

4/8/21.

League of American Orchestras

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>> (Waiting for audio) .

>> Thank you so much, Lee Ann. Thank you, everybody, and welcome to Orchestrating a Better Future. It's wonderful to see everyone's names in chat. Today our time together is going to be spent talking about National Alliance for Audition Support, the -- behind organizing the effort. I think more importantly the methodology behind best practices and ways which we can work together toward a more vibrant and representative future. Just as Lee Ann mentioned, it's a collection of organizations who have come together to get this effort off the ground, three and a half years ago, seed support from the Melon Foundation. To talk a little bit about our work thus far, besides the importance of developing these guidelines, and important best practices, I thought I would share some of the success stories. I think we can all use a bit of good news on a day like today.

I think most recently, I want to say that one of the ways in which NAAS has been able to -- we held the -- competition that (inaudible) more than 100 auditionees that were competitively selected, and we had 75 partner orchestras who participated in the auditions of which we had 15 jurors who adjudicated each audition, made the selections, and we had about 540 listeners representing our partner orchestras who joined the several days of auditions to also participate and audit the competition and get to know these incredibly well prepared -- emergent artists who are seeking a pathway into careers on American orchestral stages. What is really important about this most recent effort is that we expect there will be 75 weeks of paid work that will be offered and orchestrated, no pun intended, by our orchestral partners and coordinated by Sphinx. We awarded about 17,000 in prizes. And there were about 19 prizes in total awarded in all instrument categories and divisions. So, for -- it's important, because what we are trying to do is go beyond the support mechanisms and go beyond the coaching and mentorship, which -- taken advantage of, money is important, but at a time like ours, when there is not a ton of auditions, we are looking for other ways and new methodologies that we can pilot together and implement. When we are ready to return to stage together, we can actually look back and say we have really looked at different methodologies which really has resulted in change. And really helped us look at

a better and more representative stage and really created work opportunities for our artists. Overall, NAAS, in terms of its work over the past two and a half to three years, we have had 45 cumulative placement within America orchestras through the participating roster of the musicians, there are currently 103 partnering orchestras for NAAS, which is important, from the inception of this program, we knew we could not do this work alone, it would only generate impact if we do the work together in partnership with -- I don't mean just folks who are signing checks, but folks sitting behind the stage with us and figuring out how do we implement change and how do we go beyond these focus groups and committees and in different conglomerate of people who are generally like-minded and would like to see change, but aren't able to push change forward. In that way, I think NAAS is particularly unprecedented in that it has gathered people of different walks of life and industry who are able to talk about the difference and push progress forward. We are proud to acknowledge those 103 orchestras who have joined us in this effort. And it really started small, about 10 in the first year and then we saw this precipitous growth, which is really fantastic. We have been able to award almost 400 awards totaling nearly 350,000 since the inception of this program, and there are a total of almost 260 alumni of this effort overall. So, this is a group of artists who we are working with. I'm mentioning these numbers

not simply to provide a score card, but to mention that there are at least that many musicians who are actively interested and pursuing a career toward a life in American orchestra. It's something for us to feel encouraged about, it signals to us that orchestras are important, timely and important, and there is not only interest amongst the musicians of color, but also readiness and a process which is preparing these musicians for these placements. So, I think all of those elements together comprise good news. It's now about, what are we doing to engage these musicians, since we know that they are competitive and interested. And we also know on top of that, there's 103 orchestras who are generally thinking they want to be a part of it. How do we come together and really -- change forward and generate different mechanisms of results which are going to ensure that change is last and notable and significant. So kind of, with that overview in mind, I would like to now pause and invite Tito Munoz and in this our midst here and talk about the importance of not only NAAS and its existence, but also the importance of the most recent effort which is the guidance for the new audition (inaudible) which is filling out essentially ways in which orchestras can implement change toward a more representative musician body.

>> Thank you, such a pleasure to be here with all of you, and to speak to you, so wonderful to see so many people in the chat

observing this talk. NAAS has been a really -- it's been, as Afa has mentioned an unprecedented project, thinking about what the orchestra can be in the future and how diversity, equity and inclusion is such a huge part of that, what are the barriers that people are facing getting into orchestras, maybe dispelling some of the myths that we are all believing as far as our audition in and tenure guidelines. It's a really, really important aspect and important resource to provide folks opportunities to be able to have a say and have a seat at the table. And actually have these really, really difficult discussions, these discussions that are ongoing, always fluctuating always evolving, we are always learning new things about ourselves, about our own biases, thinking about how things should be done. It's important that we can come together in a respectful and collegial and professional way, mix all of our experiences together., and coming to the table with a lot of goodwill. And that's been really, really an important thing for all of us is making sure this is coming from a place of goodwill and wanting to see everything improve, wanting to make our industry better, more inclusive, more welcoming, while at the same time making a very -- keeping an importance of artistry. I see Joe mentioning -- thank you for that.

And I wanted to also speak about the experience that we had in creating these guidelines. You know, each one of us on this committee comes from, as Afa said, a give walk of life, a different

aspect of this industry. Myself being a conductor, being a gate keeper, so to speak, a big part of the audition process, but also all the folks who are part of this, who are thinking about this, who are in the contract negotiations who are hearing what the musicians are thinking about these things, it was so important that we had such a diverse pool of people with a lot of experience to come together and think about what these guidelines could, should, and should be, and how they can really, really start a conversation. And that's really what the document's purpose is, is to get a lot of us together, agreeing to some language to begin a conversation so that we can actually start implementing change, start implementing change in a really, really positive and meaningful way.

So, with that, I just wanted give you a brief context, irrelevant wanted to invite John and Meredith, and I will leave it to both of you to tell us about it and walk us through the document, thank you, all.

