Symphony Orchestra Organizations in the 21st Century

In this section of our Web site, the Symphony Orchestra Institute is pleased to present a report which looks ahead to the symphony orchestra organization of the 21st century, with special emphasis on the future environment for and organzational functioning of this institution. The report integrates the written views of 13 very thougthful and knowledgeable people working in various roles within and around North American symphony organizations, each addressing the same set of basic questions about the future of symphony organizations.

In its form, the report is rather unique. It is an amalgamation of a wide range of ideas and insights, many similar and reinforcing, some opposing and conflicting. Almost all the views submitted have been included somewhere in the report with minimal filtration, conveying real authenticity with occasional ambiguity. As will be clear, the report does not present anyone's position, including that of Institute. The report does, however, carry out a goal of the Institute which is to foster steady dialogue about how symphony organizations function and might better function, especially given the fast-changing environment in which they operate. We hope the report will stimulate broad thinking about the future of symphony organizations, and that it will be useful in strategic planning within these institutions.

As background, about a year ago, the Institute initiated a review of its own strategic development. Since our mission is to help symphony organizations become more effective through positive organizational change, we decided that an important element in our planning should be to learn more about how persons in and closely observing symphony organizations viewed the future of these organizations.

As a step in this direction, we turned to our Board of Advisors, saying: We are gathering views about the future environment for symphony organizations and how they might be functioning in that environment, including attaining a better understanding of the factors and forces which will foster or impede organizational change.

We provided our advisors with 11 very challenging questions, thoughtful responses to which would clearly take a commitment of time and intellect. We also promised those who participated that we would feedback to them their collective views. We were pleased and grateful that 13 current and former advisors stepped up to our challenge.

As we read through the multipage responses which began to flow in, it became clear that we needed some special approach to organizing these clearly excellent insights into a document that would maximize our and the participants' comprehension. At this point, we turned to a volunteer, Dr. John Boaz, a retired faculty member and administrator at Illinois State University. With John's assistance, along with the wonders of computer word processing, we first grouped together for each question the separate advisors' responses to that question. Next, John reviewed all the responses for each question and identifed various themes or common dimensions, and set about to further organize, deconstruct and reconstruct, and edit (very modestly) the responses into these subgroupings, keeping as a unit the phrases, words, and paragraphs

of any one respondent, in order to provide the reader with the maximum flavor of the author's point. We also decided to include somewhere in the report all the thoughts provided by advisors, and not to make judgments as to what expression to include or exclude.

Following our policy and our understanding with the advisors, and so that ideas could stand on their own, John and I also edited the responses so that no expression could be linked to any individual advisor or to his or her organizational constituency. As final steps, John developed single sentences or phrases which highlighted in the most cogent form the main idea of associated paragraphs, and the whole report was then fine-tuned by Marilyn Sholl and me.

As the overall report began to shape up, and with the permission of the participating advisors, we decided that, when completed, it should be shared with the readers of *Harmony*, and, more broadly, with anyone interested in the future of symphony organizational develoopment into the 21st century.

Table of Contents

Following are the 12 questions to which members of the Board of Advisors responded. Page numbers indicate on which page of this PDF answers begin.

"responsive." What do these words mean to you specifically? Do you agree? If so, what specific changes will symphony organizations need to make or should consider making?
Page 21

9. There are various associations and other groupings within, surrounding, and serving "the symphony orchestra industry." These entities include such associations as the American Symphony Orchestra League [ASOL], the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians [ICSOM], the Regional Orchestra Players Association [ROPA], the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians [OCSM], and the American Federation of Musicians [AFM] and its locals, and subgroups within these larger groups. There are various "professional role groups" within or serving the industry, such as the associations of personnel managers, orchestra librarians, music critics, and so forth. There are for-profit business groups which regularly work within and around the industry, such as artists' representatives and presenting organizations. All these groups are part of and contribute to some degree to the mainte-nance of traditional patterns of how symphony organizations function. In your judgment, what impact, either positive or negative, might these associations or groupings have on individual symphony organizations and how they function in the future?
Page 23

10. What forces will be at work within symphony organization participants as individuals, the organization as a whole, or the world in which the organization functions to keep things from changing at a pace required?
Page 25

11. In your overall judgment, what forces or conditions need to exist for positive change to start and be sustained in the typical symphony organization?
Page 27

1. **Who, in your view, will be the "customers" of these organizations? How will customers and their needs change over the next 25 to 50 years?**

Consumer demographics will not change.

"I believe our customers will be basically the same group we attract now, the upper-income, highly-educated, older, white population. We should just be comfortable with who we are and lower our expectations about increasing audience base." A concurring advisor says, "I'm more sanguine than most about the staying power of the symphonic classics and think that the core 'subscriber base' for the classical concerts will remain fairly stable for many years to come. Another advisor amplifies: "Customers will be fewer than two percent of the population, and they will live in fewer and larger metropolitan areas. They will come, then as now, from the same high-income, highly educated, over-55 age group." Regarding income levels, another advisor predicts, "There will be more affluent people. They will look and act differently from today's affluent people, but in most cases they will also be educated and mature."

The customer's basic reason for coming to the symphony will not change.

"Our audience and our community will always look to the symphony orchestra for deep artistic experiences (even philosophical, spiritual). This is fundamental and primary . . . to any discussion involving the symphony orchestra." Another advisor predicts, "Patrons will engage the symphonic art form because of the live, acoustic experience and the preservation and interpretation of the literature. Granted the same is said of today, but the future may be a more clinical and sterile environment and live, versus synthetic, will cultivate an appetite the likes of which are completely unknown to us now."

But their musical interests will be more complex and demanding.

"Their tastes will change with respect to the serious and demanding music that they like, to include stuff which we traditionalists find unpleasant," one advisor predicts. Another thinks, "The future growth (i.e., financial health) of any professional orchestra will require adding new artistic products and services to the successful traditional concert series." Another believes, "The enlightened symphony orchestra patron will be educated and influenced by a methodology vastly different from our experience. The electronic forum will further accelerate at warp speed in the areas of education, pedagogy, information, and recreation. Another says, "I believe that their interests in music, as in other things, will be more complex, and hence more receptive to demanding and serious musical offerings." And still another hazards, "They will need to be able to have quick and easy access to the music, and they will probably need to have it be interactive and entertaining to some degree."

The trend away from subscription sales will continue.

"As even loyal patrons select the specific concerts they wish to attend rather than take the traditional approach of buying the entire package, subscription sales will decline. Patrons will be particular not only about the program, but also about when the concert will take place as the demands on their time increase, along with their choices for other cultural events which might be more user-friendly."

And real "customer service" must be at the top of the agenda.

"The contemporary concern shown for the customer throughout all areas of human commerce should be well shared throughout symphony orchestra organizations. At the present time, we don't know enough of what our customers need, want, or expect. We know that symphony orchestras need more ticket-buying, concertgoing customers. I believe that we can really get more customers more efficiently and effectively by listening—really listen-

ing—more to our customers. Far from becoming more and more irrelevant, symphony orchestras are positioned to provide what people will need more of as the future unfolds: value."

The limited number of young people in today's symphony audience should not be disconcerting.

"Everyone is concerned about the lack of interest among young people in classical symphonic music, stating that the concert hall is full of gray-haired people. But this is always true. As folks age and the music of their youth is no longer played, they realize they don't like the music of their children and many turn to classical music. For some it's a new adventure, for others, a rediscovery of music they learned as small children." Another advisor supports this view by adding, "Although some predict that eventually there will be no audience left, there are reports that the average age of the audience (attending concerts of one of our major orchestras) has stayed about the same for the past 50 years. Maybe classical music appeals to more people as they mature! However, our interest in developing a younger audience should not lead to a neglect of our present customers." Another advisor summarizes evidence by asserting, "There are no longitudinal studies that prove there has been, as popularly reported, a substantial aging of the audience for symphonic music. The data from audience participation studies, such as they are, leave room for reasonable disagreement on the 'aging audience'."

But educating children to symphonic music is the key to assuring future audiences.

"If the trend of the past 25 years of reduced music education in schools continues, orchestras will need to devise ways of attracting audiences from a population which is even further removed from an introduction to classical music in their youth. Historically, one of the indicators for attending classical concerts as an adult has been participation in bands or orchestras in school. As these programs have been cut, orchestra organizations have fewer people with that experience to draw in as audience members. It seems that the needs of the customers will increasingly include more education, but packaged in a nonthreatening entertainment environment which will welcome the uninitiated to classical music." Another advisor believes, "The (finally) rising tide of interest in renewing music education programs in America's schools will eventually restart the engine of interest in orchestra music that has been stalled for a generation."

