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AMERICAN LEAGUE OF ORCHESTRAS

Re-envision Relevance to Build a More
Inclusive Future

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(Music)

>>> Hello. I'm Douglas Hagerman, chair of
the League board. Welcome. We have a triple bill.
Remarks by the chair of the NEA. Our annual meeting
of League members and keynote speech by Nina Simon.
Today's session is sponsored by Fisher Dachs, one of
the world's leading theater design consultants. Their
mission is to help their clients plan successful projects in
accordance with real programmatic and budgetary goals.
They are represented here today by associate principal,
Robert Campbell, chief intelligence officer, Alexa
Antopol, and marketing associate, Richard Hackman.
We want to invite you to visit them, and all our exhibitors,
in our virtual exhibit hall after this session. It's my

pleasure now to introduce Mary Anne Carter. Under her leadership in the NEA since 2018, the work of the agency has gained public visibility and sustained support from Congress. Chairman Carter's travels have brought greater visibility to the NEA's critical investments, in making the arts more accessible for all. She has shown her deep passion for the arts. We are grateful for the NEA's ongoing support for orchestras and for your partnership in advancing the arts, nationwide. Thank you, Mary Ann.

>> Thank you so much. Jesse, thank you and your entire team at the League for pivoting so quickly to a virtual conference. Simon, welcome, and congratulations. I look forward to working with you. I'm thrilled to be a part of this year's landmark meeting. I understand this conference has three times more registrants than usual. By being apart, we're actually coming together more. And we need to. This is an incredibly challenging time. Especially for the performing arts. Yet, despite the unknown and uncertainty, you continue to create and share your music. I applaud the orchestra community for adapting so quickly to this new digital environment. I have seen incredible performances, taking place over Zoom, or some other online platform. You're filling our homes with

music and I always feel like I have the best seat in the house. There has been something so moving and beautiful about seeing members of an orchestra, alone in their homes, yet playing together on screens, in our homes. Your music is a critical part of our national well being and will be a critical part of our recovery. So thank you. Thank you for insisting that no matter what is going on in the world around us, there will always be music. By turning lemons into lemonade, those concerts have introduced people all over the country to orchestral music. A lot of these people watching the streams have never stepped into a concert hall. So this positive development of new audiences brings a new challenge. Now, will we make these online audiences economically viable and bring them through the door once we re-open? That is the million dollar question. When will we be able to put a full orchestra back on stage with a sold out audience? Until then, what strategies can we use as a bridge? Partial re-opening? How do we ensure the safety of the staff, audiences, performers? We have been surveying organizations across the art disciplines, to hear their thoughts and fears about reopening to help us determine priorities. We want to provide some measure of financial relief as quickly as possible. In March, the NEA received \$75 million

through the CARES act. Shortly after, we awarded nearly -- million who will redistribute the money to organizations throughout their jurisdictions. That will cover jobs, preserving jobs, and operating costs. The remaining 45 million will be awarded to individual nonprofit arts organizations throughout the country. We are working hard to get those grants out the door. We will announce the awards by June 30. That is three times faster than our normal time line. Our website, arts.gov, has a COVID resource center. We have tools for how to make sure your virtual event is accessible for people with disabilities. So please, reach out to the agency. If you have any questions, we truly are in this together. Please, stay safe, healthy, and always let the music play.

>> I will clap on behalf of the whole audience.

Thank you so much, we're grateful for your passion and support of our members. Next, we will turn to our first virtual meeting of the annual meeting of the League of American Orchestras. We implemented our four prong -- invest in technology platforms, started to build a new website, and moved to better offices at a lower price. We are working to finish the fund raising campaign that will pay for all that. The League staff coped with all that change and pivoted to online

meetings, conference, this whole conference for six weeks and our work in Washington has been of massive value to all sizes, especially when our representatives in Washington hit overdrive to ensure financial support of orchestras in the face of the pandemic. If we were meeting in person, that comment would draw an ovation of gratitude for your work. We selected Simon Woods as our next CEO. Here are brief sentiments about the League's fiscal, 2019 financial results. With a budget of just over \$8.2 million, we ended with a small operating surplus of about 23,000. The 8.2 million includes our regrating programs. So part is money in the door from donors and back out the door to members. There was a 3-point -- reserves and a four hundred thousand change capital fund. For the current fiscal year, 2020, we anticipate a deficit of \$250,000. Now, we turn to the business portion of the meeting and elections for the Board of Directors. This year, since this is a virtual meeting, instead of a voice vote or show of hands, we're asking you to vote through an online portal at this time. The primary contact for each orchestra will receive an email with the slate of members and a link for how to cast your ballot. Watch your inbox thorough these. The full board approved the following nominees, appropriations them for election to a three year term.

