

# INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.

A magazine of the Institute for Music Leadership at the Eastman School of Music



*The Importance of Artistry  
in Arts Leadership*

*Also featuring:*

*The How and Why of the Alternative Ensemble*

*A Conversation with Donna Milanovich*

*What is a Community Gamelan?*



EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Produced by the Paul R. Judy Center for Innovation and  
Research at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY



# THE EASTMAN CASE STUDIES

Examine issues and challenges  
that face today's musical leaders



**Designed to help current and future leaders of musical arts organizations develop the skills and perspectives for solving problems through situational analysis and discussion**

## **A Multi-Volume Case Study Series**

*focused on musical arts organizations*

### **Topics Including**

<i>Advocacy</i>	<i>Capital Campaigns</i>
<i>Foundation Giving</i>	<i>Branding &amp; Marketing</i>
<i>Labor Negotiations</i>	<i>Digital Media Industry</i>
<i>Maintaining Mission</i>	<i>Audience Development</i>
<i>Program Expansion &amp; Analysis</i>	<i>Governance &amp; Board Recruitment</i>
<i>Mergers of Cultural Organizations</i>	<i>Organization &amp; Personnel Structure</i>

**...and many more!**

Available for download

**EastmanCaseStudies.org**



**EASTMAN**  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER



INSTITUTE FOR  
MUSIC LEADERSHIP

## EDITOR'S WELCOME

There are important questions in our musical arts world that have no single answer, no clear solution, and no relevant precedent. We face new challenges daily that require critical thinking, innovative solutions, and at times, improvisation.

One concept that we can reliably embrace and support is that the leaders of musical arts organizations – large and small – benefit from an intimate relationship and knowledge of music and music-making. It is this effective synergy between artistic understanding and executive know-how that can be transformative for our organizations, from the world's largest opera companies, to artist-led orchestras like the **Chicago Philharmonic**, alternative ensembles such as **yMusic**, and community-based ensembles like **Gamelan Dharma Swara**, all featured in this issue of **INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.**

It is this dedication to the artist-leader concept that has recently led the Eastman School of Music to appoint [Rachel Roberts](#) as the director of its new [MA in Music Leadership degree program](#) – designed for musicians who wish to lead and create innovative musical organizations of all sizes and types.

With this spirit of artistry-based leadership, I hope that you enjoy this issue of **INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.**

Musically Yours,

James C. Doser  
Director, [Institute for Music Leadership](#) Eastman School of Music  
Editor-in-Chief,  
INNOVATE.MUSIC.LEAD. Magazine

## INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.

A magazine of the Eastman School of Music

ISSUE NUMBER 2

DATE OF RELEASE March 1, 2018

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: James C. Doser

MANAGING EDITOR: Steve Danyew

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD. is published twice per year, in August and March.

SUBMISSIONS

We welcome submissions of research papers to be published in INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD. We accept submissions on a rolling basis. If you have questions about your work and if it would be appropriate for this publication, please email us at [prjc@esm.rochester.edu](mailto:prjc@esm.rochester.edu).

MAIL:

Paul R. Judy Center for Innovation and Research  
Eastman School of Music  
26 Gibbs Street  
Rochester, NY 14604

EMAIL:

[prjc@esm.rochester.edu](mailto:prjc@esm.rochester.edu)

WEB:

<https://iml.esm.rochester.edu/prjc>

IN THIS ISSUE

5 The Importance of Artistry in Arts Leadership

JAMES C. DOSER

15 A Conversation with Donna Milanovich

19 The How and Why of the Alternative Ensemble

WILLIAM ROBIN, PH.D.

24 What is a Community Gamelan?

VICTORIA LO MELLIN

27 Sound Bits

29 Contributors



# The Importance of Artistry in Arts Leadership

James C. Doser

*This article first appeared in Volume 7 of the Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Arts administrators face decisions that require expertise in both the hard skills of business and the soft skills of communication, interpersonal relationships, and advocacy.

The most logical decisions, the most promising initiatives, and the most inspiring projects can fail if leaders lose track of the core artistic values that brought them to the profession in the first place.

The most effective administrators possess both a thorough knowledge of art and the sensitivity to articulate the arts experience on a deep level. They understand the transformative power of art as the core of the mission.

This is more than bridging a gap of understanding, being sensitive to the sensibilities of artists, and being a good listener; and it is certainly more than

simply parroting the organization's messaging. Rather, this is a set of values acquired from *being* an artist, and/or having personal experience with arts' ability to affect and change lives of individuals and communities.

Artistry must be at the foundation of training for arts administrators, and at the center of their professional practice.

## PART ONE: LEADING THROUGH A LENS OF ARTISTRY

For arts organizations, the clearest vision of operational, artistic, and economic success comes through a lens of artistic insight.

Arts organizations – sometimes just one poor season away from financial collapse – are particularly vulnerable to severe economic downturns. In response to the 2008 recession, most arts organizations decreased their annual budgets. In the arts capital of New York City, 39 percent cancelled or postponed programs.<sup>1</sup> In the same period, the unemployment rate for artists more than doubled that of other professionals.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Jones and Christina Knight, ed., “The Recession & the Arts III: The Impact of the Economic Downturn on Nonprofit Cultural Organizations in New York City,” *Alliance for the Arts* (June 2011), accessed April 12, 2017, <https://www.nyc-arts.org/pdfs/Recession&theARTSIII.pdf>, 4.

<sup>2</sup> “Artist Unemployment Rates for 2008 and 2009: An Addendum to NEA Research Note #97,” *National Endowment for the Arts Research Bulletin*, (January 2010), accessed April 13, 2016, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/97-update.pdf>, 1.

from 1999 to 2007.<sup>4</sup>

Faced with economic issues that threatened their organizations, many arts administrators, boards, artists, and donors were forced into decisions that challenged their ability to work as a team with common visions. Their futures, in part, are determined by the ability of leaders that not only understand, but *feel* the artistic missions of their organizations. The story of Charlie Owens and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra (HSO) provides a solid starting point.

Despite economic and labor pressures, the HSO has been one of the leading medium-market professional orchestras in North America for several decades. In the early 1990's, a new model of governance emerged for the HSO after a period of contentious labor negotiations. Labor mediator Ron Compton suggested that ten HSO musicians become full voting members on the board of directors, which was declared "unprecedented territory for members of an orchestra."<sup>3</sup> For the first time, the board was to experience representation from its artists, who would bring first-hand knowledge of the artistic process to the governing body. In the fifteen years that followed, the HSO flourished:

From 1993 until the economic recession of 2008, the HSO boasted a series of successful contract negotiations and not a single grievance filed by its musicians. More than half of that prosperous time was under the leadership of executive director Charlie Owens, who guided the orchestra through a period of significant fiscal and artistic growth through his term

Mr. Owens, with a strong record of business and administrative skills, also brought an artist's background and sensibilities, having earned master's degrees in Music and English from Dennison University. His decision-making reflected a dedication to the mission of the orchestra. His relationship with musicians, coupled with his instinctive artistic leadership, paved the way for collaborative and positive growth.

