

Diversifying Audiences

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DAVID SNEAD: This is just like the start of a concert. Everyone sort of knows when they have to get quiet.

Good morning, everyone. I am David Snead, the President and CEO of the amazing Handel and Haydn Society in Boston. I thank you so much for coming this morning. I'm with Kate Prescott, our market researcher, and Lilee Dethchan, our VP of Finance and Administration, to kind of tell you about the DEI journey that we've been on at H&H.

And I want to say at the beginning, I don't think we have all the answers, so if you're expecting that, I'm sorry. We're in progress right now, because of course, we lost a year of concerts due to COVID, so things are still yet to be done. We have a lot of things we're doing that we report on. I don't pretend to believe that a lot of this is stuff you aren't already doing, so don't think we think we just found the magic formula.

But I think what's interesting about this, hopefully, is the process. The sort of data driven way that we've gone about thinking about diversifying the audience as a driver for organizational change and evolution. So that's really what this is about. This is not about convincing you why this is important. We already know that. That's why you're here. It's sort of about how we've been implementing a plan to diversify the audience and also the organization.

So I want to start off by just a few slides about context about H&H. And this work is not happening in a vacuum. It's not just one thing all by itself. We're doing DEI over here and other stuff over here. This is one element of an entire organizational strategy called relentless relevance. I get that name from a guy named David Aaker, who is a professor of marketing up the road at Berkeley.

And the idea is to optimize everything about your organization; 360 degrees around optimizing customer value and marrying work to more people as a way of getting people to come to concerts. If you don't matter to them, it's much harder to get them to come, and then getting them to come back and then developing loyalty, and then eventually becoming donors.

As David Aaker wrote, after spending much time studying brands, he said, "It's astounding how much of what's spent on marketing has no impact on growth. What grows market share is relevance." So the key idea here is relevant. How do you use all of the tools you have at an orchestra to create a connection? To become relevant to people at a personal level?

Relevance we're talking about here is not about doing social good and doing great things in the community, although that's very, very important. It's definitely part of it. What we're talking about here is creating a personal connection with someone such that you matter to them, and that's why they come to your concerts.

So a little bit about H&H. We're the oldest performing arts organization in the country, founded in 1815. We just finished our 207th consecutive season. We perform a baroque and classical repertoire, so basically 1600 to 1850-ish, kind of Monteverdi to Mendelssohn. And we perform on period

instruments, in an historically informed way. So gut strings, natural horns, valve-less trumpets, all of that stuff. And we're an orchestra and a chorus.

So everything I just told you says we're old, right? So the question is, how do you make this organization relevant to Boston in 2022? And that's what this story is really about. Just looking at the organization overall, I think if you want to become relevant to someone you start off by learning about them and listening. So we started off with market research in Boston in 2016, to understand the Boston classical music market and how H&H fits into that.

And we found some interesting things. First of all, there was a very, very low awareness of H&H in the market; six percent unaided awareness. So we weren't on people's radar at all. The fact that we play on period instruments, people didn't know that. The fact we played baroque and classical music, they didn't know that either.

Basically, if you asked people in the market—and this is people, by the way, who were into classical music in Boston—tell us about H&H. The top answer was, I don't know much about you. That was their main response. But also, though, a great opportunity, right?

On the plus side, attendees, very, very high concert satisfaction. People really love the idea of connection between the orchestra and the audience, they felt. Also, we found 25 percent of the market was inclined to attend H&H when they found out what we did: baroque and classical, period instruments. Yeah, that's interesting. I might come. I just don't know about you.

So that then led to an overall strategy to position the concert experience not as an escape. A lot of orchestras say, escape the everyday by coming to our concerts. We're not about unplugging, we're about plugging in. It's about promoting an active connection between music, musicians, composer and audience.

We talk about immensely engaging, emotionally moving and joyfully uplifting concert experiences that are historically informed, masterfully performed, and passionately shared. All of that came from the research. That's what that audience told us they were looking for. The good thing is, it's really true. I mean, if you go to an H&H concert, I think this is what we hear from the audience about what the experience is like for them.

By the way, great attendance today. There's going to be a lot of data, a lot of slides. You're all going to get this in the app, so don't worry about taking notes or reading all the slides. You'll get them for your very own.

So the way this was executed was, we went from brochures like this—again, we're trying to be immensely engaging, emotionally moving and joyfully uplifting. From this to this to this, showing the connection. And this cover this year, much more intimacy. We do talk about the period instruments in the brochure. We also did videos on the website about the musicians and their instruments. And we sold just gobs of tickets.

So that's all background. The interesting thing about today is what we also found in the research, which was that our audience was way, way under representative of the actual disposition of the classical music market in Boston.

Twenty percent of the classical music market in Boston were people of color. Our audience was only at 12 percent. So why is that? Why aren't they coming? Again, this is a survey of people who like what we do, and they're not coming. So the question was, what does H&H do to become more relevant to classical music enjoyers of color? And to find that out, we decided, as we always do, to go back and just ask them. Talk to people. Find out what they tell you and then act on it.

And so with this, Cynthia, we need to toggle to the other presentation, Kate's presentation, who will now you walk you through the data. I thought I could do all of this myself, but with Cynthia here I am just going to take advantage of her.

KATE PRESCOTT: Thanks for your patience, everyone. Okay, hi. As David mentioned, this research was really about helping H&H become more relevant to people of color who enjoy classical music. And again, it's about attracting people to concerts. And so what we were doing was exploring the relationship between people of color, the relationship people of color have with classical music and with concerts. Identifying the barriers to attendance and really looking for strategies to motivate attendants' increased engagement.

