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Symphony Orchestra Organizations: Development of the Literature Since 1960

by

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EDITOR'S DIGEST

Symphony Orchestra Organizations: Development of the Literature Since 1960

At the publisher's request, this essay's author waded "hip-deep in the card catalog" through existing writings about symphony orchestra organizations. Following months of research, she extricated herself and set a demarcation line of the 1960s, which she describes as the "Big Bang" in the arts world. She argues that it was at this time that arts organizations grew larger and more complex, inviting examination and analysis.

Practitioners and Academics

The essay first guides the reader through orchestra case studies, industry analyses, and trade journal articles. We learn that practitioners and observers have often expressed their thoughts about the world of the symphony orchestra and its participants.

The literature review then progresses from the work of practitioners to that of academics. In a discipline-by-discipline summary, we discover that symphony orchestra organizations are the focus of many academic lenses: economics, nonprofit management, organizational behavior, human resource management, political science and public policy, sociology, and social psychology. The author explains not only what has been written, but also why the cited references merit our attention.

A Personal Moment

As a final thought, author Erin Lehman explains the research with which she has been involved since 1989, and outlines some of the conclusions reached by the Harvard University cross-national study of "Leadership and Mobility in Symphony Orchestras," for which she was the lead field researcher in the United States and the United Kingdom.

What follows gives scholars and practitioners a common platform from which to view the dynamics of current and future symphony orchestra organizations. Whether or not readers elect to ferret out each reference, they will share an understanding of the writings and research which have preceded the Institute's current undertakings.

Symphony Orchestra Organizations: Development of the Literature Since 1960

At base, symphony orchestras are as much about people as they are about music. As *cultural institutions*, symphony orchestras preserve and promote the musical heritage of past, present, and future composers. As *performing arts organizations*, symphony orchestras' *raison d'être* is to perform for live audiences. As *social enterprises*, orchestra organizations depend on the people who work in them and who support them.

Precisely because they fall into so many categories of definition, symphony orchestra organizations are discussed in the literature of a wide range of disciplines. As complex organizations in the performing arts, orchestras have become a focus of interest; they have been analyzed through the lenses of economists, public policy analysts, sociologists, psychologists, and nonprofit management experts, as well as musicologists.

A look across the years and across various disciplines reveals a variegated pattern of writings on the symphony orchestra organization, with particular growth in the literature since 1960. In this essay, I describe that pattern in order to bring the reader up to date on the state of research as of 1995. In so doing, I hope to shed light on what remains to be explored in this field of inquiry.

1960 to the Present

Indeed, in my preliminary search for information—studies, books, articles, and/or musings about these unique cultural institutions—I discovered a great deal. With literally centuries' worth of history and criticism, it comes as no surprise that there are volumes on musicological topics—composers, repertoire, conductors, the social evolution of the orchestra. By contrast, however, much less has been written on the organizational dynamics of such workplaces. In a sort of informal hierarchy, one finds a plethora of writings on the history of music and musical organizations; followed by an enormous literature on philanthropy in and funding of the arts (including debate about public policy, the corporation as art patron, and audience development); a newer and growing interest in the literature of nonprofit management; and lastly, the sociological exploration into the symphony orchestra as organization.¹

If we look at the literature another way, its growth can be seen as a function of the leadership and resources guiding the arts in general in America. As such, the literature's developmental vortex was the 1950s, when the public debate about legitimizing the arts through national recognition and funding began. Before that, of course, two very important institutions had already been established: the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), dating back to 1896, and the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL), founded in 1945. I have chosen 1960 as this survey's demarcation line, however, because in my view the years from 1960 forward were pivotal; they forged a "Big Bang" in the arts world—and, thus, in the literature as well. In addition to the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, the Rockefeller Foundation released its assessment, *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects* (1965). The following year, the Ford Foundation announced its grant program "to help symphony orchestras build large endowments in order to thrive," based on its report about the challenges facing these organizations. Also noteworthy at this time was the release of William Baumol and William Bowen's seminal work, *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma* (1967), which suggested that endowment investment income would never be enough to satisfy the rampant inflationary costs in the performing arts—thereby exposing the ultimate challenge to the American symphony orchestra as an institution.

