

INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD.

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



New Music Theater, New Music Ensembles

Also featuring:

- > *Arts in the Loop: A Creative Community Revitalizing Downtown Rochester*
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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Revitalization.

When the South Dakota Symphony seeks to “hear what’s in the minds of young people today to refresh our music and continue its evolution”.....

When researcher Ryan Ebright investigates “the confluence of contemporary music ensembles and music theater” as a strategy of “a collective effort to revitalize the genre (opera).....

When the City of Rochester (NY) embarks on a mission, vision and initiative to leverage the arts “to collect input from marginalized communities, connect people and sectors of diverse characteristics, and drive economies to new heights”....

.....then an important and driving force of music is front and center. We create, we adapt, we evolve, we connect, we REVITALIZE ourselves, our art, our organizations, our communities.

Innovation leads to revitalization. Music leads the way.

Enjoy.

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



The editors of the INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD. Magazine encourage and welcome your submissions of original content for publication. Below are guidelines for submission:

1. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis. You may submit a proposed topic, or a completed work. The I.M.L. magazine is published twice per year, in March and August.
2. Submissions will be considered from all individuals studying or working in the music field. This includes undergraduate and graduate students, college and university faculty, and professionals.
3. The editors are interested in a variety of content, both in terms of writing style and length: research papers (under 5,000 words preferred), how-to and practical experience articles (under 2,500 words preferred) informative short pieces (under 1,000 words) and book reviews (under 1,500 words preferred), graphics and illustrations are all welcome. The editors are also open to additional content ideas, so please contact us at prjc@esm.rochester.edu if you have another idea.
4. Submissions should relate to the main themes of the magazine: innovation, leadership, and careers in music. These themes are broad and allow plenty of room for a variety of topics and perspectives. Research topics that would be appropriate include but are not limited to: a) new and innovative models of organizational structure, b) studies of ensembles / other musical organizations and their methods of organization, marketing, performance, etc., c) studies of orchestras, jazz ensembles, and smaller ensembles and their models for audience engagement, structure, personnel, management, etc. Appropriate topics for how-to and practical experience articles include career-building tips and advice, creativity, and profiles of innovative initiatives, projects, and musicians.
5. **For more information, and to submit your work, please email prjc@esm.rochester.edu.** Submissions should be sent as Microsoft word files. All citation methods are accepted. Submission of your work does not guarantee publication. Your work will be reviewed by the magazine editors, and you will be notified whether your work has been accepted for publication, accepted with changes requested, or not accepted for publication at that time.

Thank you for your interest in the INNOVATE. MUSIC. LEAD. Magazine, and we hope that you will consider submitting your original content or an idea for an original article. Thank you!

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**EASTMAN
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New Music Theater, New Music Ensembles

Ryan Ebright, Ph.D.

In a darkened auditorium, I sit along with forty-three other audience members on a warmly lit stage inside a square of sheer curtains. Just a foot away, a percussionist crouches on an elevated platform, spinning a cymbal with his hand as he looks into my eyes. The friction of bronze against felt emits a gentle *whoosh* that accompanies his litany of nearly inaudible words. Elsewhere in the enclosed space—behind and to the left of me—a clarinetist, flutist, and cellist are coaxing similarly soft sounds from their instruments, and somewhere in the auditorium, beyond the curtains, I hear a soprano humming.

This is opera in the twenty-first century. Or rather, this is composer David Lang's *the whisper opera*, a piece created in 2013 in collaboration with director Jim Findlay and the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). It is one of many examples of a growing trend in the

new millennium: the confluence of contemporary music ensembles and music theater. Groups like ICE, Alarm Will Sound (AWS), NOW Ensemble, eighth blackbird, and even the JACK Quartet are increasingly taking on operatic, theatrical, and multimedia projects. This convergence has led both to new forms of music theater and to an important facet of these ensembles' identities, one which sets them apart from mid-to-late twentieth-century ensembles such as the Group for Contemporary Music and Contemporary Chamber Ensemble (on other key differences, see Robin 2018). New music ensembles have now become catalyzing agents in the creation of new, often unorthodox, opera.

