Disaster Preparation and Recovery

Conference 2025

DANIEL CRUPI: Thank you so much for joining us today. Welcome. We're really excited for this panel conversation today about disaster preparation and recovery in the arts. My name is Daniel Crupi, I'm the Executive Director of the Asheville symphony in North Carolina. Today I'll be serving as your moderator as we discuss disaster preparation and recovery in the arts, and our goal today is to equip orchestral leaders such as yourselves with practical tools and real world lessons and a roadmap for arts preparedness and recovery.

So a little bit about my own experience. This is now a topic that really resonates deeply with me in the wake of my community's encounter with Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina in September of 2024. So just for some background, Asheville has been regarded as a climate haven for many, many years. Temperatures are moderate. The mountains protected us from the worst of storms. We were far enough inland not to have to worry about hurricanes, or so we thought. And we live pretty close to a temperate rainforest, so forest fires were not a significant concern.

And I will be transparent in that when my family and I were considering a relocation to accept this position in Asheville, climate safety was certainly a topic of conversation and on our minds. So that is why what happened in September of 2024 was so shocking and unexpected for all of us when Hurricane Helene devastated many parts of western North Carolina. The storm turned out already to be one of the deadliest of the 21st century. The state of North Carolina has estimated $60 billion in damage occurred statewide, also making it the costliest natural disaster in North Carolina's history.

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And in western North Carolina, hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, affecting and displacing over 200,000 people. The power was out for weeks. Cell towers were destroyed, so communication was impossible for days or weeks. Roads in and out of Asheville were blocked by landslides. There was no way in or out of the community except by helicopter. The water infrastructure was so critically damaged, we didn't have clean drinking water for months until mid November. And in the middle of all of that, our arts community was trying to figure out how we continue operating.

And for the Asheville Symphony, specifically, while our venues and our arts infrastructure had experienced significant damage, more pressing for us was the human toll. Several of our musicians

lost their homes, their vehicles, and their instruments in the flooding. One of our youth orchestra families lost absolutely everything but the clothes on their back. And so we found ourselves asking, as an organization for the second time in five years, what does it mean to be a cultural institution when your community is in survival mode? And we learned that disaster recovery is not just about business continuity, it's about people, it's about trauma, it's about reimagining your role in the community in real time.

And what we learned is that being prepared before the emergency hits, having systems and relationships and protocols in place is not just smart, it's ethical for your organization, and it is mission critical for you to keep doing your good work in the community. And so that is what today is about. You're going to hear from three incredible leaders, each with their own perspectives on how orchestras can and should be preparing for and responding to disruption. So let's start with some introductions.

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I'll start at the end with Jan Newcomb, who is the Executive Director of the National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response. Jan is one of the nation's foremost experts on arts emergency preparedness, and as the executive director, she works directly with arts organizations around the country to create response frameworks, coordinate relief efforts, and support long term recovery. Jan, can you tell us in just a few words sort of about the practical application of disaster preparedness and recovery as it relates to your work?

JAN NEWCOMB: No one is prepared without a plan. So you need to think of readiness planning. And the reason I say this, I have run 10 arts organizations in my career, three of them were orchestras, and of my top 10 Letterman list of crises and disasters, most of them came while I was at an orchestra. So because you do so many different things, I've had a car run into my office completely, and it was amazing I didn't die of — well from impact, but carbon monoxide. But also, when I — my first day as interim president and CEO of Rochester Philharmonic, I was greeted by all these firemen running up the stairs, and they said, "Ma'am, ma'am, you've got ducks swimming on the roof."

We had had about 12 inches of rain or something over the — and it was a flat roof. And I was like, "Oh, my god." And they said, "Your roof is going to collapse." Right under the roof, guess what? The library. So we were able to save everything there. But I want to just point out, and then I'll let you go, but was I — being the first day I looked at the contract — you know, our we didn't own the building, but guess who was responsible for all capital improvements? The orchestra. So just when — you know, there are a lot of different things, and we'll talk about these functional areas that really occur, and we're having more intense natural disasters, but the biggies are the human made.

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DAVID: And we're going to dive into those in just a bit. Thank you, Jan. Next is Kelly Waltrip, who serves as Executive Director of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra, bringing a vital youth and education perspective to our conversation. Kelly has been in close proximity to both natural and human caused crises, and her experience managing operations, communications, and youth safety in crisis is really relevant to today's conversation. Kelly, you want to say a few words? Introduce yourself.

KELLY WALTRIP: Sure. Good morning everyone. This is something that has become really important to me. I've worked in a variety of states who have a lot of different environmental factors, a variety of sizes of organizations, both professional and educational. But really, my interest in this area came to light working with the youth orchestra and some of these human disasters, things that I never thought I'd be dealing with. I think my first day on the job I found out that the organization had just gone through a really fun experience with a parent who had been hitting on students on tour in the aftermath of that, and of course, that parent had not been background checked.

And so we were putting in place a lot of great policies and being proactive, and I thought that would be the end of that situation, and I was wrong. A year later, I was sitting in court getting a restraining order against the parent. I have a lot of experience doing things I never thought I would. I had a student have a panic attack and disappear in a strange city on tour. I've had another parent with a restraining order show up at a concert and start threatening me and other individuals.

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And while there's not a lot that can truly prepare you for some of these situations, it inspired me to do more research to figure out why so many of the organizations I had been a part of didn't have a comprehensive plan. And so I got a grant and took a class at the University of Kentucky on emergency planning for the arts. And so that has changed my outlook and planning process and how I can be better prepared to lead and how my team know how to prepare in these situations.

DAVID: Thank you, Kelly. And last, we have Joseph McKenna, who serves as President and CEO of the Sarasota Orchestra, an organization that has had to navigate all sorts of disruptions, from hurricanes to venue transitions and community crises. Under Joe's leadership, Sarasota has made major strides in strategic planning and resilience building, bringing another valuable voice to today's conversation. Joe, do you want to introduce yourself quickly?

JOE MCKENNA: Sure, it's good to see everyone. So yeah, I've been at the Sarasota Orchestra since 2001. So we've had our fair share of things over this nearly 25 year period. But probably the thing that best equips all of us in life is experience. And we had some very tall experiences in this last year over about a four month period. I'll just go sort of in reverse order, because the same storm that hit Asheville brushed along the coast of Florida. So if we just go to the middle of last October, when Hurricane Milton came ashore in Sarasota County as a category three storm, that was after Helene had passed as a category four storm with incredible storm surge.