And orchestras will play a more direct role in their music education.

"Outside a few first-tier institutions, orchestras will align themselves with local schools, often through formal arrangements, and will in many cases take over the educational function as it pertains to instrumental training and orchestral performance in schools. This model is already working in the world of ballet. Increasingly, it will be the key to both public and private funding."

2. **How will communities (in which symphony organizations function) and their needs and expectations change over the next 25 to 50 years?**

Community preferences in programming, scheduling, and even locations will change.

One advisor observes, "Communities will change as they always have, by making choices, whether actively or passively. Symphony orchestras will survive or flourish in direct relation to how effectively they are able to create the taste by which they are to be appreciated." Another describes these communities as "a new-age group demanding 'pertinent' repertoire." Another advises, "Orchestras well be challenged—by consumer demand, competition, and the need for revenue—to become more flexible organizations that can meet the demand for concert music in jazz, chamber music, new music, and non-Western music. Yet another adds, "Orchestral institutions must find ways

to become more responsive to their communities. The traditional approach has been to determine the concert times and programs primarily based on the availability of the hall, the orchestra's internal schedule, and simply, past practices. Orchestras need to investigate changing community preferences in programming, scheduling, and even locations. The goal should be to integrate the orchestra into the community, as a relevant, accessible, and necessary part of its cultural life." Yet another suggests, "There will be increasing demand for more music-educational services." More specifically, describing the changes in the needs of end users, one advisor says they will have "less time available," there will be "more good competition and competitive offerings for their scarcer leisure time," they will be "more demanding of customer service," and it will require "more tailoring of musical offerings and venues required to suit them." Regarding location, yet another advisor observes, "While the total experience of attending a symphony orchestra concert in an exquisite concert hall will remain unparalleled, I do think [orchestras] need to go to the community, too. Making appearances in unexpected venues, casual venues, and in easily accessible circumstances will keep [orchestras] uppermost in the community's mind."

People are returning to the city, and arts organizations can stimulate economic development.

"The 'return-to-the-cities' movement that seems to be taking hold across the nation is very encouraging, most notably in cities such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Seattle, Charlotte, Denver, and Cleveland. Only a few years ago we were afraid that continuing white flight would make suburban venues necessary. Now we see the development of upscale residential housing, restaurants, and boutiques providing a supportive community for urban arts organizations and, indeed, a whole new role for urban arts organizations as economic development engines." However, one advisor believes to the contrary: "Suburbanization will continue to sprawl and symphony orchestras will find it increasingly difficult to attract audiences to a city center. They will encounter increasing pressure toward suburban tours or suburban 'virtual' orchestras."

Several communities will receive major funding and become centers of symphonic music.

"A dozen or more orchestras nationally, many of them in communities not presently considered centers of symphonic music, will receive large endowments and be thrust into leadership ranks," one advisor predicts.

There may need to be a different funding template altogether.

"Because the art form may be embraced as an outward symbol of an inward depth of artistic and spiritual expression, the need for a different approach to funding and guardianship may change. Communities may have to return to municipal, state, or even corporate undertakings."

There will be more community-based orchestras. And many present city-based orchestras will become state- or region-based.

Three advisors anticipate that fewer communities will support full-time orchestras, although amateur and semiprofessional (community) orchestras may flourish in smaller communities, as is the case now in Great Britain. In the words of one of these advisors, "More community-based orchestras built around amateurs and semipros with a core of professionals will arise." And many present city-based orchestras will become state- or region-based while a few will have satellite homes.

However, one respondent articulates the difficulty in predicting these changes. "If one believes, as I do, that *community* for this purpose equals the geographic area in which a *live* musical performance can be heard easily; then the *community* will not change. Expectations and demands will change, but it is not clear to me how."

3. **How will technology (and other advances which will directly and indirectly impact symphony organizations) change over the next 25 to 50 years?**

Technology will change the way symphony organizations do business.

"Web-based compression and encrypting technologies will create a sea change in the ways that music is accessed and purchased," says one advisor. Another adds, "The great technological changes now taking place should be pursued primarily by the symphony orchestra to expand its own efficiency, managerially and developmentally, and to broaden public awareness of its activities." Another advisor believes, "Technological advances will make change possible in methods of product distribution, in administrative productivity, and in reduction of production costs." Still another observes, "The Web will also greatly change the informational and educational resources of an orchestra, allowing orchestras to expand their educational services to the community." "However," cautions one advisor, "perhaps the greatest technological impact on symphony orchestras will be extremely indirect. Technology is and will continue to create new and more refined forms of entertainment that will compete with traditional arts and entertainment for discretionary dollars. Orchestras will find the entertainment field ever more crowded with products and marketing strategies." Another concludes, "Therefore, symphony organizations need to be aware of these technologies, vigilant, and willing to experiment with new musical products, offerings, and venues, and to embrace change as a core competency of the organization." Paraphrasing one of the advisors, all of these changes will have the effect of limiting the cost competitiveness of regular live concerts, excepting the large "one-nighter," such as the Boston Pops at the hockey rink.

But the orchestra industry will probably resist technological change.

As one advisor laments, "Whether these advances will have a significant impact on the orchestra industry is questionable, primarily because of the resistance to change."

Technology will be used to bring customers to fairly traditional concert experiences and will not fundamentally alter the experience.

"By its very nature, technology should not impact the fundamental thing that is a symphony, which is full of acoustic instruments. Certainly recording technology will improve, as will sound reinforcement, and symphonies will participate in new media, such as CD-ROMs and interactive Internet Web sites, so how people experience symphonic music will change, but hopefully symphonic music itself will not change. Obviously technology will have a great impact on new compositions."

Here again advisors comment on the difficulty of predicting technological change and its impact. One notes, "Technology has already changed massively. The Internet, the death of the recording industry, hence the [ready] availability of recorded performance is causing a structural change in the way we can acquire and hear music. [The future] will be interesting but [is] essentially unpredictable . . . Obviously, there are a number of [parties] trying to [make predictions] with considerable specificity right now!" Another responds, "This is an area where creative people are just starting to focus their efforts. To guess where we will be in 50 years is impossible. Will we be listening to concerts at home on the Internet instead of going to the concert hall? Or will the technology be simply a fun way to play with the music while we learn more about music? Will orchestras be recording everything for a video-hungry audience which prefers the comforts of staying home and enjoys being able to put the music on 'hold' if necessary? The technology is advancing so rapidly that we may only be restrained by our vision."

4. **Given your predictions above, what services and products do you envision the symphony organization of the future will need, or have the opportunity to provide, if it wishes to be successful and sustainable as an organization?**

Symphony orchestra organizations' core service will still be to provide great works of music performed at the highest levels of excellence.

"While orchestras need to go to and reach out to potential ticket buyers (to put it crassly but realistically), orchestras need to be less aloof and elite. They need to break out of the box on occasion (San Francisco and Metallica). Supertitles in the opera hall were regarded as controversial and rude when they first came into use. Maestros speaking to the audience from the podium were shocking. Good grief. Practicality convinces them to do what they must to survive. However, I think that in our enthusiasm to reach new audiences, we must not let our raison d'être escape us. Performing great works of music is the reason . . . musicians choose this profession. Hopefully, performing great works of music is why symphony orchestras exist. Yes, they are museums. Yes, they have an obligation to perform works of contemporary composers. Performing popular culture repertoire is on occasion enjoyable, entertaining and quite probably supports their mission. . . . It is very easy to cheapen ourselves in the pursuit of survival."

Programs should appeal to smaller "special interest" groups.

"Orchestras will probably need to develop programs which appeal to smaller 'special interest' groups, perhaps offering concerts to those who want to hear baroque, contemporary, romantic, and other styles. Making use of the orchestra in smaller parts such as a chamber group would be an effective way to tailor the many resources of an orchestra to a particular audience. Concert packages will need to appeal to a customer who wants an *a la carte* approach to ticket buying." Another advisor advocates "more relevance of products, more excitement attributed to them promotionally, a stronger role of marketing in fighting the increased competition and targeting customer niches." This same advisor also recommends "more variety in offerings" and "total organizational commitment to work together to satisfy end-user needs regardless of what they are and to adopt the attitude that 'the customer is always right' no matter how 'musically illiterate' the customers might be." Another believes, "There will be efficiencies in service extension due to technology, and product beyond the major/standard repertoire will suit demographic appetites, all of which will strengthen sustainability."

