

**Professional Symphony Orchestra Management:
A Melting and Melding of the Polar Caps.**

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Introduction

In the hundred or so years of the development of the symphony orchestra, there have been few changes in the way that an orchestra manages itself in rehearsal and on the concert stage (Roelofs, 2002). There have however been gradual changes taking place in the management systems of all other aspects of running an orchestra. These changes have taken place in response to internal and external pressures and have affected the balance of influence between the players and management in such matters as artistic decision making, performance appraisals, both artistic and administrative, business management and future planning (ibid).

Two Tier Management

Two distinct layers of management exist in a professional symphony orchestra. They do not operate in isolation of each other, but they do deal with different things. As stated in the introduction, the first layer of management is standard in orchestras throughout the world. This is concert platform management, which also applies to rehearsals, (often referred to as platform etiquette) where the conductor is the chief, and the concertmaster is his (in 99% of the cases) senior manager, section leaders are assistant managers, and the rank and file as their title suggests, just that; rank and file, all on the same level. A strict set of rules dictates who may do what, and though these rules are hardly ever written down, players learn them very quickly when they first join an orchestra. Failure to comply results in unmistakable peer disapproval (e.g., a rank and file player may only address the conductor through the principal of the section).

The second layer of management that operates alongside the performance management deals with everything else: hiring/firing, choice of programme, fiscal management, volunteer management, sponsorship, marketing, and operations.

As mentioned above, the first layer of management is standard throughout the orchestral world, but within the second layer there exist 2 polar models. They are the corporate or board on top model, similar to Mintzberg's (1979) "Simple Structure" and "Machine Bureaucracies" organizational forms, and the cooperative or players on top model, equivalent to Mintzberg's (ibid) "Professional Bureaucracy" or "Adhocracy" forms. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, and most other American orchestras are examples of the corporate model while the Vienna Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra are examples of the cooperative model.

The last 10 years have seen an accelerated increase in movement away from the original forms, brought about by a latter day tranche of internal and external pressures. Huge competition for the entertainment dollar, the collapse of the recording industry, the willingness of trusts to fund only those enterprises involving children and education, a move away from authoritarian methods of management, the disappearance of the impresario, (Peterson, 1986), the emergence of the new age conductor, modern industrial negotiations techniques, (Fisher et. al, 1991) are only some of the factors that are contributing to a melt down and reformation of second layer orchestral management worldwide.

While these changes in managerial form are having profound implications for the management of orchestras worldwide, their specific impacts on not only orchestral management, but also the management of like organizations, are not well understood. Even less understood are the implications of these changes for the future—though cooperative structure orchestras are adopting some aspects of the corporate form, and corporate structures allowing players more input, are these changes for the best? Are there better ways that might somehow retain the advantages of the older models that are being overlooked due to the wrong pressures to change having too much power? These are the key issues and questions guiding our project.

Research Design

In New Zealand, the two principal professional symphony orchestras are examples of each of the models, and consequently provide a potentially valuable vehicle for studying these trends. The two orchestras serve the same population of only 3 million inhabitants, in an economic environment that has been the same for both orchestras. Comparatively, Great Britain has a mixture of both models, but there are considerably more variables, there being a much larger more diverse population, and the cooperative orchestras clustered in London.

This paper will focus on the defining points of the pure polar models of second layer orchestral management as an introduction and point of departure into an examination of what is driving change in this second layer of orchestral management in the 21st Century. This examination of the change agents will be preceded by a description of the current state of the management models of the two principal New Zealand orchestras and an examination of their position on the polar continuum, resulting in a discussion of the merits of the principal points of each, and a consideration of alternative forms that somehow bring the two together.

A qualitative, case cluster approach (Eisenhardt, 1989) will be used that draws on three data sources: 1) participant observation data collected when the 1st author was a member of a cooperatively owned professional symphony orchestra for 20 years, 2) interview data collected from stakeholders of 2 symphony orchestras, and 3) historical transcripts and documentation of the polar models collected over this 20 year period. Specifically, studies of current American corporate model orchestras and of British cooperative model orchestras, and of the two New Zealand orchestras will be undertaken.

Defining Points of the Two Polar Models

Cooperative Model

The cooperative or player-owned orchestra is a structure that is as old as the phenomenon of the symphony orchestra as we know it today, with the Vienna Philharmonic formed in 1842, the Berlin Philharmonic in 1882 and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1904.