These critical "events," together with the fact that arts organizations from this point forward were growing larger and more complex, spawned what happened in the next decades. As both the internal operations and the external environment grew increasingly difficult to coordinate, professional management of the arts became essential (DiMaggio, 1987). And this complexity begged further examination and analysis. The desire to understand how these organizations functioned and interacted with their environment created a cascade of studies and discussion.

The Literature by Author and/or Type

Until Henry Swoboda compiled his 1967 work, *The American Symphony Orchestra*, there was, as he put it, "no contemporary handbook available describing the unusual evolution of symphonic life in America within the recent past." Swoboda hoped to provide a candid assessment of the orchestral scene through an overview of achievements, shortcomings, and trends, as well as a consideration of the cultural and financial aspects of symphonic life. In so doing, he enlisted the perspectives of leading practitioners of the day, including Maurice Abravanel, Erich Leinsdorf, Helen Thompson, and Paul Hume.

Other candid assessments followed. Because arts organizations are multifaceted and complex, a steadily growing number of social scientists have attempted to apply their particular disciplines to the questions that confront these organizations, and have contributed greatly to the literature. But the *reflective practitioner* is also represented in this survey of research, writings, and musings. In fact, a collation of the thoughtful opinion and analysis of practitioners and

informed observers over the past 35 years would result in a well-documented “industry history.” In lieu of that, I present a brief exposition of the gamut of thoughtful opinion and analysis from practitioners to academics.

Practitioners and Industry Experts

By practitioners, I mean musicians, managers, board members, volunteers, and staff—the constituents who make up a symphony orchestra organization. Their perspectives and analysis constitute a large part of the existing literature. So do the perspectives of industry experts and informed onlookers: music historians, music critics, and philanthropists, as well as individuals from the musicians’ union, and even governmental arts agencies. These practitioners and experts have helped to paint a complete picture of the inner workings of the symphony orchestra and the world that impacts and shapes it.

Orchestra Case Studies

One genre of research and writings prevalent in the literature is the orchestra profile or case study. For example, Robert Craven (1986) provides us with selected orchestra profiles in the United States (and around the world, 1987), as does the *American Record Guide* series, “State of the Orchestras” (in each issue since November/December 1992). But case study analysis is best characterized by Edward Arian’s book about the Philadelphia Orchestra, *Bach, Beethoven, and Bureaucracy* (1971), which exposed the problems and processes that constitute a symphony orchestra. This orchestra profile by a former Philadelphia musician-turned-academic is still current and considered “must reading” for new orchestra recruits.

Compared with the work by Arian, other “orchestra biographies” that followed in the 1970s and 1980s may be less direct in what they have to teach us, but each presents issues of life and work in a symphony orchestra. There is Howard Shanet’s magnum opus, *Philharmonic: A History of New York’s Orchestra* (1975). Three other works in which an author-as-outside-observer follows the orchestra for a substantial period of time (often a year) in order to relay to us that “a symphony orchestra is not only beautiful music,” but also about “the fears, doubts, angers, and vaulting ambitions of the people who make it up” include: William Furlong’s *Season with Solti: A Year in the Life of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra* (1974), Herbert Kupferberg’s *Those Fabulous Philadelphians* (1969), and Carl Vigeland’s *In Concert* (1989) about the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Examples of this genre for a British orchestra include Adam Galinsky’s and my 1994 case study of the London Symphony Orchestra and Linda Blandford’s work, *The LSO: Scenes from Orchestra Life* (1984).

Industry Analyses

It was Philip Hart, however, who went one giant leap forward from the case studies of specific orchestras with the 1973 release of his monumental book *Orpheus in the New World*. In it, he provided a painstakingly thorough review of the world of the symphony orchestra, from repertoire to conductors to the musicians’ union and audiences. This work, combined with the Rockefeller

Foundation report (1965), the Wolf Report (1992), the ASOL task force report (1993), and John Robinson's 1993 look at adult participation in the arts, provides a firm foundation for the analysis of this industry. Complementing these works in ways that head us toward the future are analyses which compare trends in different countries (Galinsky & Lehman, 1995) and across different art forms (Zolberg, 1980; Heilbrun, 1993).