As another advisor puts it, "The constraints that I foresee among symphony organizations will be that successful organizations must adapt to the cultural and musical ecology of their particular communities, and that the larger the symphony organization, the more diverse range of products and services it will need to provide to its community. This suggests that symphony orchestras will need versatile staffs of multitalented musicians and administrators." This advisor continues, "Symphony orchestra organizations, especially those that own their halls, will increasingly become 'presenting' organizations that manage concerts and concert series that are not symphony concerts. The orchestral core personnel will be utilized in a variety of chamber music configurations and for educational services.

Education and outreach may not be the answer.

"The *au courant* response to this question is more education and outreach, but I'm not convinced that either will produce new audiences or be sustainable economically," says one advisor.

Symphony orchestras must become teaching and learning organizations.

Another notes, "More attention will be given to 'entry audiences' and younger listeners, especially the revival of school concerts, which will become a major 'frontier'." Still another advisor states, "Peripheral services such as community activities, educational activities, and outreach activities all will be desirable, possibly necessary, elements in the success or failure of the organization."

Further, "Symphonies may need to take over a great deal of the music education function in communities as the schools cease teaching music as part of the curriculum." And another says, "Symphonies should also do outreach to the minority groups in their respective cities, not to do crossover music but to bring these communities into the classical music world." Still another believes, "The programs which involve education or outreach have been an excellent way to build personal relationships among the staff, musicians, and community. A final observation: "There already is and will be even more a need for quality, innovative educational activities. I feel the key to educational success in our area is individual focus. This is labor intensive, but it works. Not all communities, cities, classrooms, and individuals within classroom are the same, and since our art is both highly personal and highly public…the overall rule is that there is no overall rule or formula."

The impersonal manner in which business with audiences and the community has been carried out in the past will not be the model for the future.

"It will be the individual and group personal connections which will enhance the experience for the audience, musicians, staff, and board members." Another advisor adds, "Within symphony organizations, we need to ask with greater interest and to listen more intently to what it is the other constituencies need, want, or expect. Effective communication is the most secure foundation for a successful and sustainable organization." Another remarks, "Although greater numbers of people will spend increased time at their computers, they will still look for opportunities which provide a sense of community." This advisor advocates, "symphony orchestra support groups which focus on and cultivate specific interests, such as 'Mozart lovers' and 'friends of the viola section,' and shorter concerts, perhaps without intermissions, with the opportunity for postconcert socializing."

And symphonies will need to become very savvy about technology.

"Symphonies will need to become very savvy about the Internet. An initial, obvious challenge is in customer service, in terms of providing ticket sales and concert information over the Internet. Web sites can further provide a wealth of information about the institution, the musicians, the board, and so forth." Another advisor adds, "Technology will play a very important role in symphonic music—how we hear it, experience it, and what we do with it." And still another advisor declares, "Sooner or later, each orchestra will be faced with how and when to use technology, and whether it should be a leader or a follower. Tremendous opportunities await those who are in a position to offer their product to a fast-growing market."

Symphony organizations "need to grab top technology industry entrepreneurs and get them involved—on the board or board committees—to help discuss changes, how to respond to them, and to help boards and managements lead in the future in response to such significant changes."

5. **What aspects of the ways symphony organizations typically behave, function, do work, and are structured will help or hinder their ability to be successful and sustainable in the 21st century?**

Advisors considered the following to be helpful aspects:

Commitment to core purpose will be vital.

"I think that the organizational commitment to its core purpose will be the principal factor for success or failure in the 21st century. If the structure of the organization hinders its ability to adapt, then success will be elusive. If, on the other hand, structure is flexible outside the framework of core purpose, then achieving success is possible." Another advisor adds, "This is a beautiful, great art. Humans will always need this. It is live, real, and acoustically satisfying."

Communication will be essential.

"Communication. As in personal relationships, it is essential to success. I don't think it will be less necessary in the 21st century. Managements and musicians, boards and staff, boards and musicians all need to talk, educate each other, and generally stay in touch. [How many times has one heard colleagues say] 'What are *they* doing to us now?' When all are stretched too far in doing day-to-day battle, it is easy to let this one go. I know a member who was rotated off the board to let another have a turn. As close as he was to the inside circle, he was suddenly out of the loop and consequently out of the receiving end of information. Ninety-eight percent of musicians are equally uninformed. This is not a good thing."

Balance between fiscal conservatism and daring innovation will need to be struck.

"Nothing is gained without daring innovation, without dreaming—this involves financial risk. Who can balance these two valid ideas and get the best of both of them? But it can be done. A healthy endowment, for example, gives much greater latitude to daring thinking. Of the two, the second (daring) is primary."

Symphony organizations must serve customers at a much faster rate.

"In order to be successful and sustainable in the future, our organizations will need to be able to serve our customers at a much faster rate. The current need for instant information will become even more important."

Symphony organizations must become more effective or face extinction.

"What we can do is become more effective as organizations. This is the primary message of the Symphony Orchestra Institute, so I don't need to explain further. But, I will say that I am impressed with some of the methods for doing this that are explained in the new Letts, Ryan, and Grossman book [Christine W. Letts, William P. Ryan, and Allen B. Grossman, 1998. *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations; Managing Upstream for Greater Impact.* New York: Wiley.] on high-performance organizations which calls for increasing adaptive capacity and knowing when and how to change programs and strategies so that the organization is delivering on its mission." Symphony orchestras must "reach decisions about what they do through research and consensus (the servant-leadership model)." Another advisor recommends improving professional management through standards and certification and involving musicians deeply in the decision-making process within organizations. And a third says, bluntly: "Those boards that prove incapable of leading the crucial transitions listed above will, in many cases, see their institutions die."

Or as another advisor sees it, "Producing symphonic concerts is labor intensive, not only due to the obvious number of musicians required, but also in

organizing the numerous details for each event. In order to grow and reach more audience, streamlining the structure and the details will be essential. Dialogues between musicians and management, musician participation, and musician 'buy-in' are needed to allow for creative activities. Rigidity in union contracts might hinder the ability of orchestras to respond to the needs of the communities they serve. Organizations will be more successful when the boards of directors, management, musicians, and volunteers regard themselves as partners in the enterprise."

Advisors enumerated the following aspects as hindrances:

Hierarchical structures pose a major obstacle to needed change.

"Today's typical management structure is hierarchical, and tends to be rather unresponsive to the needs of both the community and of the musicians. As long as the financial side of the institution is in order, there is probably little incentive to change this structure. Because of their ability to raise money, the bigger orchestras are often better insulated from having to change as quickly or as profoundly as the smaller ones have had to. They have thus been able to maintain control of both the artistic and managerial aspects of the institution. Often, it is a financial crisis which forces change, such as a sharing of control—but is it necessary? The goal of improving an orchestra's morale and self-image, and ultimately the quality of the music, should be reason enough to provoke a change."

Another advisor observes, "Historically, our organizations have been run in a very 'top down' manner. If one looks at industry, that model has and is changing, and I believe we need to make that change as well if we want healthy organizations. In general, I think the environment will need to be much more collaborative in all areas, internal as well as external. Communications and flexibility will be very important, as will be the ability to change without constantly causing upheaval."

Or, as another advisor puts it, "Certainly the ability to encourage the board and orchestra to work as partners and owners of the institution will be critical to the long term success of orchestras. We can no longer leave it to the management to lead the orchestra and board. The management should be working for the board and orchestra as a manager works for an owner." A third advisor sees it this way: "The greatest threat to necessary, effective change is the routing of continuing to do things because that's the way we've always done them. We cannot flourish, and may not even survive, if we only continue by doing the same things a little differently. Rather, we must week to discover how we can do things with significant difference, and more significantly, what different things we can do."

And a final advisor enumerates the negative aspects of hierarchical structure: "Lack of teamwork; compartmentalization of thinking or actions; hidden agendas or different groups; lack of good, frequent, and open communication; elitism ('we know better than our customers do'); lack of creative, change-seeking leadership; lack of respect for each individual in the organization; and lack of empowerment and involvement of all constituents" of the organization.

Goal ambiguity leads to poor results.