But in 2007, Charlie Owens left the HSO, causing a notable shift in the ability of management to communicate effectively with its musicians and to face the difficult situations yet to come.

The serious financial challenges of the recession and the inability to sustain the orchestra's growth forced the HSO to consider new cost efficiencies, including a merger with its longtime performance venue The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. Hoping to save administrative costs, management consolidated the administration of these two organizations, but in so doing it also removed essential leadership personnel, most notably the leadership that possessed a central understanding of the artistic mission of the HSO.

Musicians felt that the mission of the orchestra was no longer understood or supported. The trust and shared vision that had been guided by knowledgeable leadership soured, as noted by an HSO musician on the negotiating team:

A symphony orchestra is about number one, the music; number two, the musicians, who are the

---

<sup>3</sup> Michael Anderson, "At the Core: Contract Negotiations at the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, *Eastman Case Studies*, Vol. 1 (Rochester: Eastman School of Music, 2016), 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

music makers, we're the product; and number three, everything else. We believe that this management and this board, are concerned with everything else, above numbers one and two. One does not grow the Hartford Symphony by cutting the Hartford Symphony.<sup>5</sup>

The necessity for cost-cutting may have been obvious, but its implementation lacked the sensitivity that Mr. Owens's artistry may have brought to the role. The resulting environment lacked the trust, teamwork, and sacrifice necessary to successfully implement painful adjustments. Today, the HSO continues to face these challenges.<sup>6</sup>

Making difficult decisions from *within* a mission-positive environment is much likelier to succeed than from one perceived as disloyal to the central mission of the organization.

The *Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra* and *The Music School*, faced similar hardships during the recession.<sup>7</sup>

In 2000, these leading Rhode Island musical organizations engineered a successful merger of a professional orchestra and existing music school. United by a common mission, yet with unique operational and programmatic needs, they approached navigating the economic challenges of the recession differently from that of the HSO and The Bushnell Center.

This merger was initiated because one organization's strength compensated for the other's weakness.

The school in fact was facing nearly the exact opposite challenges of the orchestra. Whereas the orchestra had financial stability and was looking to strengthen its educational programs, the Music School's programs were flourishing in spite of financial instability. Despite the institutions' distinct objectives, the two musical arts organizations were inherently linked by their mission of enhancing the region's cultural landscape and offering robust music education programs.<sup>8</sup>

The merger made initial progress in operational efficiencies. However, the combined organization neglected to create a unified culture that married the best practices of the predecessor organizations (performance and education).

It took the vision of a new administrator – one who had both artistic and education experience and who understood the content, passion, and missions of *both* original organizations – to unite the team, successfully leading it through the challenges of the recession.

The appointment of (David) Beauchesne was controversial as he had little experience with the leadership of orchestras. However,

---

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ann Drinan, "Hartford Symphony Ratification: Two Views," *Institute for Music Leadership Blog*, February 22, 2016, accessed May 6, 2017, <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/iml/prjc/poly/2016/02/22/hartford-symphony-ratification-two-views/>.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Laprade, "Culture Shock: The Merger of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School," *Eastman Case Studies*, Vol.1 (Rochester: Eastman School of Music, 2016), 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



with experience as both a performer and educator, he brought fresh perspective to the entire organization and had no obvious biases towards either facet of the organization.<sup>9</sup>

The entire organization – including administration, musicians, faculty, board, and donors – agreed that the mission of the organization was the prime directive and must drive the path to economic stability.

Leading by example, management and staff accepted salary cuts before approaching musicians and faculty to ask for the same. While reflecting upon these sacrifices, board member Marie Langlois recalls “everyone shared the vision of moving forward and coming out of the financial collapse with success.”<sup>10</sup>

How important was the presence of a leader with an artist’s (and educator’s) perspective in responding successfully to the crisis at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra and Music School? What could the HSO and The Bushnell have achieved if all its stakeholders were perceived as mission-driven?

We may not know the answer to these specific questions. However, leadership undergirded by personal understanding of the artistic principles of the mission, *and* empowered by effective business acumen and skills is more likely to lead arts organizations to long-term artistic success and financial stability.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> Laprade, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Jed Gaylin, “Being Relevant - Who Cares?,” October 5, 2015, accessed March 8, 2017, <http://jedgaylin.com/being-relevant-who-cares/>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## PART TWO: RELEVANCE

For decades, arts organizations have argued the importance of being relevant to their communities. However, business relevancy and artistic relevancy are not only different, but sometimes antithetical. The inherent conflict between the two often stirs great emotion and controversy within the community, and can result in a major impact on the health of arts organizations.

In his essay “Being Relevant – Who Cares?,” conductor Jed Gaylin frames the history of relevance and how this quest to be relevant is a requirement of music director searches:

We in the classical music world are tasked now with “making music relevant for current and future audiences”....Certainly nobody – least of all a performer – wants to be irrelevant. The art-world is striving for relevance as a prevalent value, and it seems all conductors (in addition to being consummate musicians, masterful technicians, savvy business minds, powerful communicators and ambassadors in the community) are expected to make music relevant.<sup>11</sup>

Gaylin then continues with an essential point: “In other words, really, relevant is a nice way of saying ‘sellable.’ Yet, relevance and marketability are *not* in the least interchangeable.”<sup>12</sup>

He is right. Arts organizations that are relevant to their communities, one would presume, would be marketable, would attract philanthropic and government support, and would be financially stable if effectively managed. But attempting to be relevant solely from a business perspective, and creating marketing strategies that are disconnected from the mission of the organization may be both misguided and ineffective.

An interesting parallel may exist between classical music organizations and churches, in that both have attempted to attract larger audiences by modifying delivery of their products, sometimes to the detriment of their central mission.

David Haskell explores this phenomenon in his article, “Liberal Churches are Dying. But Conservative Churches are Thriving.”

To increase membership, many liberal churches have sought to make services more relevant to their communities by “modernizing” the experience – and (some would say) “diluting” the theology. In some cases, the quest for business relevance overtakes the essential relevance of the core message. One theory suggests that it is not the delivery (perhaps not even the content) but the *conviction* and *strength* of belief in a central mission that leads to growth.<sup>13</sup>

So how might this theory relate to musical arts organizations? The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, under the notable leadership of President and CEO Deborah Borda, may well have set the bar for

effectively building relevance with communities and clearly aligning these efforts with its artistic mission.

