

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

FORUM OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA INSTITUTE

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## Publisher's Notes

by

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If queried, most participants in symphony organizations would probably say that there is an intensive amount of communication and face-to-face contact which goes on in this business, and would cite personal experiences. During a season, many members of boards, staffs, orchestras, and volunteer groups spend countless hours in meetings and related discussions. Board members and other volunteers lament the time they spend in symphony meetings. Orchestra committee members complain that they seem to be in a continuous session. Externally, executive directors and other staff members, and volunteer leaders, attend various conferences and meetings where information is shared and gathered, relationships are developed, and opinions and insights exchanged. Orchestras send delegates to annual conferences and other meetings to foster face-to-face contact with colleagues in other orchestras. Personnel managers and librarians have annual meetings to share professional insights and to give and receive mutual support. Year in and year out, in hundreds of North American symphony organizations, an enormous amount of time and energy is devoted by participants to gathering, getting to know each other, exchanging ideas through talking and listening, and carrying out business.

And so, during the course of a year, across the industry, what is the amount, regularity, and quality of verbal communication and relationship building which takes place *within symphony organizations involving all the constituencies*, and especially *between all the persons elected and appointed to leadership roles within these constituencies*? How much time and effort is devoted to having people in these groups get to know each other better through regular, authentic, and purposeful discussion? How much time and emotion is devoted to having constituency leaders explore where everyone is coming from and develop, as a team, where everyone needs to go, together, if the enterprise is to be successful? Teamwork involves practice, predictable and reliable actions, and thus trust. Shared experiences, stories, smiles, humor, and mutual support, are part of excellent teamwork. Creating these conditions takes time, energy, and true engagement. How many symphony organizations devote the necessary resources to these communications and relationships? Most readers would probably say, "Well, not too much of that kind of communications and relationship building is taking place in the symphony industry . . . but probably it should."

There are some symphony organizations in which the steady and comprehensive development of communications and relationships throughout the organization is, in fact, a high priority, and is commanding a heavy investment of time and

energy. Such efforts are leading to positive cultural change within these organizations. In the first part of this issue, we are pleased to tell or update the stories of three such organizations.

- ◆ Over the past three years, the Oregon Symphony Orchestra organization has embarked on an exciting transformational journey, as enthusiastically described by **Joël Belgique**, **Fred Sautter**, **Lynn Loacker**, and **Tony Woodcock**, beginning on page 1. Organizational development consultants **Saul Eisen** and **Elaine Cogan**, who have worked with the Oregon Symphony, add their perspectives on the organization's growth. Given the well-publicized difficulties this organization was having, the change in this organization's ecology is phenomenal. As the participants report, there is more progress to achieve, and gains to sustain. But the Oregon story shows what can be accomplished through commitment and teamwork of joint-constituency participants and leaders. Hats off to Oregon!
- ◆ The Hartford Symphony Orchestra organization realized a major catharsis in its organizational life through a contract renewal process carried out in 1994. The elements and stages of this process were reported in *Harmony* #5 (October 1997), by a roundtable of participants who were involved. We thought it would be interesting to check back with some of these participants, joined by some current constituency leaders, to see how things were progressing in the Hartford organization. "Quite well, but with continuing challenges" is the answer you will hear from **Ann Drinan**, **Dwight Johnson**, **Candy Lammers**, **Arthur Masi**, **Millard Pryor**, **Greig Shearer**, and **Tom Wildman**, as reported on page 16.
- ◆ The institution which is perhaps leading the pack in innovative organization change—at least among the larger orchestral organizations—is the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra organization. As described in *Harmony* #7 (October 1998), the PSO began, in 1997, to employ Hoshin, a unique strategic planning technique of Japanese origin. This initial experience soon led to the expanded use of Hoshin. With further experience and practice, the PSO has begun to employ, increasingly throughout its operation, the principles which underlie the Hoshin technique, and some other similar techniques, in such a way that these tenets are now becoming a dynamic part of a new culture developing in the PSO organization. The sense of sustained if not accelerating change taking place in this organization comes through rather clearly in the voices of **Scott Dickson**, **Hampton Mallory**, **Ron Schneider**, **Linda Sparrow**, **Bob Stearns**, **Kathy Kahn Stept**, **Tom Todd**, **Gideon Toeplitz**, and **Rudolph Weingartner**, which are recorded starting on page 24.

On behalf of the Institute and *Harmony's* readers, we thank all of the participants for the concern and time they gave to these three roundtable discussions in

order to better inform others throughout the symphony world about what high-level, interconstituency communication and involvement can do for organizational vitality and participant satisfaction.