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And about six weeks earlier than that, we had Tropical Storm Debbie, which was not even a hurricane, which was a big rain maker event, which actually the orchestra came through quite well. But I actually lived 13 miles from the coast, personally, and we had inland flooding, so I was displaced from my home for six months. So the two crises that came after my own personal flood, Helene and Milton, I was managing from a displaced location. So I'm sort of the poster person for climate related things, and for a category four storm to brush Florida and do what it did in Sarasota and then make its way to Asheville and all the places along the way, with what it did, it's really, really phenomenal.

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And we actually had a fourth event in early June last year, which was just a no name storm rain event, where we had about eight or nine inches of rain and about — oh, maybe it was about two to three hours. So these sort of are very harrowing experiences. To Jan's point earlier, I was in Sarasota in 2004 when Hurricane Charlie came along about an hour south of us. That was the year that we started developing our plan, and we update it and refine it and pay attention to it every year. It evolves with experience. And if the word plan seems ominous for you, just use the word framework.

Because I think, for us, we think about it as a framework, and we probably — when we talk a little bit later in the presentation, a lot of the things that you think you can rely upon in disaster recovery aren't there. So you have to be completely ready for the entirely unpredictable landscape. No power, water issues, signs not in intersections where they once were, families in crisis, musicians disconnected from what they do. But as Daniel pointed out, one of the things that we did because of the planning was in place, and we had refined it, I say we started in 2004 in order to be ready for 2024.

And we've learned a lot of other things since then. So, and I'll just say that, as related — that the good thing about hurricanes is you know that they're coming. Tornadoes, you don't know when they're going to happen. And there could be other unexpected wildfires, there could be other unexpected things that give you virtually no notice or very little notice. So the more you have that plan or that framework, not that it has every answer, but it gives you sort of a vocabulary to sort of manage the unpredictable.

DAVID: That's great. Thank you, Joe. Clearly a lot to unpack here. And I think that the use of that word, framework is a great term. Plan implies you have all the answers for every conceivable scenario. And as we all have learned, I think your framework, your plan, is going to be an evolving document as you're responding to crisis in real time. So I think it's a great tip. So speaking of the planning process, Jan, why don't we start with you? I can personally attest, disaster readiness and planning seems like a very nebulous topic until you are in the middle of a disaster. So Jan, why don't you tell us just what does that process of developing that plan or that framework look like at a high level? What are the key components that arts organizations need to be thinking about?

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JAN: Okay, first of all, you need to know that you must do it, and it must be a an entire organization involved. And I say that, not that you're going to have everybody on the staff in the process of planning things, but you want to make sure you're hitting all the elements. So we call all hazardous, all hazards readiness planning. And you're right, it's a muscle within your organization. You bring in your policies and procedures. You have a pocket response that has everybody's phone numbers, insurance companies, and you can — we have it so that you can run it off two sided, eight and a half by 11. Everybody can have it in their pockets so they don't have to have it on the phone if things — as you know, things don't work after a disaster occurs.

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And the thing is, is that if you start looking, if you go to Dplan.org It's D Plan Arts Ready, you can actually do a risk assessment, and you can create what you need to do specific to your organization, and there are 99 questions on just the risk assessment, because it goes over nine functional areas of the organization. And I want to tell you, I always say to executive directors, you're the least important people. You want the people who are actually in the trenches, the box office people who's backstage, how do they know when to — who's stopping a performance due to whatever? How do you — what's the chain of command on speaking to the public about things?

These are all things that can actually — if you talk about them in staff meetings, you can get some really good, interesting insights from the people you work with every day, and you never knew what they bring to the table. So it's creating a culture of readiness is really a gift to your organization and community. Because you're the first ones we ask, “Please help us recover.” And if you're not ready to help, you're going to be — I mean, that's what we're here for, to help the community. So getting a plan together, it's not hard. It's just, I know human nature. We’re like, “Oh, well, we made it through that one.”

No, just assume the next one's coming, and how can you do it better? And that's one thing about the plan is that you debrief. Just like the military debriefs after a sortie. You debrief, what worked, what didn't work? We thought this would happen. And get to know your emergency management people in your counties or your parishes. They need to be your new best friends and invite them all and their families to performances so they see you and know your building if you have a performance space. So I'll stop now.

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DAVID: That’s fabulous. And I think important not just to include, you know, your staff in that planning process, but to get to know — build those relationships in the community. What would you what would you say about involving your board of directors, and, let's say, your musicians in the orchestra, your various volunteer councils in those planning processes as well? Speaking from experience, we at the Asheville Symphony have a chorus that is, you know, quasi independent, but still functions under our 501(c)(3). They are starting to realize, you know, they need to take some extra steps in terms of preparation, but as a fully volunteer council, you know, that can be daunting for them. So can you speak just a bit to that?

JAN: Yeah, to know that it, as I said, needs to be specific to your organization, but you don't have to use scare tat tactics. However, they do work pretty well. Just understand, especially in the communications part of it, make sure the internal commute communications is as strong as how you speak to your patrons and donors and community. Make sure your musicians know. Make sure your staff knows what's happening and have — before anything happens, they know who are the — who’s the spokesperson for whenever something occurs. And that is so important, because you don't want people talking on truths or different points of view. You want to have one point of view. And involving everyone and having them be part of the process, and having training, especially with volunteers like ushers.

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Are they aware what to do if something happens? You know, all the stuff can happen. Does the stage manager know he or she might be the one that has to stop a performance? And I mean, there are things that happen. And what about the guest artists? Do they know where security stuff is and all this? We tend to tell them, the people unloading the trucks, but not the actual people who are going to be performing. And they're like, "Wow, where am I?" So it is involving everyone, and I think it makes a stronger organization, quite honestly. It does, because you get to know people in different contexts.

DAVID: Love it. Thank you, Jan. So Kelly, can you tell us a little bit about how you approach emergency preparedness, especially if you don't own your own venue, which is the case for us too in Asheville. We operate in a million different venues, none of which we have jurisdiction over. Or you have a small team, perhaps, or you're heavily reliant on volunteers. You're traveling from space to space. How are you managing in that more flexible environment?

KELLY: Sure, I think initially it was really daunting, because we work in so many venues. We don't even have our own office space anymore. So we are reliant on other organizations, other entities. And there are assumptions that we made and that they made about the relationship and how these plans would work. So the first thing that I recommend is ask them all for their plans. It turns out the building that we were in, the city didn't even know how to open the door to the fire escape that we were in. And once we brought it up, they found out that they didn't actually have a key to open that door, and so we were going to be in really big trouble if there was a fire blocking our exit to get out of the building.

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And we had to bring this up to the city of Denver. So I think the first thing is to don't make assumptions. Make sure you know the plan, that you meet with them, that you walk it through. One of the things that we found is that most of the organizations that we work in their spaces, most of them did have a plan, but for the most part, it really didn't consider our use of their space, whether that was the office space that we were tucked in the fifth floor. You know, we work in a university on Saturday mornings, and we've worked with them for years and years, and so there's no staff from the university there when we're there, and their plan is reliant on their staff, and they've never talked to us about it, and that's kind of terrifying.