In the recent article, “Los Angeles Has America’s Most Important Orchestra. Period.” New York Times music critic Zachary Woolfe states:

As it prepares to celebrate its centennial in 2019, the Philharmonic puts more energy into new work than any other orchestra. It presents a greater sense of the diversity of today’s music and its creators than any other orchestra. It ties its mission to education and social justice in its city more than any other orchestra. And, yes, more than any other orchestra, it combines a commitment to the future with a fresh eye on the past.<sup>14</sup>

The quest for this mission-positive relevance reflects the perspective and skills of its leadership. Ms. Borda – who studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, the Royal College of Music, Jacobs School of Music, and the University of Minnesota, where she earned a law degree – is an example of a leader with a thorough and personal understanding of music at the highest levels, combined with a robust and equally impressive toolbox of business skills and acumen.

One result of Borda’s leadership is that the Orchestra’s relevance has developed alongside notable, and national, artistic impact. As Alan Ross writes in the *New Yorker*, “The ascendancy of the Los Angeles

---

<sup>13</sup> David Haskell, *Washington Post*, January 4, 2017, accessed January 12, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/01/04/liberal-churches-are-dying-but-conservative-churches-are-thriving/?utm\\_term=.bcc247cbda6a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/01/04/liberal-churches-are-dying-but-conservative-churches-are-thriving/?utm_term=.bcc247cbda6a).

<sup>14</sup> Zachary Woolfe, “Los Angeles has American’s Most Important Orchestra. Period,” *The New York Times*, April 18, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/18/arts/music/los-angeles-has-americas-most-important-orchestra-period.html?emc=eta1&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/18/arts/music/los-angeles-has-americas-most-important-orchestra-period.html?emc=eta1&_r=0).

Philharmonic is the salient event in American orchestral life of the past 25 years.”<sup>15</sup>

There are many examples of relevant connections being made with audience and community members, and not necessarily in the concert hall. Perhaps none has resonated so strongly, has been so personally stirring, or is so applicable to arts organizations as Street Symphony, founded by Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist Vijay Gupta.

Street Symphony bridges the gap between the highest levels of classical music-making and the most marginalized communities, and presents opportunities for unfettered classical music performance to be relevant to audiences not likely to attend a Disney Concert Hall performance.

Street Symphony places musical performances and storytelling at the heart of important social conversations. By supporting an authentic connection between distinguished musical leaders and communities experiencing incarceration and homelessness, Street Symphony serves to foster a dialogue which tells the unheard stories of the most marginalized communities in Los Angeles through the power of musical expression.<sup>16</sup>

In an appearance before the Eastman School of Music’s “Leadership Issues in Music” class, Mr. Gupta described the

reaction by an inmate at a Los Angeles prison in response to a Street Symphony string quartet performance held in the prison. The performance included repertoire from several composers of the traditional canon. The inmate stated, “I love these composers because all of them had ‘real stuff’ happen to them, in fact, ... **Schumann died in a place like this.**”<sup>17</sup>

In response, Gupta said,

He totally took me aback. He was absolutely right....When you talk about approaching and playing Schubert for an audience in a concert hall or university we talk about the fact that Schubert might go through three different keys in the exposition of one of his quartets. Or, do we talk about the story that Schubert was gay, and that he couldn’t come out, and that music was a safe place for him, and chamber music was something that he played in his living room. What’s the better story? Right? And we take that story and then tell, well maybe because his emotions were so quickly vacillating and suppressed, that’s why he had to seek out all these different tunes, and maybe that’s what informed the counterpoint, and so **the personhood informs the music making.** And I think that that applies to the composers, the performers and the audience members.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Alex Ross, “How the L.A. Phil Can Stay on Top of the Orchestral World.” *The New Yorker*, March 23, 2017, accessed April 18, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/how-the-l-a-phil-can-stay-on-top-of-the-orchestra-world>.

<sup>16</sup> “What We Do,” Street Symphony, last modified 2016, accessed February 28, 2017. <http://streetsymphony.org>.

<sup>17</sup> Vijay Gupta, Personal interview, February 13, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Gupta, Personal interview.



Similarly, Gaylin makes the following statement in “Being Relevant - Who Cares?”

...(Let’s) remind ourselves daily that art functions by connecting each individual soul to something greater, in a shared environment that creates a mysterious bond for all in the concert hall (or prison). The more we distract ourselves from that central purpose, the more we weaken our bond to the audience members, and then, yes, we do lose relevancy.<sup>19</sup>

I would propose that arts administrators who institutionalize the practice of developing genuine, honest, arts-centered connections with their communities – whether in the nation’s leading orchestras or in grass-roots initiatives like Street Symphony – will create a relevance that results in marketability and stability. Connecting artistry to personhood can, and should, be the lifeblood of administrators who keep arts at their core. Ms. Borda and Mr. Gupta have shown us how.

### **PART THREE: JUSTIFYING THE ARTS**

As leaders, we must seek support from a wide circle of influencers, many of whom do not relate to arts in the same way we do. When addressing business, government, philanthropic, and educational leaders, we often speak about the associated economic, community, and educational benefits of the arts. This is essential information for policy makers including boards, politicians, and voters.

Using non-arts-related metrics may offer temporary strategic benefits, but may not hold up to the test of time and rigor of analysis. It may even diminish the most valid justification for support of the arts, which is of course, its humanizing value as art. Leaders who can deliver personal and compelling messages about the value of arts and complement it with secondary data for important influencers, possess a powerful formula for success.

The National Association for the Advocacy of Music Education (NAFME) produces valuable tools for schools, teachers, and parents. One, “Twenty Important Benefits of Music in Our Schools,” provides an example. NAFME understands that these are “secondary” benefits to music education, and states this in the introduction to the list, “Read on to learn why music education is so important, and how it offers benefits even beyond itself.”<sup>20</sup>

**1. Musical training helps develop language and reasoning:** Students who have early musical training will develop the areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. The left side of the brain is better developed with music, and songs can help imprint information on young minds.

**2. A mastery of memorization:** Even when performing with sheet music, student musicians are constantly using their memory to perform. The skill of memorization can serve students well in education and beyond.

**3. Students learn to improve their work:** Learning music promotes

---

<sup>19</sup> Gaylin, “Being Relevant – Who Cares?”

<sup>20</sup> “Twenty Important Benefits of Music in Our Schools,” *National Association for Music Education*, July 21, 2014, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.nafme.org/20-important-benefits-of-music-in-our-schools>.

craftsmanship, and students learn to want to create good work instead of mediocre work. This desire can be applied to all subjects of study.

**4. Increased coordination:** Students who practice with musical instruments can improve their hand-eye coordination. Just like playing sports, children can develop motor skills when playing music.