Some examples of cooperative orchestras are:

- The London Symphony Orchestra
- The Philharmonia of London
- The London Philharmonia Orchestra
- The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- The Vienna Philharmonic
- The Berlin Philharmonic
- The Israeli Philharmonic
- The Colorado Symphony
- The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra
- The Auckland Philharmonia

The essential element is ownership by the players, but after this no two orchestras follow exactly the same formula. All cooperative orchestras elect players from the orchestra to a board, which often but not always includes selected outsiders who can provide expertise in specific areas (e.g., law, finance, marketing). These outside appointments are made to provide guidance, to ensure that management is on track and to give the company respectability in the eyes of funders both private and public. This board is generally charged with appointing a Chief Executive Officer who in turn is responsible for employing the administrative team.

Appointment of orchestral players is almost always the domain of the player core, but variations occur in the degree of involvement of the music director and management. Where the Chief Executive Officer has a musical background, as in the case of the London Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia of London, these Chief Executives (Managing Directors) are often included in appointment procedures.

The Music Director is appointed by the players, but in most cases the Chief Executive is called on to officially make the appointment as many US artists agents will not sign contracts for their conductors if the decision is seen to be the responsibility of the musicians. The players, usually through a player elected committee, handle all discipline and standard of performance issues.

Choice of programme, soloists and guest conductors generally falls to the Chief Executive with input from players through player committees, surveys on past and prospective guests, and always with the ratification of the player core.

The legal framework varies from country to country according to local legislation governing the constitution of entities. The four London orchestras that are cooperatives would now not be legally able to set up as player-owned entities *and* receive funding from its current sources. The Scottish BBC Orchestra recently considered reforming as a cooperative but found that to do so would disadvantage them in various ways, the most important being to deny them access to Arts Council funding.

Pearton describes the formation of the London Symphony Orchestra thus:

“It is important to recall that what the LSO was doing was new in Britain. Formally, the players who appeared on the platform were all shareholders in the company, which saw that they got there. The company, styled “The London Symphony Orchestra Ltd”, became the entrepreneur, the employer of conductors and soloists for its own promotions and the negotiator of terms for its members in concerts sponsored by others. Through their elected Board of Directors, the players took their employment into their own hands and were ultimately responsible for the policies followed.... Other orchestras in Britain have emulated this pattern of relationships, when existing sources of patronage have ceased and players have been driven to reorganize or disband, notably the London Philharmonic in 1939, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in 1963 and the Philharmonia, ...in 1966”(Pearton, 1974, p.29).

The LSO was established as a public limited liability company whose shareholders were the players, each of whom owned 10 \$1 shares out of the pool of 1000 shares. What makes an orchestral cooperative different is that the artistic pecking order is not the same as the management level. i.e. the directors are not necessarily principal players. In other cooperatively owned structures such as law firms or accountancy practices, the governing board is generally made up of the most senior partners.

Orchestras Not Player Owned.

In the pure form these orchestras have a hierarchical structure of board, management, players. The board is put in place by the owners of the orchestra, which is in most cases the state or a trust, and this board appoints a Chief Executive who in turn appoints an administrative team. Either the Board or the Chief Executive appoints the Music Director. The Music Director, usually assisted by a players’ committee, and the Chief Executive appoints players. The Chief Executive and in some cases the Music Director handle all discipline problems. The players, usually through their union, negotiate their pay and conditions with the Chief Executive.

Boards of American orchestras are usually very large, typically in excess of 50, and are quite obviously unable to function as governing boards. Subcommittees are drawn

from the macro board to deal with specific areas, usually at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer. At the 2002 American Symphony Orchestra League Conference in a session led by Charles Olton, President of the American Symphony Orchestra League, it was agreed by those attending the session (board representatives from most American orchestras) that the function of boards of orchestras was to personally make a monetary donation to the orchestra, to embrace change, to help with any changes of vision and leadership, and to engender a creative spirit. Priorities for boards were listed as Money, Audience and Image.

Jeanne Brodeur, a consultant with Wolf, Keens and Co., professional fundraisers, giving a keynote address at the Orchestras 2000-On the World Stage conference in Montreal listed board responsibilities in North American Orchestras as:

- To raise money.
- To protect financial security.
- To fulfill their budget objectives.
- To give a “public” face to fund-raising.

The Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, a Cooperative Orchestra.

Formed in 1980, the orchestra grew out of the ashes of the Symphonia of Auckland, a board directed orchestra. (The Louisiana Phil, the LSO and the Philharmonia of London all became cooperative orchestras after having been board owned orchestras.) The resulting phoenix group from the Symphonia blamed poor management for the demise of the Symphonia. They managed to retrieve the rehearsal hall, the library and some instruments, which were hurriedly put in trust to save them from the creditors on the collapse of the Symphonia. An incorporated society was formed with a constitution that described the structure of the organisation. Only those full time players of the orchestra could be full members of the society. There were to be six officers of the society elected annually by the society who would oversee all aspects of the company operations, monitored weekly in meetings with senior management. Only the elected players, the Chief Executive and Assistant Manager can vote at these Administrative Council meetings.

The Administrative Council is effectively the board of the orchestra, and can make decisions on behalf of the society, but is cognizant of the fact that any decisions they make can be overturned by the society. They are careful therefore to refer important issues back to the society. Such issues might be the appointment of a music director, ratification of full time players, changes to the constitution etc. The full society (all the full time players of the orchestral core) meets monthly but attendance is not compulsory. Administrative Council takes advice on financial and business matters from a Board of Advisers made up of respected members of society. The Society gives the Board of Advisers the power to approve and monitor the annual budget, and to recommend the appointment of a Chief Executive. An Artistic Liaison Committee deals with internal artistic matters when instructed to do so by the Administrative Council. The Auckland Philharmonia has an annual turnover of \$6 million, and receives \$1.3 million from Creative NZ, which is the arts council of NZ.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. (NZSO). A Board Directed Orchestra.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1946 as a national orchestra. Initially under the control of the Broadcasting Corporation of NZ, the NZSO became a limited liability company in 1988 still owned by the government but now funded through the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage. It has more recently been restructured as a state owned enterprise to bring it into line with other government departments. A board of 8 directors is appointed by the Minister of Arts of the Government of New Zealand and is responsible for governing the orchestra. These directors are remunerated and are answerable to the New Zealand Government through the Ministry of Arts Culture and Heritage. A Chief Executive Officer reports to this board and is charged with making all artistic and business decisions, including the appointment of the music director. The NZSO has an annual turnover of \$14.8 million and receives \$10 million from the Ministry of Arts Culture and Heritage.

The players do not have representation on the board, but a players' committee meets with the board before the formal start of each board meeting. The players committee also meets with senior management on a regular basis.

The above descriptions of the 2 New Zealand orchestras are brief, but these sketches will serve to focus a number of issues that confront both orchestras that are reflections of what is happening or has already happened with orchestras of similar structure elsewhere in the world. Drawing on observations of the two New Zealand orchestras and interviews and observations of orchestras in the United States and Great Britain, we have in the next part of this paper discussed changes occurring in both cooperative and non-player owned orchestras.

Reasons Why Player-Owned Orchestras are Moving Away From the Pure Model.

The great dilemma for cooperative orchestras is how to relinquish artistic and administrative management without losing control of those cherished aspects that characterize player-owned orchestras as outlined earlier in this paper. However, the desire to survive has meant the inevitable relinquishment of some aspects of control even in the oldest and most artistically revered cooperatives.

With many mainland European orchestras, there is a rationalizing of funding from governments, and in order to survive, orchestras are being forced to deal with the problem of dwindling audiences. Box office statistics are also an indicator to those funders who require proof that their funds are wisely placed. With this latter day requirement of accountability comes an awareness of the marketplace, the employment of marketing and sponsorship teams and inevitably the influence of these teams on artistic decision making.

Sir Simon Rattle when interviewed by Susan Shineburg on his appointment as Music Director of the Berlin Philharmonic made the statement:

“[the players of the Berlin Philharmonic] wanted to be evangelists as well as priests, to go out there and show people different art forms and reach a

younger audience. They recognised that if they did not do so they might not survive” (Farish, 2002, p.32).

The reasons for relinquishment of governance fall into two categories; those driven by external pressures such as dwindling audiences, and internal or self-imposed factors such as the lack of time in which to manage, which is brought about by the desire to work more “playing calls” which in turn generates more income for the shareholders, who are of course the players. A call is usually a two and a half hour long session of either orchestral rehearsal or performance. The Philharmonia of London works in excess of 600 calls each year which is universally regarded as an enormous load, and hence as a cooperative has had to hand over most of the decision making to their valued and trusted non playing managing director.