"I think we could learn much from the thinking of Paul Dimaggio on the behavioral consequences of ambiguous goals: the lack of accountability (he

says we like it that way); the resulting inability to know what works and what doesn't; the tensions between boards and musicians, between professional staffs and musicians, and between boards and professional staffs."

Isomorphism can be damaging.

"Our rigid one-size-fits-all homogeneity, which forces small and midsize organizations to try to look like big ones in structure and hierarchy, is very damaging."

Human relations practices need to be improved.

"High turnover, low pay, burnout, 60 to 80 hour weeks—all endemic to the nonprofit sector—are within our ability to change. Letts, Ryan, and Grossman [cited above] call for human relations practices that link jobs with mission and results, and for getting over our unwillingness to invest in rewarding high performance."

Narrowly focused audition and hiring protocols should be reexamined.

"A singular obstacle to change in symphony orchestras is the audition and hiring protocols for musicians. Orchestra musicians are asked and expected to provide many services and to be involved in many ways that go beyond playing in the orchestral section. This would suggest the need for the hiring process to weigh a variety of talents. It does not seem, however, that the hiring/audition process is becoming more comprehensive. If anything, it is becoming more narrowly focused on blind screening of excerpt auditions."

Structures that hinder tapping the full potential of people must be dismantled.

"Because technology is changing so rapidly, the organization must look for expertise wherever it exists. Tapping into the knowledge, contacts, special skills, and so forth, of the musicians and board members will be imperative. The traditional structure of the staff managing, the board raising funds, and the musicians performing must be turned into a collaborative process. Everyone must be seen as a potential resource—musicians, community leaders, and so forth. The work rules in musicians' contracts must become based on common sense, not historic precedents." Another advisor puts it this way: "Restrictive policies toward employees and orchestra members incredibly hinder [potentials]. Musicians have a lot to contribute managerially and artistically." Concluding, still another advisor believes it a hindrance to "perpetuate the pathology of the long-outmoded negotiating style that fosters mistrust and dysfunction, and perverts good will, energy, working relationships, and environments."

6. **What organizational forms will either be needed or should be considered to address the evolving demands, expectations, or opportunities symphony organizations will face in the 21st century? Specifically, do you envision the need or advisability of shifts in the form of any or all of the reasonably differentiated organizational groups (namely, the board of directors; the management and staff organization; the orchestra; the music director and conducting staff, including guest conductors; and the volunteers) which currently exist in the typical North American symphony organization? Why do you have this view? Do you envision the subdivision, disappearance, blending, amalgamation, integration, and so forth of any of these groups, or other changes of organizational form, to better address the changes you envision in the first question above? Why do you have this view?**

About overall symphony orchestra organizations, advisors responded:

Orchestra organizations should become flatter and more holistic.

"There is a need for blending of the board of directors, orchestra, music director, and the conducting staff (more than the guest conductors). These groups need to realize the importance of a holistic approach to all decisions. The music director cannot continue a hierarchical structure that fails to consider the whole organization—from marketing to ticket sales to fundraising—as well as the effect on the community." Another advisor says, "In our organization, there is a blending of several of these organizational groups. Orchestra members serve on the board of directors, meet regularly with staff, and assist the volunteer group. Artistic direction is set collaboratively by the music director, orchestra members, and staff, with input from volunteers. In my view, this is a model for the future, although we certainly have not yet perfected it." This advisor goes on to say, "The labor versus management mentality has no place in the future of successful orchestra organizations. Communication and cooperation among the typical subdivisions in orchestra organizations can strengthen the structure. I do not envision the disappearance of any of the groups, but rather more integration, interaction, and shared responsibility for the success of the organization among the groups. Again, a sense of partnership among all the constituents in determining the future of the organization will enhance the possibility for flexibility and responsiveness."

Artistic decision making should involve more teamwork.

Another advisor believes "the 'artistic-team template' will have more and more adherents. Why? Because quite frankly I think that those people who are drawn to the art form—be they musicians, board members, volunteers, or staff—are far more listened and learned than was the case when the 'maestro myth' was given life. The conductor . . . is obviously vital. But in areas of programming the shape and taste of a concert or series, it need not, or perhaps should not, be the exclusive domain of one person. Collegial buy in has far more positive energy than autocratic dictum that is often badly abused. Most who orbit around the symphony world are virtual musicologists and not to hear their thoughts and voices in the process is irresponsible. Positive synergy from a motivated, mobilized, energized, and fully franchised artistic team can unleash innovation and be bold."

As to boards of directors, advisors said:

Board members should be active and independent.

"An orchestra, like a corporation, needs an active, independent board which is not dictated to by the management."

They should be educated about music.

"Board members need to be educated about music as well as the business of music."

They should use their background and skills.

"Their experience on the board should make use of their background and skills as well as encourage them to become advocates for the institution. Orchestras are money-eating animals. The demands to raise even more money and to stretch even farther can lead to frustration and burnout, and there must be a better understanding of the needs and concerns of these volunteers. Too often board members are asked for money, but not for their ideas or suggestions. I believe people want to be used for their skills and not just because of their financial resources. Their experience must be fun and they must feel appreciated." Another advisor declares, "Membership should be limited to those individuals able to contribute both time and money and who have a committed desire to make significant impact or contribution in at least one specific area."

Boards should be smaller, include nontraditional members, and be progressive.

"Because Americans have less and less time for volunteer activities and because we have learned that large boards result in lack of personal ownership and responsibility, we need to create smaller core groups that comprise the leadership of the organization. This core will be surrounded by and supported by task forces who take on special assignments and responsibilities. We will learn that we do not have to put people on the board in order to garner their loyalty and support." Another advisor agreed. "I see the board of directors shrinking to perhaps 15 members at the most, including the orchestra. I believe the way in which the board conducts itself will need to change, also. Board meetings may be conducted around a video camera or whatever the future holds in that area, with members not all together in one room. I think the structure of the organization will become one in which task forces will be working on side issues, and the board of directors will carry on the fiduciary responsibilities of running the organization. A third advisor added, "You need the moneyed interests. You need the daring thinkers. In most cities there are individuals who are both. So let's get progressive, moneyed board members."

Suggestions regarding management and staff included:

Symphony orchestra organization staffing should be flatter, more flexible, and more cross-functional.

"This internal organization will need to become a flatter, more flexible, more cross-functional, team decision-making structure, more reliant on the expertise and contributions of each individual. Why? Because we cannot continue practices such as competing departments, uninformed staff, and lack of communication if we want to keep good people and be effective." Another advisor puts it this way, "The staff and management also feel under-appreciated. A strictly top-down management structure may do very little to encourage creativity. Senior managers with skills in working with, motivating and leading people are just as important in a nonprofit organization as in a dynamic and competitive business. We have heard the reports from ASOL (American Symphony Orchestra League) which call for more training and development of new managers, particularly people with experience in other

businesses. The 'grapevine' reports that managers are not pleased with this initiative, because they do not see any weakness in their ranks and they believe that orchestra management is unique. ('Successful managers in other fields could not do our job'). I believe that our industry is not so unique and orchestra managers need to be as innovative as their counterparts in the for-profit world." Another advisor concluded, "Management must be the principal entity leading the charge to break down barriers among all elements and constituencies."

"Management and staff will need to be highly creative. They will need to be the ones thinking outside the box, as they will be working day-to-day in the organization and getting feedback from the community as to what the community wants from the organization. Staff will spearhead the changes that need to happen and be the creative force behind what the organization does."

"Administrative staffs should get larger and more diverse as the range of performance and educational products offered by an orchestra grows. This need or tendency will compete with the reflex to balance budgets of eliminate deficits through reductions in administrative staff."

Staff members should have new skills, particularly technological.

"The management or staff will have people with different skills particularly those with skills in the new technologies."

Thinking about the orchestra evoked the following observations:

Orchestra members should be involved in core decision-making processes.

"We must involve players in the decision-making processes of the core leadership. Player representatives should have voting seats on the board and should serve on cross-functional teams with management and staff. Why? Because otherwise our organizations will be eaten alive by union problems, and we will be missing a key element in the creative capacity of our organizations to take decisive actions and meet our goals." Another advisor states, "The board and community want great music and the musicians want to play great music. The staff should be working to bring these forces together and facilitate a mutual vision. Presently, musicians are seen more as employees than as partners, and the board and management often feel frustrated when confronted with traditional union responses. This unproductive relationship needs to be changed for the good of the institution and the music."