So I think the first step is really understand and have these conversations with the venues that you're in. Some of the venues we're in, we're really there one day a year. We come in and do one concert, and do you know the evacuation plan when you're doing that? Does your staff know? Do you have the law enforcement if you need to call and you have somebody threatening people at a youth orchestra concert at a very small church? I think the biggest thing is there are cracks even in the

existing plans. And even if you work with professional orchestra or a big performing arts center, chances are they haven't thought about what if something happens and you need to evacuate, if you're back of house.

They know how to get the audience out, but they've never necessarily talked about what it means to have a whole separate entity being the one that's getting the notifications. And so I would say the first step is to really get in the nitty gritty, find out what it is that they are covering, and then figure out how you can adapt your plan as somebody who works in these spaces, because your number one priority, for me, is keeping kids safe, keeping families safe, making sure that we know, and that really is our responsibility and not theirs. But what has happened in these conversations, the city of Denver is now embarking on a really collaborative process to look at planning across venues, across all the organizations who work in that.

And as I was starting to reach out with questions that helped them inform that process, and so we're excited to be a part of that really comprehensive sector planning together, and I think that's going to be powerful in Denver with some of the things that they faced. And then I just also encourage you to meet with anybody who uses your spaces or other people who use those spaces to collaborate, because you don't have to reinvent the wheel, but you do have to make sure that you know what you're dealing with and what's not covered by some of the spaces that you're in.

DAVID: Great advice. And can I ask you a follow up? Actually, for the group. How many in the room are either with a youth orchestra or have a youth orchestra or significant student programs that are a part of your outreach? Great. So this is going to be relevant for everyone. So tell us a little bit about how the planning and prep process changes when you're working with students, you're working with minors. Speaking from experience, every time we have a youth orchestra event, our youth orchestra is incredibly successful, but the kids are often not great at following directions, right? You want them to, like, go in one specific door. You put up a million signs that say, “Please do not go in this door. Use this other door.” And they're just kind of — you know, they're like — it's like herding cats. So with that in mind, you know, how do you deliver content like this when you're dealing with student population?

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KELLY: So I really don't think we have been doing a great job at this. And I'm sure some of my colleagues in the youth orchestra division have been doing a great job. I think students get this all the time at school. They've been through all the drills. They do active shooter training, they do all kinds of drills. And so I think as arts organizations, sometimes we don't go there because we want to be a safe space. And so the way that I am now thinking about approaching that going in is, we have a plan. We haven't — we’re going to be really talking with the parents and families about making sure that they understand why we're going to be doing some of this training, so they're not necessarily scared of

that, but so that they know that we're taking their kids' safety seriously, that we need to know for — I mean, we're all pretty good at attendance, so we know who's there, but so that we know, if something were to happen, how do we count and make sure we have accurate records?

But I would say basics for working with kids, really check your insurance policies to make sure you have the right things to protect everyone. Be thinking about being proactive in terms of policies, of not having people one on one with minors, having open doors, having background checks. All of these things are really critical in terms of preventative safety. Not saying that nothing will ever happen if you have those policies, but at least you can say that you were preventative in some of that. There are some incredible policies that some of my colleagues have, safe child policies that, you know, I'm sure you could reach out to somebody in the division to get more information about.

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But planning for us is going to mean the first time we're in a venue that we are pointing out the emergency exits to the kids, and at least some of them will have that information. I think for us, we have some students with mobility challenges and accessibility challenges, and some of the places that we rehearse or perform do not take that into consideration, are not accessible for some reason, even city buildings. And so if you have to evacuate, have you made a plan for that child to get out? Again, we may be there when there's not ushers who have that training. And so we're really taking that on when we walk through a venue, that that is the big focus, of, how do we make sure that we're planning for that? And then when students enter that space, that it becomes very normal for them to think about, where do I go? Do I leave my instrument? You know, how are we managing this process and bringing the conductors into that so they can help us in those situations where we might need to address it.

DAVID: Yeah, awesome. Thank you. So Joe, you have been incredibly successful building disaster readiness repository for Sarasota. So for those in the room looking to take that initial first step, or who have yet to undergo their first real natural disaster or human disaster, how do you go about securing buy in from your board of directors or even your staff and musicians to participate in that process? Because, as Jan was mentioning, group participation from all the different components of your organization is so critical to making a successful framework.

JOE: Yeah, so a few thoughts on this. It comes back to the plan. One of the things that you all may want to think about is your audit committee, by its pure function, is responsible for risk. So you may plant the seed with your board chair and your audit committee chair to say, "We have to make sure that we have a disaster plan, even if it's a simple one and it's an initial one." But the board should actually be demanding it as well. If they're not, you can bring it up to them. And to Jan's point, that's a way to kind of bring them into the conversation. While they won't necessarily do all of the structuring

of the plan, at least they're aware of it. And if you need resources or you need training, or you need some of those kinds of things, it's a lot easier to go ask for it when they're actually at the table.

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The other thing that we've done is we have an emergency response team. So when we developed the first plan, and Jan and Kelly are absolutely right, the more that you can involve the people within the organization, you'd be surprised the amount of knowledge that lives in your organization. So we have an emergency response team of 13 members, cross departmental, that every time we have — when we know we have a risk of a tropical event, we mobilize that team. We sort of refresh. We picked up, what needs refreshing from the last storm? And we've been doing this for years.

So for example, that emergency response team in 2022, Hurricane Ian landed just about 90 minutes south of Austin, Fort Myers. Incredible devastation. There was a lot of devastation, and schools were closed in Sarasota County for two weeks. So the storm was 90 minutes away, and we still had that related or ancillary impact. That emergency response team is there to kind of activate and answer all that sort of stuff. So we actually hadn't used the emergency response team. We hadn't needed it since Ian in ’22 until we needed it in ’24.

Now, we had had places that we get together like twice a year to just kind of kick the tires and make sure, and if you have any new staff, you get to bring them into the fold, they might add new things to it. So in the last summer, the two events that we had, the no name storm, which gave us no notice, so there was no mobilizing the emergency response team. Fortunately, you know, we were agile and could respond. And then Tropical Storm Debbie, we had it mobilized, but it was largely just a rain event, and the damage was mostly limited to certain areas. But we activated the full emergency response team within two weeks, two and a half weeks, because Helene came. We mobilized that, we got through Helene, we put on a concert, and then we shut down again, using the same team to get ready for Milton.