Their names are on the screen. These are all directors who were added to the board within the last year or so. They're standing for election to full terms now. In addition, the following board members on this screen are proposed for re-election to 3 year terms. The following people on this screen here will serve on the board going forward and the League Board of Directors will elect officers at the board meeting this summer. The following are the officers being proposed, on the next screen.

Now, I welcome Jesse Rosen for some remarks.

>> Thank you, Doug. This is my last annual meeting as the League CEO. I put on a sports jacket for the occasion. This turned out to be the happiest moment of the day because it still fits, an unbelievable surprise after everything I've been eating for the last few months. You can relate to that. I will talk about the future and some things I think will be important in our work ahead. I've valued the privilege of working on behalf of all of you for a long time. Hundreds of concerts, board rooms, staff meetings, so much time together with so many of you over the years. It's been an incredibly enriching part of my life and heart is open to all of you. Thank you, and I'm sure, I plan to stick

around, this is not the end. This experience has meant so much to me and my thanks to all of you. About the future, there's been a lot of great work in orchestras in recent years. A lot to be encouraged about. Some things to build on, as we look ahead, and four things to talk about. First, our cultures, organizational cultures, especially ability to work collaboratively, specifically thinking about the last two months, when managers and musicians faced harsh economic and health crisis, and figured out how to navigate this together. With the spirit of shared sacrifice, musicians and managements figured out how to make this work. This was a strong showing of our ability to function successfully together. Just like nothing more important coming down the pike, than for musicians and managers to work together how to create safe work environments. This is work that must be done collaboratively, it's not adversarial, it's together, partnership, and my profound hope we will figure out how to do this work together.

Talented leadership development, not with a capital L, but qualities that really matter, for having resilient strong organizations. Among you in our field and our League, we looked at this through the long end of the telescope. The League makes great programs, a lot of good programs. But we also know that 80% of

professional development happens on the job. That means if we want to see change, it must happen in our organizations. We have to behave differently to identify and support talent. Most orchestras don't have a dedicated HR person. It's a question of scale. So in the face of that, we still have to figure out how to bring intentional, thoughtful, caring, intelligent work to the people in the organizations. This is governance work, too. Boards must be sure their CEOs have what they need to be successful and need to be paying attention to whether their CEO is doing the same with the staff. We always express our frustration, not enough talent, not enough people want to commit, but the work is what we need to do within our own organizations.

The imperatives of equity, diversity and inclusion, which should be in the center of our work now. I was recently at a meeting with peers who run national arts service organizations. The topic was about equity. One colleague said, I don't know how I can be expected to think about that issue now. It takes every ounce of energy I have to hold the organization together. We're on ropes. My membership is on the ropes. I need to look after them. How can I be involved with this question? That's fundamentally wrong headed, suggesting that somehow these imperatives are things

we put on and take off as is convenient. Thinking about excellence, an enduring value in orchestras, something we organize our lives around, we would never say we will forego excellence for a while because it's complicated. Equity and diversity are just like excellence, if we really mean it. They will inform how we continue to navigate the crisis we're all working through.

Creativity, we love the concerts, the music. But geez, we can do more on the creative side. We have not changed much in a long time. Before the pandemic, after the pandemic, the amount of talent coming out in the world is at an all time high. What makes us who we are, we're orchestras. If you need evidence, of what has been untapped creative talent, look at how musicians have pivoted, figure out how to stream online, reaching exponentially bigger audiences. With San Francisco Symphony, the director said we need eight other artistic partners to do this work. One is not even a musician and the creative potential of our organizations is enormous. We need to think differently about how we structure our organizations to unleash the real creative potential available. Alex Lang, great colleague, talking about orchestra machines, good at making concerts, but it's time to think about what is the work, make the machine design fulfill our full range of creative

possibilities. Those are things I've been thinking about and point to work we have been doing and some we need to start doing. It's all positive, speaks to great opportunity. The League staff has been phenomenal during the last two months. I've never been more proud of them. They have really stepped up. If we were in a big ball room at a hotel, I'd ask them to stand and you would be cheered. This is the cheering moment. I will leave a couple seconds for a roar to go across the internet for League staff. And about Simon, the person who will take the reins is Simon Woods. A very gifted leader. He will have new, different ideas. Welcome, and in leaving, I think this is like, like dancing, you listen carefully to the music and know when to follow and when to lead. Nobody wrote books about this. It's definitely an art. I'm totally positive, Simon is a great dancer. So that makes me really happy. Should make you happy, too. If you can see the poster behind me, I hung it up because it's a great symbol of the strength of our community. A poster from hurricane Katrina, the first time people came out after that hurricane, was the orchestra. Alan Valentine put on a concert, in Nashville, for the benefit of the Louisiana Philharmonic. If there's ever a vivid reality, through the idea of being stronger together, that concert was it. It keeps us connected,

healthy and strong. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you very much. And Doug, back to you.