>> Thank you, Tito, so much. And Meredith and I will tag team through the guidelines, and (inaudible) say that it was a great honor to co-chair this with Meredith. I think that there is, oh, we add that NAAS, at NAAS are working hard to prepare people and to give them what they need to be excellent members of your orchestras and ensembles, however if we can't come to an agreement about the process how it works, some of us feel

that our work is not complete. So, the way to tag team with us, I think Meredith, you are going to come on and turn your camera on -- there she is. Excellent. Just to start off with, to go past the preamble, which we hope that you all have had a chance to read, there is there are some elemental principles that this great committee put together in terms of some thinking about it, and I think the first and foremost one that we all talked about is that it's really important to get everybody on the same page, and that's the number one in this list, it's very important to have everybody sort of understand not only the ethos of the orchestra's ensemble and what the community is like and to have some substantive discussions and active items coming from the discussions about how one orchestra or ensemble might be reflective of their community. That's number one. Number two, we also felt that, you know, the anti-racism, implicit bias, group communication skills were essential. Obviously it's great for the whole orchestra, but in particular, for the audition committees. And for the tenure committees to understand what -- how bias plays into one's decision making. And I know that there are, of course, programs by the league to help sort of create the -- or provide funding for that. So I really, all of us on the committee felt that was important, that be included in your -- in sort of the skill building system.

So, Meredith, I will hand you over to number three.

>> Thanks, John, hello, everyone. I just want to echo John's words. What a wonderful experience it was working with this group. Very collaborative and really articulate people. And I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to do this. So, on number 3, setting time bound benchmarks, we all know nothing gets done unless it's marked in your calendar. So I think we have this opportunity right now to have a free and open discussion with no pressure in terms of, only a few brave orchestras have stepped out into the front and said we are having you a auditions in the fall. I think we have an opportunity to get everyone around the table, yes, they have to be negotiated, a subject of mandatory bargaining. It's important to have all the involved parties to have the opportunity to discuss freely what they think it is going to work for your orchestra, not everyone is going to work for everybody.

The number one, obviously, is self-explanatory, not simple to implement. Depending on the size of your orchestra and how much time you have to do the auditions, a possibility of doing taped rounds, I don't know if the people are excited about going back to that, but it is a possibility. It's something you have to discuss with your committee. I think that a huge change in what we have done in the past decades is recruiting players of color to come to the auditions, I think we have had a very slim turn out of people to choose from and so if you have 25 percent people of color behind the screen, that's going to make an enormous

difference in who we end up hiring. Fully screened auditions, I know some -- IXOM has had a meeting with some of our delegates and committee people, and there are some orchestras who have already implemented fully screened rounds, there are some orchestras that are insistent that they won't do it. Again, it isn't for everybody, but you need to discuss it and talk about it amongst your people.

I think, yeah, automatic advancement, again, is something if you are inviting people, as many of us do, to come to a semifinal round, perfectly simple to ask people of color to invite people through NAAS that could come and play in that round. Not a big deal. The no hire auditions, again, it's difficult for different orchestras, it just depends on where you are. I think it is expensive, it's frustrating to come to the end of the day or two days and have not chosen somebody to come be in the orchestra. So I would certainly encourage discussion of the idea of saying yes whenever this process is over, we are going to choose somebody and welcome that person into our orchestra. Again, the trial weeks, I know, my orchestra, I think is pretty determined to stay with trial weeks, just because there are many little elements of ensemble that you can judge, that you can't judge in an audition situation, but many of those elements can find out in the tenure process, it isn't necessary to have a trial week. You can decide that on your own, I will pass it back to John.

>> I will unmute myself. So, the number 7 is one that we actually had a significant amount of discussion about, and that has to do with looking at the complete musician. Everybody, I think, agreed on the committee that the few minutes in the prelims that one has to show what one has is not adequate when trying to think about the entire musician and what their abilities might be. We thought -- we talked about how to initiate some kind of interview part to, at some point, during the audition, whether that's in the finals as part of it or how to do this in an anonymous manner, and there are ways to have a third party maybe involved with this. But I think it's really, you know, just to want to encapsulate what the committee was saying, musicians have so much to offer. On a personal note, the -- symphony, we really encourage our fellows to get out there and to be able to talk and to be able to communicate with audience and to be able to do a number of things, whether it's social media or media in general. Just something to think about going forward. I'm going to go on to the tenure guidelines.

So, a lot of discussion talked about how, just as an overview, the, sort of the -- some orchestras kind of, the sort of hard to fathom what is going on with actual tenure and how these decisions were made and how the communication could be sometimes abrupt and not helpful. So, the -- we realize that for any musician, especially a Black and Brown musician, the

feedback throughout the tenure is important for the sake of transparency. There are various things about touch points during it, we recommend more often than not, especially with a new player. Number two talks about having somebody who, you know, can schedule with the tenure candidates, right at the beginning and representative from management to go through the process and right from the beginning it's clear what the process is going to be and what rights do they have.

Number 3, again, a lot of discussion about for musician coming into an orchestra, it can be somewhat bewildering and overwhelming, so, what we were suggesting is that there should be somebody that, a senior, a tenured member of the orchestra ensemble, an advocate of the ombudsman, to help them understand that every orchestra has a culture, and I think it's very important for, the committee feels it is very important to have that musician understand what that culture is and to be able to be within the culture and be creative in the culture. The last item is the relation of the candidate -- the -- should be collegial and respectful. How you accomplish that had been up to each orchestra and ensemble, sharing all comments that are made during tenure, review meetings with the candidates, or having sitting down with the candidates at every possibility. With that, I think I'm going to hand it --

>> I think I would just add that --

>> Please.

>> Any of your musicians who is already tenured and is for some reason put in a probationary position already has these rights spelled out in your contract. In -- it's just extending the courtesy to somebody new, and you can probably just rip out part of that contract and put it in the new part.

And I do want to backtrack just a little bit to talk about number 7, adding the interview process. I think part of what makes this one controversial and very difficult is that the actual job description of what your musicians do has -- throughout the contract and if you are starting to change what it is that you are actually expected to do as a musician, then it gets into other areas of the contract. But again, I think at this point, many of the public speaking engagements and things like that, that I do with my orchestra is voluntary. And you could still say yes, do this part of the audition process, but anything that you ask a musician to do is -- I'm not saying it's not paid, I'm saying it's a voluntary situation. Okay. I'm gone.

>> Thank you, I appreciate those additional comments.

>> Thank you, Meredith and John for that excellent summary. And kind of revisiting the guidelines. I know many of you have had the opportunity to take a look at the copy. I -- I also thought I would yield the podium, so to speak, to my maestro Michael Morgan to share another perspective of how he thought the

process to be and his Outlook on the importance of developing these guidelines. Mr. Morgan?

