

July 17, 2017

This edition of the Update newsletter includes reflections and recaps on EDCE sessions from the League's 2017 Conference in Detroit (click [here](#) for the constituency agenda with descriptions). Writers in this issue are:

- Fiona Harvey, Association of British Orchestras
- Deanna Sirkot, Alabama Symphony Orchestra
- Laura Reynolds, Seattle Symphony
- Caitlin Daly, New Haven Symphony Orchestra
- Jessica Ingraham, St. Louis Symphony
- Jon Weber, Chicago Symphony Orchestra



### **Detroit Rising - Transformation in American Orchestras**

by Fiona Harvey, Education and Youth Ensembles Consultant  
*Association of British Orchestras (ABO)*

This was a Conference of two firsts for me – my first time attending the League of American Orchestras Conference and my first visit to Detroit. My expectations were of a Conference three times larger than the ABO's and the possibility that it would be difficult to meet people who work in the same area of orchestral management as me. The half-day session on Monday 5 June, 'Orchestras in Response', was therefore a useful and welcome opportunity to meet Education and Community colleagues, as well as to hear about, and discuss, some of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing American orchestras. I was immediately struck by some familiar issues: the challenges of building meaningful partnerships with other organisations; understanding each other's values; agreeing on shared objectives; working on projects that try to meet the evolving needs of the participants and their communities; advocating for the benefits of music as a core subject in the education system, and evaluating the impact of such projects.

The main differences are in the arts funding environment and our public education systems. The UK does not yet have such a high proportion of philanthropy and its associated tax relief incentives. Since 2002, the UK has had a national curriculum in which music is a compulsory subject between the ages of 5 and 14. Like my British colleagues, the American orchestras' Directors of EDCE like to share their experience, explore new ideas with each other and find solutions to common problems. Although already feeling the effect of jetlag, I enjoyed hearing the presentations on Monday afternoon and the ensuing discussions. I hope that we can welcome EDCE colleagues to the ABO Conference in January 2018 and that I will return next year, with some British colleagues to continue sharing and hopefully developing collaborative international projects. Thanks to the League for enabling my attendance and to all the EDCE Directors for making me feel so welcome at my first Conference.



### **Mission Driven Partnerships**

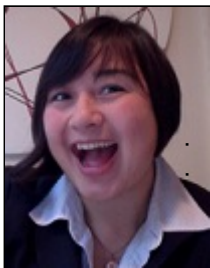
by Deanna Sirkot, Education Manager  
*Alabama Symphony Orchestra*

In my experience, it is easy to become preoccupied with the finer details of community partnerships. While this type of work is important and necessary, the EdCE Half Day session, "EdCE in Response," taught us that these details are only part of the equation. As we discussed and listened to successful examples of community partnerships, a common thread appeared: a shared goal is the cornerstone of successful community

partnerships. This goal must always remain at the center of the partnership, and orchestras must adapt to the circumstances of those to whom we cater our programs.

The speakers at this session showed us their processes for building these partnerships. Facilitated by Jennifer Harrell, the Half Day session led us first through the questions that orchestra staff had asked before beginning successful education initiatives. What are the components of successful partnerships? What might be some "red flags"? Afterward, presentations by Sarah Ruddy from Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra and Terry Wolkowicz from New Bedford Symphony Orchestra emphasized the importance of finding common ground and clearly defining a shared goal. Jessi Ryan from the Minnesota Orchestra demonstrated that successful partnerships are malleable and continuously align to the needs of each partner. Later Caen Thomason-Redus of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra opened our eyes to opportunities for partnerships not only with *outside* entities but also to opportunities that engage the *internal* facets of our organizations. The ingenuity of these programs along with engaging discussions with my peers inspired in me a new view of community partnerships. Although there were many emulable initiatives and methods of implementation, this session encouraged us to adapt our programs to our communities' unique situations. As long as we ensure that a shared goal is at the center of our work, we could positively affect our target audience.