>> I'm going to exercise, a prerogative to hundreds of people watching this broadcast, thank you for your remarks, Jesse. That leads me to an impossible challenge I have. Since this is Jesse's last conference as CEO, we have to recognize his extraordinary service. But we do so today in an abbreviated form. I want to assure you there will be a full opportunity in the future to recognize, recount and celebrate everything Jesse has done once we are able to get together and celebrate together. Here's an overview of a few things to remember about Jesse. Under his leadership, the League advocated for orchestras' deeper engagement with community, renewed efforts toward inclusion, greater discipline regarding fiscal matters, increased use of data to inform decision making, and wide spread engagement with composers. In his twenty years at the League, he initiated a renewed research benefitting the entire orchestra field and created new ways and initiatives to areas such as leadership development, governance, EDI, art aggregates towards creativity and innovation. There's been a large increase in the number of members of all sizes, benefiting from League programs and initiatives. As well as an upturn in the

profile of orchestras among the nation's policy leaders, cultural and opinion leaders. Under his direction, the League has been a catalyst for the field's collective action on EDI, which is a great example of his thought leadership in our field on many subjects. His most important legacy has been to make the case for orchestras to shift their focus outward, away from our own artistic excellence and other internal measures of performance, urging us to establish our civic value as orchestras in relation to our communities. If this were an in person conference, I'm confident that an extended standing ovation for him would ensue. Until we can gather for a great party in his honor, join me in sharing your congratulations with Jesse in whatever way you see fit. I suppose the greatest thing we could do to recognize his legacy is to focus on the four things he just commended to us. Culture of collaboration, leadership development, EDI, and creativity, four great chapters for us to write in the future. On behalf of all the League members, thank you, Jesse.

Now, to talk about our next CEO, Simon Woods, in April, our search process came to an end. Our selection is based not just on his experience and credibility in our field, but also on his track record of

advancing the League's mission, for example, through the essentials program, and his vision for change as orchestras pursue deeper engagement with their communities. Of course, there's his passion for orchestral music. Most important, his personal qualities, that will nurture our organization and its members, qualities, such as integrity, and humanity. Hi, Simon!

>> Hi, Doug.

>> We will go to the next little thing. There's Simon. Can you hear me now? You're on mute.

>> I start and the first thing that happens is my internet crashes. Thank you, Doug. Huge thank you to the board of the League for entrusting me with the leadership at this time. It's an extraordinary time. To Jesse, what do I say? First of all, I'm a horrible dancer. That analogy doesn't hold. But definitely, I will try to do everything I can to do the things he talked about. To be honest, orchestras have been part of my life for over forty years, American orchestras, gave me many friendships. Since I was in Philadelphia, I've been involved with the League. I hosted a couple of -- taken part in professional development. It's more than a job. It's like joining a family I've known for many years. It is a strange time to take over. If there's one thing I learned over the past weeks, it's how much I treasure the live

music experience. Orchestras from the smallest to the largest have completely reinvented the way they deal with the world. There's an incredibly strong conviction that things will never be the same, yet I have an equally strong conviction that the live experience will -- we will get back to playing. As we take the journey home, the League will be here to support and encourage. But it's not only about institutions. Anybody who knows me know I care deeply for institution, and also for the people in them. Looking at this business, it's an extraordinary collection of people. Musicians, conductors, management leaders, agents, board members. Donors. You all are why I'm in this job now. Our institutions may have history books, recordings, but right now, it's about the people, more than ever. My pledge is I will be here for your institutions as we take this journey together. Thank you very much, everybody. Huge congratulations to Jesse and gratitude for everything you have done. Can't wait to work hand in hand with you, Jesse. Thank you. Stay safe.

>> Thank you, Simon. We look forward to welcoming you to the helm in September. I will welcome Alan Valentine, CEO of the National Symphony. With a pitch I hope you will all seriously consider.