The story of American opera in the past forty years is a remarkable one, as composers, artists, and institutions in the United States took part in a collective effort to revitalize the genre. At the same time, this renaissance revealed competing

visions of what “American opera” is or might be. Whereas some institutions and artists embraced the traditions and models of grand opera and made their works American by virtue of the stories they told (think *Moby-Dick*, *Little Women*, and operas about Richard Nixon, Harvey Milk, and Frank Lloyd Wright), others leaned into the experimentation of avant-garde playwrights, artists, directors, and composers. But in the past fifteen years or so, American composers working within the realms of opera and theater have increasingly opted to forego conventional approaches to orchestration.

Instead, composers have begun scoring chamber theater works for specific ensembles. As a result, new music ensembles are supporting an ever-larger share of operatic innovation. In addition, instrumentalists now sometimes find themselves occupying explicitly theatrical roles, placed in full view of the audience—rather than hidden from sight—to foreground their musical *and* dramatic contributions. As part of my broader, ongoing research into contemporary American opera (see, for instance, Ebright 2017), I want to know what the ramifications of this shift are for ensembles, composers, audiences, and institutions, as well as for the genre of opera itself. I also aim to discover why ensembles are undertaking these more theatrically-oriented pieces. To that end, in 2018 I conducted interviews with several ICE, AWS, and NOW musicians and artists. What follows are sketches of some

preliminary whats and whys of music theater in these three ensembles.

The substantial growth of operatic or theatrical works in new music ensembles’ repertoire is obvious from a glance at ICE’s recent seasons. Percussionist Ross Karre, a current co-artistic director for the group, estimates that somewhere between 30 and 50 percent of the concerts ICE performed in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons involved either staged works (what critics might readily recognize as operas) or pieces that entailed some sort of additional performative element, whether that be video, sound design, lighting, or movement. In 2017, ICE participated in 13 different operas; during the previous season, 12. These projects—which vary considerably in terms of length, ensemble requirements, and scope of production—included Ashley Fure’s opera-for-objects *The Force of Things*, Pauline Oliveros’s posthumously completed *The Nubian Word for Flowers*, Mikael Karlsson’s *The Echo Drift*, Hans Zender’s version of *Winterreise*, and Suzanne Farrin’s *Dolce la Morte*.

Although the prevalence of what might loosely be labeled “theatrical” works in ICE’s repertoire has grown in recent years, it was part of the group’s identity from its inception. Clarinetist Joshua Rubin, who has served as ICE’s program director (2011-14) and co-artistic director (2014-18), said that from the beginning, “we all thought about presenting music in a way that had some elements of audience engagement and theater mechanics,

whether it's using electronics or lights or even the way that we were staging our concerts." From their first performances at the Three Arts Club in Chicago, Rubin said, "it was a very conscious mission to create these kinds of theatrical experiences with our concerts in whatever way we could."

In addition to re-imagining how they presented contemporary music, a phenomenon that John Phippen has explored through an ethnographic study of eighth blackbird (Phippen 2014), ICE early on pursued explicitly theatrical works through their commissions of Huang Ruo and Du Yun as well as their new productions of older pieces such as Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (see Cesare 2006). ICE's commitment to an expansive vision of the concert experience, as well as music theater, is built into ensemble's makeup: its current roster includes a lighting designer and sound designer, as well as three vocalists.

Lang's *the whisper opera* gives a good sense of the collaborative ethos—what Karre described as a "flattened hierarchy"—that drives many of ICE's music theater projects. In contrast to pieces such as *Echo Drift*, Kaija Saariaho's *La Passione de Simone*, and Louis Andriessen's *De Materie*, for which ICE essentially served as a pit orchestra, *the whisper opera* grew out of a shared interest between Lang and ICE members in creating a new piece for Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art after workshopping the composer's *anatomy theater* in 2006. At the start of a residency at Mount Tremper Arts in New

York in 2012, ICE musicians worked first with the director, Jim Findlay. "We came up with some audience-performer relationships that would push against convention in a major way," Karre said, "proximity being the main thing." Alice Teysier, the ICE soprano and flutist who began performing in *the whisper opera* in 2018, called it "one of the most physical theater pieces I've ever done," largely owing to the direct engagement performers must create with audience members. Once Lang arrived at Mount Tremper, he, Findlay, and the five ICE musicians experimented and played around with different musical and theatrical ideas. "By the end of this three-day residency we could run with piece, which was really interesting," Karre reflected. "We didn't have all the notation done, so we sort of memorized the games that David had invented. But then after that, we codified those games into slightly more notated systems."