Bridging, then squeezing down, and finally eliminating the space between the constituencies of a symphony organization is not easy, and is a process to which too few symphony organizations are seriously committed. The gaps between orchestra and staff, and between orchestra and board, are the widest and most boundaried in most symphony organizations. As I pointed out in my earliest essay in *Harmony* # 1, the separateness of the orchestra from its supporting elements—staff, board, and volunteers—has its roots in the very nature of the art form and its historical development. In this regard, this tendency toward separateness might be considered “natural,” therefore requiring rather unique and creative organizational efforts and structures, if it is to be bridged and overcome. In more than 100 North American organizations this separateness is heightened by an orchestral collective bargaining agreement. In helping to bridge both the natural and the manmade boundaries between these two worlds, and in administering a document which attempts to link them, orchestra organizations have come to depend on the personnel manager, a special role within symphony organizations. Thanks go to **Doug Hall, Llew Humphreys, Jeff Neville, Greg Quick, Carl Scheibler, Linda Unkefer, and Russell Williamson** for informing *Harmony*'s readers about this position and some of the duties and ambiguities their work entails.

After participating in or reviewing these four diverse roundtable discussions, I found myself reflecting on the long journey ahead for organizations which do not aspire to become truly unified communities, and the need to get on with this effort (page 37).

On page 43, we turn to a topic of keen interest to everyone interested in the future development of symphony organizations. Is the audience for classical music shrinking, or, in fact, growing? Are the doom-and-gloom pessimists or the naive optimists right? Not persuaded by the anecdotal sentiments of either camp, **Douglas Dempster**, Dean of Academic Affairs at the Eastman School of Music, has taken a hard look at the numbers. His conclusion is that growth, not decline, has been taking place. Doug is also the director of Eastman's Catherine Filene Shouse Arts Leadership Program, dedicated to more completely preparing students for the real world of the professional musician.

We are pleased once again to bring to our readers' attention the perceptive writings of **Christos Hatzis**. As is noted on page 56, we have excerpted some key points made in a recent Hatzis essay which is posted on his Web site, and thus are initiating a linkage between the pages of *Harmony* and content increasingly appearing on the World Wide Web.

In a further step in initiating a link between content appearing in *Harmony* and that posted on our own Web site, < [www.soi.org](http://www.soi.org) >, we are pleased to present a report looking to the symphony organization of the 21st century. On page 59,

we introduce readers to the main points in this report, which is an amalgam of the contributions of 13 current and former members of the Institute's Board of Advisors. On our Web site, readers will find a complete presentation of the report, which can be easily downloaded and printed for even more careful study, which we hope many readers will wish to do. We believe this report will be especially useful to those involved in symphony organization strategic planning or otherwise interested in the future of symphony organizations. Interspersed with the *Harmony* presentation are various quotations relating to the future environment for symphony organizations.

On page ix, under The Institute, the Internet, and the World Wide Web, we describe various matters which relate to the Institute's own future development.

- ◆ If you are a symphony organization participant, we hope you will take a few moments right now to complete and return (in the postage prepaid envelope) the survey packaged with your copy of *Harmony*. We need your response to better serve you and your organization over coming years. By providing us your e-mail address, you become eligible for a handsome prize. Act now!
- ◆ We go on to outline our plans to publish *Harmony* content increasingly on a dual basis—in the traditional paper printed and mailed form, and also the newer electronic form available for reading, downloading, and printing. Over the longer term, we can envision our Web site becoming an electronic forum for information, discussion, education, and interactivity regarding symphony organizational issues—well beyond the potentials of a periodic print publication.
- ◆ We reiterate the service orientation of the Institute toward symphony organizations which are committed to its aims and efforts, and which signify that commitment by an annual voluntary contribution. More about this continuing focus during 2001 can be found under Distribution of *Harmony* and Institute Support, on page 73.
- ◆ We also announce the formation of the Advocates of Change, reported in more detail on page xiii. This is an association of participants and supporters who believe that symphony organizations must become more effective and high performing, and will only become so if more participants begin to push new approaches. Some 35 people from around North America have coalesced as founders of this group.

Recent developments in the Institute's field activities are reported on page xii. Although the reports are brief, the significance of these activities is large. Some day, out of the Institute's field efforts, and also drawing on the experience being gained in other cities and organizations—be it in Pittsburgh, Portland, Hartford, New Orleans, or elsewhere—I am hopeful that the Institute will be able to bring about a broader understanding of the beliefs, principles, processes, and methodologies that can underpin real transformational change in North American

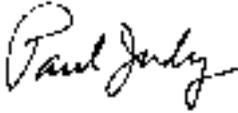
symphony organizations and throughout the field at large. In the meantime, we will continue to work quietly with selected organizations and groups in these efforts to perfect insights and designs. Finally, as noted, the Conductor Evaluation Data Analysis research project has been further delayed, but hopefully will be completed in 2001.

While speaking of commitment to organizational change and improvement, we are very pleased to note that the Institute ended 2000 with some 158 supporting symphony organizations, a new record, including 18 organizations which provided their support for the first time (page xv).

Following past policy, on page 71, we report the Institute's financial operations for the year ended March 31, 2000, and our financial condition as of that date.

Lastly, we are indebted to **Phillip Huscher** for the musical score fragment appearing on our 11th cover and the snippet of orchestral history it symbolizes. Can you diagnose the music? Do you wish to conjecture as to the historical development to which it refers? If you get this one, you are a magician or a genius! See page 39.

All for now. Good reading!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Judy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.