

*Harmony*TM

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Publisher's Notes

by

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Publisher's Notes

In each issue of *Harmony*, our goal is to create a bouillabaisse of insights and ideas which are informational, but which particularly challenge traditional, conventional thinking and practices existing within North American symphony orchestra organizations. After you have finished reading this issue, I hope you will conclude that we have closely approached, if not reached, our objective.

The first two authors who will greet you are widely known employees in two major American symphony organizations—one a player and the other a manager—and both men have engaged in prominent activities outside their organizations.

Joseph Robinson has been principal oboe of the New York Philharmonic since 1978. He is widely known for his marvelous tone and ability as an instrumentalist, both in orchestral and chamber music. Except among his closest friends, Joe is less well known for many other accomplishments and interests, including the founding of a North Carolina-based oboe school, membership on the Knight Foundation's "Magic of Music" panel, and membership on the boards of directors of the Grand Teton Music Festival and the Union Theological Seminary. Joe is an entrepreneur and "free thinker"—some would say an iconoclast—when it comes to how orchestra organizations might better function, and the new behaviors and directions these organizations should pursue if they are to retain, if not expand, their place in contemporary society. Some months back, my ears perked up when Joe mentioned that he had "some ideas about competition between symphony orchestras." I encouraged him to share these ideas with the *Harmony* audience; starting on page 1, in his inimical style, Joe does just that.

Henry Fogel became the general manager of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association in 1985 and has carried the title of president since 1996. He entered the orchestra world in 1978, and for some 20 years has been an observer and student of industry and organizational history, policies, and practices. He has had a long interest in radio as a medium to reach, educate, and cultivate a classical music audience. Henry conceived and developed the radio marathon, a fundraising technique which has been used by hundreds of symphony organizations. Even today, he finds the time to produce a nationally syndicated radio program reviewing records and artists. Henry has been a pro bono consultant to a number of symphony organizations and is active with the American Symphony Orchestra League. Henry became an Institute director in 1997, and in the course of our friendship and work together, we have had many discussions about symphony organizations. I encouraged Henry, when he was

ready, to share his views about symphony organizational practices. The time for that personal expression has come, and I think you will find Henry's insights and his call for organizational change to be of keen interest.

Regular readers of *Harmony* know that we try in each issue to convey a "story" or two about symphony organizational developments, roles, or issues as discussed by people who are directly involved. Shortly after the Institute was founded, I had the good fortune to visit Bob Bell, the general manager of the **Toledo Symphony Orchestra** (TSO) organization, along with various members of his administrative and conducting staffs, board, and orchestra, and to hear a performance of the orchestra. As my inquiry progressed, it was clear that something special and positive was going on in this organization. The Institute then sponsored an Organizational Development-in-Residency program with the TSO organization, the results of which further contributed to our knowledge and regard for it, and helped to advance the organization's own self-knowledge. In the course of our acquaintance with this organization, we have noted some rather unique human resource philosophies and practices, one of which is the focus of the TSO roundtable starting on page 35.

The final two essays are by authors who are not participants in professional symphony organizations, but who are devoted observers of long standing, and who—each in his own way—have provided personal services to the field.

Joel Mandelbaum has recently retired as a full-time professor of music at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College (City University of New York), having spent some 24 years with that institution as teacher and administrator, and as a composer and scholar. In my introduction to Joel's essay on page 47, I outline in more detail how a chance contact led to his excellent report about the American Composers Orchestra (ACO) organization, which is a unique symphony organization. The ACO is one of a number of "special purpose orchestras" which contribute so incomparably to the classical music culture of New York City and, indirectly, to that of North America and the world as a whole. Joel is a master storyteller and I think readers will share his enthusiastic judgment that the ACO organization is a very special community.

Mitchell Korn is a leading consultant to arts, educational, government, and grantmaking organizations seeking to build and strengthen community life through the arts. Over the past 15 years, Mitchell has assisted a wide range of symphony organizations as they have redefined their participation in and provided new energy to the musical and cultural lives of their communities. Out of this work, Mitchell and his associates have created a framework for thinking about the community educational role of symphony orchestra institutions and the organizational implications which follow. We are pleased to present these well-conceived views starting on page 57.

As noted on page xv, we were pleased to publish, in December 1999, our second research study, and to advance our organizational consultation program with the election of Frederick Zenone as the Institute's vice chairman.

The Institute has been blessed with the support and interest of an expanding circle of persons who have been willing to serve on our **board of advisors** for terms usually of one to two years. At the beginning of the year, with the completion of terms of all advisors, we thanked nine advisors for their service, welcomed nine replacements, and asked seven to serve renewed terms of 18 months. The new composition of the board of advisors, along with a brief biographical summary of each new and reappointed member, is presented starting on page viii.

If the Institute is to continue to assist symphony organizations through a period of rapid change, we need to develop our staff and volunteer resources. To this end, we are exploring various profiles and configurations of employees and volunteers, both for work in our Evanston office and, as may be appropriate, in other locations. Also, we need to identify, orient, and qualify organization change consultants for work with symphony organizations in accordance with our principles, who will contribute to a growing methodology for such work. I hope that any reader who is especially attracted to the Institute's mission and might therefore be interested in employment, volunteer service, or consulting work will note the opportunities summarized on page vii and described in more detail on the Institute's Web site at < www.soi.org > .

We have enjoyed particularly robust early 2000 support from the symphony community, as listed on page 73. Warmest thanks to all those involved in these decisions to "boost on" our efforts.

Although we regularly receive communications from readers, we have not reported them for many issues. However, we recently received three letters whose content we felt our readers would find especially motivational (page xvi).

Last but not least, has **Phillip Huscher** once again stumped most readers of *Harmony* with the symphonic score fragment appearing on the front cover, and the important bit of orchestral organization history which goes with it? Find out on page 69!

Let us know if we reached our objective of challenging traditional, conventional thinking and practices!