Trade Journal Articles

Trade journals represent the main medium for discussion of this topic, and articles written by practitioners and industry observers reveal the complex and complicated nature of managing symphony orchestras. Articles in such publications as *Symphony*, *International Musician*, *Senza Sordino*, *International Arts Manager*, and the *American Record Guide* allow us to glimpse the Rubik's Cube of issues facing the symphony orchestra organization.

Key writings include articles by Debra Borda, Ernest Fleischmann, Henry Fogel, and Thomas Morris, executive directors of the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra respectively. Each of these authors has contributed to the debate about the viability of symphony orchestras as they are currently structured. Equally important are the writings of musicians and conductors such as Robert Levine of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, whose informal treatise about stress and musicians provides powerful insight into that critical subject; Joe Robinson, principal oboist of the New York Philharmonic, whose 1987 article "Players and Proselytes," details trustee-musician relationships; and Michael Morgan, music director of the Oakland East Bay Symphony, whose recent piece, "The Music Is Multicultural," published in *Symphony* magazine, details yet another facet of symphony orchestra organizations.

Steve Young, newly elected president of the AFM, has also contributed to the literature with an unpublished work, "Are Music Schools Preparing Performers for Real Life?," coauthored with Howard Garniss. And, Lew Waldeck, former head of the Symphonic Services Department of the AFM, contributed to an AFM publication about cooperative orchestras, "When Musicians Call Democracy's Tune."

Clearly, a wealth of intelligently written articles provides readers with insight into the wide-ranging debate among practitioners and industry experts through an ongoing print discussion.

Other Lenses Through Which to See

Academics add other perspectives to the literature. The discussion in this section is not exclusively about the literature on symphony orchestra organizations, rather it extends our "depth of field" to cultural policy and arts research. Through a review of arts literature from the standpoint of various disciplines, I suggest the use of a broader framework for interdisciplinary research on symphony orchestra organizations. My concern is not just with the advancement of a

particular discipline that can inform us about the symphony orchestra, but also with increasing the opportunity to see these organizations through new lenses and encouraging the cross-fertilization of ideas from one field to the other.

Economics

Despite what has been described as a virtual economic boom for the arts during the 1970s and early 1980s², symphony orchestras and other cultural institutions have increasingly needed to understand the economics of their particular art forms. The literature in this area emerged out of the “eagerness of economists to apply their tools to hitherto untried areas and the recognition of arts administrators of the increasing economic pressures on the arts” (Blaug, 1976). At base, the question is, how can symphony orchestras and other performing arts organizations cope with economic pressures which constitute a “permanent crisis”?³

Many economists have and continue to examine the economic aspects of the arts, beginning with Baumol and Bowen’s pioneering work in 1967 and, more recently, with that of James Heilbrun and Charles Gray (1993). The development of the field of cultural economics over the past 28 years has been aided by the Association for Cultural Economics, which was established in 1973 to launch a formal discourse on the subject. This association, now an international network (ACEI), continues to expand its reach, focusing not only on economic analysis of different cultural organizations and the perennial issue of public support for the arts, but also on such topics as the economic aspects of careers in the arts.

In its journal, ACEI has published such pieces as, “Cost Functions for Symphony Orchestras” (1985) by Mark Lange et al., and Mark Lange and William Luksetich’s “The Cost of Producing Symphony Orchestra Services” (1993), which discuss the difficulty of using average cost curves to analyze symphony orchestra costs. Instead, they suggest that orchestras should be viewed as “multiproduct nonprofit enterprises” with entirely different utility functions from those of profit-maximizing, for-profit firms. We also find Samuel Schwarz’s “Long-term Trends in Performing Arts Expenditures” (1984), one of several articles he has published on such symphony orchestra economic issues as the income gap (see also Schwarz, 1983). For comparative analysis, Jean-Pierre Guillard, in “The Symphony as a Public Service: The Orchestra of Paris” (1985), discusses the French government’s subsidization of a “symphony orchestra network” versus the funding structure of American, British, and other European orchestras. More recently, Marianne Felton (1994) brings us up to date with her comparative analysis, “Historical Funding Patterns in Symphony Orchestras, Dance, and Opera Companies, 1972-1992.”

