, employment in the local symphony orchestra is quite often the best full- or base-time work available in the community.

Professional staff positions are filled by persons with more general administrative skills, and turnover in these positions is probably more like that in small businesses. However, the executive director of a symphony orchestra organization is not often considered for employment in other types of organizations in the community. The career path for an executive director tends to be up through symphony orchestra organizations in various communities.

Well-run business organizations are very analytical and realistic in their competitive assessments. It strikes me that symphony orchestra organizations are not. I wonder at the sense of competition that exists in many symphony orchestra organizations, especially the larger ones. Trustees, managers, and musicians all tend to think and talk competitively about other symphony organizations, when, in fact, that is not the direction from which real competition is coming.

Might someday symphony orchestra organizations compete and rival each other with respect to their effectiveness as organizations, the satisfaction of their constituencies, and the value provided to their communities?

Stratification

Some observers have noted the stratification that exists among North American symphony orchestras, if not the world over. In the artistic realm, this stratification (with competitive overtones) is reflected in such phrases as “world” or “international” or “national” or “regional” class.

In more economic terms, this stratification is the basis for grouping orchestras by quantitative measures such as revenues, expenses, number of full-time, full-season musicians, and overall employment. It would be interesting to note to what degree the stratification profile in the symphony orchestra industry parallels that of other selected professional service organizations or selected nonprofit organizations, such as museums. Do the content and degree of organizational issues vary by strata?

The combination of community pride, competitive urge, and stratification issues perhaps inhibits more serious consideration of sectional and regional orchestras, or some combination of local and sectional/regional organizations. Many observers dismiss these possibilities out of hand. Others are interested in thinking through the problems and the potentials. There are some examples which could form the basis for study.

In some professional service organization industries, various theories posit the inherent difficulties of medium-sized organizations surviving competitively, versus remaining small, or moving ahead concertedly to a larger scale. Some of this thinking might apply to possibilities of regional orchestra organizations. In this regard, something might also be learned from the field of commercial joint venture theory and practice. Research in these directions might prove valuable.

“Celebrityism”

At the recent conference of symphony orchestra organizations, I looked through a large display of programming and other marketing materials from all over North America. I was struck by the creativity and attractiveness of many of these brochures. Were I not already a symphony devotee, I would clearly have been attracted to a concert hall by a number of these inviting handouts.

However, almost without exception, roughly even space was given to the name of the music director as compared with that of the orchestra. In some materials, the music director’s name and picture were more prominent. I was definitely being sold on “him”—and “her” in a few cases. It was clear that this orchestra was “his” or “hers” as much as it was the community’s.

Of course, visiting artists were prominently displayed in these materials, with pictures and raves. In a sense, the heavy promotion of the music director was in order, as he or she is in a way, per earlier discussion, a visiting artist.

My point here is that symphony orchestra organizations, for whatever reason, are rather unique in the promotion of a single person—the music director—in a way that overshadows the organization itself. We see this phenomenon in other performing arts, but not in the cultural arts in general. We don’t see it in the university field. We see it a bit here and there in the business world, but most thoughtful business leaders frown on it as an ego trip and an ineffective use of corporate funds. Even a driving entrepreneur who has created a successful business from scratch quite often insists on staying in the shadows and pushing forward the team which helped make it all possible.

Celebrityism is clearly the pattern in show business, and some would say, debatably, that is the business of symphony orchestra organizations. The pattern of artist celebrities is also followed in professional sports, but relatively speaking, neither general managers nor coaches get much publicity.

Heavy promotion of the music director and personalization of the institution are practices which probably stem from some historical root. Managements probably feel that celebrityism helps sell tickets, fill concert halls, gain recording

contracts, sell recordings, and heighten the image of the orchestra. It is a practice which, on balance, music critics foster more than deplore. And it is a practice which some musicians, perhaps reluctantly, perhaps proudly, support by highlighting in their resumes the music directors who have employed them.

It is a practice to which I am sure many music directors have become accustomed, so that they would feel slighted if it changed. But I am equally sure that some music directors are not comfortable with all the hype, although their agents may well be. Finally, it is a practice for which, perhaps, we are all to blame, reflecting our American orientation to glorify our heroes and personalize our central institutions.

From an organizational point of view, celebrityism does not necessarily contribute to teamwork and effectiveness. If it did, I think more businesses would utilize it rather than frown on it. In my judgment, not only many musicians, but also many board members and other volunteers are not very happy or confident about it. When it is pursued heavily, these key organizational participants begin to have the uncomfortable feeling that the direction of the institution is too much at the beck and call, and being operated to the personal benefit, of one person. This practice causes general uneasiness in the hearts of many people who are keenly involved in symphony orchestra organizations.

Perhaps someone someday will undertake a thoughtful analysis of this practice, and its overall cost/benefit relationships. It is certainly an interesting and unique aspect of symphony orchestra organizations.

Summary

Most symphony orchestra organizations are relatively small, local enterprises, operating in a central facility, with employees, volunteers, and a constituency all living in the same community. They are service organizations, principally with local customers. They are also economic and financial entities buffeted generally by market forces, both local and national. Symphony orchestra organizations share these commonalities with a wide range of other organizations.

Symphony orchestra organizations do hold unique central market positions in their communities—monopolies of sorts—but substitute and alternative services and products are impacting this position and charitable funding is more competitive. By their nature, orchestral organizations have little head-to-head, real competition with other similar organizations for customers, contributors, or employees. Even so, they engage in reputational and intellectual rivalry, spurred on by community boosterism, some of which has a positive impact, but much of which is misguided and unwise. There should be more rivalry and community pride based on organizational effectiveness, constituency satisfaction, and community value.

The symphony orchestra world is stratified, and organizational issues by

strata probably differ, as in industry. Middle-strata organizations may have some of the same challenges faced by middle-strata professional service organizations.

Finally, the personalization of orchestra organizations through heavy identification with particular music directors is unique but questionable. A traditional practice, it merits research as to organizational costs and benefits.

Conclusion

The performance, advancement, and preservation of classical symphonic music in America depends upon a broad and growing audience base and the existence of many healthy symphony orchestra organizations providing orchestral performances accessible to many communities. To ensure this scenario, we need to be concerned about the unique human makeup of these organizations, and how they are structured and functioning. We need to be concerned about their effectiveness and the value they are providing to the communities they serve.

To this end, we need to study these interesting organizational systems, starting with the orchestra itself, which is a unique employee group. This uniqueness may help explain, in part, some of the organizational behavior which is observable in symphony orchestra organizations. Further thought and study might lead to changes which take into account and adapt to such uniqueness, resulting in improved communication and effectiveness.

The management and leadership structure of our symphony orchestra organizations is also unique and probably has depended too much on history and tradition. The leadership and administration provided to individual musicians and the orchestra as a whole is complex and confusing. Musicians should be more involved in and engaged by the direction of their organizations, including a definition of their own roles.

From an external point of view, symphony orchestra organizations have much in common with many other nonprofit and profit-making organizations in American society, but display some unique differences. Symphony orchestra organizations would benefit from a more realistic assessment of the socioeconomic environment in which they operate and a review of practices which do not have good cost/benefit relationships.

The small, local nature of symphony orchestra organizations, and the intense devotion which all participants have to them, provide a solid foundation for positive change. It is my hope that research and dialogue will give greater impetus to such change.

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