

August 4, 2016

This edition of the Update newsletter brings you a few reflections and recaps on EDCE sessions from the League's 2016 Conference in Baltimore (click [here](#) for the constituency agenda with descriptions). Writers in this issue are:

- [Alex Laing, *The Phoenix Symphony*](#)
- [Stanford Thompson, *Play On, Philly!*](#)
- [Jessica Leibfried, *Minnesota Orchestra*](#)
- [Liz Youker, *Kalamazoo Orchestra*](#)
- [Karli Larsen, *Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra*](#)
- [Lindsay Bartlett, *Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra*](#)
- [Aimee Halbruner, *Richmond Symphony*](#)
- plus [Conference Materials & Final Thoughts](#)

Guest Reflection

by Alex Laing, principal clarinet
The Phoenix Symphony
[The Leading Tone](#)

I was in grad school when I first heard the phrase "community engagement." This was in the late nineties, and the shift from calling these practices "outreach" to "community engagement" was just starting to take hold. That shift resonated with me – both the impact on the practice (from outreach to community-engaged) as well as the fact that there was a search for the right language.

The idea of community-engaged music making was exciting to me because it showed me a framework to practice western classical music in a way that was more useful to more people. It inspired me and was a big part of how I was able to envision a whole practice for myself – one in which music and community and Blackness were more intertwined.

I would use more than my fair share of space if I listed all of the take-aways that I gathered during the conference, but a couple stand out:

- The Minnesota Orchestra's decision to move ticket taking from the entrance to their lobby to the entrance of the hall itself. As I understood it, this allows people without tickets to participate in pre-concert activities and socializing in their lobby. What struck me was how this hack was elegant in its simplicity and opened up more of their organization to more people.
- At some point during the constituency meetings, Leni Boorstin from the LA Phil said, "we want to go from having programs to affecting systems." For me, this aspiration – while far from simple in its implications – is an inspiring challenge.

Community engagement is part of my aesthetic as an artist, not something that is overlaid on top of my aesthetics. The time I got to spend with Education and Community Engagement folks was a highlight of my time at the League conference. Thanks.

What the talent pipeline looks like for students of color

by Stanford Thompson, Executive Director
Play On, Philly!; Chairman, *El Sistema USA*

To address the systemic issues in American orchestras regarding diversity and inclusion, we must begin by addressing a student's first step in the process towards artistic mastery: early—and equal—

access to quality music education. What happens to a student of color when those entrusted with the task of inspiring, encouraging, and mentoring them do something—purposefully or unintentionally—to disenfranchise that student? What steps do youth education groups take to protect these students from prejudices or unintentional biases held by those put in place to help them?

Within the past fifteen years, I have experienced discrimination and lack of cultural sensitivity as a student in the top high school programs throughout the United States, at one of the top conservatories in the world, and on the professional performing circuit. Within the past five years, I have watched dozens of my students of color experience the same issues. What happens when parents in the youth orchestra do not want their child hanging out with the "urban kid" who dresses in hoodies and wears baggy jeans? What happens when your student has earned a higher seat in the ensemble, but you know the parent who has paid full freight for the past three years demands that their child sit higher since they have been in the ensemble longer? How do you address the highly regarded private teacher in town who doesn't encourage and support your student of color as much as his/her "favorite" in their studio?

There are many steps in the talent pipeline that are full of obstacles for any student, regardless of color or economic status. No student can do it alone. Being aware of every student's challenges while actively and consistently providing support is the only way that we will help young musicians earn a place at the very top of their profession. The process of diversifying the pipeline begins the moment a student of color picks up the instrument, and it is at its most fragile each time that student is put into the care of someone else. Our work to explore our own unintentional biases and educate ourselves about the challenges faced by our students, must be intentional and strategic to ensure that they receive equal opportunities to grow through failure and success.

How do we differentiate authentic community engagement from audience development?

by Jessica Leibfried, Director of Education and Community Engagement
Minnesota Orchestra

As the designated "note-taker" for our EDCE Constituency table, it was my task to capture the conversation taking place on the topic of how to differentiate authentic community engagement (often led by EDCE departments) from audience development experiences (often spearheaded by marketing departments).

The hour was split into two sessions and the first group began discussing how to define the following words: "community impact," "community engagement," and "audience engagement." The second group reviewed these definitions and then pondered how to use them within the orchestral organization to not only define whether something is marketing driven or education driven but to aid in internal conversations related to evolving the culture of orchestral performances. Essentially, what the group was asking was "How can well-defined elements of education and engagement be used as a tool to promote systems change within your orchestra?"