We wanted to be really thoughtful. This was back in early 2017, and we wanted to be really thoughtful about this research, because very little had been done with this audience at that point.

And so we did a very comprehensive study. We included qualitative and quantitative. We had personal interviews. We sent people to our concerts. We interviewed them afterwards. And then we followed up with lots of online surveys. For the qualitative, we partnered with another group who had

a team of multicultural researchers, because we wanted to make sure that we had their perspective on this whole topic. And so I'm just going to go through some overall findings and some of the recommendations, and then turn it back to David.

So just a minute about the qualitative methodology, because it was fairly complex. We started with in-depth interviews, and I shared the interviews with a woman from the other team who was a black researcher. And so we first brought in about 25 people across demographics and different ethnic groups, and we screened for people who enjoy classical music and attend the arts at least occasionally. And we covered lots of different topics, from their habits, leisure habits, to relevance of classical music in their lives, their awareness and perceptions of H&H, and so forth.

Then we brought in another 25 or so people, same kind of screening criteria, and we asked them all to go to an H&H concert. Because we wanted to understand the relationship between perception and reality in terms of what was going on, and we had a separate group of 25 because we didn't want to influence them with our pre-concert interviews. So we wanted some people to go in blind, right? And so we did that.

They got to choose one of four concerts over the fall: Beethoven 9; Beethoven/Mozart program; *Amadeus*, the film on period instruments—totally awesome; and *Messiah*. And so after they went we did online post-concert surveys, and then Brenda and I followed up with a lot of them with in-depth telephone calls to further explore what their experiences were like. So I'm just going to talk about sort of three highlights from some of that work.

One was that from the interviews, we found that everybody liked classical music, but it wasn't their music of choice. And similarly, with concert experiences, they would go to classical concerts, but

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preferred other things. So I would characterize it as latent interest in classical music, somewhere below the surface for all of these people.

Second, when they went to these concerts, they, indeed, looked at the audience and said, yeah, it's not like me. And yet they still felt very at home. They describe the audiences as older and not diverse, and yet they told us after the fact, you know, I found myself really bonding with the other audience members, and it was through the music and the joy of the experience. And sometimes they talked to people directly, and other times it was just fact of being in the hall and experiencing this with other people.

And third, everybody reported enjoying the concert much more than they expected. So pre-concert, they walked in saying, eh, I'm not sure. And literally everybody came out saying that was much more, or extremely more enjoyable than I thought. It reminded people about why they like to go to classical concerts, and they also found the entire environment of it extremely welcoming.

So coming out of that research, I had actually the partner group write the report to ensure their perspective. And so their sort of overall conclusions were, after this, all of this qualitative work, there is a significant opportunity for H&H to expand its audience of color. Respondents enjoyed the performances. They didn't feel left out. They felt there was inclusion on the stage, which they liked in the programming. They responded very favorably to the purity of instruments and historical perspective. And after the concerts, virtually no one said, I'm not interested.

That said, the research team felt that there would be a substantial investment in time and resources and in education exposure relevant to motivation in order to accomplish this.

So then moving forward, we followed up with surveys in July of '18, and we had a random sample. We pulled people from a 25 mile radius of Boston Symphony Hall, where all of the concerts are held. We again screened for people who at least enjoy classical music and attend at least one performance in a typical year. That instance rate was actually 25 percent. So 25 percent of people that we talked to fell into both of those categories.

We had a sample of almost 700 people, about equally split between people of color and white, because we wanted to compare the differences. And we also looked at differences across ethnic groups. I'm not going to talk a lot about that. I will say just in general that African-American black participants, respondents, were slightly less involved in classical music than others. But most of the results were fairly split equally between the groups, so I'm not going to focus there.

We asked everything. We're not going to go through that. I am just going to talk a little bit about brand awareness and attendance, motivations, barriers, perceptions of H&H, some of their experiences, and then look a little at the communications for the brand.

As context, this looks at overall arts attendance. We asked people how many times—and like I said, you'll get the slides and I'll read them. You don't have to worry about the individual numbers. But essentially, this looks at how many concerts people go to in an average year. And what it essentially says is that the POC sample is characterized by light arts attendance. And that's actually the same for the white sample; even more for that group. So you have the majority attending one, two or no concerts in an average year.

And additionally, we looked at a lot of media things, and only 17 percent of them indicated actively searching for information about arts and entertainment on a regular basis. So people aren't looking for us, necessarily. You know, we have to know that we have to work outwards.

Additional context. We asked people about their classical concert enjoyment and classical music familiarity. And like we saw on the qualitative, the vast majority of these people really enjoyed attending classical concerts. On the other hand, a lot of the people are not that familiar with the genre and the music. So over 60 percent said somewhat familiar or less. So context.

Then we get into the brand, and here is the first H&H issue that we see. This is total brand awareness of many of the organizations in Boston, and H&H is down there at 28 percent. This was the most striking difference between the POC sample and the white sample, where the white audience was at 50 percent. So there was much higher awareness. And in general, that sample had higher awareness of sort of the major arts organizations in the area.

Then we looked at perceptions of the organization. So here people could check all of these, whichever statements they felt strongly applied to H&H. So you see at the top, highly respectable, has an excellent orchestra, is a source of pride for Boston. But the overall picture is that these numbers are all low, and they're flat. So essentially it's saying people have low familiarity with the brand; who the brand is.

And so for a lot of people, these are people who are aware of the brand. But a lot of the people, they're aware in name only, right? So that's another issue.