>> Thank you, Doug. I'm here to talk about

stronger together, League giving day 2020. This is the second year I've been asked to make this pitch so I'm guessing that some of you will stop taking my phone calls before long, but no fear, I will still find you. We have heard numerous pitching for League giving day. I will add my voice to the call for support for the League. If I were in front of you in a hall, as last year, the first thing I'd do is ask for a show of hands for each of you affiliated with an orchestra, that received a loan or other form of federal assistance through the CARES act. Again, the League has shown its value to our field through its great leadership giving voice to our concern in Washington. Even before we understood how badly they need that help. In addition, the League's leadership, advancing the work of equity and diversity, in the face of the pandemic, and though we have a long way to go we're on a path that will make our institutions and arts better. The League is also adding significant value to membership with increased activity in response to COVID, pivoting this conference to an online conference, record time, astounding how fast that happened, and removing barriers to attendance by making free to all members and tripling attendance in the process and they did all this so well. The League also suffering from a lack of earned income now. We all

confront that issue. Most of our earned income comes from conference registration fees. It's had a very serious impact. For those of you who have not given yet, and only 10% of you attending this year are current donors, the time is right at this moment for you to join me and all of us involved with the League as donors, in making your own gift to stronger together. I know there are demands on your finances, but let me give you a perspective about how you can approach this. In a regular year, a trip to attend this conference costs from \$1,500 to \$2,000. So a gift of 10-20% that of amount, say, 150, to 400, that would go a long way to supporting your work in the League. Know, whatever you decide to give will be deeply appreciated. It's important for all of you to please think about this and make a generous gift to the League before this conference is over. It's really critical to our lives and our future.

>> Thank you, Alan. It's my pleasure to introduce Nina Simon. Over ten years ago, Heather had the good idea it was time for the orchestra to do some public perception research. We got high marks on excellence. That's good. We got high marks on education. We got low marks, really low, on serving a broad cross section of community. That's where we did badly. That was when the League sounded that alarm.

We said we have some missions to work on. These aren't issues only of perception. They're issues of behavior. We have a lot of learning to do. Over the ten years or so, many of us in the performing arts have been asking what it looks like. We certainly know it's more than giving a free concert in the park and in school. The development practice that helps inform how we do that work effectively has been taking place and luckily there are people like Nina Simon who have been figuring it out. Actually, there aren't many people like Nina Simon. She wrote a book called the The Art of Relevance. She started something called OF/BY/FOR ALL, which voted on inclusive practices for organizations. She's also headlining all the big conferences this spring. She's everywhere. Then I thought it's like what you all do. I'm thinking Nina is the Yo-Yo Ma of relevance. It was an enormous honor and I'm excited she's here. I will hand it over to Nina. Over to you.

>> Thank you so much. I have never had such a complimentary opener. I appreciate it. As you can guess, from the title of the slide, we will look deeply at how to re-envision relevance so we can build organizations out the other end of this crisis. First, I want to honor that there are 550 people here, and I want to honor those who are not able to be with us today.

People in mourning, people who lost their jobs, trying to figure out where to find their rent next week. It's a gift for us take this time to think about revisioning and reimagining. Thank you to the 300 of you who took the poll before we started. If I offered you a blank check right now for one of the following paths forward, what would you do with the money? We had these options listed on the screen. As of a minute ago, 302 of you took this. About two-thirds say you'd use it as risk capital. You're coming into this hour ready to reinvent. Also, almost 30% of you would really love to go back to normal. This is understandable. And I don't think normal is coming back any time soon. So what I want to do is equip you, wherever you fell on the poll, to get excited about the potential for reimagining and offer a concrete process for doing it. Who is this person, what is she, anybody credible to talk about reimagining? Well, I know what it feels like to be flung into crisis, to have to reimagine your organization while it feels like there's a time bomb in your bank account. I know it feels amazing if you can do the work of reinvention and come out stronger. As Jesse mentioned, 9 years ago, I became the director of this place, the Santa Cruz museum of art and history. In my first week on the job, I discovered that we were completely out of money. I knew we had a financial gap

but didn't realize how harsh it was. The we had \$16,000 in the bank and 30,000 of unpaid bills. In the first week I had to lay someone off. I asked all of my colleagues to join in taking a 20% salary cut. I said I believed we could reinvent the museum and enact this vision they came up to become a gathering place for the community. But to do so we had to change quickly. It was a hell of a first week. Many of you have had incredibly tough week like this in the last few months. Today, I will share about what it looked like for us. Our crisis was not a global pandemic but it threatened our survival. The museum did not matter enough, to enough people, to survive. We could start to change. We wanted to be a museum for everyone in Santa Cruz, to people of all ages, backgrounds, invite them in as creative agents themselves, not just to look and learn but to share their own voices and creative talents in the space. We wanted to build that vision of a thriving community gathering place, inside and out of the museum. We were successful. The result was extraordinary. When I came in 2011, when we had no money, a budget of 700,000, and 17,000 visitors, mostly school kids. We tripled attendance and by the time I left eight years later we increased our budget, staff to both increase and diversify who was participating and built a 5 million dollar