>> Once I figured out how to reduce myself. It's wonderful to see everyone here, and I, as the last speaker, are probably not going to say anything you haven't heard before. But I will do it briefly anyway. We have a long tradition, for most of us it's a distant past tradition of not being a very welcoming industry, for most people this has changed a long time ago, but it takes a long time to live down that reputation. And so I think part of what this whole effort is about is our industry being more obviously openly welcoming and at the same time welcoming and maintaining its excellence.

All these points were very much discussed very thoroughly and thought through by what was a really excellent team on this committee, and as was said before, we know this will not fit with everyone's current CBA, but we have the opportunity now to think about and try new things. That is one of the silver linings, if you can find them, of the COVID period. Of course, looking for an equity of opportunity, and not necessarily an equity of outcome, but an equity of opportunity. And I know I am largely preaching to the choir here, I know a lot of people who absolutely believe in all of this now and in looking for ways to do this, and I'm going to suggest a couple of things to end my little contribution about diversity.

I think it's worth each orchestra discussing and defining what diversity means for that orchestra. Because it is so different from place to place, depending who is around you and where you live, diversity does not mean the same thing, it's in a very diverse center, Oakland, California, it's very different from other places in the country. But the whole country goes getting more and more diverse, just becomes more and more urgent that we define this word that we keep throwing around. To make sure that diversity, written large across programming and personnel and guest artists and staff and board and audience, diversity is no longer an interesting luxury, it's become an existential threat, that your our cities and people will drift away from us if they cannot see anything of ourselves reflected in our (inaudible) preaching to the choir, but a lot of people -- champions of this in the list of people who are here today, but I think it's a wonderful document and a wonderful place to start. And I hope that all of you are able to incorporate as much of this into how you audition and tenure players as you possibly can. And with that, I'm going to turn it back to Afa, because I think we are going to get questions now.

>> Awesome. Thank you so much, maestro Morgan, John, Meredith, and all of the folks who have been contributing to setting up this dialogue. I'm excited to get to the questions. We have a good number of them which I'm going to try to field to various members of the NAAS family, because I can't be expected

to answer all of them. I should also acknowledge while you have not yet seen them on screen, here with us are Bill Neri, who is the project manager for NAAS and including managing relationships with all the member orchestras as well as managing the well-being and access to resources of all the musicians, here is hands-on comprehensive job of making all of this work.

Also with us, although not yet on the screen is Andre Dowell, who is our chief of engagement at Sphinx and also oversees this entire area. So I just want folks to know and to be able to place Andre and Bill in the structure of NAAS, because they are so critical, everything from conception to carrying this work out. Here we have a good number of questions, to be fair we will scroll up and appear in the order on my screen, if the order doesn't coincide with yours, don't judge me too harshly, the first question is from Ed. Hi, Ed, Ed tells us the pipeline argument, IE, it would have been more diverse if there were more stronger candidates, is not any longer acceptable. There are talent and qualified musicians, yes, I agree. So what is the program doing to dismantle these perceptions? I would love to throw this to Bill on the ground working directly with the artists but also from a 30,000 view, I wonder what you might say we are at NAAS to dismantle the perceptions.

>> Yeah, thanks for that question. Some of the work that we are doing right now with our 103 NAAS orchestra partners is

really sitting down and having conversation with all of them. A great point that Michael just brought up was in regards to the concept of diversity and -- of the country and throughout different orchestras, even within cities and trying to align that definition with the mission to -- institution, we have been having conversations with dozens of our partners, how can we best implement the -- within your orchestra. I'm proud that everybody is taking critical and positive steps forward to make this happen. The barriers and they vary quite a lot, but it really starts and ends ultimately with conversation, conversation within the orchestra, with their constituents, with board members, and it's really great to involve us through the process of ultimately the task falls on the various committees and tasks forces created within the orchestra.

>> And can I also, some support of Bill, see one of the practical ways in which NAAS is trying to dismantle these unfortunate misconceptions, we have developed a national database, which is a searchable instrument available directly on the NAAS Web page, which allows orchestras to have a tool and to have access to some of the most qualified musicians of color around the country. Andre, did you want to add anything on this before we move on?

>> Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for asking and checking on that. First, hello, everyone, if you haven't had an opportunity, you can click on the document, it's in the last paragraph, you will see

audition and tenured guidelines in bold, you can click it there and follow along if you would like. Thanks for your question. There's a lot of things that we are doing from the musician facing side in terms of providing support, and that was one of the main things that we did at the beginning of this initiative. And most recently we have shifted a little bit more to the orchestra facing side of things as well. This document, for example, came out of those conversations from our artist council. Some of the members are actually here with us in this chat as well. One of the things in our conversation that we have had with several orchestras is looking at the audition and tenure guidelines is trying to incorporate them in your CBA's, so those are some things that I would encourage us all to look at, but the main thing I want to draw our attention to is the very first, the principles that are listed in the audition and tenure guidelines that are things put into place that don't necessarily have to be in CBA's and that's really having a shared understanding between all of your constituents between what diversity is and thanks, Michael Morgan, for bringing that up. But I think from the orchestra facing side, having that continuity across everyone's -- staff and musicians and talk about what vendor you are ice using, those are conversations that we have to have and those larger and smaller conversation are things we try to incorporate to dismantle some of these stereotypes and break down walls. So I encourage everyone to look at those principles

and start from those principles before trying to get into the weeds of every single bullet point that we have listed, those are more for launching a conversation for the orchestra. Everyone will not be able to implement them as -- we have, but that will be a point to launch a conversation, it starts about defining what the principles are with regards to the organization.

>> Some of the questions I will skip ahead, somebody is asking whether the document goes available, it's now being re-shared again. Although it is identical to what was shared in the past. And if someone still needs access, I think just puts it in the chat and we will send it another way.

There is a question from Darren Hicks about how does an orchestra or an organization become a partner to NAAS and join this effort? The short effort is you reach out to Bill directly. And you can do so at -- directly from the website and Bill can share with you what are the kind of prerequisites, if anything, in terms of orchestras joining and what are some of the ways that we ask our partnering organizations to participate. That could be an easy one.