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So the one thing I really stress to all of you, and Daniel mentioned the word people. It's all about people. When these things happen, the anxiety level goes really high, because people want to look after their property. They want to make sure their family is okay. Their job might be at risk. So I have this sort of approach that I bring to it I call my slow motion management style. The calmer that you can be, the lower the anxiety level goes down and keep people focused on executing the specific things within the plan. That's how we did it through, you know, two back to back hurricanes, a category four and a category three within three weeks of each other.

And what was really interesting, why you have to look after the people, is once the storm has passed, or the sort of immediate danger is sort of mitigated, if you will, there's a whole road ahead. So after Milton and the three stones we had, Milton was largely a wind storm, Helene was largely a storm surge event, Tropical Storm Debbie was a rain event. So each storm is different, each event is different, and they have a different vocabulary, and they behave differently. They arrive at different times of day. Evening versus morning. Big change in how people orient.

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So getting back to the people. When Milton hit Sarasota, they were already recovering from Helene several weeks earlier. And then our main performance venue, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, and a high school that we use for some of our youth programs, were damaged by the storm. They were out of action for 60 days. So our first two masterworks right after the storm, after getting through the emergency of the storm, we had to move two masterworks to alternative locations. But to Jan's point earlier, when the community sees you respond with that sort of intention and service, they're there for you. When you fall silent is when it becomes a little bit more difficult to recover. So it goes back to that emergency response plan.

But I'll just share a few of the things because of the experience I've had and when your own home — when we got through my personal experience with Debbie, the storm had passed, and it was a Sunday storm. It was Monday morning, and it looked like everything was okay. And then in short order, there was a little notice in our neighborhood of water gathering, and within 60 minutes, water in 160 homes, and a lot of people lost cars. That's how fast it can happen, too, even when you think sort of the danger is gone. But just a few things in that emergency response plan that I'll share, and I don't have enough time today to add all of them, but meeting and discussing regularly, a couple times a year, and it's actually to the point about the emergency folks in the county, like, we call upon them, like, in December and February, when there's no storms, because they can come and they can give us their undivided attention and clear thoughts. They're not in battle mode.

But a few other things. We actually — whenever we have something like this, we take a member of our senior team and we send them out of Sarasota, we locate them out of town, we call them our designated survivor. They go and they're able to be in a place where there's power and have access to the platform that they need for whatever the business might need. We did that with both Helene and Milton. The other thing is interesting, may be different where you live, but know who your staff members are that live near medical facilities or hospitals. Those areas generally — the power generally comes on faster where there are hospitals.

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So if you have staff located in that area, they become a network of being able to activate the recovery for those that might not have power or are without certain things. And you have to have a to go platform. We activated this both with Helene and Milton once we actually — in the final preparation for the storm, we generally try to have everybody on our team done within 18 hours, and absolutely 12 hours before we leave. And in both of those instances, we prepared for our building to not be standing when we left. And that meant that the CFO and I and two others, we had a go platform that we could run the business alternatively from another location if we needed to.

So, I mean, we've had to do that because of the nature of that. I don't want to scare you, but just starting to think about it and creating that framework is really helpful. And then the other thing, I just encourage you to all do this in the orchestra field, so you'll appreciate this, is just what I call bathe in the zone of unpredictability, because that's everything. When the power is not working, some staff members that you would thought on the emergency response team, they might not have power or don't have access to certain things. So how you navigate and improvise with the folks that you have to bring everything back online.

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So fortunately, in Hurricane Helene, water was within six inches of coming into our building. So we dodged that, even though that was a highly prominent storm surge event. And then with the wind event, Milton, you know, we lost our performance venue. So again, each of them are different, but those are just some of the tips. The last thing I'll just mention is communication is so vital. I'll tell you just what we did from our experience over the years of doing this. When we have these events that come on, if we have Sarasota in the cone of uncertainty for the storm, we generally start communicating with our staffs four days before that happens. In some cases, we follow up and say, “The threat has passed, no big deal.” As it gets closer and it becomes more imminent that something's going to happen, we get into a mode, that our final communication is we shut down, and here's how we're going to reopen, so that everybody knows that there's some plan to go forward.

And then when we do reopen, my senior team, we work on a every four hour communication platform, that we come out and we say, “This is where we are. This is what happened. We'll be back with you in four hours to give you instructions on what's next.” And with both Helene and Milton, that four hour thing we did over about four days because some people didn't have power, some musicians that did, they would get the word out. So that whole communication. And you'd be surprised, the anxiety level of your staff musicians organization comes way down when they know that you know what's coming next. And you know what? There was times that I wrote to them, I didn't know what

was coming next, but you can't project that, because those are the very people you need to help recover.

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So in some cases, we're working on this, we don't know the answer to it, we'll let you know in the next communication. And if we didn't know it in that one, we carried it over to the one after that. And that became sort of the energy. And the other thing I'll just say that is quite remarkable, and I only know this from this most recent year, is the trauma of these storms, this sort of this — whether you had damage or not, or displaced or not, there's a trauma for everyone, but there's a certain thing that comes with that trauma and this sort of sense of responsiveness from everybody and sort of collaboration was extraordinary. So if you have the plan, back to Jan's point, it sort of breeds that whole thing. Those are just a few of the lessons. Could share a lot more. And somebody told me that I need to write a book about this, which I hope I don't have to, but I'm just curious, maybe — I don't know if — how many of you have disaster plans currently?

DAVID: Nice. So this will be some good takeaways. And great council, Joe, on the — speaking from experience, that designated survivor piece would have been incredibly helpful for us in a community that was totally cut off from the outside world. Lost all communication within Asheville, western North Carolina, and beyond. That was the most challenging component with us was our inability to communicate with one another and to check on one another. So having someone on the outside would have been incredibly helpful.

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I want to spend a little bit of time talking about kind of community coordination and cross sector communications, moving away from the planning component, and we will save some time at the end for questions, because I know we probably have plenty from the audience. So Jan, the National Coalition of Preparedness and Response did a fantastic job convening arts organizations, leaders all throughout Asheville and western North Carolina almost immediately following the impact of Helene once at least we had access to power and internet and those things again. So can you talk a little bit about how you see those conveners, whether they're local or regional foundations or they're entities like yours? What kind of role do they play in the recovery process?

[0:37:05.2]

JAN: Very good question. I just want to jump back. NCAPER was founded in 2006 after Katrina and Rita, when we realized that 95 percent of the art sector was not helped at all afterwards. And it wasn't because FEMA didn't want to be there. It was because we were not part of the definition of cultural resources, if you can believe that. And it's taken 20 years of advocacy to get to the point where they now recognize that artists and arts organizations are cultural resources. So it's important. So NCAPER came together. We're a coalition. Talk about cats on a leash. We're all national arts service organizations and funders who have like certain slices of interest, like Surf Plus [?] helps craft artists, Music Cares helps music, musicians, and people who work in music industry, etcetera.