**5. A sense of achievement:** Learning to play pieces of music on a new instrument can be a challenging, but achievable goal. Students who master even the smallest goal in music will be able to feel proud of their achievement.

**6. Kids stay engaged in school:** An enjoyable subject like music can keep kids interested and engaged in school. Student musicians are likely to stay in school to achieve in other subjects.<sup>21</sup>

These are important points to raise in conversations about the value of music education. However, by not focusing on the primary benefits of music in our advocacy, we risk that others will say that these benefits may be attained through other more efficient and effective means. Eliciting support from those who have not experienced the arts personally is difficult and requires an arts-literate and passionate leader.

Its reaction to President Donald J. Trump's proposal to eliminate funding for the NEA,

Jamal Rossi, Dean of the Eastman School of Music, Gloria Culver, Dean of the University of Rochester College of Arts and Science, and Jonathan Binstock, Director of the University's Memorial Art Gallery co-authored an essay in Rochester's *Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper.<sup>22</sup> In it, the authors quote another U.S. President as he launched the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 1965.

The arts and humanities are one of the most important ways we can satisfy the universal 'desire for beauty and hunger for community,' and a budget that ignores the arts and humanities is a disastrous one for many people.<sup>23</sup>

The writers then provide data that appeals directly to this group of stakeholders: "As a result, the NEA generates \$135.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 4.1 million jobs in the arts and related industries and returns \$9.6 billion in federal income taxes."<sup>24</sup>

Our goal is not to justify our organizations based on secondary benefits, but to effectively communicate the power of the arts and create cultural ambassadors – especially those with financial and governmental power – by engaging them with personal, visceral, and meaningful experiences with the arts.

The role of the arts administrator is to construct a compelling pathway for funders, government officials, educational decision makers, community leaders – and

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Jamal Rossi, Gloria Culver, and Jonathan Binstock, "The Arts Yield Benefits for All." *Democrat and Chronicle* (April 1, 2017): A17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

even more importantly, community members – to experience art in relevant ways.

Administrators who call on their personal experience in the arts are best able to demonstrate the credibility, sensitivity, and passion to deliver this message effectively. Those who bolster their appeal with data regarding the secondary benefits of the arts have a powerful combination. One without the other is not as likely to succeed in advocating for the arts and arts organizations.

#### PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

Many arts administrators succeed because they combine personal understanding and passion with the hard skills of leadership, business, administration, development, and marketing. They are fundamentally artists who also possess outstanding leadership and management skills.

Must an arts administrator be an artist? Perhaps not – but they must possess a profound and heartfelt knowledge of the transformative power of art. In the words of Andrew Jorgensen, from the Washington National Opera, in his interview with Eastman’s “Leadership Issues in Music” class:

What is the most important piece of advice that I can give to future arts administrators?

It’s about passion. That sounds very cliché, but I think, at its core, it isn’t just that leaders need to understand the art form; leaders need to care *deeply about* the art form. I am passionate about the place of opera in our society. My most transformative experiences have been at performances.

Our passion will be the driving force that convinces philanthropists to sign up, that convinces audiences to come to see it, that convinces artists to join with us and partner with us and make things happen, even under increasingly adverse circumstances, and that keeps us getting up every morning, and excited to go to work, and work towards presenting that next opera.

Everything else will come; everything else that is strategic can be learned and can be taught, but the passion, I think, is what keeps us doing it, and what reminds us of why we do it.<sup>25</sup>

Arts administration programs need to provide an integrated approach of developing artistry, arts knowledge, and essential leadership and business training.

Of course there will always be examples of arts administrators who have little or no arts background, and who follow their own unique paths, developing successful careers and providing outstanding service to their organizations. We will be fortunate to work with these leaders.

Though we would not dishonor an arts administrator because she is not, herself, an artist, we should also not create barriers that force students to choose leadership without the opportunities – or requirements – to be knowledgeable and passionate artists. Rather, we should encourage (and make it feasible) for artists to acquire essential administrative, leadership and business skills while being fluent in the language, canon, and sensibilities of the art that their organizations present.

---

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Jorgensen, Personal interview, February 21, 2017.



Arts organizations need passionate, knowledgeable and personal advocates for the value of the arts. They must speak the language of the arts when working with stakeholders. They must connect, with passion and conviction, the power of the arts to our communities and their leaders.

By providing students with the opportunities to develop a deep, personal understanding of the artistic process, along with high-level skills in business, governance, marketing, and advancement, we will nurture a new generation of articulate and effective leaders of our arts organizations, leaving a legacy that will benefit us all.

[Click here](#) for the bibliography.

# A Conversation with Donna Milanovich



*Donna Milanovich is the Executive Director of the Chicago Philharmonic Society.*

**You were a flutist in the orchestra for 17 years – how did you get interested in the arts administration side of the orchestra?**

I was asked to be a musician member of our board in 2005 before our restructure in 2012. When the 2008 economic downturn occurred, I became involved in raising funds to keep the season afloat and help sustain what I felt was a worthy organization. I wasn't originally interested in the arts administration field, but I saw

many phenomenal musicians leave the music field because of the economics of those years so I became passionate to help. I came on as an unpaid ED in 2010 to fill the need of this organization. By the end of 2011, the lifestyle of juggling both my full-time music performing and teaching career, family and growing administrative duties became unsustainable, and I decided to give my resignation. Our board came back a week later and offered a full-time compensated position with the commitment to restructuring our organization into the unique model of musician leadership beginning in January 2012. I accepted and, although at the time said it was for a one-year trial, I've never looked back. I stepped into the arts administration field because of my passion in serving the musical arts community and this experience has been absolutely rewarding. I was mentored by our extraordinary board, in particular our board chair, Paul R Judy and now our chair Thomas Manning. It is a privilege and honor to serve The Chicago Philharmonic Society and to have the opportunity to help music and musicians in a broader way.

**The Chicago Philharmonic has an innovative structure that is a little different than most orchestras – can you describe that a bit?**

The Chicago Philharmonic has a unique musician-leadership model. We consist of a

board of 21 but now anticipate this to grow to 25 with a continued majority of musician members by intent. The board created five committees: Artistic, Personnel, Patron Services, Development, and Financial. The majority of committee members are also musician members of the Society, some of whom also serve on the board of directors.

Furthermore, the musicians participate in our governance through the Musician Advisory Council. This group of 35 musician members provides a large pool from which to draw future board and committee members. In addition, the council provides feedback to management and the board concerning the Society's musical and organizational policies and activities. Each member is encouraged and given the opportunity to seek a wider interest in the Society's affairs.

Our unique model creates the unparalleled flexibility and the highest skill match for our own programming and for our various partners, thus creating employment opportunities for musicians to further their own careers and help all to maintain the highest level of artistic excellence.