We did have a number of people who had been to H&H concerts in the past, about 20 percent at some point, and asked about their enjoyment. And like we saw on the qualitative, the vast majority had a wonderful time, enjoyed their concerts very much. Nobody said they didn't enjoy them. But if you looked at the non-attenders and expected enjoyment, it's far lower. You only have 10 percent saying, I'm going to love your concerts based on what I know about them. So there is another sort of issue there.

And I think part of that goes to their perceptions of what it's going to be like, right? So this looks at perceptions of the H&H audience. Who is in that audience? And this is among people who had attended; POC sample of people who had attended H&H concerts. So I think they're going to be really knowledgeable of classical music and they're going to come dressed up. But they also said, very friendly from an audience standpoint, right? And relaxed versus stuffy was the other end. And they were less likely to say mostly white, mostly old and mostly serious.

Not so the non-attenders, right? So the non-attenders also said, yes, I perceived the audience to be very knowledgeable of classical music. They are probably going to be dressed up. And very friendly and relaxed. And drops tremendously, and then you see this rise in mostly white, mostly old, and mostly serious. So there are significant issues in terms of perceptions of who is going to be in that room.

We also asked general attendance inhibitors. So what holds you back from going to these concerts? And this was a sort of check all apply list that we had grouped into areas. And the first thing you'll notice is, there are lots of them. And when we see this in qualitative research, when we asked people about wanting to go to concerts, the barriers come readily to mind. So it's, oh, I would love to go to a concert, but you know, those tickets are going to cost a lot. And then there's that parking. And I'm not

sure of how to get there. And am I going to really, really like that? Maybe some other time. You know, that's sort of how it works.

And so in this case you have, very high on the inhibitor list is financial primarily, perceived ticket prices. You also have uncertainty about what the experience is going to be like, and the performance. Lack of interest in the genre, or at least relative to other variables or other activities. The environment and the atmosphere came up, just like what we just saw, and that was particularly true among the African-American and Hispanic respondents. And other issues; you know, personal things got in the way, transportation.

To the point about financial and ticket prices, the other thing that we see all the time is that, yes, financial, ticket price can be a real barrier for a lot of people, and we see that with younger people in lower incomes. And it's also a perceptual barrier. This looks at, we asked people how much they would expect to pay for less expensive mid-range and more expensive tickets to H&H.

And so H&H, at the lowest end, the less expensive is \$25 to \$29. Mid-range is \$50 to \$56. Higher is \$75, top is \$104. At the low end, people estimate \$45 on average, and actually—so these volumes are looking at what the lines say, which is that perceptions are actually all over the place. They don't know what it actually costs, but they vastly overestimate in general.

So low end, the average was \$45. Medium priced tickets, the average is \$90. Most expensive tickets was \$152. Seventy percent of the people assumed that the tickets, high priced tickets, were a hundred or more. That was 78 percent. And that's particularly a problem because people want good seats. They don't know how much they cost, but they think they cost like twice as much as they do.

So that's another huge barrier.

And then there's the hall. This is people who hadn't been—so very few people of this sample had been to Symphony Hall in any frequency. This looks at the people who hadn't—hadn't been, or hadn't been in a really long time. And so, how do they perceive it? Well, classy and beautiful, great. But formal, special occasion and expensive; and not exiting, welcoming, comfortable or for people like me.

The good news is, those people in that sample who had actually gone to Symphony Hall had much better perceptions, right? So the reality is better. You can see beautiful jumps way up. Formal and special occasion go down. And exciting, welcoming, comfortable and for people like me increase significantly. It's not beautiful here. There's still work to be done. But that actual experience really improves people's perceptions of the hall.

One last thing within this sort of realm is we actually asked people of the POC sample what their suggestions would be for attracting people of color. We asked them about whether they have friends that go and that sort of thing.

And so the primary response was, well, show more of us. More diversity, right? In both the performers and the programming, more black artists of color. Just you know, more African-American conductors. Showing programs based on African-American culture, that sort of thing. Also awareness and outreach came up. Advertise where we are; local papers and community centers. Partner with local organizations. And then a number of other issues.

And then just one last section. We switched to sort of looking at communications, and who H&H says they are and how do people react to that? And so this was the brochure from that year. There's the cover, masterly performed, passionately shared. The back cover with the performances. The inside spread with jeans photo-shopped into the people in the first row. We can do that. We can do that.

And H&H for sure has always started on the first page with this copy that's about the brand. And so we had people read that. So after looking at all of this we said, based on that imagery, those words, that language, how appealing do you think H&H's concerts would be?

And so the people who had gone, said, yep, really, really appealing. Which is important because it means what they're doing and what they're saying rings true to their experience and what they enjoy out of it, right? So yeah.

The people who hadn't been expectedly have lower ratings in terms of overall appeal. But still you have over half of the POC sample saying, I'd be highly interested in going based on what you just showed me, right?

We exposed the idea of explaining what period instruments were, and that H&H does baroque and classical. Also high interest in the period instrument idea, which we saw in the qualitative. Baroque and classical was a little lower, and we found out through other measures baroque is lower, but interest in classical and early romantic are really high.

We went in a little deeper with some of the print ads. And these are ads from the previous year when we did the qualitative work. And so we showed people ads and then asked them about how well— what's your reaction to this way of promoting a concert to you?

And so overall scores are really strong across four ads. I think it's interesting that African-American and Hispanic, they were more strongly attracted to the Handel *Hercules* and the Beethoven 9 showing all of the soloists.

We then went a little further and showed each of the ads and said, so what attracts you? What most attracts you to this ad? And that was on an open ended basis and we coded all of the responses. And so for this particular ad, the vast majority of the responses were about the soloist pictures, not Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, right? It was about these pictures. And so they said, it's the photo of the bass baritone. I'm not used to seeing an African-American in a classical role, but it's great. I was pleasantly surprised. Diverse soloists. The diversity catches my eye. How refreshing.