The LSO miraculously managed to resist employing management staff for more than 40 yrs. The Auckland Philharmonia employed a management team from the first year of operation, and this team has increased in size commensurate with the orchestra’s growth.

Where the players are confident that the management team is making decisions in the best interests of the players, managers are increasingly able to make decisions on pivotal issues without reference back to the players. This integrity bank is however built over a period of many years and is easily put in overdraft by managers who act outside what they know to be the players’ wishes.

“In some areas, the managing director was more influential than one might have expected in a self-governed orchestra. Although he described himself as ‘employed by the players,’ which was factually correct, he was not driven solely by their instructions. Knowledgeable and well connected in the business, he took responsibility for the great majority of decisions concerning conductors, and with them repertoire, and for a wide variety of income – generating activities, including long-term strategic initiatives” (Maitlis 1997, p.52).

With this greater involvement of professional management teams it is only to be expected that they bring with them management technologies that greatly improve administrative efficiency. Modern, well-trained management teams have proved that they can not only be trusted to manage the affairs of the orchestra according to the wishes of the players, but are often regarded by the players as more competent in dealing with matters that have traditionally been the domain of the players in a cooperative orchestra. Similarly, effective marketers must have input into programming, and though it often takes time to build a trust, the players as owners of the company increasingly understand that market trends must be taken into account. The players are more likely to listen to management if they have had a hand in choosing the management team and have made their choices on the basis of relevant musical experience as well as commercial skill.

Managers of player owned symphony orchestras are often musicians, and their boards are generally player dominated, providing a heavy bias towards artistry rather than commerce. They are driven by the question “what do we want to play that the audience will also like?” whereas with a commercially driven management and board

the question is more likely to be “how popular can we go before the orchestra won’t play it?”

“Everyone in the Symphony wants to have a “good” program. But what defines a “good” program depends on whether individuals are relying on a business or artistic orientation in making their programming decisions” (Ruud 2000, p.128).

In a world of increasing user pays and self-funding, fundraising is a highly technical exercise. The people with the money may not be known to the players, especially if in the case of the Auckland Philharmonia, almost half of the players are from overseas or from other cities. When the Auckland Philharmonia was in its fledgling years, the players of the phoenix group were well known to their audience. The orchestra was building its brand, and often played for little or no fee simply to put themselves in front of their potential audience. Now with a future much more secure, and a staff to take care of dealing with sponsors, donors and the audience, and with an influx of players from out of the audience region, the orchestra is becoming increasingly faceless, and as a consequence the players are losing contact with and control over those areas which are associated with audience interface.

A little more difficult for the players as owners to deal with are the external pressures to relinquish fiscal control. Arts councils, trusts and other distributors of funding require their beneficiaries to account for how funds are spent. Reporting procedures are often complicated, requiring specialized knowledge of accounting systems. Funding officers are better able to satisfy their masters if they can assure them that beneficiary spending is overseen by a board of respectable citizens instructing the beneficiary company....enter the board of advisers, which is generally non musician weighted, with power to distribute funding and monitor budgets.

In 1964, the Arts Council of England in consultation with the London City Council appointed a committee chaired by Arnold Goodman to consider the dire financial situation of the four major London orchestras. One important question asked of the orchestras was “if a subsidy could be found, would the orchestras entertain the idea of a member of the subsidizing body sitting on the board?” Barry Tuckwell, Principal Horn and Managing Director replied that the LSO had always been run by the players and had never had any outside members, but would consider ways and means if a subsidy were found (Pearton, 1974, p.29).

The Philharmonia of London is currently giving up some of its autonomy by putting in place a board as prescribed by the Arts Council of England. This is a trade-off for a substantial annual increase in funding. The Board does have player/owner representation but is weighted in favour of non-player respected members of society who are deemed fit to monitor the distribution of funds from the public purse.

Increased tightness of accountability of how the public purse is spent is not a worldwide trend however. The Berlin Philharmonic has recently had a change in the manner in which it receives its funding from government by becoming a foundation or “Stftung” as apposed to a merely public body. So now rather than having to apply annually for funding from the city-state, it has the security of 4 yr funding, allowing the orchestra greater ability to plan ahead.