In 2017 we hired over 310 professional musicians through self-produced concerts and collaborative works. Our extensive musician network also provides us the versatility to produce innovative programs that allow musicians to experiment with a wide range of styles.

Finally, our musician-centric approach also extends to the administrative staff. The majority of the dedicated administrative team have degrees or minors in music and/or arts administration or are from another artistic field.

**In the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of YouTube, Facebook Live, and Netflix, how do performing arts organizations keep audience members coming and excited about live performances?**

I think we keep maintaining and expanding our audience base by being connectors, by creating opportunities to show who we are as an organization and as individuals both musically and personally. I also think it's important to create opportunities to engage the audience into those creative moments by either communicating directly, adding collaborative or complementary artistic elements, and by inviting them to take part when possible as part of the experience. Our goal is to give patrons an artistic experience that has the capacity to create a transformative experience both personally and collectively.

Lastly, I believe it will be in part by bringing the experience to audiences in many different ways other than in the traditional concert hall experience.

**What are some the things that you feel audience members are looking for when they come to a Chicago Philharmonic concert?**

A vibrant experience with first-class, high-level performances, something innovative they haven't heard that way before, something that connects what they are experiencing to an overarching theme, elements of surprises, whether it is the opportunity to learn something new from our concerts from a conductor talk, musician talk, or a collaborator's inspiration; or to experience a new work.



They also feel a sense of welcoming, warmth, and liveliness with the pre-concert music offerings, and during the concert. Our concerts provide them the opportunity to connect with our staff, musicians, and audience members who are passionate about the musical arts and its community in Chicago.

**In addition to a wide range of concert activities, the Chicago Philharmonic has a number of outreach and education programs. How important do you think outreach and education programs are for creating a future audience for concert music?**

Our mission is to share beautiful music with diverse audiences and it reflects in our work in the communities. There are still many culturally underserved and underrepresented communities in Chicago's rich cultural landscape. Our community outreach programs are designed to enrich the quality of lives of youth, individuals and families in those communities, because if we don't create these programs that can reach the underserved or those without a strong connection to music - who will?

The people we reach either via community programming or in the schools are our future. But most importantly the practice of any art form be it music or dance or theater enriches the human spirit, and all people should have the opportunity for that transformative cultural experience that has the potential to make an impact in their lives. That's why all of this is ultimately important to me. I became a musician because a Gary, Indiana Froebel High School music teacher gave my father,

who came from a poor immigrant family, a compelling music education. It was the love and passion for classical music he learned there that he passed to me. Although he did not become a professional musician, it made his and ultimately our family's life richer for it. There are not enough of high-level community offerings and music education in a wide range of elementary and secondary schools, and our organization and other organizations must bridge that need.

**Is there a field or company outside of music that you think we could learn from as we (the classical music field) think about improving what we do?**

Yes, any offering that attracts a large consumer base be it EDM, basketball games or girl scout cookies. Learn what makes successful organizations grow (or not grow) and why—like the growth of soccer of the last twenty years in this country. I think we need to make the practice of an art form into a staple commodity. We all make some type of music from birth. We should figure out how that connection has become diminished and why our public is not finding the concert hall the place to experience that joy.

**The Chicago Philharmonic mentors many young musicians. From your experience and your interactions with these young musicians, what kinds of skills and tools can universities and conservatories be focusing on that will help them in today's competitive environment?**

To me there is a difference between learning in university for ones' own

knowledge and benefit and perhaps expecting to create a livelihood in that field. I think in our society we should figure a way to more easily allow for both.

It is my observation that we don't as a country have a cultural infrastructure that allows for gainful employment for all our performing degree graduates in the traditional route of full time symphonic employment, however I believe there is benefit from receiving a music degree, applying the success and skills that obtaining that degree gave you, and going on to work in a different field while retaining the wonderful ability to enjoy music at a high level.

I think university students need to be given a realistic picture of just how competitive that performing career, or music education career is, and information about other music related employment alternatives and options there might be, including the opportunity to be entrepreneurial.

Our graduates should be taught the tools they need to excel – superior music education and a virtuosic technique and performance experiences to enable them to have a competitive chance to enter the market as a full-time employed symphonic or music educator, as well as the more entrepreneurial skill set a freelance musician needs to create a viable alternative to these relatively few tenured positions. We should require every music student to take a basic business course aimed at freelance musicians that covers the business side of being a freelance musician: creating lesson contracts, job contracts, budgeting, creating databases, musician union work, how to find health insurance, how to keep self-employed tax

records, among some of the useful topics as well as how to value and structure their own work and fee system.

My takeaway from being a professional musician for over 40 years is that they need to be passionate and dedicated to be the best possible musician they can be, never stop learning, stay open to opportunity, and be prepared for the journey to be a lifelong commitment and endeavor. And to remember they are a conduit to share the joy, artistry and meaning of the musical arts.

**Could you share a couple of favorite pieces of music that you enjoy playing or listening to?**

I have the good fortune to hear live music played well virtually weekly --between our self-presented and contractual work – there is a richness of genres that are truly inspiring.

That being said anything Sam -my engineering -rock band (keys, composition) son, Hannah, my history/creative writing (oboe) eclectic music surfer daughter suggests, or Benjamin (violin)- my University of Rochester science major son with a passion for classical violin and jazz are creating, listening to or performing I am right there.

Last thing I listened to this week was: [George Walker: Lyric for Strings](#) and [Aaron Kernis: Musica celestis](#).

# The How and Why of the Alternative Ensemble

William Robin, PH.D.

As a musicologist who focuses on the world of contemporary composition, one of the main issues that I examine in my scholarship is the question of institutional identity. What does it mean that New Amsterdam Records, or the ensemble yMusic, or the composer collective Bang on Can constructs a particular image for itself as an organization—and how does that image affect broader developments in contemporary music? This was a question that I attempted to address in my 2016 dissertation, which focused on a twenty-first century scene of American musicians often labeled “indie classical.” Institutional identity is often conflated with branding: how an organization positions itself, with publicity campaigns and marketing initiatives, in a musical marketplace. But the question of identity also, importantly, centers on the priorities of composers and performers who found such organizations; the repertoire that they perform and record; the manner with which they present themselves to the public; and the complex relationships that they have with other actors in new music.

Given the importance of alternative ensembles in contemporary music in the present day United States, the question of identity seems paramount: the decisions that these groups make—what they play

and how they play it—significantly shape the world that we live in. As part of my dissertation work funded by the Paul R. Judy Center for Applied Research, I examined two prominent ensembles active today: Bang on a Can All-Stars, first established in 1992 as an outgrowth of the Bang on a Can composer collective; and yMusic, founded in 2007 by six freelance performers based in New York. On the surface, these organizations appear quite similar in approach. They are amplified chamber ensembles that perform rock- and pop-inflected in clubs as well as concert halls; they strongly emphasize collaboration as part of their artistic practices; and they frequently participate in the same institutional settings, such as Merkin Concert Hall’s Ecstatic Music Festival or university arts presenters across the United States.