The exchange of ideas at my first League conference encouraged mutual support and proved that our network of resources is vast and ready to assist as we build our own partnerships back home. Thank you to those who shared their work at the Half Day.



### **Messaging Matters**

by Laura Reynolds, Director of Education & Community Engagement  
*Seattle Symphony*

Presenters:

Gabrielle Poshadlo, Communications Manager, Bedrock Detroit  
Rosalie Contreras, VP Communications at Seattle Symphony

This session focused on strategies for developing a strong and healthy partnership between Communications and Education & Community Engagement departments. The presenters shared specific tactics, [frameworks](#), and a case study to demonstrate ways to apply communications planning to effectively share stories about Education & Community Engagement work. Here are some highlights:

#### Elements of Communications Planning

These are some key questions and specific information that would be helpful to gather and prepare for a conversation with the Communications team.

- **Overview:** What is the project and why does it matter? What resources are we putting towards this project?
- **Realistic Goals:** What do we want people to know and think about the project, and what do we want them to do as a result of learning about it?
- **Measurable Objectives:** How will we know we have succeeded at a particular project?
- **Sound Strategies:** Who are the most strategic audiences for our orchestra? What are our key messages for each of these audiences? Timing is everything.
- **Proven Tactics:** Which vehicles will be most effective for accomplishing everything above?

#### Unique Challenges in Education & Community Engagement Communication

Some items to consider when partnering with Communications and with the community.

- Partner relationships and expectations
- Navigating nuances in language
- Building internal awareness and getting "airspace"
- External profile

#### Best Practices

- Use the right tool for each audience
- "Engagement before information"
- A picture is really worth a thousand words
- Lead with compelling stories
- Minimize jargon
- Continually collect participant quotes, stories and photos

- Bring people with you to witness your work in progress, not just the final result
- Repetition is key

### Tactics for creating a happy, healthy PR/EDCE relationship

At the Seattle Symphony, the EDCE and PR teams meet every other week to share notes about upcoming projects, coordinate timing on photography and press, and to brainstorm about potential stories. The EDCE team invites PR to join in on planning meetings with partners and they often observe or document the actual process of the work, not just the final product. This helps us:

- Continuous informal dialog
- Understanding each other's priorities
- Goal alignment
- Diversify your projects
- Try collaborating during the design phase
- Consider communications goals in programming budgets



#### **Tech Review**

by Caitlin Daly, Education Director  
New Haven Symphony Orchestra

The “Technology Responds” seminar that Ted Wiprud, Vice President of Education at the New York Philharmonic, ran was a great introduction to several different tools that orchestras have created to help audiences in different capacities. Ideas were wide-ranging and included many different formats: podcasts, video games, websites, and even Virtual Reality (shared by our colleagues at the L.A. Philharmonic). Perhaps the biggest takeaway for me was that there are a wide variety of technological resources that any orchestra has access to. You don’t necessarily have to be the orchestra that *created* the content...you just have to know where to look! That thought also makes it tantalizing to listeners – for example, podcasts and webcasts can be created and listened to *anywhere*, unlike the concert hall where you must be present to experience the music.

I think that I was most excited about the Virtual Reality ideas and what the future can hold for them. When I think of someone like my father, who is the biggest fan of classical music (but has no musical background whatsoever!), and picture him physically experiencing what it’s like to be in the orchestra or up close to the L.A. Philharmonic’s Maestro Dudamel as he conducts, it makes me smile to think that he can experience music in a different way than just sitting down and listening. I can’t help but think about what the future of this could mean for audience experiences; is it possible to feel what it’s like to sit next to a concertmaster? Or conduct a whole orchestra? Or experience music with colors or animation? The possibilities seem endless, and the numbers of people who would be interested in music now that they could *experience* it differently seem infinite.