And I think it was also the quality of the pictures, because you had people saying things like, nice to see a black with braids. The photos of the singers are friendly and inviting. I loved seeing the young, diverse faces. So it's not just the pictures, it's what the pictures are.

So for this image, for this ad, again, people focused mostly on the image. That's what attracted them. And that was split between two different things. One was the power of the emotion that he was expressing. And so people were just looking at him. He seems full of energy. He looks like he's putting it all. And again, it was who he is. It's not a white guy, for once. It's an African-American, and so that tells me this is a diverse show and it makes me feel comfortable to attend as an African-American woman. It features a person of color and it's something you don't see much.

And then lastly, I think it's really interesting, this one. This is Aisslinn, the concert master. And again, people went to her in terms of the attraction as opposed to Mozart and Beethoven. And it was for two reasons. One, her demeanor. They looked at her and said she looks confident and proud, and she's saying, I'm going to blow your mind, right?

And that is actually her personality. And the other was her appearance. The red hair, the red outfit, tells me that this is not a show for stuck up people, and they are reaching out to young audiences. The hair color in the ad because it tells me that they are welcoming towards all kinds of people. Her non-classical appearance is refreshing. And so all of those, as a whole, I think communicate the welcoming-ness of this brand.

Okay, so lastly, how likely are you going to come, based on everything you've seen? We showed them concert descriptions as well. And so those people with past experience, the vast majority said, yep, highly likely to come. The people who hadn't been, it was, expectedly, lower, but you still have over 40 percent of the POC population of this sample saying I'd be really interested in coming to those performances.

So what does that all mean? It looks like the qualitative and the quantitative said there is certainly potential for diversifying the audience. And in order to do that, it sounds like you need to minimize those barriers, leverage those strengths, in order to motivate trial and repeat. And lastly, create these lasting emotional connections.

And so we just talked a little bit about how to do that, and I think it's important. There's lots of barriers, like I said, and we tend to sort of ignore a lot of them and say, well, it's out of our control. We still have to deal with them.

And so in this case, you could look at them as practical, informational and emotional. And the practical are the things like they're lighter art attenders, or they are less involved with classical music. They're less familiar with the category. And the other barriers; we still have to deal with it.

And then there are informational. They don't seek out information, which we see with general market samples all the time. In terms of arts, we found no dominant media sources, either broad media or culturally specific. So that also leads to that little awareness of the brand. Price perceptions, as we talked about.

And then I think those emotional barriers, which are truly important. You know, this low expected enjoyment, questions about the atmosphere and the audience, all contribute to this resistance to attend.

On the other hand, H&H has these strengths that they need to leverage. The communications were very appealing, so the strategy resonated. There is value in the period instruments. People liked and felt the communications were highly appealing and showed efforts at diversity, which was both surprising and affirming to them, which I think is important. We also found that the experiences were highly compelling, both sort of orally and visually to people. And we knew that people really had engaging and satisfying overall experiences. They enjoyed them. And that enjoyment improved those emotional barriers, right?

So overall, it suggested a couple of major strategies, and I think they kind of go back to brand relationships 101, you know? It's about exposure, engagement and experience. Clearly, you need to

increase awareness of who H&H is and what they do and shift those perceptions if you're going to get people in the door.

You need to create greater connections in order to up the engagement to be open to coming, and an incentivized trial to get people in the door. And then obviously think about the experience and enhancing it from a DEI lens. And there's lots of tactics that you can do. And all of those—I'm not going to talk about them but you can get them. But I think literally, if you think about it, each level, from exposure to engagement to experience, there's lots of things to do.

Obviously from an experience standpoint, increasing diversity on the stage in the programming, and the musicians, and the H&H, of course, is really important. But there are lots of things you can do around that as well.

So with that, then H&H turned their attention to developing this path to greater relevance. And I'm going to turn it back.

SNEAD: Okay, Cynthia, if we could go back to the other presentation. I did want to say, while we're doing this, I hope you're getting here that the specific solutions for H&H are kind of idiosyncratic to us and who we are. But I hope that there is value in learning about the process and the philosophy of going out and learning about the audience you want to attract and then building strategies based on that.

There are some interesting things that we learned, hypotheses that we kind of jettisoned. One, it was all about perceptions. You know, there was this perception that we were too expensive, but we're

really not. And there was this perception that the hall experience was not welcoming and attractive, but the people who had been said it wasn't. And then there was this perception of just not knowing much about it.

So these are all things that we could address, which is good news, great news. And I think this work inspired a comprehensive, organization-wide, detailed, granular, specific plan, which was my goal. I have been through—I mean, you have organizations that have the very nice flowery language about our goals and ambitions, what we want to achieve. But then, what gets done?

And this was about getting something done. Henry and I have been around too long to not get something done on this. So this, along with other inputs, led to this 63 point, I think it is, implementation plan of things we are going to do. Every item has an owner. It has a budget and it has a timeline. And it's over three years.

So I'm going to walk through that in a second. I wanted to start off, though, with this statement from our strategic plan, which has those lofty ambitions. The goal, it said, was to increase relevance to racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities in greater Boston by creating a welcoming and proactively inclusive institutional culture that embraces all people.

Well, swell. You know, the question, the issue is, how do you do that? So we, with the senior staff, and really led by Lilee, our VP of Administration, went through, and with the help of a consultant, Teresa Nelson at The Impact Seat, created, over the course of several months, this plan.

I'm not going to go through the entire thing with you, I'm just going to hit a couple of highlights of every section. And maybe this will be helpful to you as you think about implementing the strategies and tactics back at your place.