Relinquishing fiscal control has an impact on artistic control where a board refuses to fund a particular event because they believe it will fail. In this situation if the board's decision is based on sound marketing advice, the players are more likely to agree, but if there is suspicion that the decision has been influenced by the personal preference of the board members, the fine line that separates cooperative orchestras from corporate structure orchestras has been identified and crossed.

Another form of artistic interference is threatened by the requirements of music directors, visiting conductors and soloists. United States trained Music Directors are not used to working with player owned orchestras and resist being ratified by the players rather than by the Chief Executive and/or the Board of Trustees. In some cooperatives the appointment/reappointment of the music director is openly decided by the players, in others the decision is made by the players and conveyed to the Chief Executive who then takes all responsibility for the contract negotiations, and in others, notably the 2 US cooperatives where the power is vested in the board of trustees to:

- appoint the music director
- appoint the executive director
- approve the budget

In the case of the Louisiana Philharmonic, the board of trustees is made up of 10 players and 14 community members. It may be argued that the Louisiana Phil has positioned itself too far away from the polar cooperative model to be classed as a cooperative.

Player-owned orchestras are characterized by leniency on their members with regard to rigidity of conditions of employment. Both the LSO and the Philharmonia of London have a scheme where some positions are advertised as 50% full time, allowing successful applicants the opportunity to pursue other activities (usually within music, teaching, solo career, chamber music). The very reason that the LSO was formed in 1904 was because Robert Newland and Henry Wood insisted on a 100% attendance from musicians in their newly established Queens Hall Orchestra. The concept of adaptability to suit the players may provide solutions to many of the issues concerning US orchestras currently, notably, the need for musicians to broaden their bases of activity, and the improvement in a musician's job satisfaction as a result of greater involvement in controlling their future.

Ernest Fleischmann in 1989 pronounced the orchestra dead, and suggested replacing orchestras with a "community of musicians" (Fleischmann, 1989, p.65.) to replace the traditional orchestra organisation. It is interesting that Ernest Fleischmann is known for his period of management of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, but he did cut his orchestral management teeth on the London Symphony orchestra, and though the player owned model did not always sit well with Fleischmann's way of doing things, he undoubtedly saw value in many of the ways of the cooperative system in his time with the LSO.

Reasons why non player-owned orchestras are moving away from the pure model.

We propose that non player owned orchestras are moving away from the pure polar model because of a 21st century desire for artistic freedom on the part of the players combined with increasing difficulties that orchestra managers have in balancing the books. These two factors are closely related in that the players increasingly crave involvement in areas that have been in the domain of management in corporate structured orchestras, and management for their part are prepared to trade some of their closely guarded domains of responsibility for the cooperation of the players if this is what it takes to keep the company fiscally solvent.

It is an enigma that in this modern world where individual expression is not only accepted but encouraged that there exist artists' collectives (orchestras) made up of up to 120 highly intelligent university trained artists who do not have any say in their artistic destiny.

“The conservative climate in orchestras is inherently at odds with the nature of artists and with the process of creating art” (Wichterman, 1998, p.47).

Though there are several reasons for the recent drop in the income of orchestras, the fall in box office earnings is key. Funders both private and public are more likely to fund success, and small audiences send clear messages. Driven by the need to sell more tickets, managers have endeavoured to humanize the orchestra. The role of the impresario is indeed an important one in casting magic over an orchestra, but one in need of demythologization. – in line with this the impresario is now more likely to be a young, good looking, healthy “rank and file” player appearing in an advertisement on the back of a bus dressed in conventional concert garb, but in a distinctly human pose.

In order to build audiences of the future and to attract funding from trusts that disperse to creators of programmes for youth education, most orchestras are involved in educational programmes, where again enormous cooperation is required from the players. Asked to step beyond their traditional contractual arrangements, it is unreasonable for management to expect this departure without opening the door to other possibilities such as involvement in artistic matters.