[0:38:13.7]

We operate that — we communicate with whoever is on the local level, people on the ground, and try to — we try not to insert ourselves too early in the process, because when you don't have water and you don't have electricity, it is difficult, but we jump right in as soon as possible. And the idea is, what can we do? I have all my coalition people going, “Okay, I'm here for the ready. What do they need?” So that people aren't sending diapers to everybody, and you know, there's a coordinated effect. But the other thing is listening. And this is where I have fun with my New York coalition people. I go, “Listen. Do not, do not take over the space. You have to listen to — find out what the needs are.” And these calls that we do are really, really — that’s what we do. We listen. We try to connect.

One call I — we had weekly, then bi-weekly calls after Hurricane Maria, both for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Over a year. I mean, that's how long we were involved with them. But I would never forget one guy early on in the in the Virgin Islands said, “We don't even have tarps. You know, we have, like, no roofs. We don't have tarps.” And one of my coalition members, “I have a friend, Sir Richard. I think we can solve this problem.” And the next day, Virgin Airlines dropped off, you know, a whole cargo plane of tarps for people. So it's finding out what the needs are, but then quickly telling people, “We've got to be prepared with a plan.” Because what does Asheville want to become that it wasn't before? I mean, do we want to have a river arts district maybe on stilts? I don't know.

[0:40:24.3]

DAVID: That’s an ongoing conversation in our community.

JAN: Well, with my hometown of Corning, New York, in ’72, we were all under 20 feet of water. We had just gotten — we’d driven the mayor nuts because these women said, I call them queens without countries, they said, “The five blocks of Market Street are all bars and men's clothing stores. This has got to change.” And so they had kind of worn him down, and they had a committee of what we want Market Street to look like. Hurricane hit, everything's underwater, including the Corning Museum of

Glass. And I want to tell you, within two years, we were one of those best small arts council, or cities of art in the United States.

It was actually a model for the Main Street. And it was because they had already thought about what they wanted, and it included bringing in artists to live in these wonderful buildings that had been covered over with 1950s stuff. So they brought in a preservation architect. So if you owned a building, you had free architectural help. And so now it's this glorious little five blocks of — it became — it went from a factory town to a cultural destination.

DAVID: That was the catalyst for change for the community.

JAN: It was, and it was important. So the arts are very, very important, but you got to be ready.

[0:42:01.7]

DAVID: And I can speak personally to NCAPER's impacts as we were going through our recovery process, bringing resources and experts on the calls from FEMA, from the National Endowment for the Arts, to be available for questions, because every organization is so different. Performing arts or craft or museums or what have you, and everyone — the federal pathways are so nebulous, and when you're working with a dearth of information, as we were literally working in the dark, that communication is so critical to have those resources available to you. And I'll also give a shout out to the League, who did a great job serving as a convener in the immediate aftermath of Helene, gathering all the orchestral executive directors of the affected areas of Milton and Helene, and Heather Noonan trying to intercede on behalf of some of our musicians to FEMA when they were having a hard time getting instrument damage covered by FEMA.

So the League was hugely helpful in that process as well. Looking at the time here, I want to make sure we kind of get to the human component of all things. So this question can be kind of a bridge. So Joe, you mentioned something on our call a month ago. Sarasota Orchestra, in the wake of crises like yours, natural disasters became as much a health and wellness and social service organization as they are an arts organization. And we have certainly found that to be the case too in Asheville. You need to be mobile and nimble and flexible and sort of adjust your role in the community post disaster. So can you speak a little bit more to that sentiment and how you went about approaching that process? And Kelly, I'd be interested to hear your input on that as well.

[0:43:42.3]

JOE: Yeah, so just after actually Hurricane Ian in 2022, which was 90 minutes south of us, we lost power for a couple weeks, but we actually didn't have damage to the building, and so we actually put on a benefit concert, raised $100,000 in a single night to give back to relief in the community. Because so many members in the community, whether they were affected or not — it's kind of strange, like those that are affected are affected, and then there's those that feel guilty that they weren't affected, because, you know, the next street over was, like, totally underwater. So in Ian, we did that and responded quickly. So we became that sort of heart and social service crutch to the community. Introduced the community and community foundations and all that in a good way.

In this past year, we weren't able to do that because the Van Wezel, the hall we play, was damaged, but we had to continue to find other ways to do that. So what we did was it was, how do we get back on the stage somewhere else, wherever that is? So in the first case, our colleagues at the opera house moved some things around, we got our first masterworks in with music director designate. Then we identified a church for another one. And that actually helped sort of heal the community, that sort of finding a way, that innovating forward. People wanted to help those that were really displaced. You know, we provided support from them in other ways.

But it's really important, your organization can be part of the overall community health, of helping people to feel that their soul, you know, needs a little healing for all of us that have been around for a while. You know, we did that after 9/11. The arts community was there for the country. So in your own particular area, when you have an event like this, you can be there in the same way, and on whatever scale it is, it doesn't matter. Just figure out a way to do a small piece. And that's where the musicians actually really rose. Like, how do we help? We didn't need them to pack up the library. We didn't need that to shut down and move the servers. We didn't need them. But when it came time the storm was over, we said we got to get back out there to help the community heal. They were fantastic. So that's just a couple of examples.

DAVID: Yeah, they can be your best ambassadors to your community. Kelly, anything you want to add to that?

[0:45:53.8]

KELLY: I think in the youth world, and I think all of us learned this somewhat in COVID and post COVID times is what we provide to youth, and just like our communities, is so vital. And finding a way to do what we do and create some normalcy in that, and bringing together the amazing educators that I know a lot of organizations have who are really attuned into what kids need. And it might not be that rehearsal, the music, is the most important thing that day, but finding a space to let them be and to have music together, and to come together in a place that feels like family, even if it's at a different location, is so critical.

You know, I think I'm often surprised when people's response to dealing with any kind of tragedy is to seek out this music. And I think that's important for us to remember too. There was a student who called me once and said, “I'm going to be late to the dress rehearsal because I'm at the hospital. My mom's on her deathbed. Is it okay if I come and just play the concert still? Because I know I'm missing part of the dress rehearsal.” And you know, it's just this moment where you're like, “Of course," that that is where she needed to be with her musical family that day. But I think if we remember and make sure that we're noticing, what do the people need in our lives, and how do we be there for them and create some normalcy when possible, but also space for them to use music as a vehicle for healing will help us all move through these crises.

DAVID: I love that. And sort of sticking with that, the theme, let’s move into kind of the human component for another five or so minutes. Then we'll open it up to questions. So Kelly, sticking with you someone, I think Joe, earlier was using the word trauma. Kids that have been through the COVID pandemic and now gone through some sort of disaster, like what we experienced in Asheville, or what Sarasota has been experiencing, or you have experiencing, or you have in Denver. There's a lot there, and there's a lot to unpack. So when you're back from some sort of traumatic event like this, and you're back in the rehearsal hall, what is your approach for addressing that trauma or not?