And still another advisor observes, "In some—not all—communities, in some—not all—orchestras, . . . the cooperative model can work most effectively . . . at least to the extent of having orchestra musicians on the board and having a strong artistic committee. If handled with energy and commitment, this approach revolutionizes an orchestra's spirit and sense of realism, as well as creates real benefit to the administration. The co-op model is not for every orchestra, or community. Some musicians feel they do better if they don't have to worry about finances, programs, or artistic decisions. Also, there is no question that at times, when a true, strong leader appears—such as a Mahler, a Stokowski, a Koussevitsky—an organization can thrive for a while as an autocracy or oligarchy. Who could argue that? But, in general, who could disagree that true musician involvement—musicians having a stake in the health of their organization—will energize and greatly benefit a symphony orchestra association."

Another advisor "envisions orchestra members being a part of the creative force, as well as becoming much more integrated into the community through teaching and community service activities and receiving direct feedback" from the community.

And yet another states, "except for the largest orchestras, musicians will have to become more invested in the strategic management, and even in the day-to-day programming and operations of orchestras. Player-owned and managed orchestras will probably not become the norm, but something of the spirit of commitment and responsibility found in musician-managed orchestras will be essential to the future health of many mid-sized and smaller orchestras. (The largest orchestras will continue to enjoy budgets and markets that sustain large organizations with traditional divisions of management and artistic labor.)"

Musicians should define the artistic mission of the institution and share a common enthusiasm for ensemble performance.

"Musicians like to think they are different from everybody else, but they are not that unique. Every working person shares the goals of job security, satisfaction, appreciation, and respect. What are musicians willing to do to achieve these goals? They have insulated themselves from some realities by negotiating more complicated contracts. Are they happier and more fulfilled? Do they resolve difficulties, or only exchange them for different and maybe bigger problems? Musicians must begin to define the artistic mission of the institution."

Of music directors and other conducting staff members, advisors said:

Music directors should be more significantly involved in the business-decision process.

"We have a real problem here. Orchestras compete with each other for the biggest names they can get, and have created a system in which one of the key leaders of the organization is not in residence and is not involved in helping to run the business. I don't think this will change in the next 25 years. We are stuck. The best we can hope for is that as we all come to understand how important conductors are to the business-decision process, we will find ways to involve them more significantly."

And this requires longer residency than is currently typical among music directors.

"The role of the music director needs to change. Is it conducive to developing a quality artistic and working relationship to have the artistic leader at the helm for about 30 percent of an orchestra's working weeks? What corporation, sports team, or other high-performance organization would want to operate under those conditions? Where are their interests if not with their orchestra? What role do their managers/agents play in the industry's instability? How would a music director's relationship with the community change if he or she were truly a resident of the community instead of a visitor? And, even more importantly, do music directors even recognize all this as a problem which they need to address?" And one advisor believes that some music directors will become more full time. "Outside first tier orchestras and a few on the second tier, the role of music director will become more 'full time,' more community-based, much more closely linked [to] pedagogy of all types and levels, and akin to the traditional director of urban music familiar from German experience. Smaller communities will astonish the country with the quality and intensity of activity possible under such committed leadership." Another advisor, less optimistic about change, states, "It is hard to see a change in the trend toward 'fly-in', short-term music directors. This will continue to create problems [and] some risk to the artistic product. But the greater problem is

that when there is an absent music director, the orchestra's most public face is not in the community on a daily basis. Orchestras need to explore new ways of establishing and sustaining artistic identity through the absence and turnover of conductors."

Regarding volunteers, advisors had the following suggestions:

We need to cultivate a younger pool of talent and friends.

"The role of volunteers has been changing. With more women in professional roles are orchestras also making changes? Are there more women on the board or does there still exist a structure where the men make the decisions on the board and the women's volunteer groups do the grunt work? There needs to be more effort directed toward involving younger leaders to participate—even those who are not CEO's of corporations. The pool of talent and friends needs to be cultivated and educated."

Volunteers should be involved in crucial and high-level tasks.

"As the volunteer world continues to undergo fundamental change, we will have to attach more importance to administrative practices and volunteer management. Museums have a lot to teach us about how to structure meaningful and sustainable volunteer programs and how to use volunteers to accomplish some of our most crucial and high-level tasks."

And they should be more integrated into the overall organization.

"The volunteer groups, I hope, will be more integrated into the overall organization. And their role will be more greatly appreciated. If not, there will be no volunteers." Another advisor sees volunteer groups becoming "foot soldiers in bringing classical music to the public," "out advocacy group," more "highly organized with specific tasks to be performed, and "integrated" into the overall organization."

7. **In connection with your views on the above questions and topics, do you envision symphony organizations needing to consider or make any changes in their overall decision-making processes, and if so, what changes, why these changes, and how might these changes be made?**

All constituencies should be involved in product development processes through cross-functional leadership teams composed of blends of representatives of each constituency.

"All of these groups could blend in cross-functional teams. One of the most important functions of the leadership core would be to create teams of representatives from each of these groups to engage in product development processes."

Or as another advisor puts it, "The key to the future is a collective sense of everyone belonging to an organization. The division of labor among all the constituencies must become blurred. I am familiar with a music director search in which a number of musicians . . . are fully involved in all aspects of the process in a truly collaborative fashion. The good feelings within the organization have begun to spill over to the community. There was an extremely successful endowment gala where suddenly everyone realized that the symphony is the 'happening' arts organization in town. . . . Just before the concert, the board president thanked the players for donating their services, and they received a three-to-four minute standing ovation. Major gifts have been materializing, unasked for, from donors not usually involved with this organization but who now want to be part of it. I doubt this would be happening . . . if this organization were following traditional patterns. The volunteer organization has changed as well—it's not the monthly 'ladies tea'. Instead, this organization wants to create a list of volunteers who can be called

in to help out on an event basis. To this end, a new staff person has been hired to coordinate volunteers and work on events. Hopefully this will make the volunteers feel more a part of the organization and attract younger volunteers (from both genders). Music directors must be more involved in all aspects of the organization, and must take direction from knowledgeable persons within the organization. The days of the benevolent dictator are long gone. Programming by committee is not an option, but there must be an awareness of what is appropriate for the community, what new things should be tried . . ."

One advisor suggests concretely the use of cross-functional leadership teams: "First, identify the area for discussion, see who the topic affects, and incorporate those people or representatives affected to share the views of their larger constituencies. A meeting is then held, interests are shared, and decisions or next steps are identified. At the end of the meeting, everyone should understand what decisions still need to be made. A reassessment should be made to assure that the correct people were at the table. If people are missing, include them at the next meeting. While it can be a lengthy process, in the long run the use of cross-functional teams creates a much healthier organization, one in which all the different constituencies are on the same page and understand why and how decisions come about."

A second advisor sees musician involvement as the key to change: "Provide for voting participation of musician representatives on the board of directors (more than one or two 'token' musician members), but establish a clear and effective reporting structure and define how decisions will be made. Allow for musician input and responsibility in artistic planning. Encourage musicians to participate in all committees of the board of directors. In order for musicians to be engaged in the success of the organization, they need to be informed and to gain knowledge of the organization as a whole, not only from the perspective of the performer." Another advisor focuses on artistic and programming decisions, reminding that these decisions "have become less the automatic authority of conductors and include an assortment of administrative and artistic staff. This will and must continue."

Yet another advisor sums up, "Although each group maintaining their autonomy and identity is good, there should be a concerted effort for each group to find projects which cross over into the other constituent groups. The board needs to help the volunteers, staff, and orchestra in their projects and should receive assistance from the others also. A family relationship? It isn't hard to have this view after watching the organization work against itself for so long. Each group feels they are right and knows what is best. I believe that if we all had the same information and understood one another, we would find we have more in common than we have differences. And, our differences can be discussed in a manner which brings all parties together rather than separating them."

There is widespread recognition that the relationship between management and musicians must be improved.

"Although the relationship between management and musicians seems to go in cycles, there is no doubt we are presently in a period in which there seems to be an almost widespread recognition that the relationship needs improvement. Some orchestras have brought in outside consultants to facilitate the process of learning to work together and advance mutual goals. . . . Changes in this direction are very necessary to keep the industry healthy." Another advisor argues, "Master agreements have to be negotiated in such a way as to allow

orchestras to build educational programs around musicians. Some program initiatives have to arise from musicians themselves and have to benefit those musicians in some way."

Musicians should become more directly and actively involved in board and management decisions.