Although there is too much information to mention here in this brief article, listed below are some EDCE colleagues who mentioned work that their orchestra is doing in terms of inter-departmental collaborations or shifting internal communications systems:

- Consider contacting The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra if you're interested in their "town hall" meeting forum that provides a space to talk about issues just like these with both musicians and staff present
- Reach out to Milwaukee if you're interested in their new department of "shared experiences" that provides an example of interdepartmental work
- Send a note to Cincinnati if you're interested in how their new "Audience Engagement Director" position came to fruition
- Check out the place-based initiatives happening in your own community! Recommended by Ayanna Hudson, Arts Education Director for the NEA, [these examples](#) may be helpful as you define what engagement means for your institution.
- Feel free to contact me at the Minnesota Orchestra for info on our OH+ program—it's our hallmark interdepartmental program, diversity and inclusion program and audience development program.

There are many other wonderful examples of work being done and each year, the League reminds us that we are not alone, and a conversation with a colleague is only a phone call away. Many of

my colleagues remarked at how Marin Alsop made us feel like a family during the BSO concert. I would add that the EDCE group always makes me feel like I'm part of a family. Looking forward to seeing you next year!

Education Roundtable: technology

by Liz Youker, Vice President, Education and Community Partnerships
Kalamazoo Orchestra

Education colleagues enjoyed a lively discussion of technology during the roundtable session on the final day of conference. Several topics of shared interest rose to the surface.

Foremost, we recognized the need in our field for effective software, along the lines of Tessitura or Arts Vision, but tailored to our specific educational needs. Many of us have experienced the launch of a major new software program within our organization, beautifully tailored to ticketing and donor relations, with hopes for extended functionality that will make our work easier, only to find our needs put on the back burner due to cost and awkwardness of fit with the overall purpose of the software. While many colleagues are finding ways to put OPAS, Tessitura, Arts Vision, Salesforce and other existing systems to use for certain aspects of education, the limitations are frustrating. We still reach for a variety of free resources such as Google Calendar, Google Forms, and Survey Monkey to cover the gaps. The group was enthusiastic about the idea of coming together to approach programmers from leading companies about developing effective Orchestra Education modules, not offered as an expensive add-on, but packaged with the software up-front. None of us envision a magic solution, but we all need workable school databases and friendly registration systems that connect to calendars and communication tools for confirmations, reminders, surveys and more.

In the realm of curriculum materials, as classroom technology improves, we are responding with exciting up-to-date formats. While many teachers still prefer print materials, the increase of technology in the classroom has prompted a shift from static to interactive presentation. Colleagues are doing interesting work with Interactive PDFs, PowerPoints, and Smart Board designs, increasingly accompanied by online listening and video such as Spotify and YouTube channels. It goes without saying that strong partnerships with music teachers are key to staying on top of these developments and using classroom technology to the fullest.

More and more orchestras are looking for ways to get beyond the concert hall through streaming and conferencing, and the group had great suggestions for tools. From Skyping for free, to subscription services such as PolyCom, orchestras are finding ways to reach across the community or across the world. Colleagues recommend Adobe Connect for video, document and screen sharing, and Fuze as an inexpensive service for videoconferencing to which only the host needs to subscribe. For file sharing, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox and SharePoint are widely used.

Speaking of technology—how about the improvements to the [Education listserv](#)? It is now much easier to initiate, respond to and track conversations. Let's all put it to good use and stay connected!

Education Roundtable: statement of common cause

by Karli Larsen, Director of Education
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

In response to the nationwide decline of music education, the League's [Statement of Common Cause](#) was drafted in February 2007 by over 50 education directors from professional and youth orchestras, and is currently endorsed by over 250 organizations. The statement, "Orchestras Support In-School Music Education", says that while the educational activities of orchestras, such as school-day and family concerts, small ensemble performances, residencies, after-school programs and more provide valuable experiences and allow young people to develop a lifelong relationship with music and the orchestra, these programs are not capable of replacing a standards-based K-12 music education.

The statement serves as an important advocacy piece for the League, as it demonstrates American orchestras' support for in-school music education rather than supplanting dedicated music teachers. As a local example, when the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and other arts organizations were asked by the superintendent of our school district to help fulfill a "standard of care" for their students

by providing in-school music and art instruction, we were able to use the Statement of Common Cause as reason to decline such a partnership. That the Statement is supported by a coalition much larger than just the MSO education staff was key in this delicate discussion, and it allowed us to frame a conversation about how the orchestra best supports K-12 music education.