[0:47:58.9]

Especially considering that many of your youth orchestra staff members, speaking, you know, from experience or your coaches, your artistic personnel, are incredibly competent, but are probably not trained counselors. They might be educators in schools, but they do not have certification and counseling. So what's your approach to unpacking that with the kids?

KELLY: Sure. I think every time something happens, and we often don't know, right? That lots of kids are experiencing trauma that we might not be aware of as a natural disaster. And so whether we know it or not, we're doing this on a weekly basis, and I would say there is a lot of training available, and some of our educators are just incredibly talented at doing this, and have actual background in doing that. And for those who don't, I think as teams, youth orchestras generally say, “Okay, what is the plan?” And so for the most part, when we're coming back from COVID, it is — you know, the plan for today is just to get together, and if we have instruments, right? What do we do if we don't even have instruments? How do we create something normal or musical without instruments?

And I think creativity, and also just really listening, in terms of what the students need, and asking them, is how I would approach that. And if I didn't have somebody who had that expertise, I would probably consult somebody to bring in to really help us unpack that, partner with other resources in

the community. Again, it's really helpful to have those relationships ahead of time before you need them, so you know who to call and bring them in and do resources, meditation, all kinds of different approaches depending on the situation. But it's hard to say a one size fits all, but I think being really responsive to the needs of your students and community is key.

DAVID: That's great. Thank you, Kelly. So sticking with kind of the human component, Joe or Kelly or Jan, I'm curious, one of the tricky needles for us to thread in Asheville was extending support to our staff and our team members and threading that needle of, you know, communication, needing to get work done. There was real work that needed to be done in terms of outreach to our musicians and our chorus and our board and our volunteers, and communicating action plans for concerts that were being rescheduled, but at the same time, our staff was living through a critical emergency, and basic needs like shelter, food, water were not met. So how do you approach supporting your staff while simultaneously juggling your work responsibilities in the community?

[0:50:29.9]

JOE: Well, I think for us, it was, we just looked at it all the same as human need. So, you know, human need has lots of faces, but the need is need. So, you know, we had staff members that were not so impacted by the storm that rose to kind of cover the — and cover the for those that were affected by the storm, that sort of just good will, working back and forth was really helpful. And I think, as Daniel mentioned, the communication even with patrons. You know, the communication. The more you can communicate with everyone on a regular basis, whether it's every four hours, and that's what it needs to be usually in the early phase of it.

But the other thing that we did, which was really helpful for those that were affected by the storm, whether they were personally affected at home as well, as you know, things we would — all of this heavy workload, there was a couple things that we kept in mind. We made sure that everyone was hydrated. Sounds simple. Everyone was hydrated, and we told everyone to take their time, because in this disorientation, the risk of injury goes up. Your car accidents happen. Your path to work is different. Your schedule's out of whack. You're exhausted. So we basically said, "Stay hydrated and take your time." Those are two, like, simple human things that prove really helpful to everyone. So those are just a few things that we did that proved to be really helpful.

DAVID: Great counsel.

[0:52:02.7]

JAN: I'd like to add that recovery is short term, middle term, and long term, and all of this stuff keeps happening. What he's talking about immediately after sometimes also continues a long time, seemingly a long time. I know, with Corning, it's well over 50 years later, and people are still talking before the flood and after the flood. And the thing is, is that the mental health issue. I mean, the response early on is almost euphoric, where we're working together, and everybody is — it's wonderful. You know, we're attacking all this. And then you have issues with — a lot of health issues. We saw a huge rise of stress related things like diabetes, cancer.

I mean, it really spiked. And after that — so you have to remember that if you're part of the healing process, you know, heal thyself first, and just remember that it is a long process, and that's why we keep talking about, learn from what worked, what didn't work, how can we do things better? One of the things that NCAPER does is we develop toolkits to help you kind of think about things. One of the things we did during COVID was when so many organizations were stopping, so we were helping with what do you have to do? You know, what do you do with the assets of a nonprofit and things?

[0:53:43.1]

But the other thing was to have conversations among staff members. What is your — we all know job descriptions say nothing, really, about what you do. So we'd have these conversations, "What do you do on a daily basis, Kelly? Who do you talk to? How does this happen?" And so what happens is that you've got some redundancy built in, because we all know people move on and things like that, but if you can keep that institutional wellness and how it happens as, you know, kind of top of the list, it really does help heal.

DAVID: The knowledge seepage, for sure.

JOE: I'd like to just add one point. Jan's really right on this. You know, with these storms, when they happen, you know, it's on the news for a few days, and then it falls off. You really have to watch the staff, like 10, 14, 21 days out, over 60 days. Because it falls off the news. Oh, my god, I got this mountain to deal with. I'm trying to get kids in school. My neighbor, for example, in our situation, the Tropical Storm Debbie was the week before school started. They have a seven year old and a five year old that they had to find a home and get the kids started into school. So like, to the point Jan made, keeping track of that as it's rolling along.

Just because the sky could turn blue on the sun's out again didn't mean — it has a long cascade. Personally, I don't even know myself how it's totally affected me, other than what I did do personally, is as soon as I could begin exercising every day, I did that, and I told our board and our staff, "This is what we're going to do tomorrow, and we'll get this fixed by Friday." When they know that it's

measured and there's not this unreal expectation, they'll actually relax into it and be a partner with you. And that's part of the healing and the sort of the social work, counseling part of it that goes with it.

[0:55:43.5]

DAVID: Right, biting off in small chunks. I think that's brilliant. So last question before we move into questions, 60 seconds each. Let's give like a practical thing. What is one thing you recommend every orchestra do in the next 60 days to be one percent more prepared in the spirit of biting off small chunks? Because this is an overwhelming, daunting process if you look at the whole thing. So why don't we — Kelly, why don't we start with you? What's one thing you would recommend in the next 60 days everyone in this room think about or take a step?

KELLY: Yeah. So absolutely, I think the first thing, if you are just starting, the easiest thing to do is to make that centralized contact list that we've mentioned a couple of times. As an ED of a small organization, there's nobody else before I did this that knew how to contact our insurance agent. There's nobody else who knew which lawyers were functioning in which ways. My key board members, the chief of police, who ended up being invaluable in some of these security situations, connecting me with other folks. Anybody that you can think of. Your IT person if you have a cyber attack. One place where all of that information is and that people know where that lives. So the hit by a bus situation, you're one step closer to at least people being able to get that critical information.

DAVID: Great feedback. Jan?