expansion and a reserve. This kind of reinvention is possible. Yes, even in a pandemic. Yes, not just at a museum in Santa Cruz, but around the world. After I left the museum, it was to found this nonprofit, OF/BY/FOR ALL. Our digital tools have been used by thousands of people around the world and we work closely with 42 organizations in eleven countries, in a program called the change network, organizations going on change journeys, transforming themselves through crisis, with their communities. I want to offer a concrete process for reimagining, rooted in what we learn in OF/BY/FOR ALL. I will invite you to think about four steps to reimagine. First, simple, you can do this entirely on your own, in this hour. That is to invite you to choose to change. When we think about crisis, we often think about the idea, because of the crisis, we must change, need to change. While that's true, it obscures the reality that not all of us want to change. About 30% of you want to go back to normal. So I invite you to get out of this unhelpful mind set about whether you want to change or not. Instead, think, can you choose to change, not because you want to, but because it's necessary. We all made choices to change in the last months that we probably didn't want. Self isolating, taking care of each other, wearing masks. We didn't make those changes because we wanted to.

But we looked at what was happening and made the choice to do so. Some of you may have found grace and joy in the changes, other suffered. Wherever you are, you chose to change in response to what was happening on the outside. What wasn't work for you before the pandemic? What was broken? What drove you bananas? What was injustice? What do you never want to go back to doing again? Talk to leaders across the arts, to a theater director, said our season was canceled, we're freaked out financially but it's a huge chance to unleash ourselves from the subscription battles. They saw them declining over years, and were reinvented from doing investment in new audiences. But they couldn't let it go. Hey, we just canceled a season. We're free to pursue a different business model for engaging with our closest patrons. Or a ballet director said, touring is something that we loved on one level and hated on another. Yes, dancers love connecting with communities, but they were superficial engagements. Touring was a crap shoot, financially. She decided to choose, instead of just playing chicken and asking when can we go back on tour, to cancel touring for the next 18 months and challenge ourselves to figure out can we reimagine ways to connect with people in other communities, more deeply. I talked to a man who works

in a large orchestra, who feared the leaders would not choose to walk away from things that weren't working. He had brilliant ideas for transformations that could happen in his orchestra. I won't share them here because they're his and there are people like him in your orchestra, too. Young people, activists, who thought a long time about the opportunity to change. It's not a coincidence that all three the people I cite were people of color. In our fields, they often have led the charge for years. They have solutions to some of the questions we're addressing for the first time. So as you choose to change, I invite you to think about who you're choosing to do it with. As you make decisions, the people most likely to help you lead change, activists, people of color, young people, are not the people you're laying off. Now is the time to listen to them. Once you can figure out what you feel motivated to change, you can go to the next step. Who do you want to change and move towards? Who do you see as critical to the future of your organization? Who is a staff of the future, the audience of the future, patrons and partners of the future? How could you invest now so this can be a time of growth and transformation, not a time of retraction and retrenching. We think of communities as this. Imagine, there are all these bubbles of communities, groups of

people who share something. If you think about your organization before the pandemic, you had existing communities who loved you, always came, participated. You probably also, before the pandemic, had communities that you were moving towards, strategic to your future. Maybe an incredible teen or fellowship program. At this moment, who do you want to invest in? A lot of organizations go in this direction. Retrenching, audiences, letting go, cutting fellowships and community engagement teams. And knowing that some percentage of their traditional audiences are probably not coming back. This is a bad strategic move. I invite you instead to ask, how could we spend more effort on the communities we're moving towards, maybe on neighboring communities who could be part of our future, so instead of coming out of the pandemic with an audience and community that looks like this, we could come out with one that looks like this. This contemporary arts center they decided traditionally that the audience they're easily able to engage are local art lovers, especially elites, and international artists they bring in to projects. They also know they have a problem, that they are in a neighborhood, a low income, very populated area. They know there are creative artists there and families there who they want to connect

with, but have not historically been able to do so. That's why they came to be part of the OF/BY/FOR ALL, to bridge the gap. They saw they could not be successful unless they connected with them. They had communities of interest, local artists, families in the neighborhood. During coronavirus, their traditional communities are less engaged. International artists are not traveling. At the same time, they're seeing more and more opportunity to engage with the audiences and communities of the future, with local artists and families in the neighborhood. They became the largest distributor of food in their neighborhood, raised tens of thousands of dollars and gave out thousands of bags of food along with notes and creative activities, inviting them to be in relationship with the arts center. They also created this online program, moves towards audiences of the future so their future looks more like this. Think about who is critical to the future of your organization? Funders, audiences, staff, volunteers, partners. How can you use this time to move towards them, instead of hunkering down with those you worked with so long in the past. Next, think about what assets do you have to share with these communities that matter and what assets do they have to share with you. We take an asset based approach in OF/BY/FOR ALL. We believe

