

*Harmony*TM

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Publisher's Notes

by

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Publisher's Notes

In *Harmony*, we publish ideas and insights about how symphony orchestra organizations function and might better function. Living somewhat dangerously, we take a nondirective, eclectic approach to developing content for each issue of our journal. We enjoy taking the chance that we will cross or recross the paths of people who have intellect and creativity, and whose fresh and interesting ideas on topics and directions relate broadly to our mission. And when this happens, whether with individuals or groups, we invite and prompt them to become authors who will share their insights and ideas with others toward the goal of developing healthier symphony organizations.

In this issue, we have a collection of such authors. It is serendipitous that there are certain common themes represented directly and indirectly in what they express, as follows:

- ◆ There is untapped human potential in most organizations, but in most symphony organizations, the pent-up, boundaried, and positive energy is enormous. Fresh, nontraditional organizational approaches are required to unleash this energy.
- ◆ Symphony organizations must increasingly find ways to become more engaging, more open and inclusive, provide more choice, pursue more organizational experimentation, take more risks, and truly connect with their customer-audiences.
- ◆ Because orchestras are complex human systems, pursuing, achieving, and sustaining significant change in organizational behavioral practices and traditional institutional relationships is a real challenge. But it can take place if there is broadly based will, unified and persistent effort, and an environment of trust.

Are you acquainted with **Peter Wiegold**? If not, when you meet him sometime, you will know that he is very special! Peter comes in layers. Outwardly, he is a musician and composer, creative and improvisational. A bit deeper, he is a trainer, educator, psychologist, and facilitator of group learning, for all age levels. More deeply, he is a humanist who believes in the whole person and in the creativity and potential which exists in every human being. And finally, he is an activist, ready and willing to carry forth his beliefs in effective and passionate ways, including writing the essay you will shortly read beginning on page 1. I think you will find it enthralling!

Our second essayist, starting on page 15, is making a return appearance. Five years ago, in *Harmony* #2 (April 1996), we were pleased to publish an article coauthored by an orchestra player and his father, a neuroscientist. Their essay dealt openly with an issue—stress and discontent in the orchestral workplace—which influences the organizational performance of symphony institutions. *Harmony* was the fledgling journal of a newly established institution about which there were lingering questions of purpose and legitimacy. The article enjoyed a positive and thoughtful response and was helpful in establishing the nonaligned, constructive, objective policies of *Harmony* and the Institute. We are thus pleased again to present an essay by this orchestra player, **Robert Levine**, on a related subject: the role of the music director in today's symphony organization. This is not a new topic in these pages, but the author's insights are fresh and penetrate to the core. Not everyone will agree with everything he says or the way he says it, but many people will think, "There is much truth in these observations." And perhaps some will go on to say, "Yes, we really must address and act on these issues."

In these pages, we often use the phrase "organization change." Starting on page 30, as an Institute innovation, we present the background for and a consolidation of installment presentations on this topic recently posted sequentially on our Web site at < www.soi.org >. As noted there, we have concluded that the Institute, whose mission is to "foster positive change in how symphony organizations function" is, in fact, sponsoring the application of a well-founded and expanding approach to organizational improvement. This discipline is known by various phrases, including "organization change," which we have adopted for our review. We believe this phrase will help symphony organization participants better relate to the concepts involved and how they apply to the symphony world. As we tour this new ground, we are pleased to be guided by **Laura Leigh Roelofs**, the principal author of the organization change text which starts on page 33. To follow this review, step-by-step, be sure regularly to check the Organization Change section of our Web site. Those receiving **Key Notes from SOI**, (see below), will be regularly alerted to new postings.

Shifting gears to group authorship, we thank **Andy Buelow, Samantha George, Bill Helmers, Barbara Hunt, Steve Ovitsky, Steve Richman, Allen Rieselbach, Roger Ruggeri, Mike Schmitz, Susan Stein, Liz Tuma, and Robert Wilkins** for permitting us to sit in on a roundtable discussion of what is transpiring in the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) organization (page 39). After some difficult times in years past, the MSO has made significant strides in organizational development through the concerted effort and goodwill of many participants. But the organization is not resting on its laurels. Leadership participants are thinking ahead about how their organization might become even more effective, creative, and innovative, and might better serve and become even more valued by its community.

Finally, former Institute Board of Advisors member **Frederick Starr** returns to *Harmony* by taking off on page 53 from where he landed at the end of his essay

in *Harmony* #5 (October 1997). But in piloting this fresh and entertaining flight, Fred brings to us a new perspective, that of the clarinet player in a New Orleans jazz ensemble which performs with a wide range of North American symphony orchestras. This essay is an “up-close” observation of the orchestral workplace by a caring and discerning observer who has a simple message: let’s have more teamwork.

In our introductory pages, we have more than the usual amount of information, but it deals with very important Institute developments.

- ◆ We make two important personnel announcements on page vii.
- ◆ During 2000, as reported in the Fall issue of *Harmony*, the **Advocates of Change** movement was formed. The group’s membership topped 100 by year end, and already members are voicing views about possible directions and priorities toward achieving healthier and more responsive symphony institutions (page viii).
- ◆ In mid-2000, the Institute completed its first five years of operation. As part of a strategic review, we decided to obtain “customer” feedback in three central areas. To this end, a Symphony Organization Participant Survey was completed in December, and we are pleased to share the primary results with *Harmony* readers starting on page xiv.
- ◆ The initiation of a periodic e-mail bulletin, **Key Notes from SOI**, is reported on page xxi.

The Institute’s most recent field work is summarized on page 13, along with the status of the multi-year CEDAP research.

Juxtapositioned for greatest effect with related content you will find the following very interesting, quoted material:

- ◆ Gunther Schuller on the Role of the Conductor (page 26).
- ◆ Frederick Zenone on the Integrated Organization (page 37).

On page 66 is a listing of those symphony organizations that have already provided commitment to and support of the Institute’s objectives and programs for 2001.

We usually save **Phillip Huscher** for last. This delays as long as possible the cogitation stimulated by the score fragment on our cover. Are you frustrated? Here’s a hint. The root of this story is in a prior cover story. Think about it! Turn to page 64 to see if you guessed correctly.

I think you will find this issue one of our best! Thanks again for your support and interest.