In the artistic area we had seven things we said we would do. One of them was to create a fellowship for period instrument musicians of color. If diversity is an issue in your symphony orchestra, it's really bad in period instrument land. So we decided to go out and recruit musicians of great potential of color just entering the field, and create an opportunity for them to work with H&H. And that was one of our major initiatives to get more diversity on stage in our orchestra.

Same thing with the chorus. I said earlier, the chorus is a big part of H&H. And actually, I guess, 40 percent or so of our concerts are with chorus. And so getting more diversity in the chorus was another big goal of ours. And also, we wanted to diversify the repertoire and also the soloists.

So to get help with that, these are the folks that have been helping us in that effort. First of all, Reggie Mobley we hired as a programming consultant. As some of you may know, he is quite an amazing countertenor. And I have to say, one of the great things that we all have in this field is, we get to work with really amazing talented people, and Reggie is quite a very special person and artist. And he's been helping us learn more about repertoire that's not really played from under-represented composers. And he'll talk more about that at the end of this session. He's going to join us from Berlin.

Anthony Trecek-King joined us as a resident conductor of the chorus, to help us identify more singers of color to join our chorus. Jonathan Woody is a composer in New York, and he, actually at the inspiration of Reggie, worked with, over the course of history, Charles Ignatius Sancho, this really amazing man from London, 1770s, 1780s. An escaped slave who became a composer of really, really
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wonderful music. And Jonathan arranged the music of Sancho for us to perform in our opening night concert last year, and also on video. And Reggie will talk much more about that.

In marketing, a lot of this was about, of course, as I said, perceptions and communications. We decided we wanted to hire a marketing person specifically tasked with implementing the recommendations of this research, to grow the audience of color and also a younger audience.

We dedicated ourselves to informing all of our marketing and visuals and language to be more welcoming and inclusive. I know a lot of you are doing that already. Our new audience development manager was tasked with developing connections with DEI affinity groups in professional organizations, to help introduce H&H to new audiences. Partnerships with community organizations, more digital advertising to reach younger POC audiences, deal with the price issue, deal with the awareness issue, and so on and so forth.

So that was in marketing. And this is Michael Wark, the guy that we hired to do this job. He started in February. We're a year behind because we didn't have concerts for a year, but he started in February. And we do one concert a month, so we only had three concerts left when he started. But he has made connections with 80 affinity groups and professional organizations and has given them 600 tickets for people of color to come to H&H concerts this spring.

Now yes, he gave them. But the point is, we're just starting out. We're trying to create connections. So revenue is not the goal here. But to get 600 people to come who hadn't come before for our audiences of color, I think is a pretty good start. So Michael is working on that next year.

And then showing communications, the “Crossing the Deep” program that Reggie will talk about.

This is our single ticket app, as Kate mentioned, and it’s showing audiences of the kinds of people you want to attract, which is very important as well.

Then in the education area, H&H has seven youth choruses, of 250 or so singers in those ensembles. And we established new standards for diversifying the membership and also the repertoire of those choruses. Also to create scholarships for lower income students to come join those choruses. Also many more concerts outside of the hallowed Symphony Hall area to reach the audiences that we want to reach.

In terms of development, Mike is here. He can answer questions. We really focused on trying to find funding for our DEI programs, because it’s several hundred thousand dollars now that are being spent on it every year. Really find organizations that are targeting the same kind of groups that we’re targeting. Like for instance, there’s some health organizations that are concerned about the issue of heart disease among blacks, and maybe there’s a role for music to play in dealing with that, and so try to create connections like that.

A big part of it, though, was to find funding for a DEI program, and there’s great news there. I mentioned the fellowship for period musicians of color. We have received a million dollar grant from a local foundation to fund that for five years, so that’s really terrific. Headed by the union now, and hopefully in the fall we can get that program started.

Now infrastructure. What about hiring? What about staff and all of that? And Lilee Dethchan, who is our VP of Finance and Administration, has really been running point on this. And I’ve asked her to talk about that.

LILEE DETCHAN: Thank you. You all thought I was going to be the one to talk about data, right? So. Okay, so I think first and foremost, DEI, everyone has a different understanding of DEI, right? So within an organization, we, as an individual and as an organization, have a different understanding of what DEI means—diversity, equity and inclusion.

So thanks to David's leadership, we were able to get support from the top, and we were able to implement these 63 plus tactics to achieve the goal that we have. We have tested—sorry, we planned, we tested, and we implemented everything. So it's testing and measuring. And we found success in changing our hiring practice.

But how do we do that? We start by being more welcoming in our employee handbook. Instead of telling folks what they can't do, our employee handbook has been amended and edited, actually, completely overhauled, to be, here's how you can succeed here, no matter who you are.

Part of our mission has the incredible phrase of, for all, right? It's not for classical music lovers. It's not for Bostonians. It's not for national. It's for all. So how do we embody that as an organization, not just from the infrastructure, but it becomes part of our business as usual?

It starts with our staff. And I mean, full time staff, part time staff, musicians and faculty. So they have to see representatives within ourselves in order to attract the audience we would like to have. So how do we do that? We establish a baseline with folks. We implemented learning sessions. And I call them learning sessions because we're all adults. We don't need to be trained, right?

[0:50:16]

So learning sessions, we basically tie them into what we're doing, what our community is doing, and how we see ourselves. And then we're working on a lexicon. We finalized it, David. I just wanted to let you know. We're working on a lexicon that helps us define, H&H define what we mean when we say certain things. So that is woven into our communication plan, as well as our strategic plan.