In addition to journal articles, a wealth of books (actually, edited collections of papers) illuminate cultural economics—the problems and the possibilities, both domestic and foreign. Another work by William Baumol (with Hilda Baumol, 1984), *Inflation and the Performing Arts*, is one example. The ACEI has produced annual volumes from its yearly conferences since 1979 (see Hendon et al., 1980;

Towse & Khakee, 1992; Peacock and Rizzo, 1994). But it was Mark Blaug, of the University of London, who first introduced this type of compendium in 1976 with *The Economics of the Arts*. The articles assembled in that work capture what economists can say about “so noneconomic a subject as the Arts.” Blaug recognized that “we have only begun to scratch the surface of what may one day prove to be one of the most rewarding branches of applied economics” (Blaug, 1976).

Indeed, the field of cultural economics is comparatively young. We have not seen its full impact on cultural policy, let alone on arts organizations or their management. And, although each work listed above contributes to our knowledge of the economics of the symphony orchestra, there is clearly room for more comprehensive analysis.

Nonprofit Management, Organizational Behavior, and Human Resource Management

At one point in history, symphony orchestras were organized along for-profit lines. In fact, the New York Philharmonic started out as a cooperative enterprise in which musicians shared the profits among themselves. That was a long time ago. Today, symphony orchestras are nonprofit organizations which require sophisticated and professional management. As a result, there is a growing exchange of information and ideas between traditional management theory and the nonprofit sector. Organizational practices in the for-profit sector have contributed to this exchange, especially in the areas of leadership, organizational behavior, and human resource management. This dialogue has fostered growth in the literature specifically tailored to the unique characteristics of nonprofit organizations. The nonprofit management literature helps us understand this sector: What is a nonprofit organization? Why do so many nonprofits exist? How do they function? (DiMaggio, 1986; Powell, 1987). The analysis of nonprofit symphony orchestra organizations contributes to this field.

Traditional management theory also benefits from closer inspection of the nonprofit world. In fact, leading management scholars enjoy using symphony orchestra and other music-organization analogies to describe the complex function of management in today’s for-profit businesses (Kanter, 1989; Drucker, 1988; Weick, 1990). Of particular note is the article by renowned management scholar Peter Drucker, who suggests:

The typical large business 20 years hence will have fewer than half the levels of management of its counterpart today, and no more than a third the managers. In its structure, it will bear little resemblance to the typical manufacturing company, circa 1950, which our textbooks still consider the norm. Instead it is far more likely to resemble organizations that neither the practicing manager nor the management scholar pays much attention to today: the hospital, the university, the symphony orchestra (Drucker, 1988).

What Drucker's provocative essay fails to capture, however, is the leadership paradox posed by, and *the leadership potential of*, the conductor's role in a symphony orchestra—the potential to influence and motivate subordinates, not just to coordinate and manage them as independent units. Kevin Murnighan and Donald Conlon (1991) do look at the paradox of leadership versus democracy, although admittedly their study focuses on string quartets, not symphony orchestras. Yaakov Atik (1994) explores the inspirational aspects of different leadership styles in, “The Conductor and the Orchestra: Interactive Aspects of the Leadership Process.”

More generally, important articles in this area include: “From Impresario to Arts Administrator: Formal Accountability in Nonprofit Cultural Organizations” by Richard Peterson (1986); “Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts” by Henry Hansmann (1986); “Executive Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations” by Dennis Young (1987); “Nonprofit Boards of Directors: Beyond the Governance Function” by Melissa Middleton (1987); and “Doing Well by Doing Good: Dilemmas of Performance Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations and the Need for a Multiple-constituency Approach” by Rosabeth Kanter and David Summers (1987).