JAN: Oh, this is a hard one. I would say your next staff meeting, ask everybody, “Okay, a disaster is happening in the next 20 minutes or something. What would you grab? What's the most important thing for you in your office and for you to do your work?” And that's a good way to start thinking about why we need this, and then who would be interested in helping develop this integrated team of for disaster response. That's what I —

DAVID: Great. And Joe?

JOE: Just building on this a little bit, I would make sure I go home with your board chair and your audit committee to just say, “Yeah, I think we don't have this. We should get this on the docket and start working on it,” so that they, you know, start working on it with you. And I think to Jan's point, maybe with just maybe whatever constitutes your senior team or key managers, just take them to lunch. Don't tell them you're going to take them to lunch. And then just bring up, you know, “What the hell

would we do if we do if we had a hurricane?" Because that actually becomes the nexus of that emergency response team.

[0:58:10.7]

They don't buy in in the crisis Exactly. They're buying in like, "Well, gee, I never thought about that." Or, "Gee, you know, I was at this other organization. We did this." And evolve that. I can't tell you those 13 people on our team, incredible, incredible. They're in large part responsible for getting us through and then working with everybody else. Those are the two things I'd do. I'd take that senior team, "What the hell would we do?" And tell you audit chair and your board chair, that if they don't have this on their radar, they better get it on it soon.

DAVID: Yeah. And then they become your advocates and ambassadors for the rest of [UNINTEL] —

JOE: Because if something happens, you know what they're going to do? They're going to blame you. "Why didn't you have this on the — you know, I thought you had this under control." I'd let them know that they're responsible for risk.

DAVID: I would echo all of those comments. I would say, number one, call Jan and set up an appointment to start your arts preparedness.

JAN: That's how the Kentucky Kern thing happened. She had an email from me, and she said — but she knew me, and she called. And so now —

DAVID: Irony of ironies, Asheville in the fall, had just reached out to Janet and NCAPER before the hurricane to start our arts planning disaster preparedness, and we were interrupted by a natural disaster. So I would say call Jan. And the second thing I would say, before we move on to questions, I mentioned this on an earlier call somewhere with the League. But if you think climate change is not coming for you, you are wrong. Asheville was supposed to be insulated from all this, and we were hit harder than I think any of us ever thought we could be by something that was not supposed to be a problem for us.

And if it's not a natural disaster, it's going to be some other sort of human disaster. And your organization needs to be ready. And if you are an executive director and you're in the room, Joe is right. It's going to fall on you to have the plan in place and the connections made, the relationships built. So I'm not trying to scare you, but climate change is real. It is coming for you.

[1:00:12.1]

JOE: Just on that point, and Jan, jump in. We have three board members that summer in Asheville. They get hit by Helene in Sarasota and Helene in Asheville. Climate change is real, folks.

DAVID: All right, let's open up for questions. We've got a little — close to 15 minutes.

SPEAKER: Very quickly. I'm Toni [UNINTEL], board member, Bellingham, Washington. We are a level, I think, six [UNINTEL] a little bit. But we're a smallish organization. And I did go, and I'm holding up the in plan arts website, and I'm changing my mind from we're kind of prepared to we're unprepared. We don't really have much of a plan. But my question to you is, where does the planning process — does it fall within your insurance? Is it a line item when there are expenditures? It should be going into your budget. How would we — because at some point somebody's gonna be forking over some money, and where should that money be?

JAN: I'm not sure there's a right answer, but I think as a someone who's worked in a small organization, I think building the buy in, then it doesn't really matter where it falls. I think it's partly insurance, partly professional development. If that's something that you want to assist, get a consultant. You know, I think those are invaluable ways to put that in. Obviously, it's time for the staff. That's the biggest investment. And I think the biggest thing that I am now telling people is you can't afford not to do it. And so with boards, I think the biggest step is just start somewhere. It's not going to be — mine is still not complete, and I've been working on it for a year, but if you don't start, then it'll never be done, right?

[1:02:00.8]

And it's constantly evolving. So I mean, I do think it's good idea to put a line item in there and make sure that funders know about that opportunity. And it's a great opportunity for a donor who cares about your sustainability to fund. So I think it's also an opportunity.

JOE: I'll just add one quick point too that I didn't think about earlier. But maybe the plan is, if you have a music library or you have a building, just go take pictures and take pictures before the storm. We had to do that after every storm, because, you know, what's in there, what got damaged, it's we just had a staff member just go around, take everything, get it on a drive and be done. Your plan, you could start your plan by going home and just doing that simple thing. Because if something does happen, you're going to need the photos for either FEMA or whoever else you might need insurance.

DAVID: For sure. And back on your point as we're transitioning to the next question, this process is not that dissimilar from strategic planning process. So wherever you have those sorts of expenditures, whether in our organization, it would be under, you know, a board designated account, we would probably wrap those costs into that same line item where we have strategic planning costs.

SPEAKER: So one thing to really think about part of is what you can do to mitigate or harden your buildings against damage. In Nashville, when the Cumberland River flooded the Schermerhorn Center, we discovered that neither the freight elevator, nor either the two lifts that communicated between the lower level of the building and stage level were on emergency power. So when the power failed, there was no way to get the two Steinway pianos, the Gilesta, the organ console up out of the basement. The rest of the hall did not flood. The stage level did not flood. So these things would have been protected. So if you have things at a lower level, query your building engineers. What's on emergency power? Make sure that one of the elevators that communicates with that lower level is on emergency power. There are other strategies that you can employ to harden your buildings and make them more resilient from these sorts of things. But you have to look at it in advance. One of the things we learned in the FEMA process after the Schermerhorn flood.

DAVID: Great comment. And Paul would know, as one of the — having built a number of our country's best concert halls, at being an expert in the room. Kelly, were you about to jump in?

KELLY: I was just going to add, part of your plan too, yes, it's very important to look at that building and know where your key assets are, but if you're in a in a building that that is not possible to change and there's no other place to store them, the first step in your plan, when you do know something's coming, like a tropical storm, is, okay, whose job it is it to move the pianos before we lose the power? Right, like that can be a critical part of that plan.

JOE: The other thing too, in Sarasota, we actually have in our budget, we rent six storage units, June 1st. Percussion equipment goes out. We're four feet above sea level. There's little we can do to harden. So our plan is we hire six of those. Some of the library assets we move out. We have a whole protocol on how we do that. And we're ultimately working on a new music center project that'll be at 28 or 20, 30 feet above sea level, rather than four. So pray for good weather for a couple years till we get it built.

KELLY: This is why this framework never ends, because it's like a contract. You know, when something goes wrong, you add something to the next contract. You know, so it just keeps going and going. But remember, the cavalry is not FEMA. They're not going — they can't. They don't have the resources. So it's a local problem, local disaster. It's a local decision. And you can get some help, but

you have to be — this is why we have to be so ready. And I think, Joe, you're just like a poster child of what to do, and I'm sorry the way you had to learn about it, but —

JOE: Yeah, me too.