Like ICE, Alarm Will Sound was founded with an interest in pursuing a more theatricalized approach to performance. Nigel Maister, AWS's staging director, has been involved with the group since before its inception. As director of the University of Rochester's theater program, Maister collaborated in March 2001 with the Eastman School of Music's student-run new music ensemble Ossia (whose members would go on to help form AWS) on a production of John Cage's *Song Books*, a series of text-based pieces that blur the lines between theater and music.

On the basis of those performances, AWS conductor Alan Pierson invited Maister to join the nascent group and lend their work what Maister described as a “heightened performative element.”

“It’s not about theater, and it’s not about acting,” Maister explained. “It’s about exploring how the visual and gestural component of music can be expressed in a way that makes the concert-going experience more exciting and more vivid and more evocative.” This could mean, for instance, playing the music of Aphex Twin while lying on the floor or staging musicians in a way that helps audiences visualize György Ligeti’s complex polyrhythms.

Maister’s work within AWS has led to concert programs such as “1969” and “Odd Couples,” both of which offer a sort of theatrical, semi-narrative framework for the presentation of contemporary music. “One of the things that Alarm Will Sound has been interested in from the beginning is creating performances that feel like experiences instead of concerts,” Pierson said. “The starting point isn’t the music we want to play as much as the story we want to tell.” More recently, AWS experimented with a format they described as a “live podcast” with their 2017 album *Splitting Adams* and their 2018 Carnegie Hall concert devoted to the music of Ligeti, “This Music Should Not Exist” (see Ebright 2018). AWS also has worked on operas like Steve Reich’s *The Cave* and Donnacha Dennehy’s *The Hunger*, as well as concert pieces that make extra-musical demands,

such as John Luther Adams’s luminescent *10,000 Birds*.

In contrast to AWS and ICE, the five-member NOW Ensemble typically presents its chamber music in more conventional concert formats. But it has nevertheless involved itself in both opera and dance projects; as part of an ensemble residency in San Diego in the spring of 2018, NOW found itself onstage with the John Malashock Dance Company, woven into the visual tableau as they performed music. Perhaps its most significant effort in music theater, though, was Missy Mazzoli’s first opera, *Song from the Uproar*. As a result of their support of Mazzoli’s music in the early 2000s, Mazzoli composed the opera with NOW in mind. Mazzoli and NOW pianist Michael Mizrahi both noted that this benefited the composer as well as the ensemble: NOW performed excerpts of the music on tours for several years, and Mazzoli was able to workshop and develop the piece musically over a long period of time with an ensemble that specialized in her musical language.

Beyond the benefit of having a more expansive repertoire, music theater allows new music ensembles to tap into the current demand among presenters for opera and opera-adjacent performance, which in itself may stem from a shared desire among artists and audiences to tell (or to experience) stories in a more direct and explicit manner than abstract music is typically capable of. This trend may also reflect a broad cultural shift among composers and performers toward a way of

working that embraces music's corporeal elements, what composer Jennifer Walshe called "The New Discipline" in 2016: "Maybe what is at stake is the idea that all music is music theatre. Perhaps we are finally willing to accept that the bodies playing the music are part of the music, that they're present, they're valid and they inform our listening whether subconsciously or consciously. That it's not too late for us to have bodies" (Walshe 2016).

But theatricality and experimentative collaboration, even more so than music, take time and often money, which are resources that few if any ensembles have in abundance. It's hard enough to play Edgard Varèse's fiercely modernist *Intégral*; memorizing it in order to bring out its latent physicality only adds a further layer of difficulty (and, therefore, time and money).

What does all this mean for opera? The most obvious answer is that new music ensembles' forays into the genre mark the continued expansion of the very concept of opera. Rubin reflected that as ICE imagined new ways of presenting music in the early 2000s, "we were liable to think about everything we did as being opera." In contrast to composers and artists in the 1970s and 1980s who adopted the term "music theater" as a way of distinguishing their work from opera (see, for example, Salzman and Desi 2008), composers and performers today embrace the latter term.