With the new education law and trends, the time is ripe to update the Statement of Common Cause, and craft it into a useful more useful guiding document for advocacy and overall efforts with specific areas of concern. At our roundtable discussion, some of the concerns that came up include:

- Schools with the highest levels of poverty are the least likely to offer in-school, comprehensive music instruction, leaving our most vulnerable populations with an incomplete education.
- The extended school day is becoming more knitted to the regular school day, increasing potential opportunities for students to participate in music making.
- Appropriate measures of quality for music teachers as teacher effectiveness and evaluation protocols are being developed state-by-state.
- Professional development is vital for all instructors to become truly transformative educators.

While the original statement was primarily written to show support for in-school music educators, an updated version could highlight the benefits of arts education in more depth. The [“shared endeavor”](#) Venn diagram is a useful graphic that could be embedded within the Statement to show the clearly defined roles that different educators play in providing arts instruction, and how we can work together to advance a child’s well-rounded education.

Renewing and resetting

by Lindsay Bartlett, Community Partnerships Manager
Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra

I've been with Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra for three years now, and have been lucky enough to attend conference since 2014. There are so many wonderful takeaways each year, but for me what's most important is the renewed energy and passion I bring back with me. It's so easy to get stuck in the daily grind of our jobs - the one principal that never returns an email, the musician we just can't keep happy, and the stack of surveys that still need to be entered. Although those elements are frustrating, they are such a small part of what we do. When we can take time to look beyond all of that and think about the bigger picture, we can brush off the frustrations and monotonous daily chores much more easily. Returning from the EDCE constituency sessions is like hitting reset - it's the start of a new year and everything is fresh and renewed.

This year's conference was particularly inspiring for me. Lincoln, NE is not what most would consider to be an ethnically diverse community. Closing in at 90% white and being a university town, it's easy to forget that the struggles with race are happening all around us, even if not as obvious as in places such as Baltimore. Participating in round table discussions, hearing from organizations across the country on unique projects, and learning more on how to have hard conversations surrounding race helped me to reflect on what I can be doing to deal with issues effecting my own home. As a small per-service orchestra we have many limitations with what our reach can be, but that shouldn't prevent me from trying or from asking the hard questions.

Keeping the conversation going

by Aimee Halbruner, Director of Education & Community Engagement
Richmond Symphony

One of the most important skills that you learn as a student musician is the importance of looking ahead. So, as life-long students of music, the EDCE constituency group spent some time at the end of conference looking ahead to the 2016-17 season. But whether or not you were able to attend conference this year, there are still plenty of opportunities to jump into the conversation, stay in touch, or share your experiences with colleagues around the country.

This fall, be on the lookout for announcements from Najean about EDCE Peer Calls. Topics suggested at conference are:

- CBA – Understanding and managing musician services
- Technology: systems and services

- How to build community buy-in
- Tips for engaging new communities when you don't have an "in"
- Strategies for Parent Engagement
- Follow-up on ESSA: **Scheduled for October 14, watch for the sign-up coming soon!**
- Creating connections with teachers
- Update on Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives – how it's going
- Leveraging board/education/community committees
- Tutorials on getting the most out of League 360

Our constituency group is dedicated to continued professional development and staying in touch throughout the year: if you're new to the field (or just want someone to bounce ideas off) consider signing up for an EDCE Mentor; circulate questions or ideas on League 360; participate in peer calls. Please let us hear from you, have a great year, and we'll see you next spring in Detroit!

Conference materials and final thoughts

Action is happening now at the state and local levels to set new education policies in response to our nation's new education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act. Find out how your orchestra can be involved through our [ESSA Resource Center for Orchestras](#), which we will continue to build out as more resources become available and the law is implemented. Also, mark your calendars for National Arts in Education Week, which takes place September 11-17, 2016! Queue up some photos, videos, and anything else that promotes how your orchestra supports arts education - particularly in partnership with your local schools. Include the tags #artsedweek and #artsed, tag the League if you're on Facebook, or if you're on Twitter, include @OrchLeague – we'll repost and share selected items throughout that week, and we'd love to see orchestras raise the visibility of arts education all the way through the 17th!

Please visit the [League's Conference 2016 webpage](#) to find links to some powerful videos of session speakers and selected resources. If you have questions or suggestions for next year's EDCE Conference sessions, or would like to learn more about the constituency, feel welcome to reach out to any of your colleagues on the [Leadership Committee](#) or contact [Najean](#), your constituent liaison.

Hope to see you next year!

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