that if you focus on assets, you are inviting people to engage from a position of strength and agency, instead from a position of deficiency. We take a needs based old, often. These poor kids don't have art, et cetera. But you can also take this approach that, can make people feel deficient, like they don't have agency in the experience. But if instead you can say, let's look at the assets we all have, the creativity and tools we have, together, then you can create something more powerful. The symphony for a broken orchestra is a precoronavirus project created in Philadelphia by a combination of temple university and various other partners. Here's a two minute video clip to give you a sense of the project. Listen for the way they talk about assets.

(Video)

>> Broken instruments in the school district of Philadelphia has become a huge problem.

>> If we had this instrument working, she's a dedicated student. She would have passed that audition with no problem.

>> When it's unplayable, it kind of just goes into what we call an instrument graveyard. We keep all the broken instruments in one place and they just collect dust.

>> There are lots of organizations that want to support the school district. This is a tangible way to do it. It's exciting, the message it sends to them and gets them back to the kids who are hungry for opportunities like this.

>> Each of these instruments has its own problem. They need to be investigated, listened to, respected, so the music I write for it must be unique to it. Then, each instrument as part of the process will be healed.

>> There's a light being shined, that is big. Encouraging, up lifting, as a member of the orchestra I'm excited because these students will have a pathway to be one of my colleagues, hopefully.

>> Bringing visibility that instrumental music is alive and well. This only represents the ones that's not being played.

>> I came up with the idea for Symphony for a broken orchestra. I wanted it to be seen as something other than a problem. These are opportunities to take an active role in being part of the solution through adopting an instrument and contributing towards its repair or volunteering for a performance or even play the in the Symphony.

>> I love how in this project, you hear

everybody in two minutes talking about assets. The teacher talking about the young musician with their potential. The composer, talking about how each instrument good a unique sound to be brought out. And the opportunity to come together for something that really matters. I've seen so many positive examples of how people are getting really creative about looking for and highlighting new assets, doing so in ways that build solidarity, hope and strength. Today, even as you might feel really stressed about the reduction in assets for your orchestra, think about how you might creatively repurpose the assets you do have. This organization, in the U.K., when coronavirus hit, they realized, like a lot of theater companies, that they have a van, to take equipment, doing shows and realized it could be repurposed for distribution of food and supplies. They got other theaters as -- two theaters participating. They got more creative about sharing assets. As a grassroots, energetic theater company, they were real good at bringing together volunteers to create something big, put on a show. They realized the same talents could be applied to putting on a different kind of show, a relief effort. They became the contracted non-profit for delivering everything from food, medical supplies, to finding lost cats. They realized another humble asset

they had was a printer. They invited people across the city to send in pictures of artwork they made and they would print it and stick it up on phone poles around the city. Alan talked about the idea of what his theater company is fundamentally for. It's not selling ticket. We're here to tell stories and make them true in the world. One big story we tell is that our community comes together. We do that by doing this relief effort. Another big story we want to make true is that there's creativity in every household in the city and hence the poster project was born. He said, of course they want to get back to making theater, inhabiting their space. But that won't stop them from doing the work that's their fundamental purpose by creatively rethinking their assets during this time. If you can answer these questions, you will come up with a bold plan to revision your organization. I invite you to think about how you may ask these questions, with many people across your organization. How you may talk about it with musicians, front of house staff, community partners you see as part of that audience and community of the future. We need to listen to new voices. The old voices got us to where we are, and the new voices will help us think about what assets we can creatively repurpose. If you're not sure how to do this, stay in touch with me. We're creating a

simple structured program to help you step by step create a revisioning plan. Whether you stay in touch with us or not, I hope you will choose to change. I hope you will commit to reimagining. If you do so, you will create a plan that serves your stakeholders, donors, and partners as well. When a funder asks you after coronavirus, or community leader, what did you do during coronavirus, they don't want to hear, we hunkered down, spent down our reserves. They want to hear, we took this as an opportunity, where we chose to change, committed to new community who are important to our future, got creative about assets we could share. Together, we built a plan to become more inclusive, more relevant, equitable, and sustainable. We have a bold vision for how our orchestra can matter more to more people. Let's build that vision together. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much. That was a wonderful presentation with lots of rich examples and great guidance in it. As questions are coming in, you're doing this work globally. Seeing organizations in action. What are you learning about the organizations that do well with this approach? And what are you learning about the ones who are struggling with it?

