

Permission to Wonder in the Age of AI for Orchestra Marketing

2026 National Conference

JEN TAYLOR: Good morning. Thank you all so much for waking up early after a night of partying at the symphony. After such a wonderful introduction, I'm not sure I have much more to say on this slide, except that my work sits at the intersection of creativity and systems. I help arts and culture organizations adopt AI, not just to move faster, but to make smarter, more strategic choices about where to focus.

Generative AI is driving massive transformational shifts—shifts in how we create, shifts in how we communicate, and shifts in how we connect. But instead of racing to master every new tool, I want to invite us to see this moment not as a technical challenge, but as a strategic inflection point. This session is about giving ourselves permission to wonder. We're going to wonder out loud, we're going to wonder imperfectly, and we're going to wonder together.

Okay, how many of you are talking internally about your AI strategies? Okay, how many of you are having similar conversations about your internet strategy? Anyone talking about their internet strategy? One, yes. We're not talking about our internet strategies anymore because it's not a strategy. It's a foundation. It's the infrastructure that enables our work, and that is exactly where AI is headed. AI isn't a channel or a tactic. It's a new way of working. And in the next five or ten years, it's going to feel as ordinary as checking your email or searching the web.

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So today, I want to offer you a compass, a way to navigate AI strategically, rather than reactively. The goal isn't to do more. The goal is clarity. To know which 20% of your work creates 80% of your audience connection and revenue. But clarity doesn't come from certainty. It comes from curiosity, from giving ourselves permission to test, permission to explore, and permission to wonder. A few years back, Sutton Foster, Broadway actress, for those of you who haven't heard of her, she posted about these cute little crochet animals that she made on her Instagram handle. And the first thing I thought was, "I wonder if I can do that." So I tried. My first attempt? Well, let's just say it wasn't exactly what I pictured, but I created something, right? It's that moment of, "I wonder if I could," where so many of you are with AI right now, right? You're trying, you're curious, you're unsure, but maybe you're starting to try. Trying, failing, and iterating. That's how innovation happens. The organizations that thrive with AI aren't the ones that get it right first. They're the ones that

give themselves permission to keep wondering strategically. The question isn't, can we master this? It's can we build a culture where the trying is valued as much as the knowing?

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AI is everywhere, but most orchestras don't have a policy, a roadmap, or a plan. Meanwhile, audiences expect more, right? Speed, personalization, insight. This gap could be one of the places where your 20% lives, the small set of friction points where audience expectations outpace our system. Closing that gap is rarely about doing more. It's about identifying the handful of friction points that drive impact. I know so many of you are carrying a lot. Smaller budgets, stretched teams, the continued push for more fast wins, right? It's exhausting, and it pushes us into reactive patterns. Being strategic isn't always about doing more analysis. Sometimes it's about stepping back to ask, are we solving the right problems, or just the loudest ones? AI can help identify the few high-impact levers that actually move results. At capacity, we believe in human-driven AI. Arts and culture are human, and AI usage needs to reflect that. It's a really powerful tool, and it can do basic tasks like editing copy and streamlining information. But it's also a thought partner that can help explore strategy, offer perspective, even spark new ideas. But at the end of the day, the human behind the tool is responsible for how it's used. That means thoughtful, specific inputs, checking for accuracy, addressing bias, and using it ethically.

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AI should never replace human creativity or critical thinking. It should expand them. We want to help arts administrators expand the reach of the arts. We are not looking to replace the people doing the work. So everything that I'm sharing today builds on that foundation. AI as a collaborator and not as a replacement. Okay, before we dive into what's possible, I do want to acknowledge that AI is complicated. There are real tensions, tensions around labor, tensions around ownership, even around truth. I can't solve all of these problems, but we can help mitigate some of the risk. For example, if you're in a long chat and you change topics, open up a new chat to reduce the compute load. Or simply don't prompt these tools to imitate live artists, right? Ask for inspiration, not imitation. We don't need to pretend that AI is good to recognize that it's here. What we do need is a shared sense of ethics and the courage to question and guide the tools that we're using. And that's the spirit of today. Permission to wonder—responsibly, creatively, and together. We've all been trained to chase answers. But what this moment really calls for are better "what ifs." Wonder is how strategic insight begins. By asking better "what ifs," we can challenge where we spend our effort. We're going to take a look at two real examples where wonder didn't just inspire ideas, it shifted strategy.