But one essential issue that I addressed in my research, and that deeply shapes and differentiates the identities of these institutions in the present day, was the question of *why*: why did these particular organizations come into being? What purpose were they originally meant to serve? And how does that initial mission shape the approach of each ensemble in the present day? In this blog post, I want to offer a bit of background on these groups,

in order to give the sense of how their origins intersect with their current identity, and the implications this has for contemporary classical music.

The Bang on a Can All-Stars were founded for deeply practical reasons. In the early 1990s, after successfully presenting several marathon concerts in downtown New York, the founders of Bang on a Can—Julia Wolfe, David Lang, and Michael Gordon—received requests to present marathons in various cities around the world. The logistics of producing a marathon concert in Toronto or San Francisco, however, seemed daunting; as an alternative, the founders envisioned forming a group that could make the ethos of the scrappy festival portable and tourable. They reached out to six freelance musicians in the New York area who had all played in previous Bang on a Can marathons, but who had never performed together in the past: pianist Lisa Moore, percussionist Steven Schick, clarinetist and composer Evan Ziporyn, bassist Robert Black, cellist Maya Beiser, and guitarist Mark Stewart.

In interview, Lang told me that he, Gordon, and Wolfe wanted an ensemble with a specific sound and unique instrumentation. The unusual nature of the All-Stars' set-up—piano, clarinet, cello, guitar, bass, and percussion—was the result of the fact that the Bang founders wanted to work with specific players, rather than specific instruments. A repertoire quickly formed out of new commissions, rearrangements of works by Bang's founders such as Lang's *cheating, lying stealing*, and reworkings of open instrumentation pieces like Louis Andriessen's *Worker's Union*. The composers and performers that I interviewed consistently referenced the idea that the All-Stars represented the "sound" of its parent organization: the ensemble's mixture of classical and rock instruments—early marketing materials

emphasized that the group was half rock band, half classical ensemble—and its hard-edged, amplified repertoire represented the aesthetic of Bang on a Can in tours around the world as well as recordings on Sony and Cantaloupe.

The existence of the All-Stars has deeply informed the musical practices of Bang on a Can's founding composers. In a 1997 interview with the Yale Oral History of American Music project, Wolfe was asked about the importance of the All-Stars as a voice for her composition; she replied that: It's really great. I don't know whether I really thought about it at first. Because when we first started I wasn't really oriented that way. In fact, I think I had just started to write for large ensembles....But I've really appreciated working with people that I know, how they work and what they can do.

Indeed, it is striking that Wolfe's recent major successes—the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music and, in September 2016, a MacArthur "genius" grant—are directly tied to her recent music for the All-Stars, in the form of the large-scale works *Steel Hammer* and *Anthracite Fields*. And the identity of the All-Stars has shaped the new-music scene beyond just the Bang composers themselves: the group is the house band for Bang on a Can's crowdfunded People's Commissioning Fund. The All-Stars have thus helped bring into existence chamber works by musicians as widely flung as singer-songwriter Thurston Moore, composer and multimedia innovator Pamela Z, and jazz percussionist John Hollenbeck: the ensemble has diversified the world of contemporary composition.

Though it is a decade and a half younger than the All-Stars, yMusic similarly embraces bringing figures from outside of classical music into its purview: the ensemble's 2011 debut album, *Beautiful*



*Mechanical*, features instrumental works by musicians such as Annie Clark, the leader of indie band St. The ensemble's website declares that "In addition to performing their own repertoire, yMusic serves as a ready-made collaborative unit for bands and songwriters"; its members have worked with such prominent rock musicians as Bon Iver, The National, and Paul Simon.

But this identity, like that of the All-Stars, is deeply informed by the origins of the ensemble itself. Back in 2007, violinist Rob Moose and trumpeter C.J. Camerieri sought to create a group that would embody what they perceived as an emerging overlap between the contemporary music and indie rock; as Moose told me, he "thought there was a movement and a general interest in combining the chamber music-y world with the band world, and felt like that was where I lived." Like how the All-Stars emerged, the pair of musicians decided to call up friends that they thought would be a good fit for such an ensemble, which resulted in a similarly unusual instrumentation: flute, clarinet, trumpet, violin, viola, and cello. As Camerieri said in an interview, yMusic doesn't make sense instrument to instrument, but it makes sense person to person. And we're all friends and we all talk about music incessantly, talk about our favorite composers and songwriters, and dream gigs, and how to make it happen. It's really an individual-specific group.

The sextet first rehearsed together in May 2008, and by late 2009 had begun to assemble a repertoire of instrumental works to perform, which culminated with *Beautiful Mechanical*, a released on August 2011 on New Amsterdam Records.

Between 2013 and 2015, I observed yMusic work closely with graduate student composers at Duke University, as part of a

residency program co-sponsored by the school's music department and its performing arts presenter, Duke Performances. The residency setting was a fascinating way to see how the identity of an ensemble is rearticulated—whether reaffirmed or transformed—in a new context. I interviewed the members of the group as well as the composers, administrators, and professors with whom they worked at Duke. A lengthy chapter of my dissertation, which you can read **here**, scrutinizes the logistics of the residency and unpacks how yMusic's identity shifted in the practices of the Duke experience.

Most significantly, I discovered over the course of my research that the identity of yMusic deeply informed the music written for it by the Duke composers. The unusual instrumentation of the ensemble—that it makes sense person to person, not instrument to instrument—offered a challenge to the students: they had to reckon with the presence of the trumpet, a loud and cutting instrument, in the context of a small ensemble. Several Duke composers also directly confronted what they perceived as the typical "sound" of yMusic in their individual pieces.

Composer Sarah Curzi considered how yMusic emphasized collaboration in their own work, and subsequently developed a back-and-forth relationship with the ensemble in rehearsal, such that the performers played a significant role in helping her develop her musical ideas. Duke student Ben Daniels was a huge fan of yMusic's pre-existing repertoire, and was thus excited to write a piece for the musicians that was steeped hocketing techniques because he knew that they could execute these rhythmic devices flawlessly. And composer D. Edward Davis, though less specifically drawn to yMusic's postminimalist repertory—his work is typically concerned with the relationship between environmental sound and silence

–decided to structure the piece that he wrote for the group around a polyrhythmic device that he knew the ensemble could execute because of how he heard it play on *Beautiful Mechanical*. These composers all considered yMusic’s sonic identity—the fact that, in building and recording a circumscribed repertory of works, the ensemble had come to be associated with a specific sound—and accounted for it in their music.

yMusic and Bang on a Can’s All-Stars tell us much about the relationship between alternative ensembles and institutional identity: the origins of such groups continue to shape how they construct their own personalities in the present day, and how other composers—not to mention critics and administrators—approach them. My next project, a book focused on new music in the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s, will similarly consider the question of identity among ensembles and other institutions in this period.