There is a question from meg. How many of the NAAS musicians are now full time members of those orchestras versus fellows? I could do this one quickly. About 50 percent. So, just slightly more than 20, 22, 23 musicians are full time members of orchestras, the rest of them have either a fellowship positions or

one -- positions, it's kind of an even split between the larger number that I mentioned. There's a question -- there are two questions and -- from -- will there be a recording? I believe yes, but Lee Ann can tell me if I'm wrong. The second one is, how do we address colleagues -- oops, it went away. Darn, I don't know what happened. How do we address colleagues, often in position of influence and often vocal, who staunchly deny the existence of bias. I definitely have an opinion, but not necessarily the one to handle it. Andre, might you want to handle this one? Folks who say there is no implicit bias. Suggestions?

>> Yeah, that's a tough question. John may want to add in as well. It kind of goes back to my initial statement, first of all, having a shared understanding across the board about what it is that we are hoping to accomplish. I think most people here, not, maybe not all, but most people can, I think we can agree that implicit bias is something that is within us and is inherent, and everyone does have biases, so bringing it to the forefront. I think a lot of the conversation that we have to do with differentiating between what biases are and what diversity is. And we are trying to break down implicit biases that also happens to include diversity. I think kind of shifting the mindset of trying to just understand what biases are, and not make it about black or Latin X or white, I think that's a good -- might be an entry point into conversation for those who do kind of really strongly disagree that

there is no biases that are happening across the board. But it's a very difficult conversation to have. So I would just say, you know, just taking those baby steps and having enough to understanding of the definitions. I will turn it over to John, I know he is looking to chime in.

>> And I think that while there are a number of ways, if somebody who says they don't believe in existence of implicit bias, there are certain on-line ways to actually prove to that individual, yes, we all have biases. And one of them that comes to mind is the Harvard IAT test. I don't have the -- if you just put in Harvard IAT test, and they cover all sorts of things, not only in terms of race but also in physical appearance and all of these various bits and pieces as well, they are very revealing. Even somebody who believes that they are not overly bias, it's quite interesting. And also you can actually, through some of these tests and definitely the Harvard one, you can chart your progress as well. You can take the test multiple times, you have to be honest about how many times you have taken it before, and as you do work in racial bias training, et cetera, then it's interesting to actually be able to see where you have progressed.

>> Wonderful.

>> There are some minds that we are never going to change, it isn't necessarily worth the effort to try. I have to say that when I had my call with my delegates and a bunch of musicians, there

were -- I was really encouraged and surprised by orchestras that were just jumping ahead and talking about this. And I think that this past pandemic year and everything that happened in it has really opened eyes and changed mind, mine, too. There were a couple of people, I think that some of the fears surrounding this issue is that musicians who you already have are afraid of losing their own jobs, they are afraid of being cut out from some of the things that they do, and will you hire people of color that are going to takeover my position? And so that, too, is something that needs to be addressed in these discussions. And to just make sure that everybody is on board and a full member of this discussion.

>> That's great, Meredith, I think there's a grouping of questions which southbound can be summarized and I will try to do so, they are under the rub brick of -- talking here to the position of orchestral culture to members of the community who have been -- what is the point of imposing a culture upon people almost from the pretext of having excluded them for a long time. I will get a glean but I would love to ask my colleagues to join me, I should clarify that the primary goal of NAAS isn't to impose a culture, the primary goal of NAAS, if I have to summarize it very roughly, is to minimize the unnecessary man made barrier between musicians of color and existing cultures and bring everybody closer together so we may build what is a set of

collectives which will be the musical electives of tomorrow. We do collectively believe that orchestras of tomorrow will differ from what we are used to. And when I say they will differ, they will hopefully be more evolved, more empathetic, more inclusive and more representative. The idea there isn't to label one culture wrong and another culture new or somehow better. We are asserting several truths. We are saying that there are in fact ready, poised musician who we are trying to nurture and empower. We are also saying there are a number of orchestras who would like to do this work and in fact evolve with us. So the role of NAAS is to bring that closer together and really generate change and propel it forward so we go beyond these statements and conversations. It does require change. We are trying to make that change seamless and urgent. But that's kind of, rather than labeling something or judging something, we are trying to provide a settle of tools that will make this change easier on everybody. There is a question here, and I guess I should say, would anyone from the NAAS site like to add to that relative to the culture change and the shifts that are occurring?

>> I if I may, actually -- sure. I mean, I'm seeing a lot of questions about this. And I think coming from people from different walks of life, and different experiences, some folks who are extremely strong advocates of dismantling white supremacy and wanting to make some substantive change, right away,

because this is a dire situation for many of us and running the gamete. One thing that I think is really, really important is -- two things, actually, this document that we put together, you know, as many have already stated, is a jumping off point. It's okay. Here is one aspects of our industry, just one. Actually it's a big one, but it's one aspect of our industry, the audition and tenure process, and what are some of the issues with that. What are some of the myths that we can try to dispel? What are some of the things that we can begin a conversation with? Ultimately, though, none of it really matters unless you in your organization decide what anti-racism is for you and how important it is to the values of your own organization. That's a big, all encompassing question, that's something much deeper than just changing a little bit of language in your CBA to change something.

That's something that really -- those are the existential questions you have to have from within. That needs to be a given, why is diversity important for your organization? What are you doing in your activities that really diversity very important, these are some of the things one needs to be cognizant about. But the question from folks that are saying what can I do, how can I move the conversation forward, that's also a difficult thing to do. Even at the top sometimes, it's very difficult to make changes, because there's such a huge structure, orchestras are huge organizations, a lot of implications, a lot of tradition, you are

constantly fighting between two extremes, one is the status quo and one is burn it to the ground. You are constantly trying to figure that out. Is the system that we are in, is there value in what we already have and what can we do -- and what is change within that mean? How fast or slow is it? What kind of conversation are you going to have with the different constituents? One thing for me that's been really, really heartening as Meredith pointed out, some of the conversation that I have had with my musicians in Phoenix and all over the country, people are really hip to change, they are really thinking about this much, much more than I thought, much, much more than a lot of us, I think, may have assumed.