Clearly, the for-profit and nonprofit sectors have much to learn from one another about management practices, and this aspect of the literature on symphony orchestras continues to expand. Adding to the exchange is doctoral research such as Robert Jones' 1991 D.B.A. thesis, “Human Resources Management of the Arts: A Descriptive Analysis of the Professional Orchestra Manager's Operational Role in the Major American Symphony.” Jones models Paul DiMaggio's (1987) survey of senior arts administrators, and adds to it an important discussion of leadership challenges facing nonprofit management in the 1990s. A 1994 dissertation by Joan Griffing, “Audition Procedures and Advice from Concertmasters of American Orchestras,” deals with human resource management. Although it is not a definitive guide, the author “found a tremendous need for discussion and advice on orchestra auditions” among young violinists, and argued that the concertmaster is “the most influential and untapped source of information.” In many ways, these studies fill gaps in the literature on critical questions of leadership and personnel management. Other topics have yet to be explored, however, including employee involvement and the impact of governance structures on organizational performance.

Political Science and Public Policy

Another growing segment of the field of cultural research lies with political scientists, urban planners, and public policy analysts. These scholars contribute to discussion about the broader contextual issues and their implications, not by focusing on the symphony orchestra itself, but rather through analysis of the environment in which symphony orchestras operate and navigate. Milton Cummings, Jr. and Richard Katz (1986), for example, provide an in-depth look at cultural support in various countries, including the United States. Other

important works in this sphere include the writings of Kevin Mulcahy (1991) and Margaret Wyszomirski (1987). They are political scientists who analyze government's role in support of the arts. Their writings inform us about factors impacting the orchestra as a cultural institution in this country, and help us understand how that context is evolving over time.

Also worth noting is the work of Mark Schuster of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Urban Studies and Planning Department. Schuster forces us to rethink *how* we analyze cultural policy and cross-national comparisons. *Who's to Pay for the Arts?* (1989), for example, shows us pitfalls to avoid when analyzing and drawing conclusions in our comparative studies of countries' cultural goals, policies, and tax incentive systems. Likewise, in "The Performance of Performance Indicators (in the Arts)" (1992), Schuster warns us about the use of quantitative indicators in the cultural sector and points out how design and measurement of various programs often affect behavior and performance in unintended ways. More recently, he analyzes the trend to fund arts and culture through dedicated state lotteries (Schuster, 1994 a,b).

In my view, the Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), provides a bridge between public policy experts and other social scientists through its program of research publications which analyze "matters of interest to the arts community." For example, the NEA has sponsored national surveys of public participation in the arts (administered in 1982, 1985, and 1992 through the Bureau of the Census) and commissioned analysis of the surveys, including Paul DiMaggio and Francie Ostrower's report #25, *Race, Ethnicity, and Participation in the Arts*, and John Robinson's report #27, *Arts Participation in America: 1982-1992*. These reports provide important data points in documenting the ongoing history of such core art forms as classical music. The analyses add greatly to our cultural database and the literature.

Sociology

Of all the social sciences, sociology has been at the forefront of research on arts organizations. Since an orchestra is a fascinating laboratory of human relationships, it is not surprising that sociologists have given us the most insight into the social organization of artistic work.

This is precisely what Jack Kamerman and Rosanne Martorella have done in *Performers & Performances: The Social Organization of Artistic Work* (1983). Chapters of particular relevance to the symphony orchestra organization include Robert Faulkner's "Orchestra Interaction: Communication and Authority in an Artistic Organization," in which he describes one of the central sources of organizational conflict—the relationship between music director and musicians. Other chapter titles convey the range of sociologists' interests from "Symphony Conducting as an Occupation" (Kamerman) to "Rationality in the Artistic Management of Performing Arts Organizations" (Martorella), and "Patronage and Organizational Structure in Symphony Orchestras in London and New York" (Couch). Stephen

Couch's chapter explains why the cooperative form of organization failed to take root in the United States. And he summarizes why sociologists are so intrigued by the arts:

The sociological study of the arts has been receiving increased attention in the U.S. in recent years. A fair number of scholars have been realizing that by studying the interdependent influences of social structure and artistic style, we can learn much about the more general question of how the patterned organization of social life influences, and is influenced by, the values and meanings attached to life by persons and groups, and the artifacts that embody them.