This expansion of the term does not stretch it to the point of meaninglessness, however. Instead, it creates a meaningful link between new music and the classical tradition—a useful strategy for ensembles and artists whose music at times might seem far removed from the canon. Lang, whose recent theatrical works include *the mile long opera* and a contemporary reworking of Beethoven's *Fidelio* for the concert hall, addressed this issue directly: "I think that everything I do is in dialogue with [the opera] tradition...I made this conscious decision after [my grand opera, *modern painters*, in 1995] that I was going to try to figure out all the places that opera could go that wouldn't be in a traditional opera house."

It is also a strategy designed to rehabilitate opera, to preserve its most cherished elements—music, drama, the chance to identify with a character's emotional life—while stripping it of any exclusionary, elite associations that might distance audiences. This aesthetic animates Lang's *the whisper opera*. What, after all, could be more intimate than a whisper?

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Arts In The Loop: A Creative Community Revitalizing Downtown Rochester

BLAIRE KOERNER, D.M.A.

A City on the Verge of Success

Rochester is defined by the historical, present and future intersection of the arts with the technology and the creative sectors. George Eastman – founder of Eastman Kodak and the Eastman School of Music – brought photography within reach of the public, produced the gold standard for movie film (still Quentin Tarantino’s preferred media), built the Eastman Theater where silent films were presented to the community with live music, where now Eastman School’s Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media prepares composers for today’s film and

game industries. Inscribed on the façade of the Eastman Theatre is the inscription “for the enrichment of community life.” George Eastman’s vision included the arts as a great connector and driving force of the city – a through-line is undeniably present in Rochester’s creative arts, technology, innovation and educational sectors today.

Yet, like many mid-sized U.S cities, Rochester has had a roller-coaster of economic highs and lows over the past few decades. The 2008 market crash hit the city hard, losing 17,000 jobs over the next two years. This greatly impacted the downtown economic growth, which has

been relatively stagnant since 2012. In turn, certain parts of downtown became vacated, Main Street becoming peppered with “For Lease” signs.

However, in the past few years there has been significant shifts in the downtown atmosphere, showing that Rochester is revving to push past its recent history and into a better future. The number of downtown residents has gone from 3,239 people in 2000 to 7,250 in 2018, as it's now one of the cities where millennials are coming to live. Between 2016 to 2019, the amount of innovate and creative class businesses downtown has increased from 108 to 180. Rochester placed in the top 25 innovative American cities in 2018, due to the amount of patent registration and advanced degrees. Four new technological and business incubators have been created in center city – RIT's Center for Urban Entrepreneurship, NextCorps, Luminare NY, and ROC Game Dev – with more collaborative spaces in the works. Not to mention, in 2018 the state of New York awarded Rochester with \$50 million for a downtown renovation project – ROC the Riverway.

The Creative Sector

Despite the bumpy ride, the overall arts & culture sector has also remained strong – continuing to be a foundational pillar for the city. An average of 4.5 million people attended arts and cultural events in 2008, a number that dropped to 3.5 million in 2011, but rapidly returned just two years later. In

2018, Rochester placed #17 in all of the U.S. for the NCAR Arts Vibrancy Index, above Pittsburgh and Austin. The Rochester Institute for Technology is at the top in the country for video game design programs – placing 2nd for undergraduate and 4th for graduate. The Strong Museum of Play, which has the only historic video gaming exhibit in the U.S., was USA's #3 for Best Family Museums. And the 2019 CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival, located downtown, brought in 208,000 in attendance with \$180 million impact.

Seeing the downtown push for growth, and considering the history of Rochesterians developing and supporting the arts, many creative individuals started asking: Isn't it time that the creative sector gave back? Can't artists provide imaginative solutions, unique ideas, and overarching themes that will embrace and assist the community and the city as it pushes to move forward? With a multitude of burning questions, and a city packed full of artistic assets, members of the Rochester creative community came together to discuss how we could assist. Our solution was to develop an initiative to energize Rochester's center city by leveraging the dense, but underutilized, Arts, Entertainment and Media sectors.