Looking to jump start your creative career or project?

[Download](#) our  
**free ACTION PLAN WORKBOOK!**

# Crafting Your Artistic **ACTION PLAN**

A workbook for musicians, music ensembles, and music projects



Produced by the Paul R. Judy Center for Applied Research  
Eastman School of Music  
Rochester, NY

A photograph of a young woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue sleeveless dress, smiling and holding a violin. She is standing in a modern building with large windows and a staircase railing.

**iml** INSTITUTE FOR MUSIC LEADERSHIP

**Eastman Career and Leadership Certificate: Online**

**Develop**  
professional career and leadership skills that benefit you and your ensemble

**Experience**  
Eastman's interactive and personalized online learning environment

**Join**  
the Eastman community of excellence:  
[EastmanCareerandLeadership.org/cma](http://EastmanCareerandLeadership.org/cma)

 **EASTMAN**  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

# What is a Community Gamelan?

Victoria Lo Mellin

As a student and performer of gamelan for over a decade, I have struggled to succinctly answer this question, especially as it relates to Gamelan Dharma Swara (GDS), the New York-based Balinese music and dance ensemble to which I have belonged for nearly as long.

When I joined GDS in 2007, the idea of a community ensemble was fairly easy to comprehend: in my teens I participated regularly in the community band, performing flute and piccolo at the local park during the summer months. The band was made up of my friends and neighbors, young and old; we played John Philip Sousa, and the vibe was casual. When GDS was founded back in the 80's, it was indeed a community ensemble, and when I became a member some fifteen years later, it had maintained this profile even as it became increasingly renowned for its performance of mainly traditional repertoire.

But in the years since, Gamelan Dharma Swara pursued exceptional opportunities that have consequently fueled new ideas about our potential, artistic and cultural impact, projects, and how we engage with audiences. Most notably, an invitation to perform at the Bali Arts Festival in 2010 validated our ability to bring a new level of discipline and dedication, and achieve

astonishingly high levels of artistic and technical execution in front of discerning Balinese audiences. Then in 2014, we performed at Basilica SoundScape—billed as an “immersive, innovative weekend of art, music and culture”—which prompted us to think more deliberately about the work we do in the context of the larger pop culture landscape, how our audiences experience our performances and interact with our ensemble.

In this light and only recently President of the ensemble, I appreciate more fully the obstacles to simply stating what we are and do as a matter of community, and yearn to engage ourselves in dialogue as to how we contend with them in the course of my leadership and beyond.

The word “community” is a loaded term, and assumes specific connotations in performing arts, some of which fairly reflect the collaborative ethos of GDS, yet fail to illustrate our ensemble's high ambitions. None of our members perform Balinese arts for a living—and admittedly our model does not facilitate this sort of reality either—but gamelan is far from being a hobby for many of us: it is a serious dedication of time and pursuit of artistic expression, discovery, and excellence.

Now more than ever it is leaning in the direction of adopting a “professional”



mentality or approach without it being that in name.

As part of ensemble leadership, I hold responsibility to nurture a passion for learning and performing the Balinese arts among our members, and enable an environment that facilitates such on an ongoing basis. In the days since our ambitions have grown, so, too, have the number of complex organizational topics with which we have had to contend (eg. do any members of a certain skill level or contribution receive compensation and, if so, when?), and so, too, have we realized that circumstances from which we had previously benefited (eg. free rehearsal space, strings attached), were now undermining our goals and overshadowing the joy that membership in the ensemble ought to bring. These challenges and our various responses to them caused the last few years to feel like an extended period of transition without a timeline for relief, and ultimately prompted leadership to embark on this study to find answers.

Over the course of time, however, this study evolved from being a search for solutions into a contemplation on existing along the continuum between the two poles “community” and “professional”, and more importantly, a deep exploration of which issues took precedent. Conducted by members of our ensemble, including those of leadership, this study represents the collaborative dynamic we have always sought to embody together. The relatively simple conclusions to which the study arrives belie the huge investments of time and effort by all of us involved. The research was conducted nearly two years ago, and writing only recently completed ([click here to view the full study report](#)). At the same time, our ensemble has continued to evolve, and as soon as analyses was done, leadership immediately began undertaking steps to address the areas of focus as identified in the study,

and which, in the spirit of an epilogue, I wanted to share:

- **Independence – invest in arrangements that limit external constraints on key activities and ensemble development**

As referenced in the study, GDS had already purchased a new set of instruments in 2015, and at time of the study were still awaiting their arrival, which came to fruition in April 2017

One year in advance of instrument arrival, drew up a tear sheet of our key residency needs (very, very important), and embarked on a search to find rehearsal space via institutional partnerships as well as affordable options; ultimately identified an appropriate space within a Long Island City music school, where we’re paying rent for the first time

- **Clarity in communication – provide clear documentation on operational policies and procedures to ensure alignment on expectations among membership; invite member deliberation and offer transparent guidance on decision-making**

Developed and implemented in Summer 2017 an onboarding process for prospective members where commitment expectations and leadership promises are communicated in advance

Begun project to compile a Member Handbook so that all such expectations and promises are appropriately memorialized

Plan to hold membership forums in the next year to invite dialogue on issues such as member compensation

- **Agility – introduce pedagogical models and programs that streamline learning and empower the ensemble to flex to various circumstances and opportunities**

Plan to introduce a Beginner’s class for new members in Fall 2017 to develop requisite skills and basic knowledge so that rehearsal time is preserved for learning repertoire and ensemble development

- Implementing two complementary teaching methods working in parallel:
  - Engaging Balinese guest artist to lead some rehearsals on developing artistry and ensemble-playing through repertoire
  - Without Balinese guest artist, leading balance of rehearsals that move away from rote-based learning, further focus on building technique, and intellectual understanding through repertoire

These actions notwithstanding, our work is not and never done. Some members will inevitably leave, and new members will eventually join; our circumstances and objectives may accordingly change.

Regardless, I believe the insights set forth in the study are relevant for us and other ensembles at any time, and as a new leader, I am eager to build upon them to re-establish a strong foundation for GDS—community gamelan or not. Indeed over the course of this study, I’ve come to terms

that what matters least is fitting neatly in others’ understanding of “what is”, and that we must cultivate our own definition, while maintaining a healthy perspective that doing so will require a generous capacity for experimentation, patience, and optimism.

