

*Harmony*TM

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Research Update



To subscribe to *Harmony* or provide support to the Institute, contact:

Symphony Orchestra Institute

1618 Orrington Avenue, Suite 318

Evanston, IL 60201

Tel: 847.475.5001 Fax: 847.475.2460

e-mail: information@soi.org

www.soi.org

Research Update

Concurrent with this issue of *Harmony*, the Institute is pleased to publish the first in its Research Studies Series. This series will present insights based on scholarly research and analysis typically focusing on a particular dimension of symphony orchestra organizations. These research-based publications will be written especially for communication with symphony practitioners: staff and orchestra employees, volunteers, and others closely involved in the operation and funding of symphony orchestra organizations.

The first research study, "Improving the Orchestra's Revenue Position: Practical Tactics and General Strategies," is authored by **Arthur Brooks**, recipient of a 1996 doctoral research grant from the Symphony Orchestra Institute. The study is based on Brooks' 81-page monograph, "Economic Strategies for Orchestras." For serious students of the economics of symphony orchestra and other performing arts organizations, this monograph is available from the author or the Institute by written request.

Dr. John Breda, also a 1996 Symphony Orchestra Institute doctoral research grant recipient, is working to complete a comparative analysis of psychological distress in the orchestral workplace. We look forward to his findings.

The Institute is following with keen interest the work of various symphony orchestra researchers. **Sally Maitlis** of the University of Sheffield in England reported on her research in the last issue of *Harmony*. Having completed more than 18 months of intensive fieldwork, she is currently engaged in a detailed analysis of the organizational processes underlying 9 different decision domains as they occur in 3 UK orchestra organizations. **Erin Lehman**, a research coordinator at Harvard, continues her study of cooperative and self-governing orchestra organizations. **Robert Spich**, an associate professor at the Anderson Management School at UCLA, and **Robert Sylvester**, newly appointed Dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts at Portland State University, have been collaborating on a review of the symphonic institution using two established perspectives of organizational analysis: organizational ecology and strategic management. Earlier this year, all these researchers reported on the progress of their inquiries at a New York University Stern School of Business conference on the management of cultural industries.

The Institute is also working with an academic team on an organizational research project which will apply “network analysis” (the determination, analysis, mapping, and interpretation of informal interpersonal and group relationships within an organization) to symphony organizations.

Finally, the Institute is developing a program in which selected scholars in the field of organization analysis and development (“OD”) will spend time with a nearby symphony organization. Over many months, the “OD-in-residence” (perhaps assisted by a graduate student) will observe meetings, conduct interviews, attend rehearsals and performances, study written material, and become familiar with the values and goals embraced within the organization, and with the structure, functioning, communications, and decision making processes of the organization. Each residency would foster “organizational learning”—a shared appreciation by many participants of how the organization was functioning, what was working well, and what unique challenges the organization faced.

The program will also familiarize a select group of organizational change scholars with the complex dynamics of symphony organizations. The Institute intends to facilitate a regular exchange of insights within this group. Over time, this program should foster organizational insights which can be shared with symphony organization participants, leaders, and consultants interested in improving the effectiveness of symphony organizations.

The Institute welcomes inquiries and proposals from scholars and practitioners interested in symphony orchestra organizational research.