Stirred by this discussion, Eastman School's Institute for Music Leadership (IML) temporarily took the reins to bring together leaders who were passionate about Rochester. Together, we are focusing on making Main Street and the

surrounding areas a vibrant connector between the exceptional arts, civic, business, entertainment, and technology resources in downtown. Acknowledging existing assets and pertinent city and regional plans, we strive to be a creative thread that will help activate the Center City area and be a catalyst for economic improvement.

Rochester's Arts In The Loop Initiative

The initiative, termed *Arts In The Loop*, kicked off in 2017 by reviewing aspects of creative & cultural revitalizations in numerous U.S. cities. After deliberation, we narrowed the focus to 5 specific areas that have had (or are currently having) success creating a vibrant environment utilizing the arts – Brooklyn, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Nashville, and Grand Rapids. Combining document reviews with in-person visits and interviews, we learned a great deal about the steps, processes, and recommendations for building an initiative such as this. The five key findings and strategies from this assessment include: 1) leveraging a city's unique identity; 2) having areas for creatives to cluster and work together; 3) designing for diverse cultural appeal; 4) empowering effective partnerships across sectors; and 5) ensuring entrepreneurship training and affordable housing for artists. We eventually culminated all of this information into a 120-page document, *Arts In The Loop Five Cities Report*.

Using the knowledge we gained from this exploration, we actively promoted the *Arts In The Loop* concept to stakeholders in the Rochester community, forming a 20-member Executive Committee in fall of 2018. The committee, comprised of developers, artists, community group members, businesses, government officials, higher education institutions, and economic development personnel, was tasked with surveying the community, crafting a vision, articulating outcomes, and recommending next steps.

As the Executive Committee members explored potential outcomes and next steps, using data collected from the 2019 public survey, it became apparent that Rochester was not only very supportive of this revitalization concept, but they wanted to be actively involved. Realizing how important it would be to have community input and ownership of the project, we decided to pull together a public symposium in the summer of 2019.

Bringing in the Experts

The focus of symposium was not only to talk about the *Arts In the Loop* effort, but to bring in creative industry leaders to discuss the ins and outs of delving into such a project. These experts had successfully developed creative plans, worked with city governments, established artist work/live spaces, connected across different industry sectors, and increased the vitality of the creative economy in their own cities. Together, they could discuss

how to leverage community and creative assets to revitalize cities and answer concerns that both the Executive Committee and local Rochesterians may have. The panelists included:

•**Gülgün Kayim** – Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, City of Minneapolis

•**Jill McMillan** – Executive Director, Arts & Business Council of Nashville

•**David Pankratz** – Research & Policy Director, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

•**Audrey Russo** – President & CEO of Pittsburgh Technology Council

•**Jun-Li Wang** – Community Development Program Director, Springboard for the Arts, Minneapolis/St. Paul

For two full days, the symposium included facilitated panel discussions, Q&A sessions, presentations, and working luncheons. The sessions highlighted a variety of crucial topics and concepts revolving around the creative economy and community impact. Overall, the four main areas of focus were: 1) placemaking and why design is key to success for activating communities; 2) the best practices of effective arts councils; 3) economic development through and with the arts; and 4) what this means specifically for Rochester's arts/entertainment/media and technology sectors.

Questions and concerns about a Rochester revitalization effort were voiced by the

public, bringing up topics such as gentrification, funding, and accessibility/ input from a diverse representation. The panelists acknowledged they had similar concerns during their efforts and provided tips and suggestions on ways to approach such issues. From the large public sessions down to the smaller working groups, the panelists eagerly detailed their successes and failures of their experiences, providing vital thoughts on processes and advice. The conversations were insightful, challenging, and truly demonstrated that no two cities or revitalizations efforts are alike. Yet, despite the differences between their organizational structures, goals, resources, and city history, similar themes arose. The Executive Committee walked away with five themes to consider as they continued to develop their outcomes:

•**Artists & the Economy** – Artists and art organizations play a crucial role in a city economy - the gig economy (1099's and individual contractors) is one of the most impactful areas of socioeconomic activity in the US. Since artists are essentially small businesses, they need the same resources as start-up companies (investments, entrepreneurial training, space, services, etc.) To acutely tap into the creative economy and provide the correct support, a city must assess and index its current assets and needs. With that information, a Creative Sector Plan should then be developed to guide future arts and culture endeavors.