And I think this isolation that we have been in for the past year has forced a lot of organizations to have really, really strong internal conversation that could probably never would have had before, people getting together in round tables, talking about things they have never talk about before. That's been amazing. All of a sudden the typical conversation that you would normally have, talking about labor disputes, talking about whatever, committee versus management, all these sort of typical dynamics that we know of in orchestras eroded for a little bit. They eroded to a point where you could actually come to a table fresh with goodwill and really ask questions of each other. And I think it's imperative that we take advantage of that. It's imperative that we

use those opportunities to start really fostering this new idea of how do we communicate with each other internally, how do we have these conversations about what our organization truly means to our community. Is that we are trying to be the next huge level orchestra that we are trying to mimic? Or are we actually just wanting to be who we are and figure out what we need to be for our community? I know this is top level stuff, but I think that's the crux of what a lot of these questions are going to come from. You can literally take this document and say we can't do this or that, it never works, sure, you can take any aspects of it and say that. At the end it's not going to matter unless your orchestra discusses some of this and answers some of these questions internally about what anti-race and diversity means for your organization.

>> Absolutely. Maestro Morgan, did you want to add something to this one?

>> I wanted to second what Tito just said, all of it, but I also thought in terms of changing an orchestra's culture, even an orchestra's programming, even the guest artist, I think everyone should just look at everything with the gentle question, why? Why have we done it this way? Is there a reason? Are we just doing it this way because we have always done it this way? And I think that will already change a lot of things, because a lot of the times we are so fascinating with the things we have done. Just

reconsider --

>> Absolutely true. The next set of questions, one beginning, basically -- how the document is being implemented. Many examples of how it's implemented and how it's gone through committees, I should say rather than going through a laundry list of dialogue, I will say that there are at least 20 known orchestras to us of all sizes in terms of annual operating budget, who are, would go actively to implement all or most of these guidelines. I can't point to one and that I they have been followed quite literally, A, we are not at that stage, and B, we are not back on stage. A lot of what is being implemented is still at an early stage. Our work and goal is really to front load a lot of this now so when we are back on stage, everyone feels ready with some of these new practices to be able to really aid in that process. I know that from NAAS's standpoint, we stand ready with the musicians, we now want to extend a hand to all of our partner orchestras and say we would love for you to use this as a jumping off point. But ultimately, if they want to -- and take nothing from these guidelines but still yield with excellent results, power to you. If there are other ways, let us know what doesn't work and why it doesn't work so that maybe we can all collectively learn to really see some real change here.

I see Meredith back here.

>> I just wanted to add that although the issue has been with

us forever, the document is only a few months in the public eye. Because we are not auditioning right now. I would say it's going to be a full year before we actually, like, know what people are going to implement and see some results. I think Cleveland orchestra and one other, the only orchestra orchestras that actually have an audition in October, so it's going to take some time.

>> In the meantime, those of you representing orchestras know that you will have upcoming openings. And we understand that and know that, too. But collecting those dots and saying we will have six openings, at the very least, I had to go to NAAS and see if we are prepared as we can be in term of diversifying, and that's a place where NAAS can help, even though we are not yet at audition point. I wanted to continue to reinforce that piece. There are a number of questions which go to the particularity surrounding the in-person interview piece which might be number 7 in our document. But it's the piece surrounding assessing other areas of musician's fitness -- it's the interview piece. How does that live together with the anonymity of the audition process and what suggestions we have surrounding that. John and Meredith are on screen to save me.

>> A couple of thoughts. Obviously everybody has to come up with their own system. One thought that came forward, which separates out the audition committee assessing the playing from

the interview group, and in fact even thinking about having an outside party, not within the symphony family or ensemble family, do that assessment piece. In fact, this is done very often by headhunters, who are -- you know, basically putting together profiles of the candidate for a job, this is thought done by the same group for the hiring, but it is done as a separate piece. That's one way. And all information in terms of everybody will have obviously a number in terms of the playing audition, and then that file will get associated with that particular number. That's one way of doing it.

Another way of doing it is, anyhow, I will just stop there. I think Meredith has some thoughts as well, too.

>> Yeah, I guess my first thought is, yes, these, being a fully blind auditioning and then having a decision made about extracurricular activities having to do with playing are contradiction, you can't fulfill both of those entirely. I think it was Barbara that suggest in the chat that you might have a situation when you have a final round, and they are all good. That's a subjects of -- mandatory bargaining, you are taking power away from the decision making of the musicians, which is in the contract and we have to respect that. But I think that, again, it's, each orchestra is going to have to decide that on their own, is this appropriate for us or not? Another issue that comes up for me as a union player, is that you might think about investing in your own

tenured musicians in terms of speaking publicly, I might mention the CEO's could take a lesson in that, there are still -- that we should be developing. And I think that this is an add on, is it appropriate to you or not, is ultimately the question.

>> Absolutely. I want to do a quick statement of apology, I have identified a number of friends in chat by name, but I should have kept all this anonymous, I apologize. I won't identify folks going forward. There is a question here, which is essentially seeking advice for those employed by an orchestra that unconsciously perpetuate of culture of white supremacy but start doing D and I work. What advice do we give when there are not people of color employed by the orchestra, but the D and I work seems to be positioned to make themselves feel better. What kinds of things can we recommend to the one questioning here? I am wondering who I might call upon for that, Meredith, can I ask you to come back?

>> I'm sorry, I didn't understand the question.

>> No worries, I will try to do better. What advice do we have for those employed by an orchestra that unconsciously perpetuate a culture of white supremacy but started doing D and I work, failed to address the root of the problem when meetings -- mostly make white people to feel good about doing something.

>> I think to do actual bias training, I think people in meetings have not had formal training, you are not going to get a different

result with the same equation.

>> And I think actually, you know, this whole thing, and negotiations call the elephant in the corner and that can be -- you really have to -- it takes a lot of courage, but just address it head on. This is -- you know, the words that you are doing, I understand that means a positive thing, however, you know, I feel, or in my opinion, or this, I think, is only going, maybe not part of the way. There's a number of ways, but to be courageous and hit it right on the head.