From sociologists we learn about the unique nature of performing arts organizations as social systems, and why certain organizational structures have come to be and have persisted over time.

Other important works in this field help us understand the demographic composition of symphony orchestras. These include Gilda Greenberg's (1981) study of why women are in the minority in major symphony orchestras, Phyllis Lehmann's "Women in Orchestras: The Promise and the Problems" (1982), and more recently, Jutta Allmendinger and J. Richard Hackman's "The More the Better? On the Inclusion of Women in Professional Organizations" (1993). Another interesting sociological perspective is contributed by Pamela Willcox-Blau's (1990) article on the career development of black musicians including those in symphony orchestras. Also noteworthy along the same line of demographic inquiry is Everette Freeman and Neil Bania's (1993) examination of African-American attendance at performances of the Cleveland Orchestra.

Why and how musicians pursue orchestral careers, what is required, and what occupational hazards exist, are other topics of inquiry. Karen Kleeh-Tolley (1988) begins to address these questions. In her dissertation, "Investigation Into the Aspects of the Process of Becoming a Professional Performing Artist: The Case of Symphony Musicians and Ballet Dancers," she points out that:

Unlike many other occupations, training in high culture arts and their performance requires an early commitment and continued opportunity to develop necessary skills. The purpose of [my thesis] is to identify and describe social origins, processes, and routes by which those with the talent to be considered artists in both high culture music and dance obtain the opportunity to realize their potential.

Saroj Parasuraman and Sidney Nachman also focus on commitment to the music profession in their study, "Correlates of Organizational and Professional Commitment" (1984). The authors found that "love of music and commitment to music as a profession are not sufficient to promote the intention to remain with a given orchestra. Rather, it is the job experiences of musicians in orchestras that influence the desire for continued membership in [them] through their effect on organizational commitment" (p. 299). The authors offer suggestions as to how orchestras might simultaneously reduce musicians' stress and increase

commitment by focusing, among other things, on job attitude, job performance, and leadership dynamics.

The issue of musicians' occupational or work-related physical and mental stress is not restricted to American orchestras. It is explored in fascinating detail in an edited work by Maximilian Piperek (1981) commissioned by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. In it, the investigators "provide a comprehensive and scientifically sound job profile for the symphony orchestra musician" through analysis of a range of factors, including the effect of working climate, authority and discipline, tension among orchestra members, criticism, and psychophysiological aspects of stress. That was 1981. In 1995, medical researchers in America are exploring *the brains* of musicians. Through the use of advanced magnetic resonance imaging, a recent study reveals that musicians' brains are structured differently from other people's and may, therefore, process particular information differently (Knox, 1995).

Social Psychology

Whether or not musicians have different information processing capacity, many of the issues concerning life and work in American symphony orchestras remain the same as they have been for decades. Like Parasuraman and Nachman, we are still concerned with job attitude, job performance, and leadership dynamics. These issues fall within the domain of social psychology, which provides a framework for understanding social and organizational influences on human behavior. It is here, at the junction of sociology and psychology, that this story comes full circle, as social psychology is the discipline in which my research on symphony orchestras lies.

Between 1989 and 1994, our group of social scientists at Harvard University and the Max Planck Institut fuer Bildungsforschung in Berlin jointly conducted a cross-national study of "Leadership and Mobility in Symphony Orchestras." In this study, we sought to understand how professional symphony orchestras are structured, supported, and led, and how musicians make their careers in them. Our data set was a stratified random sample of 78 major and regional symphony orchestras in four countries: the United States, United Kingdom, the former East Germany, and West Germany. Papers generated from this study elucidate contemporary life, work, and prevailing issues in symphony orchestras as reported by organization members themselves (players, managers, and board members), and as observed by the research team (see reports by Allmendinger, et al.).