Here are links to the technology discussed:

#### **Video Games/Apps/On-line Games**

[Weill Institute/Carnegie Hall](#)

[New York Philharmonic](#)

[Philharmonia UK – The Orchestra App](#)

[Philadelphia Orchestra - LiveNote](#)

[Royal Scottish National Orchestra – 360 Live](#)

#### **Podcast**

[New Haven Symphony Orchestra – “Listen UP!”](#)

#### **Webcasts**

[New York Philharmonic – YPC Play!](#)

[Detroit Symphony Orchestra - Webcasts](#)

## Virtual Reality

### [LA Philharmonic – VAN Beethoven](#)

As a first-time conference attendee, I couldn't have walked away with a bigger smile on my face. I just finished my second season as the Education Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra in Connecticut, and am still amazed that this field exists and that I'm somehow in it. Taking the leap from the classroom to the Orchestra staff was the best move I ever made! Everyone in the EdCE group made me feel so welcome and offered really helpful suggestions, answers, and new ideas to consider. I'm looking forward to hopefully attending the conference every year, and keeping up with the wonderful colleagues and new friends that I made!

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### **Under Development**

by Jessica Ingraham, Director of Education  
St. Louis Symphony

We've all been there. We identify a need, develop a solution, and then progress comes to a halt. Moving from the program development phase to the program funding phase can be a tough transition. So how do we navigate this transition? The Nashville Symphony, through a case-study of their newest signature program, [Accelerando](#), illustrated their process to the EDCE Constituency Group.

The panel included Nashville Symphony's President and CEO, the Director of Education and Community Engagement, and two members of the philanthropy department. As the case study unfolded, two overarching concepts became apparent. First, Nashville Symphony's CEO understood the need and made the solution an *institutional priority*. Institutional priority meant that even if additional funding sources could not be secured, the institution would still be committed to funding the program. Second, *institutional collaboration* drove the project's development. As an institutional priority, *Accelerando* was built by a cross departmental team. This collaborative team approach paid off for the Nashville Symphony in the form of a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

As the session ended, I found myself analyzing my programming portfolio and the ways in which I work and communicate with the philanthropy department at my home orchestra. Here are a few of the questions the philanthropy team from the Nashville Symphony left me working to answer. I hope these questions will help you to begin exploring your programming portfolio and how you effectively communicate with your philanthropy department:

Is the programming central to our strategic plan and is it central to the core of our institution's priorities? If so, how?

Where are we currently? Where do we want to go? And what do we need to get there?

How do we talk about our program portfolio? What are the key elements or threads that tie the programming together?

How is the EDCE team involved in stewardship? How and what is being communicated with our donors? (The Nashville Symphony's Impact Reports driven by the EDCE Team demonstrate how donor money is being used.)

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### **From Detroit...to Chicago**

Jon Weber, Director of School and Family Programs  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

The articles above reveal the many ways that our annual Conference is meaningful. Convening around topics of common interest and challenge inspires dialogue and creativity. In some cases, we leave with resources and ideas that we can immediately put into practice; in others, it is a curiosity, an insight, or a healthy nudge to think differently about how we do our work that may take years to unfold. Surrounding the professional learning are relationships with wonderful, extraordinarily devoted, and empathetic colleagues, who become friends and resources for years to come.

My time at Conference always refreshes my understanding of the ways that our institutions are essential contributors to the vibrancy of our communities. The Detroit Symphony Orchestra is an absolutely fascinating example. And, while many of us may not live in a city with the unique identity and challenges that Detroit has, we should all note the creativity and persistence of the musicians, staff, board, and donors and the unique collaborative relationships with the Detroit community that have transformed the organization.

Many thanks to the staff of the DSO for welcoming us into your home; to all of the presenters and members of the EdCE leadership committee who contributed to an engaging set of sessions; to those who have shared their reflections in this newsletter; and to the staff and volunteers of the League, especially Najean Lee, who worked to ensure our experience in Detroit was smooth, comfortable, and meaningful.

Finally—and especially if you weren't able to attend Conference—please stay engaged with us over the course of the season ahead! [League360](#) is a great hub of conversation. Mentorship opportunities and a series of peer calls will be announced in August. And mark your calendars for next year's Conference, June 13-15, 2018 in Chicago! Here's a [sneak peek](#) from the City of Broad Shoulders.

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