Though some doors into orchestral management are being opened to players, player involvement in artistic matters is never very likely under the baton of a traditional tyrannical conductor. There is a long tradition of the conductor as autocrat, bent on achieving perfection, willing to berate instrumentalists and whip them into performances worthy of the masters, whom, naturally, only the conductor understands. Arturo Toscanini is the most famous embodiment of the despotic conductor, routinely flying off the handle in rehearsals, breaking batons, and leaving the stage in a rage declaring that he would never again conduct such louts. A rare latter day example of tyranny is the recent blow up between the players of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and their conductor of 25 years, Charles Dutoit. In a public statement issued on behalf of the players, Emile Subirana, the president of the Quebec Musicians' Guild, accused Dutoit of treating his players like “battered

spouses”. As soon as the players went public with their complaints the maestro resigned, refusing to even conduct the rest of the season. (Tommasini, 2002)

Though this point deals with podium discipline, the method by which it is achieved is important. If it is achieved through cooperation and friendship rather than threats and menace, this has the effect of freeing up two-way interaction between players and music directors, encouraging at least informal participation in artistic and management affairs. Music Directors who are not tyrants tend to mix more with the players as equals, and it is natural that social conversations include artistic and management issues. This can however also cause marginalisation and resulting ill feeling. The breaking down of the traditional barriers between musicians and conductor has privileged those who cross the barriers, as they will undoubtedly have input into previously inaccessible areas. The new-age conductor must be careful to spread his/her friendship carefully, comprehensively, inclusively, just as a parent with many children must make them all feel equally loved.

Conductors such as James Levine, Michael Tilson Thomas and Esa-Pekka Salonen have shown that fine work can be drawn from orchestras without resorting to tyrannical behaviour. Benjamin Zander, founder and conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, has a number of unusual ways to stimulate his orchestra’s performance. At rehearsals, he puts a blank piece of paper on every musician’s stand. If the orchestra is not happy about something, Zander wants to know. He believes that if the orchestra is not feeling fully empowered, effective or self-expressed, the music will not work. The musicians are also encouraged to write to him if they feel that he has been insensitive (Zander, 1997, p.127).

The much more humanized climate in which orchestras operate has brought other changes, that have in turn opened the door to greater player involvement in areas outside their traditional arena. The manner in which industrial disputes are resolved and conditions are negotiated in the US has undergone vast changes over the last few years. Interest based negotiations have asked the question “is there anything else that you would accept in the place of an increase in salary, because the company really can’t afford to increase your pay?”

Artistic input and some aspects of administrative input are high on the priority lists of players, and under interest-based negotiations are items of negotiation. Traditional negotiating procedures have dealt only with conditions of employment as outlined in player contracts.

Two principal proponents of the opposing styles are Peter Pastreich – Interest based and Leonard Leibowitz – classical. Pastreich believes that interest based bargaining produces healthier relations before, during and after. The 1996/1997 San Francisco Symphony strike which Pastreich believes could have been avoided through interest based bargaining:

- lasted 10 weeks.
- cost musicians \$2m in lost salaries.
- cost SFS \$4m in lost revenue.
- resulted in bitterness that still exists.
- divided the orchestra.
- lost 3800 donors to the orchestra in the following year.

In 1998 the San Francisco Symphony secured the services of an Interest Based Bargaining negotiator who spent 3 months training both parties in Interest Based Bargaining. This resulted in satisfactory outcomes for both parties + \$60m to the endowment over the next 3 years. Leibowitz believes that “straight-line” bargaining works. It doesn’t necessarily involve banging your fist on the table, but if that’s what it takes, then that’s ok. According to Leibowitz there is only one question and that is “what’s the problem?” Leibowitz believes that the problem with Interest Based Bargaining is that mediators, and not union negotiators invented it. Any agreement is a victory for mediators. He believes that the best results come from adversarial negotiations (Williams, conference notes, June 12, 2002).

Other examples of straight line bargaining ending in industrial action are The Syracuse Symphony 1991/1992, The Charlotte Symphony, 1991, The Philadelphia Orchestra 1996, The Toronto Symphony 1999. Both Leibowitz and Pastreich as panelists at the 2002 American Symphony Orchestra League conference were unable to quote examples of strikes that resulted from Interest Based Bargaining. As a consequence players are being offered, and are accepting, more artistic control as an alternative to better pay and conditions, which because of a downturn in orchestral financial health, managements are unable to offer them.