•**Collaboration** – For a revitalization effort, building relationships between a variety of stakeholders across economic sectors is essential. From city government and universities to developers and large corporations to small businesses and individuals, all provide unique insights, resources, and contributions. Breaking down barriers and actively collaborating and communicating may not be a simple process, but it contributes to the long-term success and sustainability of an initiative.

•**Placemaking** – Directing a revitalization effort towards placemaking is fundamental to making a public space thrive. Placemaking is developed from the bottom up, using assets, artists, and inspiration from the local area to connect a space to the locals. The focus is not simply to “fix” spaces, but to animate people *into* a space, making it feel like a natural extension of the community. Artists and creative folk are perfect for making a space more engaging and helping to connect on a grassroots level.

•**Community Engagement & Inclusion** – When developing an effort or initiative, actively pursuing input from the community and offering organic engagement activities helps to honor individual voices and develop ownership. Providing a variety of opportunities where locals can be

heard and take part enables a revitalization to reach more people and become more inclusive. A diverse population that reflects the community must be represented at every stage, and level, of the initiative.

•**Funding Streams** – When funding an Arts Council, or other Public Art endeavors, it’s crucial to create sustainable revenue streams. All cities mentioned some form of income through city or state tax. In addition, Arts Councils cannot rely on just one source of revenue, but must have a variety (sponsorship, membership, partnerships, grants, etc.) to provide appropriate balance.

Overall, the event was a fantastic learning opportunity for the *Arts In The Loop* initiative members and the public. It also was a catalyst for receiving further interest and buy-in from the local community, with over 100 Rochester stakeholders attending each session.

Moving Forward

The experience and knowledge gained from the Symposium has greatly assisted us in the development of our goals and next steps. With these now outlined, the *Arts In The Loop* can move forward to the next phase with clear objectives. Starting in September, 2019, we will actively launch strategic tactics such as, intentionally developing a more diverse and inclusive Executive Committee, collaborating with

the City of Rochester to develop a downtown management entity, discussing plans for a new Arts Council funding model, and hiring a panelist to consult on developing a Rochester Creative Sector Plan as an extension of city's new 2034 *Comprehensive Plan*.

However, to kick us off, our first focus will be to gather more public input through community engagement efforts. Rather than simply hosting open house meetings and survey's, we aim to employ an interesting, and quite appropriate, idea that other cities have used – Artist Engagement Teams. These teams, consisting of local artists representing numerous artistic types, will be employed to develop and initiative over 30 brief events in the community. Designed to be engaging, creative, and collaborative, these activities are meant to attract and connect with a more diverse group of locals and solicit their feedback. By connecting with neighborhoods on a personal level, our artists can build connections with and truly learn from the unique Rochester population.

The arts, artists, arts organizations, and creative sector industries of all types have the ability to inspire, but also the power to collect input from marginalized communities, connect people and sectors of diverse characteristics, and drive economies to new heights. The arts can lead our cities – including Rochester – to

reach and surpass their potential, bringing George Eastman's vision full circle.

South Dakota Symphony Hosts Youth Composition Academies

ELLEN HOYNE

“The world of Symphonic Classical Music needs new voices, we need to hear what’s in the minds of young people today to refresh our music and continue its evolution... This has been a great opportunity to reach into the minds of young Lakota students to find out what kind of music they imagine, what’s important to them, what’s going on in their minds and in their lives.” – Ted Wiprud, Composer-in-Residence

The South Dakota Symphony Orchestra (SDSO) and Composer-in-Residence Ted Wiprud hosted 18 participants in two Music Composition Academies as a part of the SDSO’s Lakota Music Project. The academies engaged students in creative expression through music with daily music composition lessons and activities

emphasizing cultural understanding and finding human commonalities. Each student worked to compose a piece for either string quartet or woodwind quintet.

Participants of the Music Composition Academies were a mix of high school students and adults working under the mentorship of Wiprud and his colleagues to refine their composing skills and learn to orchestrate for chamber ensembles. Many of these students are first time composers. After working one-on-one with Wiprud and the professional musicians of the Dakota Wind Quintet and the Dakota String Quartet, each participant finished the program with a completed musical composition to be played in their community and school.

