Music that Matters
League Conference, May 2015
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The top three issues facing our city are:

1. Poverty
2. Infant mortality
3. Joblessness
How can we make a difference?

Should we play a role?
What is One City, One Symphony®?

- Connect music to themes relevant to our everyday lives
- Inspired by public library “one book” programs
- Objectives have evolved
  - At the core: about access and relevancy
OCOS annual themes have evolved, too

- 2012: Brotherhood/sisterhood (Beethoven 9)
- 2013: Fate and redemption (Mozart *Davide penitente*/Tchaik 5)
- 2014: Heroes (Magnard *Hymne a la Justice*/Mahler 1)
- 2015: Freedom (CSO commissions of Maya Angelou poetry)

- 2015 marked an organizational shift:
  - We let the idea guide the musical choices
  - CSO’s Diversity & Inclusion (board) committee and Multicultural Awareness (volunteer) committee guided theme and poetry selection
OCOS major components

- Community partnerships
- Listening parties
- Starting the conversation
- Access to the live musical experience
- Subscription concerts
Community partnerships

What is a hero? (2014)
Listening parties

- Held throughout the community
- Hosted by musicians, conductors
- Some with live music
- Ladder up to OCOS theme
Starting the conversation

How can the CSO be a hero to our community?
Access: volunteer for a free ticket

- Correlation between arts and civic engagement
- Offered free ticket for volunteering at *any* organization
  - 8 hours for adults; 4 hours for 17 and under
- 128 volunteers gave over 2,000 hours at ~115 orgs
CSO day of service

- Musicians, conductors, staff and audience members volunteered at one of 3 organizations
- Partnered with United Way
OCOS 2015: Poetry contest

- “What does freedom mean to you?”
- Ladders into Maya Angelou commissions and Freedom theme
- Contest open to high schoolers and adults
- Prize money (secured through sponsorship)
The concert experience

“Louis’ Listening Party”
I absolutely loved how Louis deconstructed the piece. What a treasure it was to hear an artist talk about what he sees and hears in the music so that you have the opportunity to go on the journey of discovery with him.

So, so, SO incredibly beautiful! What a treat. Took my 9th, 7th and 3rd graders, and we all loved it. When's the next Listening Party?

I found that I had new appreciation for a piece of music I thought I didn't like.
OCOS impact

- 28% new-to-file returned for something else in same yr
- Over 3 years, 40% of new-to-file have returned
- Higher intrinsic impact measures
  - 64% felt connected to other audience members
  - 81% agreed that they “would be talking about the experience for some time to come”
Old mission statement

Present the highest quality performance of great music, bringing national and international distinction to the orchestra and the community;

Delight and educate diverse audiences of all ages, and enhance the cultural vitality and quality of life in the region;

Operate in a financially sound manner
New mission statement

To seek and share inspiration
New vision statement

We will engage audiences and community better than any other orchestra in the world
MISSION
To seek and share inspiration

VISION
We will engage audiences and community
together better than any other orchestra in the world
Our values

Determined for greatness

A place of experimentation

Cincinnati’s ambassador

Cincinnati’s own
Our theory of change

• We believe our new vision will...
  • Increase our relevancy to more people
  • Deliver more impact to our community
  • Increase base of audiences and supporters
  • Inspire philanthropy
OCOS 2016: where are the intersections?

1. Poverty
2. Infant mortality
3. Joblessness
Where else can we have impact?

- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Health and wellness
- Arts education
- Vibrant neighborhoods and economy
- More connected community
Questions to ask

• What do we believe in?
  • What’s our WHY?

• What does our community care about?
  • What issues is our city facing?
  • Can music play a role?
  • Of healer? Of convener? Of agent for social change?

• Who can we partner with to amplify our impact?
  • Is there a bold arts sector goal?
  • Where can we find inspiration outside the sector?

• What (non-traditional) metrics can we apply to determine our success?
What’s one small experiment with radical intent that we can do today?