Through increased involvement of players, enlightened managers have seen that musicians are not just valuable as players. The Kansas City Symphony, which grew out of the ashes of the Kansas City Philharmonic when it collapsed 20 yrs ago, attributes much of its latter day success according to Roland Valliere, until recently Exec Director of the orchestra, to the involvement of its players. The orchestra staged popular concerts to attract new audience but had little success in getting transference to its more weighty concerts. It had to do more, and so involved its musicians by co-opting them onto the board and by encouraging them to take part in an artistic leadership committee. In an age of absent music directors and managements and trustee boards with little or no in depth musical knowledge, it makes good sense for artistic committees of players to ensure that the orchestra stays on track artistically. This involvement has an important spin-off for symphonic musicians... that of improved job satisfaction. This is born out in a study comparing the motivation and satisfaction of musicians in 78 American, British, and German orchestras with those of employees in 12 other occupations. Orchestral musicians ranked ninth, behind mental health workers and beer sales and delivery teams in the area of their satisfaction and opportunities for growth. Musicians in string quartets, who are fully involved in every aspect of their art, scored first in all categories (Allmendinger et al, 1996, p.201).

Penelope McPhee Vice President of the Magic of Music Foundation is quoted in International Arts Manager, July/August 2002 “Going Live”

“there can be no transformational change without the involvement of the stakeholders – managements, board members, musicians, audience and music director. But this cannot just be wished into existence; it requires training in appropriate skills and it may well need to become a formal requirement written into job descriptions. McPhee pointed out an irony in this regard. Though musicians are often little involved in planning and

implementing strategic change, they often embody continuity within the organisation more than the people who do have to formulate change strategies. Getting musicians involved is therefore a primary means of ensuring that change programmes do not stall when there are changes at management or board level (Farish, 2002, p.29).

‘Musicians over 40 years of age have served with their present orchestra for an average of 21 years’(Wichterman, 1998, p.37).

In a climate of greater player fulfillment through involvement, there are however signs from both players and managers that not everyone is happy with the trend. Many players in US orchestras most of which are of the corporate structure, resist all attempts to get them deeper involved, perhaps for the reason that their distance from management allows them to attribute blame when management mistakes are made or funding can't be found to pay higher salaries to the musicians.

“By being a part of a decision-making process one loses one's right to appose the decisions that are made. Many advocates of labor rights have thus suggested that employee interests can best be protected through associations such as labour unions or professional bodies that adopt an oppositional role in order to shape policy without owning it” (Morgan, 1996, p.159).

Managers and boards for their part must make sure that offers to players of involvement in artistic and administrative matters is involvement that carries weight and is seen as meaningful to the players:

“We're allowed to choose the color of the wallpaper but little else” is a familiar complaint (ibid)

Boards and managers are aware of their powers especially in the US orchestra job market where good positions are scarce, as this excerpt shows.

A 1: The musicians will not go for this proposal.

B 1: Why not?

A 1: It's not enough money for them. They'll go someplace else.

B 1: Where they gonna go? McDonald's?

Although the statement by this board member may seem a bit crass, in fact, there are few opportunities for musicians to join other symphonies given that the competition for orchestra positions is fierce (for example, when one position opened up at the Pittsburgh Symphony, there were 350 applications, and of these, seventy-five musicians were asked to audition). Consequently, musicians are faced with the prospect of working at the Symphony for less than desirable wages and conditions or pursuing other lines of work” (Ruud, 2000, p.135).

Summary:

This paper set out to locate and discuss trends in the movement of orchestral organisational structures. Though there are definitely changes occurring in both corporate and cooperative structures, there are also factors that are influencing the status quo of both types.

This discussion will hopefully stand as suggestions or questions that will inspire future research. In our research to date we have been interested to find that there are as many variants on the 2 primary structures as there are orchestras.

We were initially drawn into this study by a need to find out how other cooperative orchestras had developed so that the Auckland Philharmonia with which the first author was associated for over 20 years could learn from the flight paths these older cooperatives, which we assumed would have followed common paths. However early in the study it became obvious that the flight path of every orchestra is different. It seems that no two orchestras are exactly alike structurally, and we have found in our many discussions with orchestra managers that most are not particularly interested in how other orchestras work, or how their orchestra differs from others. Perhaps managements are too busy fighting the crocodiles to drain the swamps.

Every orchestra in the world is grappling with the same set of problems and adjusting their set of operating instructions to cope with those problems. Player owned orchestras are better placed to deal with some problems; most notably those that deal with artistic and temporal freedom, where board directed orchestras are better placed to deal with public accountability and respectability. It is obvious however that movement from the polar positions is occurring and that further movement will occur driven by the desire of the orchestra as an institution to survive.

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