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Orchestras

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GETTING REAL ABOUT RELEVANCE

League of American Orchestras

May 27, 2015

Designed and led by Michael Rohd,

for *Center for Performance and Civic Practice*

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*GETTING REAL ABOUT RELEVANCE:
Our value through the eyes of others*

GETTING REAL ABOUT RELEVANCE: Our value through the eyes of others

- How our orchestras can matter more in today's world
- How orchestras can employ the music we make to address community needs
- How orchestras can help provide what the public values
- How we can develop relationships with the community that enable us to be involved in meaningful ways

Relevance —

What does it mean?

What does it take to know
the needs of others?

How do we learn what the
public values?

And...

... In what ways do we listen to the public with the same quality and behaviors of attention we ask them to give us when they are in our spaces listening to our music?

Who is this room?

GEOGRAPHY

SCALE OF ORGANIZATION

JOB/ROLE IN THIS WORK

Hands up if -

You make the art.

Hands up if -

You develop strategies,
write text, or create images
used to persuade / invite
people to attend things.

Hands up if -

You initiate partnerships
in the community.

You maintain partnerships
in the community.

You set ticket prices.

You lead work in
community settings.

You raise money.

You design
education programs.

You manage people.

You are a volunteer
at an orchestra.

You serve on a board.

Let's agree that most of us here, probably agree with the following things, and that we don't need to spend time persuading ourselves of these things —

Music is awesome.

Orchestras are awesome.

*The Cleveland Orchestra is
awesome.*

Really awesome.

*And just so we don't have to talk about or
prove these things —*

*Orchestras can be
transformative and
life-affirming.*

*Virtuosic orchestral
accomplishment is
meaningful.*

*Young people are better off
with arts education and
exposure to great art.*

A successful, visible orchestra makes a place more attractive to companies seeking to attract employees, and aids communities seeking tourist dollars as a part of a comprehensive economic vision.

Communities benefit from successful arts organizations in lots of ways – in economic ways, in social binding ways, in intrinsic value ways — great art makes places more livable and more great.

So we don't need to spend a lot of our panel time today reiterating these things —

So we don't need to spend a lot of our panel time today reiterating these things —

We know these things are true.

I will also suggest

As they are also true in other arts-based not-for-profit sectors in this country — museums, theaters, dance companies...

All the things I just said, things we believe are positives about art, about music, about orchestras in our communities.

And are in collision with some other things we probably agree are challenges —

*Not everyone agrees with us.
And we work on that. A lot.*

-
- Issues of access, including but not limited to cost
 - Issues of culture, such as whether or not people feel included/invited into the buildings and norms of orchestra settings
 - Issues of repertoire, and familiarity, and alienation, and interest, and exposure...

Which brings us back to —

*What does it take to know
the needs of others?*

*How do we learn what the
public values?*

In what ways do we listen to the public with the same quality and behaviors of attention we ask them to give us when they are in our spaces listening to our music?

So, to have a conversation about relevance, about community needs, about authentic relationships that extend beyond our organizations, we have four amazing folks here to help us address questions of...

listening.

How do we know when we're listening well?

How do we continue to embed the great work we do (as well as develop new work and practices) in true response to what we learn, not just what we assume we know?

How do we tell the story of how
and why we matter, and what
work do we have to do to to
matter more?

I am going to ask some questions.

I am going to keep time.

*And we up here, together, are going try
and make this a dialogue more than a
series of monologues. We will try and
model listening, and see if we can
surprise each other —*

perhaps even discover a thing or two.

listening.

CHRISTOPHER ALVARADO

*Executive Director,
Slavic Village Development*

BETH MOONEY

*Chairman and CEO,
Keycorp*

ARMOND BUDISH

Cuyahoga County Executive

ALISA WEILERSTEIN

Cellist

ALISA WEILERSTEIN

(Internationally Renowned Cellist whom you just heard play some pretty outstanding music with the Youth Orchestra)



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