As participants or supporters of music- and arts-making, we all share an interest in cultivating, touching, and engaging community—and we are a community unto itself. My hope is then that you will find the study of interest, perhaps come to additional conclusions for GDS, your ensemble, and even ensembles at large.

And should it be so, know that you are among friends who are eager to hear your perspective.

*Share your thoughts with Victoria Lo Mellin of Gamelan Dharma Swara via email at: [victoria@dharmaswara.org](mailto:victoria@dharmaswara.org)*

# Sound Bits

STEVE DANYEW, MANAGING EDITOR

Sound Bits are short, practical posts that are published weekly on the Paul R. Judy Center website. To read more Sound Bits, [click here](#).

## Why Should People Come to Your Concert?

This is a crucial question that I think we all need to ask ourselves when planning and marketing concerts and other live events. Why should people come? What about this event is truly unique, or great, or captivating, or *something*? If we don't have a good answer for that, how can we expect people to come?

Let's look at this another way. Here is a question that I don't think is all that productive: how can classical, jazz, and other similar live music events compete with Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Video, etc? I don't think live events *can* compete with the convenience of those services, nor do I think they should. Our hyper-digital world and live concerts *can* co-exist, but perhaps we need to think harder about how to make our live concert experiences incredibly welcoming and exceptionally captivating. The key word is: experience. People will come for the *experience* that is created. Sure, people will come for different reasons, but I think they will come *back* if there is something about the overall experience that excites them, moves them, captivates them, makes them feel special. So ask yourself again, why should people come to your concert?

## Every Day is Interview Day

At least for freelancers, this is essentially true. When your "employers" are a wide range of contractors, venues, presenters, universities, and other organizations that hire musicians, it is important to be making a good impression on everyone you interact with in a professional setting. Academics talk about the interview process for a professorship – how they arrive at the airport and they are really "interviewing" from the moment they step off that plane until the moment they get back on to return home. In a lot of ways, the same is true for freelance musicians. You must always be at your best, always acting professional and courteous. Be yourself and be genuine, but also be aware that the music world is very small, and therefore you want all individuals and groups that you meet, work with, etc., to have a great impression of you and your work. How you work with others, how you act in professional and social settings, how you treat people, and of course the quality of your work – these are the things that will "sell" your work going forward. And yes, sales is part of your job.

## Is Your Resume up to Date? Here are Three Tips to Spruce it Up

How often do you update your resume (or CV)? Just when you need to submit it for something and then you wish you had been keeping up with it more regularly? Ah, yes. Alas, we often have more pressing things to do with our time than keep these documents ultra fresh. But, you may want to consider setting some kind of schedule that you are comfortable with – maybe once a quarter, once a month, whatever works for you. Add a note on your calendar and then just spend a few minutes updating your documents. When you update, here are three tips to help you spruce up your resume or CV:

- 1 Remove excess words:** Let's be honest – many times your resume is going to get read over *very* quickly during the first round of a job search, summer program application, scholarship application, etc. So it is important that you use as few words as possible to communicate your skills and experience. In your bullet points that describe your experience, make sure they are brief (no more than a single line) and start with action verbs like managed, led, coordinated, prepared, documented. For a great list of action verbs, see the Institute for Music Leadership Resume and CV Handbooks [here](#).
- 2 Keep it clean:** #1 above will help with this. But you also want to make sure you are happy with your formatting, font choice, spacing, etc. You want a balance between text and white space so that the reader's eye is not overwhelmed. As you add new positions, awards, and education to your document, make sure to recheck the formatting to make sure everything is still well balanced, clean, and clear.
- 3 Master resume vs. tailored resume:** Have a master resume which contains all of your experience, positions, and all the various sections of your resume. This is the one you update. Then, when you need to submit a resume for an opportunity, create a copy of your master resume and tailor that new file to fit the particular application. For example, you might reorder the sections of your resume so that the first sections in your document are most relevant to the opportunity. If you are applying for a teaching position and your first page and half is all about performance, that's not a well-tailored resume.

If you are looking for more on this topic, the **resume and CV handbooks** mentioned earlier are great resources. Enjoy!



# Contributors

WILLIAM ROBIN, PhD

William Robin is an assistant professor of musicology at the University of Maryland. He completed his PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a dissertation focused on indie classical and new music in the twenty-first century United States. His research interests include American new music since the 1980s and early American hymnody. As a public musicologist, Robin contributes to the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, and received an ASCAP Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award in 2014 for the *NewMusicBox* article “Shape Notes, Billings, and American Modernisms.”

JAMES C. DOSER

Jim Doser is an educator, administrator, musician, and entrepreneur. As the Director of the Institute for Music Leadership at the Eastman School of Music, he administers the Arts Leadership Program, The Center for Music Innovation and Engagement, The Paul R. Judy Center for Applied Research, the Career and Professional Development Office, and is Editor-in-Chief of *The Eastman Case Studies*. Recent projects include the launch of the *Eastman Career and Leadership Certificate: Online*, *IML Grant and Mentorship Program*, the *Eastman Leadership Conference*, and the development of the *Master of Arts in Music Leadership* degree program. Doser teaches classes in Entrepreneurial Thinking, Career Skills, and Leadership Issues in Music and has presented recently at the Network for Music Career Development Officers (Colburn School, LA), The College Music Society Summit (University of South Carolina), and the Curtis Institute of Music (Philadelphia). For twenty years he was co-owner of *Tritone Music, Inc.*, a company specializing in jazz instruction for adults. Doser received a BM (MUE) and MM (Jazz), and the Performer’s Certificate from Eastman, and is recipient of the *Smithsonian Award in Education* for his work on the Smithsonian’s exhibit, *The Jazz Age in Paris*.

VICTORIA (TORI) LO MELLIN

Tori has been a student and performer of gamelan for over a decade, and a member of Gamelan Dharma Swara for nearly as long. She has been always fascinated by all things paradoxical in nature--and following a happenstance discovery of gamelan in college, quickly fell in love with its divergent ideas of mechanical precision and emotive flexibility propelling this ancient tradition forward.

While pursuing her Bachelor’s in Mathematics and Music at Wellesley, Tori joined Boston’s Gamelan Galak Tika, led by composer and Bang on a Can All Stars co-founder Evan Ziporyn. Tori became a member of Dharma Swara in 2007 and participated in the ensemble’s distinguished Bali tour in 2010. In addition to performing as both a musician

and dancer, she has held various executive positions in the organization since 2009, now serving as President and director to the music ensemble.

Tori obtained her MBA from Leonard N. Stern School of Business at NYU in 2014 and currently works in fragrance development, helping to create things that are as ephemeral as they are enduring.



INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.  
Issue 2

March 1, 2018

Institute for Music Leadership  
Eastman School of Music  
26 Gibbs Street  
Rochester, NY 14604