>> Yeah, I will first say that it's an unfortunate position for a member of an orchestra to feel that way, that they are not currently able to address it. And so I just want to start by saying that I'm sorry for anyone who has to experience that. And unfortunately my response lies, unfortunately, on the musician who is experiencing that. It takes -- it takes a lot of courage to do that, especially when this is your employer. But I would encourage anyone who is having those difficult conversation to just reach out to anyone on this panel, reach out to Sphinxes and NAAS, and we can do our best to help facilitate those conversations as well. But at the end of the day, the bias has to be addressed. The work that we are doing is so important and so relevant that if we don't have that basic principle, and that's why we have that as the first -- the very first principle, that everyone must be aligned with the goals of the organization, and

so it's a -- it's a very difficult thing to navigate. But reach out and we can do our part, at least, to help facilitate our conversation or give pointers do as to how to have that conversation.

>> I want to reinforce for conflictive situations like this, while it isn't the primary work of NAAS, we want to remain a -- and help provide some pointers and resources is to how something like that could be navigated. There aren't a tremendous number of successful examples but there are techniques that can help root this thing out. Tito, did you want to add something?

>> Quickly, it's a -- it's a question that actually really sort of hits home to me as well, because even as a person, in a leadership role, it's a question I face in my profession as well., in my role, rather, that this kind of difficulty can lie for anyone, in any position. Because we are in a system, we are in a system that is oppressive, it's not easy. I think the caveat is that this is definitely not easy if it was easy, then we wouldn't be having this conversation right now. But also, that every -- I realize also every group is at sort of different points in this conversation as well.

And it all depends on the culture, it all depends on a lot of things. There are some times when you hit a brick wall, it happens. I experience it, all of us experience it, there is nothing you can do in that moment. For me, what's been really, really, really helpful is remembering that progress sometimes is very, very real and very tangible and sometimes it might not seem like

it's very tangible in the moment. I can recall many instances where just the, just forcing the conversation to happen, already, was a step forward. Just literally putting yourself out there and even just, you know, acknowledging the elephant in the room, and having that conversation with a group of people that have never had this conversation before, never been forced to tackle it head on. It's, I think of this conversation as sort of the different stages of grief, I think of it in this continuum, there's always going to be different points when you are trying to work on either a culture of an organization or a specific person. There are different stages of acceptance of what we are talking about here and what that means, and knowing where you are with those things, trying as best as you can with empathy, trying as best as you can with coming to goodwill, because -- everybody is going to have different reactions to this. But remembering that progress can be small but can be significant, and sometimes it's not always in the things that you see right up front.

>> Afa, if I can jump in quickly, if you don't change the culture of your organization, if your board remains the same and your management remains the same, the orchestra is not going to change. It all has to be diversified.

>> Absolutely. So, NAAS is attempting to address really all levels and facets of this work, but our folks, obviously, is preparation musicians and to -- orchestras, however some tools,

and real skill sets that they can develop on their own, always subject to local flavor, as we all know, because it's going to differ from one community to another. There are a number of questions which I would like to take the liberty to group and they deal with the merits or the significance of blind auditions versus the change in culture. Here I'm speaking on behalf of NAAS, not necessarily my own individual endless thoughts about why in the first place we need blind auditions, I will say that my own thinking on this has also evolved based on countless hours and accounts of listening to very well accomplished professional musicians of color who have time and time again explained the importance and the significance, and really the emphasis on blind auditions, various different organizations who have various levels of expertise in these important areas of work that's -- diversification, the change of culture within each orchestra falls upon that orchestra. We can assist and support and empower, we can be there as a colleague and we can help give pointers, however, insisting upon blind auditions from the beginning to end, there are a number of folks here who suggest that blind auditions of addressed the issues of bias rather than the facing the -- internal: Answer is yes, it has, but there is not yet a better way. So since we can't mandate all aspects of changing culture, what we can do is simply modify or limit our biases, and the way we know how to limit biases is to exclude the -- and -- ensure equity across the

board which is why we are insisting and allowing and everybody to audition, and when selection happens, that it be based upon artistic adjudication and fitness of other qualities without really inviting these biases. It's not that it's a perfect system, but it appears to be a superior system to anything else, what we also do know is that orchestras who have practiced that, there are some data that shows us that they have in fact yielded better results with diversity than those orchestras who do lift up the screens and really don't practice that limitation of bias from the beginning to end. And that's where it's coming from. It's not to say that this is perfect or superior, it's just that we haven't identified a better way, because of that we are offering the argument for blind auditions, it has been a misnomer, because we have been referring to a blind audition concept for decades on end, but haven't practiced them. To say they don't work is also not factually rooted statement, because we don't know if they work or they don't. We haven't practiced them in a truly -- in a truly blind fashion, not in any systemic way, we have more so periodically and episodically.

What would the -- with the hope of being able to prioritize diversity with our musician ranks? Is there a period of time where we can prioritize diversity in hiring and then move toward fully blind auditions?

>> That one we haven't had before. I would love to -- that

would be great, Tito.

>> I think a lot of people don't realize that we really have never really had blind auditions, because in the end, we pre-advance people, we do this already. We already pre-advance people, we -- people that in, whatever orchestra you have deemed qualified, whatever that means, you send them to the final round. So, we have an apparatus right now to do some of this work without having to change anything in the CBA, actually. The way people hire substitutes, I mean, there's very little in CBA's that have anything controlling how you hire subs. There's already a lot that is not covered by a CBA that does not protect from any type of bias, there is a lot. And we have already, most orchestras haven't taken advantage of that. That's number one, number two, orchestras often pull will screen down in some final round whether it's because you want it in, often the final round, or because there is some, as somebody mentioned, about an ensemble ground that's going to have to be an existential -- if you have a trial week, what does that mean, and you have a year or two tenure process where you will see that person anyway. In the ends, truly blind auditions, it's not totally accurate, because we really don't have that right now. Think I think that's one of the things, if we have it right now the way it is, there are things that we can do, we can make a commitment and say we are going to head hunt for musicians of color because we

can, throwing that out there. That's sort of where I think that's coming from, that's what I wanted to add to that.