"First- and second-tier orchestras will engage musicians more directly and actively in board and management discussions, but collective institutions will be rare and a transitory phase for orchestras emerging from crisis." Another advisor says, "My hope is for the musicians to become a major part of both the artistic and administrative decision-making process. The board needs to be educated that the musicians are a major source of talent beyond their performance skills on-stage. Musicians need to feel about their orchestras as owners feel about their businesses. The problems which torture personnel managers (musicians calling in with questionable illnesses, bad attitudes, trying to take advantage of the system, and so forth) would diminish. The quality of the music would also improve as each musician took ownership of the product." If musicians are to assume a broader, as another advisor reminds us, "Hiring practices for musicians will have to become sensitive to the more eclectic nature of being a symphony musician if the organization is to be successful in providing a wide range of services in the community."

The board should feel a sense of ownership and pride in the orchestra.

"The orchestra's quality is a direct reflection of the board's commitment to music. Board members should feel connected to the musicians personally, as well as through a shared mission. It is the board's dedication to this revolution which will bring about changes in the management structure. They are the ones with whom the authority ultimately resides and . . . the ones who need to understand how important and necessary changes are. The article in the Fall 1999 issue of *Harmony* has a wonderful discussion on this topic . . ."

Management should understand that survival demands developing a new style and method of doing business.

"Management should understand that the survival of the industry depends on their developing a new style and method of doing business. The good old days may have been when raising money was easy, halls were filled, and they were left alone to do as they pleased. (Sort of like running a *Fortune 500* company in the 1950s—you couldn't not make money). The managers might find all of this new information sharing to be time consuming and burdensome, but it is a critical step in building a new coalition of orchestra leadership for the next generation. Trust, cooperation, and information sharing need to be the rule, not the exception."

There should be more team-based processes.

"Change is essential and . . . a team-based process is needed. I am afraid that these changes will not be made until we are forced by threats to our survival to make them. I wish . . . that *Harmony* and the efforts of the Symphony Orchestra Institute would bring about fundamental change, but we are all alike in our institutional inertia: short of a truly inspired leader or impending doom, we will just do business as usual." Another advisor maintains, "Symphonies need to become more democratic—more inclusive of all constituent groups. Obviously, some key people will be charged with making final decisions, but having a music director or executive director making decisions in a vacuum and forcing these decisions upon everyone else is an outmoded paradigm. A task force of key people from all aspects of the organization, analyzing the local market, the future direction of the organization, what works and what doesn't, can be very helpful. However, the music director and the executive director must listen to the findings of the task force."

There should be more inspired leadership.

"The best answer lies in inspired leadership. We have a few good models—we need more." Or as another advisor observes, "We should hypothesize and dream more about symphony orchestras, so as to have another pole around which to work to improve the real, day-to-day problems, omens, and portents. Having established ideals—and a forum for expressing, arguing, agreeing, collecting, and disseminating them—how do we connect at the hip what we believe must be with what is?"

8. **Some people have speculated that symphony organizations, as we move into the 21st century, will need to become more "flexible" and more "responsive." What do these words mean to you specifically? Do you agree? If so, what specific changes will symphony organizations need to make or should consider making?**

Symphony orchestras need to be more flexible and responsive.

One advisor defines terms: "Being flexible is the ability to change as quickly as possible, and the ability to take advantage of opportunities. It fosters creativity. Responsive means the ability to make a decision. As far as changes to the organization, I think we need to assess our current decision-making process. Our organizations need to understand the necessity to be open to ideas, to have a forum for exploring opportunities, and to have a process which is inclusive, ending in a decision that all constituencies can buy into."

A second advisor says, "Most of all, symphony organizations must be responsive to the market needs and demands for the artistic and educational products they offer. And it means being flexible about how the organization can reshape itself to meet those demands. Expanding educational programs will especially challenge the traditional orchestra's self-identity as primarily a symphonic presenting organization."

Another adds, "There is little doubt that all parts of the institution need to become more flexible and responsive to market demands. Twenty years ago, many steel workers were unable or unwilling to make changes and their jobs were eliminated. . . . Musicians (with superficial knowledge of the issues) often complain that the management is incompetent and that a wholesale change is needed. If the musicians were more involved, they would have a better understanding of the types of changes which would improve the health of the institution. Schedules with soloists and conductors seem to be set years ahead. The orchestra receives a tentative working schedule for the entire year about three months before the season. Changing anything can be very difficult. A sign of good health (both as an organization and as individuals) is the ability or willingness to adjust and make changes as needed in an environment of mutual trust. If management wants more flexibility, it should present its case convincingly, and the orchestra should evaluate the request based on its merits (rather than on antagonism toward management). Not having tried something before is not a valid reason to be negative."

Including being more responsive to consumers.

" I believe being more responsive means having a consumer orientation instead of a product orientation. We need to have extensive and ongoing customer contact. In order to do this we need to put our marketing departments in the forefront of our decision processes." Or as another advisor expresses it, "To deserve the increasing support of their various customers, symphony organizations must be willing to listen more to those who have traditionally listened to them. They must be more responsive to them and

flexible in both meeting and molding their needs. The key to accomplishing this is to increase ongoing, invigorating communication with those who have not been much considered in the past."

Being more flexible means different things to different people

"The term 'flexible' has become synonymous—among musicians—with the concept of service-conversion, in which musicians are given a service 'credit' in exchange for fulfilling a non-musician task, such as giving a lecture-demonstration, teaching in community music schools, performing in some aspect of music education, assisting in fundraising events, and so forth. . . . A lot of the problems the industry is having with this concept is that people are not straightforward in how they discuss the issue. Musicians feel threatened when asked to do things, professionally, that they've not done before and perhaps have no training for. Managers feel frustrated when what seems to be such a logical, even exciting, avenue is 'shot down' without even being considered. Those orchestras that have approached this issue openly have had some good success. Many musicians, particularly section players, are frustrated by the lack of control in their lives—tempo, phrasing, bowings, and the like, are determined by someone else and all that players need do is execute someone else's instructions! Participating in a new 'flexible' or 'responsive' symphony organization may release all sorts of hidden talents in musicians, but they must be made to feel comfortable in the effort. Some orchestras have begun the process on a voluntary basis, and the success and satisfaction of those participating has encouraged others to come on board. Before any of these new approaches can work, however, symphony organizations must open the lines of communication and get the different constituencies to begin to trust one another, at a fundamental level. How this is done will probably differ, organization to organization."

Symphony orchestras need to be more innovative.

Here are two examples of innovation: "Contemporary techniques, such as collaboration with jazz, rock, rap, or dramatic artists, should include, as much as possible, the prominent participation of orchestra musicians, and not as a 'backup' group to some superstars, even if such events are designed to bring in revenue. Secondly, audiences have been proven to be attracted to special festivals of a particular type of music, or even one special composer. Look at the amazing results of the New York Philharmonic's recent 'Completely Copland' festival. Here is an American composer of this century whose works were exclusively presented over a three-week period. Everyone learned a lot about Copland. The proof of the pudding? They say that the hall was packed every night. Now, you can't do that in very community, naturally . . . but nobody thought it could be done in New York City either."

Another advisor, seeking to specify areas in which responsiveness and flexibility will be required, says, "Responsiveness and flexibility will be called for among musicians and artistic decision makers about experimenting with unusual repertoire, collaborative performance opportunities in dance, opera, film, and theater, and in presentations that involve newer technologies. New music will challenge the traditional 'core' instrumentation and hiring decisions. Early and new musics will challenge musicians to become more diverse in their knowledge of performance practice issues. The suburbanization of America will not likely reverse any time soon, forcing orchestras to go to their audiences and to find appropriate venues other than traditional symphonic concert halls. Changes in electronic recording and broadcast media will challenge traditional thinking about copyright and recording royalties.

Recordings and broadcasts are likely to become marketing or public relations expenses rather than sources of earned income. Fundraising efforts will need to be more flexible and responsive to the new cultures of philanthropy that are emerging."

A third advisor speaks of the difficulty in deciding what specific changes are needed and how to achieve them: "We are caught between the necessity to plan 18 to 24 months in advance and the flexibility we seek to modify the schedule to be innovative. This dilemma is present in all aspects of the organization—continuing to do things as they have been done versus the risk of trying a new approach. Information gathering to make the best-informed decisions is time-consuming and often labor intensive." However, this advisor concludes, "Better communication skills throughout all groups of constituents should aid in achieving flexibility and responsiveness."