I think there's another slide. So there's a long list of things, right? These things happened consistently, concurrently, and DEI is never ending. So as we keep moving, we keep improving how we think about it, what we're teaching our staff, what we're teaching our students, as well as the board work that we've been doing with our board and committees. And Jamie can talk about it when he does come and speak.

But infrastructure doesn't just mean staff and us. It means the whole entire being of H&H. Thank you.

SNEAD: Yeah. And again, you'll all get this entire presentation so you can see all of the details. I thought one interesting thing was the DEI dashboard. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

DETCAN: Sure. So the DEI dashboard measures—now I'm talking about data. So it measures how we're performing against these goals that we have set for ourselves as owners. So infrastructure falls within my purview, so I can speak to that directly.

Is this ongoing? Has it been halted? What's the progress? Is it in progress? Did we complete it? Once you complete something, you now have to think of, how do we keep this ball rolling? And then not
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have it—and we share that with our committee, our DEI committee, as well our board, of our progress. And we post that up on our web page, of where you can find stuff about H&H and DEI. So you can go to our website and see our commitment to DEI.

So that dashboard helps us see, at a glance, are we succeeding? Are we achieving these goals? And start conversations of, why haven't we started this? Oh, the pandemic happened, like David said about patrons and audience development. So now that it has, and now that we are doing more concerts, how are we measuring ourselves to these goals and tactics? And the dashboard helps us do that.

SNEAD: So this is the web page we have about our DEI program. This is accessible directly from the home page of H&H. And we put this up in March of 2021, and it says, for each area of the organization what our goals were and then we report. We updated it in February of what we had done over the past year, in artistic, in audiences, in education, and in staff and administration and at the board level.

So reporting to the community, keeping ourselves accountable for what we are doing. And now I think it's time to bring on—we have two guests with us who are going to join us via Zoom. I think it's time for that. Jamie Hoyte is the Chairman of the DEI committee of the board and he's going to join us. And we also have Reggie Mobley. Jamie is going to talk about the board perspective on the DEI work, and then Reggie is going to talk about the work he has done involving the programming. Thank you.

JAMIE HOYTE: Thank you, David. Okay, can you hear me?

SNEAD: Yes, we can, Jamie.

HOYTE: Okay, thanks so much.

SNEAD: Go for it.

HOYTE: Yeah, thanks so much. Thank you, David, Lilee and Kate.

You know, and I might say at the outset that one of the exciting things for me early on in joining the board, which was right around the time that Kate and her team were engaged in the research that she described, that very detailed and impressive research, was the fact that H&H was committed to doing this. To finding out really, what were the barriers to greater participation from an audience standpoint? Which is kind of fundamental, it seems to me, for the organization as a whole.

And I might just say, for our board and our supporters. Because our supporters are always interested in, among other things, you know, the flow of support, if you will, whether financial or otherwise. So anyway, doing that research was, I think, very important for all board members, and it was exciting for me. And then I, soon after joining the board, I was asked to chair the DEI committee, which I was glad to do. Diversity, equity, inclusion is kind of my, it's somewhat my bailiwick, if you will, over the years and many contexts.

So I'm pleased to talk about H&H's perspective. I'll give you my perspective on H&H's DEI efforts.

Now the board has had a DEI committee since 2012. It's effectiveness, though, has increased

markedly in recent years, with the adoption of the current strategic plan in 2018, and the implementation plan that David and Lilee talked about, that you heard about in 2020.

One of the key features of the strategic plan from a DEI perspective was that DEI was not relegated to just one chapter of the plan, or one section. Every section of the plan, from artistic to education to audience to infrastructure, had DEI strategies woven throughout. DEI was also in the new mission statement and new plan. The mission of H&H is to inspire the intellect, touch the heart, elevate the soul and connect all of us, all of us, with our shared humanity, through transformative experiences with baroque and classical music.

What was needed, as David said, was a road map for translating those very lofty goals into specific actions that would get things done. And I might say there's tremendous support, not just from the DEI committee, but I think from many throughout the board. And in particular, the chair of the board has been an active member of the DEI committee, as a matter of fact. And I think that's important to acknowledge.

And one other thing I'll say about the DEA committee. David talked about how excited we are about this concept of having raised some money from a kind of internship program for preparing and training period instruments. And I think that idea was not only supported by the DEI committee, but the idea of fellowships in particular was, I think, generated pretty much from the committee, I think, David.

So I just want to mention that, because while we have a fantastic, really a fantastic staff and leadership, we also have an engaged DEI committee. So as I mentioned, and David and Lilee

indicated, we have to translate those lofty notions into specific actions that would get things done. And importantly, being able to measure it through that dashboard.

So the board, in addition to the many initiatives taken by the staff which you heard about, which David and Lilee talked about, the board has done the following in the last two years. First, like many—and it's worthy to note, that like many New England non-profits, Handel & Haydn has had two boards, a board of governors and a board of overseers. We have changed the name of the board of overseers to the board of advisors, which more accurately describes its role.

Secondly, we have eliminated the mandatory \$5,000 financial commitment for advisors, so that we can open up membership to younger members who are not yet advanced enough in their careers to afford gifts of that magnitude. We do ask all board members to contribute, and we ask that the specific amount be meaningful to them. But we no longer have a fixed minimum.

Third, we've created an interest group of board members dedicated to making connections between H&H and new audiences we want to attract.

David had alluded to this. And the work of our relatively new audience development manager, Michael Wark, which—and I'm very excited about that role in Michael's work. There is a report on DEI activities at every board meeting, either verbally or in writing. And again, I think that's important because we want to have the board consistently engaged throughout. So that happens at every meeting.