>> Yeah, I want to double down on what Tito just said, I think that really recruiting a large number of people to come take the audition of color is going to make the biggest difference of any of these suggestions. I just -- by increasing the number of opportunities, we all want to hire the best person and the best citizen. And the way to make that happen is to have the largest candidate pool as possible.

>> Absolutely. Maestro Morgan?

>> It really is, I'm coming in on both of what they just said, making sure that there are people in the auditions, because I know very few musicians of color who want to be hired because they are musicians of color, they know there are at a level that they can compete with everyone else, which is why so many of them are strenuous about the need for blind auditions. And if you look at the -- well, Sphinx orchestra or the gateway orchestra, these are all -- there's all people of color, have to make sure that they are show up for your audition and your audition is welcoming enough that they will come to see it, and go out and find them for the audition if you need to, but still put them in the anonymous screened auditions, that's how everyone want to be hired.

>> Absolutely. I will also back down a little bit to -- there's a bit of a flavor to some of the questions, and I want to address it, it

is end encapsulated by -- also by Meredith, some folks are looking for data that would support our assertion that fully blind auditions yield success versus the ones with that variance of lifting the screen. It's statistically impossible, we don't have that since we haven't been practicing it, there are orchestras like the Metropolitan orchestra who in fact do practice that and it's one of the more diverse orchestras around the country, beyond any anecdotal feedback, you can't change what you don't measure. So part of what Sphinx is insisting on, we should be measuring, we are asking folks to have 25 percent of non-white candidates in an audition pool so we have a larger pool from which to choose. The way to do that is in fact invest in our recruitment and -- practices in a much better way than we have in the past, if we implement the new methodology, we can conceivably look at our statistics and say something has or has not work. But I think overall, I want to note that it all comes from a mindset. Just some few short weeks ago, we did a session for the league as well, and one of our colleagues, Alex lang, a member of the Phoenix symphony and instrumental to this process developing from an early onset, it comes from the mindset. You can find every possible fault with the guidelines document, you can also find every possible obstacle as to why in your orchestra this combination and set of these different points will be disastrous and never work. In fact we can always critical thinkers can find

why something don't work. If our north star is the same, this is simply one pathway that we are suggesting to get there. If you have a better pathway, fantastic, Godspeed. If there are better things that are not encompassed in this set of guidelines, please share it. But if we are all saying that we are after the same result, it's a matter of how we are getting there, then I think it might change the very energy with which we are approaching the process. I say to my team we are banned from saying change takes time, it's been centuries, we have had the time. It is in fact time to try something, we are much overdue, to try something we haven't tried in the past since we expecting ourselves and others to show different results. That's an overarching thing that thought was important. Are there resources for head hunting POC? Absolutely. The database, in particular, is housed on NAAS' websites. It's what toy head hunt musicians of color, a searchable tool. Another way is to participate in our -- audition, which is an annual affair that connects the best and which we know if our orchestral partners and their representatives who get to participate in a national audition every year and identify those folks that they wish to connect with. The way to do that is to write to Bill, and I know that he will be very much there to help. That is -- that's a primary work of Sphinx, even outside of NAAS, we are there as sort of the clearinghouse, the database, the family that can help with the pipeline and really that connection to

the musicians themselves. That's primarily what we do throughout the year.

There is a question here, a great one, what makes an audition more welcoming to a diverse pool? Subsequent travel, an EOE statement? Andre, can I call to you to the screen to help you with that one?

>> Yeah. That's a tough question, actually. One of the things I would say is, knowing that the orchestra has practices in place and one of the things that they are doing is putting our -- on their website. So that they know that these conversations are being had internally with that specific orchestra. We do address the travel. We are also able to subsidize travel through our musicians. It's a grant that they apply for, not the orchestra applies for. For example, the substitute -- I want to talk about substitute processes as well. We do have a process if you are looking to hire from the database, which is now in the chat, our musicians are able to apply for funding to get to know your orchestra, your organization, your personnel. And those types of opportunities obviously will lead to them becoming more familiar with the orchestra and maybe want to go audition in a future process. Those are ways attract the more diverse pools and being open about how your auditions are being run, those are things that you can put on the website, not just musicians are color, but to help everybody with the transparency of what is

happening in the process.

>> I think if you extend an invitation for people to attend your audition, that would be enormously welcoming.

>> Absolutely. As you are looking to diversify and engage musicians of color, particularly, if it's a new process, if you know of musicians and you have already identified the pool in the processes but it's a matter of how to reach them or how best to reach out to them, that's another spot where NAAS could be helpful. All of the points that were mentioned by Andre, and I think there's an implicit kind of gravitas that comes with identifying yourself as an orchestra, as a partner to NAAS. Because a great deal of the members of the roster are aware of NAAS's work and they are beneficiaries of the granting program. So it goes a long way to help with that credibility piece. Tito?

>> I wanted to second that. I think that being a part of NAAS and having, being part of the -- auditions, this year, for example, we were virtual with SOPA, a wonderful way of getting more of the musicians within the orchestra involved in these auditions themselves, the substitute hire or inviting folks to final rounds. I think when you have more of the musicians involved in this kind of process and this planning, the kind of grass roots, that's really where a lot of this is also going to be helpful to have, because in the end, a lot of the stuff that we are talking about in this document as we said has to be done through --

>> I think we lost --

>> Is really a two-way street, but a lot that the musicians in the orchestra are going to have a lot of say, a lot of things are going to be -- those musicians that are on this, it's important that those dialogues are happening within the ranks of the musicians themselves, because all of those --

>> Never mind.

>> I think (overlapping conversation) .

>> That if everybody is -- overlapping conversation) .

>> There are two sets of questions which we will combine, because they almost identical, how do we balance the need of change when the change is coming from administration or board? I think that's a really tricky one from NAAS's standpoint. We encourage our colleagues who are governance and leadership. We don't think this change is possible without the musician, at the very ethos of NAAS, I don't think any orchestra has a prayer for any system of change if musicians are not the ones leading it. So I want to say if you are feeling a certain way, then it's an important piece to try and advocate for your own advice there. And when that's a challenge, it's to come to NAAS as well and let us help you amplify or double down your advice on this, I don't think it's conceivable that this change will -- or be lasting in any way unless the artists are the ones really at the helm and making these changes there's a question, are there any -- for singer?

