

# *Harmony*<sup>TM</sup>

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## Organization Study, Organization Consultation, and Research Programs



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## **Organization Study, Organization Consultation, and Research Programs**

### ***Organization Study***

Two “OD-in-residence” programs were completed this past summer (see *Harmony* Number 6, page xiv). With the cooperation of all constituencies, **Saul Eisen**, Ph.D. (organizational behavior), a professor of management at Sonoma State University, completed a residency with the **Oregon Symphony** organization between January and June of this year. He visited Portland a number of times, learning about the organization through a wide range of interviews with individuals and small groups, and attending a number of group meetings. This fall, he will be sharing his observations with the organization’s constituencies.

A similar residency was completed with the **Toledo Symphony** organization, involving many participants working with two organizational behavior specialists from Case Western Reserve University. Professor **Karen Grochau**, Ph.D. (organizational behavior) is acting director of the Arts Management Program, and **Margaret Hopkins** is a doctoral candidate in organizational behavior. Their observations and feedback will also be completed this fall.

Representatives of both organizations have reported very favorably on these residencies, outlining the value of many people contemporaneously thinking about and sharing insights, and learning about organizational issues with trained listeners and observers. As indicated in the residency plan, any future steps toward organizational improvement are in the hands of each organization.

Each residency further confirmed the uniqueness of symphony organizations and the complexity of their human dynamics, in the judgment of scholars with extensive organizational observation and consulting experience. Their insights will be added to a growing base of Institute knowledge which someday may be integrated into publishable material about the functioning of symphony organizations.

Special thanks go to all those people in these organizations who participated in these studies.

### ***Organization Consultation***

The Institute has been invited by the various constituencies of the **Philadelphia Orchestra Association** (POA) to render process consultation services as part of an organizational improvement program. After completing a preliminary evaluation, an engagement is expected to be proposed and under way later this fall. As outlined in publicly available documents from the Institute conveyed to the POA:

- ◆ The primary purpose of the program will be to help create the leadership and organization for further developing and implementing the POA strategic plan in a way that unifies and coalesces all constituencies of the organization, significantly increasing the organization's chances of realizing the potentials of strategic development over the next two to three years.
- ◆ A correlative purpose will be to foster Institute learning directly and in some depth as to the dynamics of a major symphony organization, contributing to the development of methodologies and possible models for symphony organizational improvement.

### ***Research***

The Institute currently is sponsoring two active research projects: the Conductor Evaluation Data Analysis Project (CEDAP), and the Breda doctoral research project.

- ◆ **CEDAP.** As earlier summarized, with the consent of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM), the Institute is analyzing conductor evaluation data created by ICSOM orchestra players over the 10-year period from 1988 to 1997, as maintained at Wayne State University. The goal is to determine what if anything these data reveal about various dimensions of orchestra conducting, in the opinion of a large sample of orchestra players.

Preliminary overall conclusions from the data are:

- ◆ Musicians in the data universe generally approve of their conductors.
- ◆ This general approval varies little among players by instrumental group.
- ◆ Evaluations of different dimensions of the conducting role (for example, knowledge of the music, baton technique, maintaining balance, rehearsal time usage, etc.) are highly correlated, both overall and by instrumental group.
- ◆ There is little variation in evaluations over the 10-year period, whether examined at the level of overall opinion or in subdetail.

Work is presently under way to collect various factors about the orchestras and conductors in the data universe, to develop groupings of orchestras and conductors by such factors, and to see what, if any, differences might exist among player evaluations when considering these factors.

- ◆ **Breda Project.** This doctoral research project was initiated in 1996 by **Dr. John Breda**, with professor **Leonard Doerfler** as advisor. The project involved surveying more than 600 orchestral players to develop information relating to psychological distress in the orchestral workplace, and to complete various comparative analyses. Although the project has faced delays, significant steps have been taken to complete the data analysis and reach conclusions.

**Patrick Kulesa**, a doctoral student in psychology at Northwestern University, has been instrumental in advancing these projects.

### **Extending the Bibliography**

Early issues of *Harmony* contained either cumulative or incremental additions to the Institute's bibliography on the literature of symphony orchestra organizations since 1960. The entire updated bibliography may now be found on our web site at:

**[www.soi.org](http://www.soi.org)**