

*Harmony*TM

FORUM OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA INSTITUTE

NUMBER 6 • APRIL 1998

Publisher's Notes

by

Paul R. Judy



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

Publisher's Notes

We open this sixth issue of *Harmony* with a report of the Institute's activities during 1997, our second calendar year of operation. As you will see, we are steadfastly pursuing our mission of fostering positive change and organizational development within North American symphony orchestra organizations.

As leaders within symphony institutions become more interested in improving the cohesiveness and effectiveness of their organizations, and building greater enthusiasm, trust, and good will, they will be increasingly open to examining their internal structures and processes. There is evidence that such introspection is already under way in some organizations. As this pattern acquires momentum, forward-looking leaders will wish to consider "organization change programs" utilizing "process consultation." Indeed, the Institute is interested in selectively sponsoring such efforts. The Institute has adopted a statement of beliefs and principles which it proposes should govern organization change and process consultation programs (page xi). For all participants in symphony organizations, we urge a careful reading of this statement, and welcome any thoughts and questions.

In May 1997, I attended a conference on the cultural industries sponsored by New York University's Stern School of Business. Many interesting papers were presented at that conference, including a thoughtful study by a West Coast professorial team. **Robert Sylvester**, the new dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts at Portland State University in Oregon, has had a long career as a celebrated cellist, festival producer, and educator. He has a deep love for the arts, particularly music, and the symphonic art form. **Robert Spich** is an associate professor in organization and strategy at the Anderson School at UCLA. Joining their diverse training and perspectives in a respectful but detached way, and drawing from their Stern conference presentation and subsequent work, they have authored for the *Harmony* audience a longer-term perspective of the symphony orchestra institution within the framework of "organizational ecology." As you will see, they raise a number of issues as to the very survival of symphonic institutions, particularly those which do not identify and pursue effective adaptive strategies. In a subsequent issue of *Harmony*, the authors will put forth a range of strategic choices which they believe these institutions should consider in order to preserve their institutional standing, and carry the symphonic art form forward into future generations.

Thoughtful people generally agree that the symphonic art form needs regularly to be energized with new music if it is to retain its vitality and expand its following.

What music is to be selected for orchestra performance, and through what decision-making processes selections are to be made, tend to be the issues. These matters have been addressed directly and obliquely by various authors in previous issues of *Harmony*. In this issue, **Soong Fu-Yuan** takes the position that audiences, as well as performers, should be substantially more involved in the encouragement and selection of new music. This involvement should be actively promoted by adapting methods well established for introducing many other new consumer products and services in a pluralistic, democratic, capitalistic society. New music should be nominated and played by performers before voting audiences, and composers should be rewarded handsomely if their music receives the highest public acclaim. Fu-Yuan's view is that audiences should be "empowered"—invited to be much more alert, actively involved, and trusted in their choices of what new music is to be played for them.

Since the formation of the Institute, we have regularly propounded the unique makeup of the symphony orchestra organization as compared with any other organizational form. In organizational science terms, symphony organizations are "complex systems." Through regular discussions with leaders throughout many organizations and by standing back and analyzing what I hear and observe, I have concluded that these systems have a "leadership complexity" which is in itself unique. Further, I believe that this complexity in formal leadership roles is a contributor to generic institutional complexity, as much as it is a result. I lay out these observations and their implications as to organizational process and functioning in an essay starting on page 41.

When one becomes deeply involved with symphony organizations, especially with the idea of better understanding their leadership complexity, it becomes quickly apparent how many leadership positions women occupy. We decided to explore this aspect of the symphony organization world in a series of interviews, reports, and essays brought together in a special section: "Women in Leadership Roles in Symphony Orchestra Organizations" that begins on page 45.

The initial content of this special section consists of reports of interviews and roundtable discussions with three separate groups of women in common leadership roles in symphony organizations. We are indebted to **Marilyn Scholl**, **Sara Austin**, and **Margareth Owens** for their excellent editorial work in collecting and preparing these reports. And, special thanks, also, go to each of the 17 participating leaders!

These reports are followed by the very personal and lively insights of **Marietta Cheng** about the challenges of being a woman music director and conductor, and her views about the glass ceiling which exists in her profession.

Following this essay is an analysis we have compiled as to the level of participation of women in various components within symphony organizations, and in leadership roles. We think you will find this data quite informative, if not striking.

To round out this special section, we present a review of scholarly research on the topic of sex differences, especially as relates to organizational leadership patterns. In a neighboring Evanston institution, we were pleased to find **Alice Eagly**, a well-known scholar in this area. In interview format, Alice reports her research findings, and comments on various aspects of gender and leadership in the world of symphony organizations.

Mary Parker Follett was one of the most profound thinkers on the topic of organizational leadership. Writing and speaking in the 1920s, her ideas were well ahead of the times. Although certainly respected by a number of practicing managers and by some contemporary scholars in organizational behavior, her thoughts and writings were generally forgotten. **Martha Babcock**, a musician leader in the Boston Symphony Orchestra and a scholar/writer in her own right, presents an impressive review of Follett's writings, recently republished in a volume entitled *Mary Parker Follett—Prophet of Management: A Celebration of Writings*. We think this review may well send many of our readers to the nearest bookstore. You have probably already noted that the bookmark accompanying this issue highlights a Follett quote!

Pictured on this issue's cover is a fragment from the score of a truly fantastic piece of orchestral music. Can you identify it? From the perspective of historical orchestral development, why was this music so special? On page 116, you can verify or discover the answer in the excellent vignette prepared by **Phillip Huscher**.

We are grateful to the 35 symphony organizations listed on page 118 for their 1998 "early bird" support of the Institute. The list includes 18 organizations providing support for the first time. Our goal for supporting organizations by year end is 100. We have a long way to go, renewing the support of some 40 organizations and adding at least 25 new supporters. If your organization was a 1997 supporter and has not yet renewed, or if your organization has not yet initiated support, may we have your help in achieving our goal? Levels of suggested support are listed on page 121, but each organization is free to contribute what it believes is merited, either more or less than the suggested level. Thanks!

As noted in the report of 1997 activities, the Board of Directors believes that the Institute should become open to broad financial support by individuals—those who participate as volunteers and employees in symphony organizations served by the Institute, and those who are otherwise particularly interested in the well-being of symphony organizations. To that end, an envelope has been inserted in this issue for the convenience of those who wish to support the aims and programs of the Institute. A contribution of any size will be a vote of confidence in our endeavors.