KELLY: I will say that the Corning Museum of Glass now is really on stilts. And they said, even though it was a thousand year flood, and they went, “Yep, right, it can come again.”

DAVID: Next?

MELODY: Hi. I am not sure I actually have a question, but I want to echo something Kelly was sharing earlier. Since there are a lot of youth serving organizations in the room. I'm Melody from Seattle. Abuse prevention training. Pay for it. Have everyone take it, every coach, every conductor, and yeah, come talk to me about implementing. We're doing it right now. Found a great company. And just can't overstate the value of it. And we think of all the stories that we see of like conservatory and university music departments where these students are heading. Their experience with us prepares them to see warning signs and know how to report.

DAVID: Great advice.

[1:06:55.7]

DAN: Hi, I’m Dan. I'm director of venue operations at the San Francisco Symphony. We have a fairly robust emergency response plan. It's coordinated with our city who owns the buildings and the opera and the ballet, but every year I do an annual training with everyone, staff, ushers, stage crew. It looks like the most boring thing that they've ever come to. So I'm trying to actually ramp up our training program to be more interactive. And I know that you can do tabletop exercises to involve local law enforcement. Where would you go to find resources like this?

DAVID: Great question.

KELLY: Yeah, it's a good question. In the class that I took, they certainly did some resources of that. But honestly, I think what created the best resources for me to do those tabletop exercises are the conversations that I'm having here with my colleagues and writing down real world situations and then changing them, and then regularly building them into interactions with your staff. So like the

situation with the person with a restraining order who showed up, and then, you know, we had a situation where no one quite knew how to respond, and then thinking of a couple of different ways that could have played out. And those real world situations, for me, have been the best ones. And when I hear a story from, you know, my colleagues in Minnesota, or my colleagues in LA, this is like critical helping us prepare, since we haven't gone through that, to think about what could happen. So that would be my best guess.

JOE: I would just add to that, I know in Sarasota, leadership and law enforcement and emergency services, because that's a big deal in Sarasota, also school officials, they're incredible resource with all of the school related things that, sadly, are too common. I would just look into your own community who is dealing with those, and just organize a lunch and say, "We'd just like to talk through and how to think about it." You'd be surprised, they really are interested in helping when we've called upon them, and the richness of the discussion when the emergency is not imminent is so much more valuable. And then it gets the ownership transferred from those expertise to certain people on staff, and it kind of becomes a shared responsibility.

[1:08:56.0]

DAVID: Yes?

SPEAKER: Hi, I'm [UNINTEL] Flynn. I'm with the Charleston Symphony in Charleston, South Carolina. So, you know, hurricanes.

DAVID: You know a thing or two.

SPEAKER: And snow storms in January is a very real thing for us. My question is, how do you financially prepare? You talked about having a designated survivor and having all of these things kind of in preparation. Is this something that you have built into your budget? How do you prepare financially if you have to cancel a concert or reschedule, etcetera?

JAN: I had — when I ran a local arts agency — I used to be at Charleston, by the way. And I said, "We're going to have a reserve fund." Because what happens, what I learned with orchestras, and you know, you kind of depend on that percentage of the endowment that you put in that you shouldn't really do. So having a reserve fund was helpful. We built up $500,000 over a period of years, and that was kind of our annual budget. But it has to really, really protected, but not to the point that somebody else is telling you you can use it. You just, you know it's there, but you have to be strategic about how you employ it, when you deploy it, when you need it. But I think it's important for everybody to really think

of that. And there are people, donors, who that's really of their interest. Like, they want you to be there for their grandchildren. And in order to do that, you have to be smart.

JOE: I'll just add, we have a board designated fund just for general stuff if something happens. So, you know, whatever. But I'm going to say something that you're going to say that I've lost my mind. I wouldn't worry about the money. I'd put the focus on the people and the plan. When our two concerts got canceled, we didn't have to pay rent at the Van Wezel. We saved a bunch of money there. We didn't have to pay surcharges. We went to a church. My friends at the opera took care of us so that it kind of worked out. But there was no substitute for the human capital and the human intelligence to solve and come up with a plan fast. I put all the focus on the people and coming up with the plan. And Jan's right, there'll be a donor, or someone else will rise to that. "Oh, you've got to cover that gap." There'll be that. But if you don't have a plan, it's hard to find help.

[1:11:20.2]

JAN: And professional development of your staff is really, really good. One of the things we do at NCAPER is we go to — we speak about to 15 different arts management programs. These kids get it. They understand climate change. And I always tell them at the end, I said, "If you get nothing else out of this, when you go for your interview, ask if the organization has a readiness plan." I said, "But just be prepared, if you get the job, you may be responsible for doing it."

DAVID: We have time for maybe one last question. Yes?

SPEAKER: Before the very last question, I just want to make sure people know, you'll notice that there was no presentation in terms of slides, but there are a whole bunch of links that have been provided in the app. So if you go there, you'll see a bunch of resources that the panelists have compiled. So do check those out as well.

DAVID: We made the strategic decision not to have a presentation, because in a crisis, you're not going to have a presentation available to you.

[1:12:21.4]

JOE: That's true.

SPEAKER: Can you say a little bit about cybersecurity and data recovery?

KELLY: In the risk assessment Jan was talking about, and one that I also did for our organization, I think we have to acknowledge the reality that this is — if you haven't dealt with it at all, it is something that you will deal with at some point. So I would say, again, take the first step. If you have an IT person, start talking to them. There are a lot of products out there that have advanced more in cybersecurity even from a few years ago. So I would say staying on top of how you can keep your data secure is one thing, and making sure you have someone to call when you need to call somebody are the first steps. But larger organizations probably have a few more resources.

JOE: It's the same issue. You know, we had shut down our entire operation, so we had to bring data back online. For us, the biggest thing is an external person that's slightly removed from the storm area. Because when you have the urgent need, you don't want the IT company that's also got water in their building. So that proved helpful for us. And we have a dedicated IT person, and we've gotten more sophisticated over the years. But IT in general, it's another — I mean, for your audit committee, you know, do you have a disaster plan? And then what's the cyber plan too? Because that universe is getting — with AI and everything coming, you know, we don't even — buckle up, guys, it's going to be interesting.

DAVID: Excellent. Well, thank you all so much. Thank you to our panelists. Thank you, Jan, Kelly, Joe, for your time. Thank you all for being here, for taking this seriously. [UNINTEL] for hosting. And I think we could probably stick around for some additional questions, if anyone wants to come up and ask further. Thank you so much for joining us.

[APPLAUSE]