9. **There are various associations and other groupings within, surrounding, and serving "the symphony orchestra industry." These entities include such associations as the American Symphony Orchestra League [ASOL], the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians [ICSOM], the Regional Orchestra Players Association [ROPA], the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians [OCSM], and the American Federation of Musicians [AFM] and its locals, and subgroups within these larger groups. There are various "professional role groups" within or serving the industry, such as the associations of personnel managers, orchestra librarians, music critics, and so forth. There are for-profit business groups which regularly work within and around the industry, such as artists' representatives and presenting organizations. All these groups are part of and contribute to some degree to the maintenance of traditional patterns of how symphony organizations function. In your judgment, what impact, either positive or negative, might these associations or groupings have on individual symphony organizations and how they function in the future?**

Service organizations have a profound impact on the field.

One advisor affirms, "They have an enormous impact through lobby initiatives and mutual-interest representation, as well as advocacy and support within the industry." Another added, "Service organizations have a profound impact. One salient example of this is the impact of the ASOL classification system that encourages the hierarchical and competitive nature of the field." Another advisor says, "The various groups mentioned have an enormous impact, collectively speaking. Obviously, their various influences on individual organizations are a mixture of good and bad. To some extent, they represent entrenched antagonisms between labor and management."

They are an integral part of our national political support system.

"These service organizations need to be more sophisticated about their role in the political advocacy process and more helpful to individual symphony organizations in understanding how to structure political partnerships." Another advisor states, "Antagonisms among these groups weaken their collective political influence on public funding and public policy decisions that affect symphony organizations."

Their main advantage is independent vigor; their main danger is sectarianism.

"Many of us observed firsthand the dangers—tragedies even—of sectarianism . . . in the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s. A horror! There is no easy answer. Independent, specialized groups can contribute vastly to a cause

as long as a main, common goal is firmly kept in mind and agreed upon—such as communicating love of, excitement about, and commitment to, the actual art of music."

They should become more focused but their roles may be reduced.

"The ASOL will become more focused as a service organization to boards and managers, and will engage music directors, but not musicians, more actively. One organization will serve orchestral musicians, but it will not be the AFM. The role of all these entities will probably be reduced as new models of successful orchestral organizations emerge and as direct communication improves among the organizations."

They should become catalysts for positive change.

"Service organizations could be catalysts for positive change. Instead of being protectorates for "business as usual," they could become clearinghouses for information, advocating and supporting efforts to provide symphony organizations with necessary education and training programs to prepare them for the future." Another is convinced, "If these organizations are willing to embrace change and accept innovative models, symphony orchestras might be able to effect more change. It is difficult to overcome the perpetuation of a more bureaucratic structure; it is easier to articulate what cannot be done and harder to articulate how it might be done differently."

Another advisor concurs, but cautions with regard to union groups: "As for all the union groups, unless they themselves change and become more responsive and flexible in their rules and regulations, I see them as a negative force. I think that symphony musicians should have their own representation."

They are all here to stay, for better or worse.

"It is interesting to think about what will happen to the trade organizations and labor unions as time goes on. I don't think labor organizations or the collective bargaining process are going away. Hopefully, as we continue to search, frequently without success, for a civil society, we will also find a way for different interest groups to bargain in more productive fashion than we have in the past. That may very well be the utopian view . . . [the] existing patterns of bargaining, if continued, will price many symphony orchestras out of the market place. I do think the trade organizations are evolving . . . they will have a role . . . their principal useful function today is the lobbying function. Training, job search, the exchange of ideas in a collegial setting are important peripheral activities. They will continue."

There should be more dialogue among them.

"All of the groups can contribute greatly to the future of orchestras. Enlisting the support and participation of the various special-interest groups contributes more to a strong future than fighting or ignoring them. These groups rarely interact. 'Cross-functional' sessions would foster discussions incorporating many perspectives, and would certainly be in the interests of all parties. Although ideal situations may be used as models, the industry is not filled with model situations. There are agendas within each of the special interest groups which may not promote what is best for the industry. Does a particular organization serve a bureaucracy (itself) or its members? There is a need for more dialogue between and within the conferences (ICSOM, ROPA, OCSM) and the AFM. . . . On a more local level, there needs to be greater understanding between orchestra committees and orchestras' members. There are many layers of communication and sharing which need to take place to change the industry. There must be some momentum. Trying to alter the direction of a ship with no wind is impossible. It is up to the leadership of

each group to work out a plan which will capture the interest and imagination of all parties. One group cannot be successful without the participation and success of the others."

Another advisor observes, "My sense is that some of the antagonisms of the late 1980s and early 1990s between and among these labor and management associations has been displaced by a recognition that problems are real and need to be addressed in a more cooperative spirit. It would be great if some of these organizations would collaborate explicitly on reform initiatives." Another advisor concludes, " . . . clearly, there is a need for change within our industry, if not only for improved working environments, but for survival itself. . . . This need for change must be recognized among all aspects and organizations associated with symphony orchestras. . . . Separation of and non-communication among all parties is one of the great problems we have."

One advisor chose to include music schools in this area of discussion. "If we want musicians to be much more involved in our organizations, doing a variety of activities from fundraising to board work to music education, they will need some training. I believe music schools should provide a broader base of training than just musicianship."

On the other hand, one person is convinced these associations and groupings should have no role in the future. "So many of the groups developed out of distrust. They would be rendered useless in a consensus-built environment. Sunset most of them . . ."

10. **What forces will be at work within symphony organization participants as individuals, the organization as a whole, or the world in which the organization functions to keep things from changing at a pace required?**

Inertia is a major force against change.

"Symphony organizations don't want to change. Why would they? Who does? Symphony organizations want circumstances to change so that they can go on doing what they have always done." Another advisor believes, "Crisis will continue to be the major force for change. 'Man learns by being thrashed', (Goethe, epigraph to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*). At the same time, a very few model institutions will emerge and be everywhere emulated. The chief retardant to change will be the ability of many orchestral organizations to 'muddle through,' albeit barely."

Another advisor maintains, "Orchestras would be wise to experiment with organizational change, programming expansion, or diversification while the sun is still shining. It is much easier to find the leaks when it is raining, but it is much harder to patch the roof! The risks of experimentation are less extreme in a period of relative prosperity. Orchestras are inherently hierarchical organizations, which promotes efficient communication, defines clear chains of command and accountability, and encourages subordination of individual initiative to the collective mission. To many in the business world, this is an admirably efficient organizational structure. It is one that is very well adapted to a stable mission in a fixed landscape of challenges. On the other hand, this same hierarchical organization can develop so much institutional inertia that change becomes difficult or impossible even in the face of monumental challenges, which is why we have seen orchestras literally go out of business rather than change their ways of doing business. It is hard to imagine

symphony orchestras developing non-hierarchical organizational structures that have become popular in other industries. But it is essential to the future prosperity of these organizations that their organizational structures are not deterrents to innovation."

This same advisor speaks further of inertia from the standpoint of personnel. "To some extent, organizations change only as quickly and radically as new blood, literally, can be brought into the organization. Many orchestra musicians and administrators have been working in orchestras for 20 to 30 years, having gotten their starts in the 1960s and 1970s when orchestras expanded rapidly in the U.S. The struggles of the late 1980s and 1990s were a real shock to the system for many in the orchestral field who entered the profession during a period that rewarded expansion rather than adaptation, emulation rather than innovation, and division of responsibility within organizations rather than cooperative ownership. Many feel the imperative to shift these tendencies in the face of changing realities of the culture and marketplace for the symphony orchestra. Young professionals now being trained in conservatories and music schools must be educated with a new set of expectations. They must be innovators and consensus builders who recognize and avoid the organizational pitfalls that prevent experimentation and change."

Another advisor thinks, "Human nature will work against change. Change can be difficult. It exacerbates insecurities. It is the unknown, and many people are more comfortable with an unpleasant situation than with the unknown. In an orchestra with which I am familiar, the musicians were recently offered a choice of two schedules. One of them was 'by the book' and the other was an experiment. The experimental version was voted in. . . . Afterwards, the orchestra was surveyed as to their feelings about the change. While most of the respondents liked the choice, there was a minority who expressed the view that we should not try these things 'because it is not in the contract'. What made this response even more interesting was that a number of those who expressed their opposition . . . were not affected by the change in any way at all. This survey said more about those individuals than about the experiment. We are comfortable with what we know and that with which we are familiar."