>> It comes back to the idea of choosing to

change. I've seen that there are organizations that have not made that deliberate choice. Those are the ones that are fighting themselves, even internally, because they're playing chicken, maybe it will go like this, rather than saying we will commit to get better in a way that matters to us. Regardless of when we can re-open. It takes so much mental energy to focus on the immediate and near term. If you can instead give yourself permission to say I won't worry, if we can re-open in six months. I will assume it's far out and say, how do I want to change to be where we want to be when this day comes. One of the most powerful things I've seen is organizations saying we see this as an opportunity where when we re-open our doors, we want new people coming in with us and we will move towards them now. It has created a sense not just of giving something to do, but real purpose. We're all experiencing this individually. Oh, did I spend this time watching movies, learn how to do a pull up, how do we care for ourselves while we're pursuing things. When there are organizations with people all going through these questions, there's clarity and shared commitment, those people come forward about with a lot of energy and have a container in which this reimagine, as opposed to feeling like every day they're asking, will it be next week, three weeks? Also,

I've seen across the network in OF/BY/FOR ALL, performing arts organizations have a challenge and gift, different from a museum or library. Those are talking seriously about re-opening, some of them already opened now. There's a sense of, there's daily engagement happening. They really have to focus on things like health, safety, what's happening, tomorrow. Next week. Some organizations said we canceled the season, so they created a space for themselves and have to decide what to do with the space. Also, I'm hearing from the most courageous leaders, I'm cutting back. Not making promises that we will refill the positions we had before. We may be growing a different direction after the crisis, and yes, we care about and are very sympathetic to people losing their jobs but it's our job to go to something better and we're start to think about the structure to new things. We may not involve more diverse voices in that conversation and that's a problem. Some of the most creative ideas will be from people who have been itching for change for a long time, more likely people who felt things were not perfect.

>> AI'm interested in your pointing out the organizations are complex and have people at different stages within them. Different amounts of power, where an organization moves. You commented on young

people, people of color, earlier in their careers who may not have much authority in the organization. What advice do you have for people who are not decision makers?

>> We encourage organizations to form a team that is diagonal. Including people of different levels of power. Some organizations, their leaders are creating a re-opening committee, and have gotten deliberate about saying it includes something from janitorial, front of house, and artist, and especially, in a time of crisis, you often feel it's all up to me as a leader. But there are so many things on your plate it could be a great time to permit a diagonal team or team of people from different perspectives, levels of positional power, to do some of this reimagining and have trust they will come impact with some ideas you can help shape and sell and move forward with.

>> Thank you. Here's a question. What about organizations that do not have funds to keep any staff on, beyond just the basic administration, keep the organization running, only able to pay for some two hours a week?

>> First, I know how hard that is. You know best how you need to spend those two hours. Also, if you can spend some of those hours reimagining, you will

come out in a stronger position than where were you were before. It's a great time to engage people who care about your organization, doing some of this along with you. Someone remarked to me the other day that their board is more active than ever. They said I need to find something for them to do. We know this crisis is hitting different people inequitably. There are some people with more capacity to dream, act. A lot of people would be excited, if you reached out to a few community leaders. And said, hey, we want to radically reimagine our organization to be more relevant to the community. We're going to hold four meetings on Zoom for an hour each, no prep, would you participate? You would be surprised, who might say yes now who might have been impossible for you to get to before. If you get yeses, once you hold a vision, they will be highly invested supporters.

>> Thank you. What are some of your favorite method for gathering qualitative data for understanding what's relevant and important?

>> I never ask what people want to see. People when they take something like a survey are so attuned to trying to please you, it's particularly true reaching out to people who don't know you. They will say, I never come to library -- instead, we focus on

asking people about assets. It's a great time to ask people what are you offer, what new strength are you finding right now to you didn't know before. I can't tell you how many arts organizations get stuck in a needs based model, like, oh that neighborhood, these people, don't make art, don't care about art. We're finding so many ways in coronavirus, that's so untrue. It's a time where people are exposing and engaging their creativity differently. So ask people what matters you, what are you proud of, what's important to you. And you can do surveys, or creative response, giving food bags out, it started out just giving a meaning, we care about you, we're neighbors. They transition to having a question about the future of the neighbor, inviting people in a creative way to talk about what matters to them. If you know what matters to someone, what they're proud of, you can build something strong together. If you found that you heard, what role is musician playing in your life right now? I'd take a different approach if they said I'm dusting off my guitar, versus, if they said, I find myself listening on repeat to the song that I like. There are different programmatic choices I'd make based on what matters most to people right now.

>> Thank you. This process sounds natural to midsize organizations. Is there a process for larger

organizations?