We have collected demographic data on the board, so we will be able to develop a baseline that shows where we need to focus on diversity efforts. The chair of the DEI committee, which is me, as I've indicated, is also on the nominating committee and the executive committee. The nominating committee has a sub-committee that is specifically tasked with increasing the diversity of our nominating pipeline.

And finally, I'll just acknowledge, having said all of that, clearly, we have a long way to go. And importantly, we recognize that. For example, of our 70 governors and advisors, only seven are people of color. And many of them seem to be getting long in the tooth, too, as well. So we do want to engage more youth.

So the point is, the work continues and we're excited about it. And we're ready to continue to be engaged. So thank you very much, and you know, maybe later on, David, if there are questions, I would be glad to respond.

SNEAD: All right, thank you very much, Jamie. Yeah.

I am really delighted to introduce Reggie Mobley, who is joining us from somewhere in Germany. You are working on several exciting projects right now. As I mentioned earlier, I asked Reggie to help us diversify our programming a couple of years ago with the repertoire we were performing, and he is such a creative and brilliant and passionate and inspiring partner in that effort. And I just want to kind of throw it to you, Reggie, to kind of just discuss your projects in that regard with us.

REGGIE MOBLEY: Sure. Hey, you all. I am here in [indiscernible], so more than several hours in your future. But what I do want to say is that, it's actually not that, but it's the past that I think is important in helping us kind of secure and make sure that the future that comes works for everyone, and serves and assists everyone.

And so I think to really kind of help describe my role as programming consultant, I should just briefly tell you how it all started. This was several years ago, leading into the bicentennial celebration for H&H. And the VP of Artistic Planning sent me an email and said, Reggie, we know you, of course, as a fantastic soloist, but have you considered just kind of shifting over six feet and turning around? And I hadn't considered that. But the opportunity was one that I was more than happy to take on.

And so what we did was, we were partnering with the Museum of African-American History, and they wanted a program with H&H of the music of black American choral pieces. Knowing H&H is a period ensemble, I thought, well, let's not just work on performing the music of composers who exist now.

But I want to dig back as far as possible and show not just that there has always been a presence of black musicians within classical music, but the fact that we are, in many ways, the backbone of what American music is in general. And so the program went very well, to the point that we repeated it several years. And eventually, it moved on to a new venue in the historic area of Roxbury, and it's there that I decided that we should try something completely different.

I was, for a short while, a psychology major and I was very fond of the [Gestalt] theory. And I have my own philosophy. I believe that the arts, what we do is not just entertainment. It's not just beautiful music and beautiful art, but it is also a service. What we do is also a service. Music exists for people,

to help people. We are the backstop for civilization. We keep things going, and we are why things can work and should work.

And so we created this program that we called, “Every Voice,” and what I did is, like a Gestalt, I decided that I wanted to break apart the community of Boston into its separate parts, and show that there is a strength in every bit that makes up the whole of Boston. And if we all could see just how resilient and how strong all of us are together, I think that as a community, we would be stronger, and there would be more empathy, more compassion, more understanding, and just more camaraderie between us all.

And so these concerts were kind of set up to showcase various parts of the Boston community, with music not just of the present time, but also as early as possible as I could find. The earliest composers, black composers, Latino composers, everything that we could possibly do.

And these concerts were pretty popular in the area to the point that in my neighborhood, Jamaica Plain, there occasionally are people in the Latin quarter who would stop me on the street and say, so when is the next Every Voice concert going to be? I can’t wait to see the next one. And I was just like, well, this is amazing that this is actually kind of working.

And apparently it was, because at some point David asked me to his office, and at this point I said, well, okay, this is it. He’s cutting the line. We’ve done enough as Every Voice stuff. Time to get back to singing and facing the audience. And instead he said, I want more. And that was incredible. It was not what I expected, but it really changed things, because he saw the way that these concerts were affecting these various communities and areas, and the people that attended.

And it was time to bring this home. It was time to put our money where our mouth was, and show that this is not just something we're simply doing in the core and outskirts, but that this is something that H&H is.

And the city first, and H&H being one of the first, it's kind of our responsibility to lead, and show that we have something to show the world. And so through that, we kind of developed and we created this programing consultant role, where modern work is to show that even though Handel and Haydn are the two main letterheads, it's not a period, it's an ellipses. It continues on. It's not just Handel and Haydn, but it is Bach. It is Isabella Leonarda. It is Ignatius Sancho, and it goes on and on and on and on. Music is everyone. And there are so many people who have been involved for so very long.

And so it's time to kind of un-whitewash it, un-straight wash music history, and show that this is something that belongs to everyone. And so one thing that, what I did with what I had was, well, because of reasons, there's really only so much music that does exist for people of color from the 17th, 18th and 19th century. There is some, but there is not a ton. And because of reasons, there's not a lot that can exist on a stage like Symphony Hall.

And so we came up with the idea of basically paying for it and retroactively bringing the music that somewhat existed to an important stage like Symphony Hall. And so we talked to [Woody] and he took the music of Ignatius Sancho, who, if you know of him, born in 1729 on a slave ship from the continent to the new world. His mother died in childbirth. His father took his own life rather than live as a slave. He was then taken to London, where he was sold to three sisters, where the Duke of Montague just fell in love with Sancho and taught him to read and write, to play and compose.

Sancho, after the Duke's death, escaped and took refuge with the widow. And there he became a man of letters. He was known as kind of the black elite, and he because he was a shop owner as well, he was the first black person to ever vote in parliamentary elections in the UK.

This is an amazing story of a black composer that no one knows. We know everything about Mozart, but we don't know about Chevalier De Saint-Georges. We know everything about Purcell but we don't know about Sancho. And the thing that is important is not just that this music deserves to be shared, but it's important to understand that people that look like me, that look like Jamie, that look like Lilee, there have been people that look like us that have been doing this from the very beginning.