"None of us wants to preside over the demise of programmatic growth. We all want to be remembered for maintaining status, not for instituting internal processes which made survival possible."

Another advisor concludes, "If we continue to drag our heels in trying new things or don't question how or why processes are being done certain ways, then we will change at a slower rate."

Complacency, fostered by a currently robust economy, inhibits change.

"One of the forces that keeps symphony organizations from changing is the continuing financial support of an older generation of upper-class donors whose largess in the recent market upswing has fostered complacency. We all know that this generation is dying off, but not in time to affect current employees' careers."

Another advisor says, "Certainly, for mid-sized orchestras in markets that are not expanding rapidly, the economy itself will be the principal agent of change. . . .In an expanding economy, it has been possible for many orchestras

to keep pace with the increasing costs of musical talent. Many major orchestras are settling five-year contracts that greatly increase base salaries. These contracts seem predicated on very optimistic assumptions about a continuing expansion. But eventually, the expansion will slow or stop, earning power for orchestras will slow, and gift income will be harder to find. Many orchestras will once again face the situation of the late 1980s and early 1990s, trying to winnow out expenses in order to balance the books. Economic necessity will become the mother of organizational innovation."

Contributors could influence the pace of change.

"Most professional orchestras are dependent on outside gift and investment income for 40 to 60 percent of annual operating revenues. Corporate, foundation, and private donors have enormous influence over the organizational function and programming of orchestras that are anxious for these gifts."

Fiefdoms lead to inward thinking.

"Fiefdoms are killing our organizations. . . . Focus on the audience."

Traditional stereotypes will impede change.

"Traditional stereotypes will continue to impede change. As long as people 'think inside the box' and perceive others in the old roles, little will change. Musicians must forget the grievances they carry from 10 or even 20 years ago and begin to take ownership in the institution. Staffs must lose their parochial attitudes towards musicians and perceive them as resources, even potential colleagues, working towards the same goal. Board members must foster these new relationships and get to know their orchestras' musicians."

11. **In your overall judgment, what forces or conditions need to exist for positive change to start and be sustained in the typical symphony organization?**

A supportive external environment needs to exist.

In one advisor's words, orchestras will need "an external environment (e.g., donor support, community support, public funding) that rewards positive changes rather than being indifferent to them. A symphony organization well-adapted to the cultural needs and market realities of its community does not need to change, at least not for the community. But something is very wrong when there is no external reward for an organization that attempts change to meet the perceived needs of a community. Too many orchestras, I fear, are in this predicament. They take affordable risks with their concert programming, outreach, educational programming, and performance venues in response to criticism and encouragement, but they receive little reward or benefit for doing do. This understandably drives administrators, artistic directors, and musicians back toward more conservative decisions—the tried and true. Orchestras have become such institutionalized assets in many communities that their continued existence is taken for granted."

Ironically, advancing technology may bring about the condition conducive to that external support, as one advisor states it, "reaffirmation of that which makes us better as a community. Despite the isolation of individuals caused by advanced technology, man seeks to be part of a layer of society. The symphony orchestra is a community within the larger community it serves, enhancing that community, and enriching the lives of the individuals it engages."

Bold leadership needs to be exercised.

"Only crisis and impending doom can precipitate change, but I would like to think that we are training a cadre of leaders who understand the economic, political, and social environment for the arts in America and are prepared to

abandon unworkable modes of operation and provide leadership designed to apply best practices and avert crises." Another advisor put it this way, "The key variable for the success of any orchestral organization will increasingly be leadership. This might arise from within the board, from a manager, or, as I expect to be the case increasingly, from the music director. . . . But it will be individual, not collective. The central activity for all those interested in fostering positive change should be the identification of such leaders and the dissemination of information about what they are doing."

And another advisor believes, "Proposing and effecting change, and overcoming the apathy and inherently conservative nature of the organization, requires inspired leadership from all groups. We will need guidance from all interested parties working together in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and cooperation. It may take a major crisis to convince certain groups within the industry or individual orchestras that they must change or they will not survive in their present form. As a natural disaster can bring people together to work for the common good, so too can a crisis be a catalyst for an orchestra. Challenges can bring out the best in people. In a situation where things are pretty good, there is probably little reason or inspiration to change. Maybe the leadership needs to sound an alarm before the crisis has arrived at their door."

Still another advisor, along these lines, concludes: "We need to recruit people who are excited about change and can see the good that it brings. These people need to be disciples who proselytize what this can mean for an organization and what will need to happen in order for us to stay up with the times. They need to be visionary about the future possibilities for symphony organizations."

There needs to be a strong sense of joint ownership.

Another advisor says there needs to be "greater involvement of musicians in strategic planning in ways that lead to a stronger sense of joint ownership and cooperative mission." Continuing, this advisor advocates "finding new ways to cultivate and sustain appropriate involvement of boards and volunteers. There is something dysfunctional about the typical board arrangement. Board members are usually expected to 'give or get' gifts to cover operating expenses. However, board members are usually board members because they want to do something more than simply donate. Administrators are often plagued by meddlesome board members who 'don't know their place'. This sort of arrangement is bound to devolve into frustration and failure."

Musicians need to be considered as individuals.

One advisor advocates "finding ways to individualize musicians' contracts in ways that make the most sense for the individual and the orchestra. This could, of course, lead to abuses and inequities that, some would say, are the very reason for the existence of the AFM and ICSOM. But if orchestras are to make better use of the diverse talents of their musicians for wide-ranging program offerings, there has to be more flexibility in negotiating the terms of employment with individual musicians."

Positive attitudes and organizational pride will contribute to successful change.

"For positive change to occur . . . I think all parties need to do a good job. This is not as simplistic as it sounds. If the . . . executive director does well, and consequently so does the staff, positive change in the form of optimism will result. If the musicians do a good job, the product improves. This is equally true for the music director, who must also project a positive attitude toward the organization and its potential for success. Mutual respect leads to mutual

success. But, attitudes of anger, disappointment, dissatisfaction, and the like, are rampant among musicians." Another advisor adds as an essential force for change "universally shared pride in their organizations."

It is vital to have trust and respect among participants and constituencies.

"Nothing will truly change if the constituencies don't trust each other. Once the conversation begins, anything is possible. But having that first, really honest conversation is the hard part." Another advisor believes that "mutual respect across all lines" is needed, along with a "genuine respect for the capabilities of every individual" in the organization. Still another concludes, "The authentic attainment of mutual respect in the working partnership between the musicians and staff is the most important force for change. A house at war with itself cannot attain the development of innovative programming and artistic presentation that is convincing enough to leap over the footlights to do justice to repertoire or to sustain patron loyalty. Footsteps hasten past a house that constantly argues and is permeated with internal pathology."

Excellent, continuous communication is also vital.

"Excellent, continuous, open, and honest communication. Effective conflict resolution. Free exchange of ideas. Willingness to change and experiment with new ideas." Or as another advisor puts it: "Systems and processes to empower all constituent individuals to enable them to blossom and contribute all they are capable of contributing, and an intense desire to embrace and respond to and take advantage of the Internet age."

Organizations will need to take a broader view of mission.

One advisor advocates the "preeminence of audience development and education." Another recommends "a more radical review of organizational missions. The range of programs and services now offered by a typical symphony organization reduces the performance of symphonic literature to one-among-many offerings and sometimes to a 'minority' offering (as measured by audience participation, budget, and musician service). Yet performance of the symphonic literature is still, for most orchestras, the core mission of the organization, with other programs and services being audience development offerings, or worse, necessary evils. I wouldn't advocate for performance of symphonic music becoming peripheral for orchestras. But I would argue that other goals (e.g., education and community building) need to share pride of place in the core mission if they are to consume so much of the energy and resources of the organization."

And yet maintain fiscal realism.

"Orchestras need to be realistic about finances. Costs for simply sustaining an orchestra's quality, its musicians, staff, and operations, will tend to go up at rates that are hyper-inflationary. Endowments must be created that can grow at a rate to cover these cost trends for orchestras, as many colleges and universities have done. These endowments need to be used at very modest rates to cover annual operating expenses. The scale of programming and operations in an orchestra must then be proportioned appropriately to the endowment resources of the organization."

Audience attitude and taste will also drive change.

In conclusion, one advisor reminds us that "attitude and taste will drive change. The best barometer of the need for change is found at the box office."