>> Large organizations are becoming midsize organization. Diagonal team building are easier with larger organizations, where there are more different roles. There's more diversity of thought and perspective. You have to create a zone, my title is CEO and space maker. There's a reminder, my job is to make space for others to try new things. We must make that space, give ourselves permission to try something new. We're all exploring how our organizations are working differently. Whether, do we do an all staff Zoom town hall. Call out, hey, there's an opportunity right now for us to create a container for something more experimental than we were able to do before. Those are also terms you can use, if you're managing up, trying to get something to, if you can present, this is a special time, let's use the opportunity to do something special. Let's give ourselves different rules in the space of this. That can create the kind of cultural opportunity that can move this forward. There's also the question of what do you choose to change. If you had are a structure in the past, do you choose to replicate it or is this a time to experiment. Everybody has limited capacity so the opportunity to say let's have a small group, focus towards a particular goal, feel successful in completion

of that, very powerful. Reimagining can feel so messy and stressful, how do we make it simple? I have five weeks, I could do an hour, four five weeks. I can put my arms around that. Creating a container, where people know when their job is done and has been successful, that's important.

>> You answered the first half of it. About how to prepare for the diagonal teams successfully. What are the measures of success?

>> This is why I'm focused on how can you do a revisioning sprint. I'd be looking to say here's a plan I can sell to stakeholders, into my team, to donors and supporters. Again, being able to answer, what were you doing during coronavirus and be able to answer with something exciting. I was far on a radical perspective. All kinds of voices, saying the organizations will be successful on the other side of this, are ones that will have something bold and compelling to share about what comes next so if you believe that, I'd ask myself, go backwards and say, what do I need to put into place something compelling to share. We're developing a process that's rooted in this who, what, how, but you could also take a process saying we will have a wide open invitation of ideas from across the organization, do some kind of ranked prioritization, or we will bring in

community leaders for ideas. A lot of different ways to approach it. I'd start with the end, if success looks like, I have a plan I can sell and community well, then you ask yourself, what do I need to do to get to that plan and acknowledge that can't be a strategic plan that's multi year. We don't know what the future will have. We can't have a detailed plan, so what is the two page vision, exciting story about the future that you want to build.

>> Thank you. In the category of, orchestras often people who are working in them have very different experiences as part of the orchestra. What do you see as challenges to work place culture in orchestras, where performers are guaranteed a contractual pay raise while staff salaries are frozen. Or laid off.

>> I didn't want to presume what you might want to change. But I might imagine there might be things around labor, and about the split of artistic versus administrative. Maybe there's even, some experimentation and flexibility happening there right now. Maybe there's an opportunity to create a reimagining space with a container that's clear to say, let's try doing something in a different way towards creating a vision. Musicians care about this too. Who might have been experimenting already with different models for engaging people with music, probably musicians are there, so how

do we create a zone for experimentation together and how to commit to choose to let go of things that weren't working, even if they're painful, like canceling a subscription model, what's the work you're willing to do to make that change.

>> What do you find to be uniquely American attributes?

>> There's a bright side, challenging side in America versus other parts of the world. The challenging side is, these organizations in America are less funded publicly than in other countries. Much higher financial risk and pressure. No question. But seeing a lot more openness to experimentation and creativity, flexibility of organizational culture, here than in other countries. We work with libraries, and they're rule followers and have a lot of systems. I talked to so many libraries who said it feels like the wild west. I have more access than I ever had, there are group conversations, things that used to take months now take days to get down and in Europe, the funding is much more stable and there's more move to curtail rather than creativity. We have this democratic, intent whether we live it out, but a lot of people say we never had a meeting of all the artists, or all the faculty or the company with the staff together. We're doing that for the first time. So to

anybody who's excited by little cracks you see opening up, to say how can you strategically wind the crack, make sure it's not like when you re-open things will snap back. It was great when we met together, how can we do more of that, restructure so that's more possible. Rather than thinking this is a special time and things will change. I will put in the chat, if you want to stay connected with me or hear more about the reimagining tools, there's a link here, we will send you the slides tomorrow. They will be available through the League. I would love to stay in touch. This is my way of virtually extending business cards. Thank you all so much for having me. It really is an honor and gift. I hope we will use this gift to its greatest potential for our communities of communities and organizations. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much. Read Nina's book, it's fantastic. I can't find the closing remarks which I was supposed to give you, house keeping things. But if I recall, please fill out the evaluation of the settings, in PheedLoop, on the side of your screen on the left side. And today's session has been recorded. Probably by sometime tomorrow, if not sooner, it will be up. We will be sending you a reminder about that. And it's 2:30. So, Nina, thank you so much and all of you for being with us. See you tomorrow at 1:00. Bye-bye.