I'm currently on a tour in Germany with John Eliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir performing the work of Schütz and Bach. And the big thing about Schütz is that his writing was most important in the early 1600s at the beginning and then during the Thirty Years' War. When the Thirty Years' War started in 1618, it was only a year later that the first slave ships reached Jamestown. Early music, to us in Europe, is also actually early music to us in America. The beginnings of what we have comes from these things.

Slave songs and spirituals were created and sung in fields just as Bach and Handel and Haydn write it. And it's important that we understand that this is not only valid as this is American early music, this is early music. And this is the backbone to everything else that we have here in the U.S. and beyond.

And it helps to kind of show that we are kind of here to facilitate what is important about all of this. And so through the concerts like that, and also the concert [indiscernible] which is a concert that came out of the kind of scandal out of London that Handel was involved with, with the slave trade.

And there's a huge discussion behind that, and that can go on forever. That's another conversation,
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and with a bar with a lot of whisky and stuff. But the point is that we wanted to take that opportunity to actually show that during this time, when this music, when Handel's music was being written and performed, so was the music that came from people that look like us.

And so we're working to show the community of Boston and beyond that this music stands the test of time, and stands next to that other music that we put on Symphony Hall stages and Carnegie Hall and everywhere else.

This is very important, and it's very relevant. And it's what will help us move in the future. So this is just kind of a taste of what I'm doing and what I hope to do. And there will be more. And just realize that I'm from Florida originally, and I come from a place where we have a base of species, like pythons and kudzu, and because I come from a place that has a base of species, I believe in a base of ideas.

And the point for me speaking here isn't just to share with what we're doing, but to show that these are ideas and things that you can take yourself and to move onto your communities. And can understand that your ensemble doesn't just rest in a city, but it belongs to the community as well.

SNEAD: All right, yes. So you can see how much fun it is to work with these two gentlemen. I want to close with just one slide left. Here we go. All right, so H&H has done Handel's *Messiah* since 1857. We premiered in 1817 in the U.S., and have done it every year since 1857. And we've gotten pretty good at it.

After the 2019 production, which was conducted by Masaaki Suzuki, I received this email. And I just want to close by reading it to you.

“December 2, 2019. David. We have not met, but I have had the pleasure of attending H&H concerts over the years. I write today about the opening of this year’s *Messiah* simply to congratulate and thank you. As you might imagine, I’ve heard many *Messiahs* over the years, but what I experienced on Friday evening was like no other. The sheer beauty and power of the orchestra and chorus never fails me, but this year’s performance was buttressed by the amazing soloists.

Mr. Mobley with Mr. Burton, Ms. Watts and Mr. Phan are not only the future of classical music, they are now of the best of classical music. Thank you for your attention to and support of casting that reflects the city we live in. It makes a huge difference for me as a black man, and I imagine it matters to all who are enveloped in the oft-warm and luscious sounds of the ensembles and soloists. I’m always proud of the classical music scene here in Boston, but my chest puffed out with pride on Friday night. Thank you and your colleagues for giving me that boost.”

So that, ladies and gentlemen, is relevance. Thank you. Any questions anyone has at this point? Again, you are going to get all of this in your app so you can read it. Yes, ma’am?

SPEAKER: So you mentioned that you guys have been working with the African-American Museum in order to bring certain black composers and how they have contributed to these periods of music. What other sources are you looking at in order to find music from more ethnicities that there might be less scholarship on?

SNEAD: I don't know if Reggie is still with us, but he would, I'm sure, love to answer that. Is it possible to bring him back?

MOBLEY: What was the question again? I'm sorry.

SNEAD: The question was about research on composers of other ethnicities besides black that we're doing work on? Like Isabella Leonarda, for instance, comes to mind. But I know you're looking at brown composers, etc., and so can you talk about any research in that area?

MOBLEY: Yes, by just contacting and working with people in these communities, and also musicologists and scholars who may have further interest or knowledge about other composers.

I was introduced to a lot of the composers that I know. And so I have no problem with going through and just asking around, and asking what can happen. In particular, there's a Cuban composer, Esteban Salas. He was the first and only real composer out of Havana, and because I worked a lot in Miami, there are scholars who do know about him. And so I've been able to get tons of stories and tons of information about him. And I'm hoping to do some new and bigger projects with him some time in the future.

Also, because I'm in Europe, I do have access to other libraries and archives here, and working now with the [Archimedes] Research Council in the UK, to see if I can dig and find evidence of other things that may have just been overlooked throughout time. So yeah, we're not just focusing on black composers, but on everyone, and doing our best to just cast a wide net and find out what's out there and what needs to be heard and done and shared.

SNEAD: Okay, thank you. We have time for maybe one more. Yes, ma'am?

LISA: Hi, my name is Lisa and I'm with the GoGo Symphony, which makes this African-American hip hop related beats to classical music, and we are very successful in attracting African-American audiences. And I was wondering if you ever thought of mixing their music they already like with music that you're trying to reach them with? And that's the best way to kind of engage the community, is music to music.

SNEAD: Yeah, absolutely. We are committed to it. It's part of our core values, that we're a period instrument ensemble. So music that works with those kinds of instruments we're happy to do. I think this work also showed, though, that there's a lot of potential for growth among people of color who like classical music. It's not about—you know, we're not going after the world in general. So I think that's a very hopeful sign for us. But I certainly applaud what you are doing. Yeah.

One more, maybe. Okay, right. Well, look, you have lunch now, I think. Thanks very much for coming. I hope it was useful to you all. Thank you.