“We definitely saw kids this summer progress in just five days from being very inner, avoiding eye contact, not participating in group events to actually writing the most beautiful pieces because they have the most urgency...By the end of that time they are confidently rehearsing with musicians, telling the musicians exactly how their piece has to be, they are confidently talking to audiences expressing what they feel comfortable expressing about what their piece means to them. It’s an impact unlike any I have seen in music education.” – Ted Wiprud, Composer-in-Residence

Baylie HerManyHorses created a piece titled “Human Error: A Story of Corruption” in which she clues into elements of her Native heritage and also her understanding of life. Baylie’s piece begins with the creation of life and then as the piece progresses different elements corrupt the beauty and innocence of life. She explains that the clarinet represents humans and the damage they can cause. Baylie said, “I wanted to make something beautiful and eerie because I think that’s just how life is, it can be really pretty and it can be really bad and scary so I wanted to make something to represent that.” To listen to Baylie’s piece and the other pieces from the SDSO’s West River Music Composition Academies [click here](#).

The Lakota Music Project is a long-term collaborative program in partnership

between the SDSO and the Native American Community in South Dakota. It seeks to build tangible bridges between White and Native communities by finding points of common interest and experience. At every turn, this project strives to bring White and Native communities together through shared experience in music.

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](#).

The Necessity of Risk

You know how certain moments in time just stick with you? You remember every detail? One of those moments for me is when my grandfather explained risk and reward. In his usual calm demeanor, he explained that risk was a necessity if I was going to win or succeed at something.

When you stop and think about it, it's true. If you don't believe me, just go read all the thousands of articles out there about the importance of risk in business, entrepreneurship, and oh...life.

Sometimes we take a risk and it doesn't work out the way we wanted or thought it would. Sometimes we call that failure, but failure is also a necessary part of growing and succeeding. As musicians, we don't want to hear that. We expect perfection from ourselves and our work, but that is simply not how things work. Everything truly great comes with some amount of risk (and often failure along the way).

If there is something you are hoping to do, but you are intimidated by the risk involved, here is my advice: Don't wait for the right time. Don't wait for it to get easier. Don't wait for someone to give you permission. Start now, in whatever small, simple way you can. Start now, lean into that risk and go get it.

The Importance of Storytelling for Musicians

Do you think of yourself as a good storyteller? Or maybe you know someone who you consider a good storyteller. What makes them (or you) good at it?

I think sometimes we don't even realize how often we are engaged in storytelling. For example: Pre-concert talks? Teaching? Writing an article about music? Program notes? Being interviewed by radio/tv/blogs? Talking to a donor about the importance of your

organization's/your project's work? In all of these scenarios (and more) we are likely using our storytelling skills. But how well are we doing?

Storytelling is a great skill, because people are moved and captivated by a good story. We all know how powerful a great storyteller can be – you've surely experienced this in a teacher, a speaker, a film, or somewhere else. We don't all need to be amazing storytellers, but all musicians can practice including story as part of our work, which will only enhance our connections with our audiences, fans, communities, and students.

There are numerous courses, articles and guides out there on this topic that you might explore if you want to dig deep into this topic. One short article we really like is **this article** from Fast Company that explains 5 bad habits that we should break if we want to be a better storyteller.

What is Content Marketing and How Can it Help Us?

Content marketing is, in a nutshell, developing free educational content (like a blog, article, video) that helps consumers, without any ask or sell involved. It's just free, high quality content – plain and simple.

It's a different method of marketing from direct asks ("Check out our awesome product, and buy it here!") or more overt sales ("Here are some tips for keeping your computer running fast, and we won't say it directly, but we do offer a service to tune up your computer so that you don't have to worry about it!"). Content marketing is intended to build a connection and trust with the consumer. They learn something from your free content, and they have a strong impression of your brand. Then maybe they check out your website and see what you offer, and perhaps become a customer.

How can this help us? Well as Aubrey Bergauer, Executive Director of the California Symphony points out in **this excellent article**, musicians have a lot of stories to tell about our composers, their works, performers, historic venues, and more. Offering educational content that draws people into our work can be a great way to build a relationship with a new listener, audience member, or even supporter.

Read more about content marketing in **Aubrey's article**, and consider ways that you might be able to use this strategy in your work or in your organization's work.

Contributors

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