Ours is not the first study to focus on American professional orchestral musicians or symphony orchestras. David Westby wrote about the career prospects of symphony musicians in 1961. Robert Faulkner published his in-depth investigation of the Hollywood studio musician in 1971, and later surveyed the career expectations of orchestral musicians (1973 a, b). And certainly, ours is not the only study to detail the organizational structure and range of issues confronting the American symphony orchestra. Books have been written on the

subject, including Daniel Mason's *Dilemma of American Music, and Other Essays* (1928); John Mueller's *American Symphony Orchestra: A Social History of Musical Taste* (1951); and George Seltzer's compendium, *The Professional Symphony Orchestra in the United States* (1975) (and on the American Federation of Musicians (1989)). More current is the American Symphony Orchestra League's own assessment summarized in the 1993 task force report: *Americanizing the American Orchestra*.

What our study does reveal, however, is that perhaps even more than financial pressures, the challenges to symphony orchestra organizations today revolve around *people* issues: how to encourage player involvement and foster job satisfaction; how to provide formal leadership through "the triad" (music director, managing director, and board chair) and in critical functions (Hackman, 1986); and, of equal importance, how to attain the full potential of a musical ensemble. Meeting any of these challenges, let alone all of them, is certainly far from simple in a time of great economic uncertainty and competition, and, arguably, when great misunderstandings exist among constituencies within symphony orchestra organizations. What these challenges suggest to me is that further research, debate, and discussion would be beneficial to the institutions themselves, to those who work in symphony orchestras, and to those who appreciate them.

Future Research on the Symphony Orchestra Organization

Looking to areas of future research on symphony orchestra organizations, several enlightened individuals not only provide guideposts, but also urge us to rethink reality. Howard Klein (1990), for one, calls for a loosening of "the rigid system under which orchestras and musicians work" and suggests "that a conscientious discussion of free-flowing ideas is essential." Ernest Fleischmann (1989) would agree, since he has been the most vocal champion of a "community of musicians" instead of the traditional orchestra organization. Tod Machover (1986), on the other hand, has examined the contributions of new technologies and new techniques to the orchestra, suggesting that the future orchestra may well be a combination of electronic and traditional instruments—or maybe not, if conservatism prevails. The possibility of labor substitution reminds me of James Kraft (1994) and Kristin Wever (1994): Kraft investigates the impact of "talking" movies on thousands of instrumentalists in the 1920s and 1930s, and Wever describes the unparalleled decline of American unions in recent decades. Taken as a whole, if the typical symphony orchestra organization fails to increase its perceived value and efficiency, is it so farfetched to think that the orchestral musician of the 21st century might indeed go the way of the pit musician?

Organizational research can provide a platform for the kind of discussion that needs to take place in the symphony orchestra industry as it approaches the future. The gaps in the literature as discussed here reflect gaps in our own understanding, not so much in the realm of one discipline or another, but more generally. It is my view that we need to come to grips with the advantages and

considerable disadvantages of the present structures, roles, and processes of symphony orchestra organizations. We need to explore how these unique organizations might evolve to make better use of their substantial resources.

Notes

¹ A quick perusal of the library catalogue reveals more than 9,999 listings under the general topic of music; 7,432 items on the arts, of which 921 are specifically related to the performing arts; 1,292 on musicians (all types); and just 32 citations under the subject header “symphony orchestra.” Clearly this does not tell us all.

² According to Balfe and Meyerson (1995), “The NEA budget increased by 10 times between 1970 and 1985; those of state and local arts agencies tripled. Corporate and foundation funding increased in like amounts, as did the number of people employed, directly or indirectly, in the arts.” See also Cherbo (1992) for another source documenting the increases.

³ “Because of the unrelenting and cumulative rise in their relative costs, the live performing arts can be expected to find themselves in permanent crisis.” Blaug (1976), p. 2.

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