Unfortunately not aware, however, the discussion has occurred amongst, in our midst, several times. It isn't related to us directly, but our professional coral ensemble is having many conversation about doing something similar, it's a matter of identifying, finding resources to replicate something like this that would be applicable for singers.

There is also a question, is there a way for orchestras to directly support the NAAS grants.

>> Absolutely. That's part of the way in which orchestras partner with us, through NAAS directly, that's a note to Bill. He will be able to share a set of guidelines and share how to do that. These contributions vary, depending upon one's budget size, we make it as accessible as possible. Andre is on screen to help double down on that.

>> A exactly, I was going to say becoming a partner, there are dues, those funds are going to directly to our artists, those are suggested, and if you want to the give more, that's great. And I saw question in the chat, are we doing anything to provide recording equipment? Those are things that musicians can apply for grants. Anything that helps further them in the audition process, whether it's equipment, travel subsidies, even coachings for those that want to get involved, also a place on the website to sign up for a mentor as well for some of those coaching sessions, for those of you who did attends, everybody who attended our

competition recently had access to recording equipment purchase. So we wanted to make sure they had those things as well. That's how some of the funds, being used from orchestras. So, thank you for your support.

>> Absolutely. Thanks for that, Andre. There is a question about, has there been discussion about applicability about NAAS's work specifically to Canadian practices? A question that relates to that, about having a national round first. And I should say that not with any intentionality. There has not been a focused conversation about implementing national rounds first. Maybe that's something that the committee can explore further. There's also -- I'm trying to think. What outreach has there been to music directors since they ultimately make the choice of -- I should say that there is a slightly vary modification to that statement. They definitely play a significant role. I should say that music directors are at the centers of the conversation. There are a number of music directors who have been supportive of the process, and of course both Tito and Michael have been a part of this dialogue from very early days and have helped guide some of these guidelines. Because we do feel that the voices of music directors are central and critical to how this dialogue continues, and ultimately to -- I would say over the years have made some implicit progress as well. During Sphinx's global convening that we gather every year in Detroit, there are countless conversations

dedicated to the voices of music directors where we look at a variety of different ways in which the directors have either, maybe not prioritized diversity and inclusion in the same way, and also you can look at it a different way, now have ripe opportunities to step forward and help accelerate this work.

Let's see. What else is here? In our remaining couple of minutes, I'm trying to see if I can combine things that -- anything that has not been touched upon.

As a follow up to the earlier question, once the conversation has started or continues at a musician level, how are these musicians in governance properly represented by -- members, when admin and board is not addressing these issues in a timely fashion?

That could be a great question. I thought maybe Tito and Meredith?

>> They must address those issues. There's no exception. Every element, every family in your association has to be working in the same direction and talking together and making decisions together. You can't have just one arm of your organization changing because it won't change unless they all change.

>> I don't disagree with any of that. Absolutely right. I do think that, I want to put this as democratically as possible. So, I think, you know, one of the things about the relationship -- succinctly as possible. The history of labor management

relationships is not great, right? We know this. That's the elephant in the room, this is always like, if things are not going a certain way, then it's somebody else's fault a.m. we just point fingers at each other. That's kind of been the way we do business. So, we have to kind of take that into consideration, when any of this kind of, like, who is responsible for what, is part of the conversation. In the end, like many folks on this panel have already said, we all see the eye on the prize, we want to hope that everybody is on the same page. And it means different things for different organizations, who you reach out to, who do you trust, who can you talk to, who can actually have these conversations? You know, there is no one answer. But definitely there's a lot of factors, there's how much power do certain folks have within the conversations of like negotiations, for example, or who is our orchestra committee, who is on your contract review committee, who are those folks? And what are their goals when they speak to management and board representatives at whatever you are doing. What is your relationship with board members? I think that's a really, really important thing, especially for musicians, what is the relationship for the musicians and the keyboard members, folks who do have leader roles. Not every board member is the same. Who are the ones who are leading things in the board it can go a million different ways, it's trying to find toes avenues where you can

create a relationship where people talk to each other in this human way. Things that can't be said, legal things, things that you have to remember, sometimes your ED can't talk to you about certain things, it's not the privy -- sometimes it's really, really tricky thing to deal with and to accept in certain situations when you want something to happen. There's a lot of dynamics, for me, it's always trying to go at it with goodwill, trying to go at it with a sense that everyone really does want the best for each other and why, try to understand, try to also put yourself out there to make that conversation happen. That's kind of my experience of, and how I have been seeing how this is working in certain situations.

>> Thank you to the entire panel and the whole NAAS family and thank you to all the orchestras and many friends across the country and beyond joining in this dialogue. Ultimately I want to close by saying this is, first the first of many conversations, it's a wonderful forum provided to us by the league, but it does not need to be the only forum. NAAS is committed to staying a resource and a connector from orchestras to musicians of color and vice versa. The idea here is to minimize those barriers, the idea that NAAS has, anyway, is to provide the resources and specific tools so that we can actually push the change forward. We recognize this change isn't easy, but we also recognize that, you know, centuries of -- discriminatory practices have prevented us from having representative and reflective orchestras. So, if

we all make the decisions and say we are not prioritizing this diversification and representation, we also have to be ready for some of those changes to be highly uncomfortable, sometimes not as quick as we wish. But if we all stay focused on it and we all consistently ask the question of how rather than why not to do something, then I'm confident that we will get there. Thank you for indulging me, I'm also always open, I think most people know how to reach me. Acknowledge the work of Bill and -- on the ground and all of the colleagues who do this work as part of chairing various committees, I hope to see you again very soon, thank you again.

>> Thank you so much to our wonderful panel, Andre, Bill, John, Meredith, Michael, and Tito for this thoughtful and informed conversation. Before we close, I would like to remind you to take a moment to complete the survey by clicking on the link at the bottom of your screen. Your feedback is important and helps the league further programs, we hope to see you on our next -- the subject of climate change, we are two months out from our national conference, save the dates of June 7 through 17th and watch for an e-mail announcing the launch. We hope to see you again soon.