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Both examples started with somebody asking a better "what if." The San Francisco Opera faced a classic problem. Nine out of ten of their first-time ticket buyers never came back. Instead of guessing, we worked with them to use AI to scan reviews, draft surveys, and synthesize over 300 responses in weeks, not months. One insight was that people needed more context around the plot. So they created a sticky synopsis. They reframed complex plots into approachable language that was easy to find. Early data shows that newcomers are engaging with this language longer. What the San Francisco Opera discovered wasn't just a content tweak. It was a strategic reframing of audience on-boarding. By shifting the question from how do we sell more to why don't they return, they reallocated efforts from acquisition into retention. The San Francisco Symphony wondered if there was a way to keep brand voice consistent across multiple departments. After finalizing their brand voice guide with capacity's creative strategy team, we built them a custom tool right inside of ChatGPT that knows their brand voice, target audience, and style guide. Now, multiple departments within the symphony use it to output, iterate, or get feedback on content all in the same brand voice.

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Now, this wasn't just about writing faster. It was about alignment. When every department speaks in one voice, you unlock coherence, trust, and brand equity—all strategic multipliers. So how do we do this? Well, here are seven ways leaders can wonder differently with AI. Now, I picked seven, but there could be others. Each of these wonders represents a different way to find your 20%. The mindset shifts that transform AI from a tool into a strategic ally. Now, I'm going to walk you through each way to wonder.

For each one, we're going to talk about where it is or what it is. I'll show you an example, and then we'll talk a bit about the benefits. These are all things that you could start testing next week. So much clapping and laughing. I feel like I need to be funnier. Okay, our first wonder is about things we take for granted, the stories we tell ourselves about our audiences, our art, and our impact. Challenging assumptions is how leaders uncover hidden growth. The challenge is mental, because what if the things we're sure we know just aren't true anymore? I've always heard that young people don't donate. We're funnier than them. They're going to hear that.

MALE VOICE: Donate.

TAYLOR: I've always heard that young people don't donate. I'm going to dig into this assumption.

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On the screen, you're going to see a prompt where I acknowledge my assumption, and I ask for any research on the topic. Okay, now I'm going to do some screen magic, so give me a second while we switch from slides into ChatGPT. Okay, so young people don't donate. Let's see what AI has to say about this. And it might take a minute. Sometimes a minute feels like an hour when you're standing on the stage waiting for these tools to think. But that's just the way it is. And it can tell you, you can see it's thinking, it's searching, you can see some of the places where it's looking. Yes, question.

FEMALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: Absolutely. So for all of my prompts, I think about context, task and resources. And I'm happy to go into more detail on that later, but those are kind of the three pieces that make up all of the prompts that I do and all of the prompts that you'll see running today. Yeah, yeah. Okay, yes. Young people do donate. The assumption that young people do not donate is not supported by credible data. A better assumption is young donors often give differently, at lower current dollar levels and with weaker loyalty to institution, unless the organization connects giving to impact identity, community access and participation. So here are my key findings. I can see all of the sources. If I was doing this in real life, I would click through all of the links and read all of the data that kind of led to this learning.

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Here's some performing arts specific input or insights, and it doesn't actually exist by age. So basically from a performing arts perspective, the data might not exist as much as in a broader way. And then some engagement strategy examples. So I'm going to push the tool a little bit further. Now that we have some data that perhaps young people can donate, I'm going to ask it based on all of the research to create a ranked chart of 20 strategies that my orchestra could use to encourage people under 40 to donate. It created a rubric because I asked for one, looking at things like the likelihood of generating donations, appeal to under 40, scalability, cost efficiency, and long-term donor pipeline value.

And now I have 20 ideas by rank, strategy, description, immediate versus long-term value, why it appeals, the donor mechanism, effort, cost, score and some caveats. So number one, impact-based monthly giving program. Create a recurring donor program tied to tangible outcomes. Younger donors prefer manageable, reoccurring gifts and visible impact. This requires strong impact reporting. Again, here are 20 ideas I could dig into any of them or even have it generate 20 more. So instantly, we were able to move from assumption perhaps into action. When we start to challenge assumption, the impact goes beyond audience insight.

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It changes how we lead. We stop making decisions based on what's most familiar, and we start making them based on what's most true. For orchestras, that means finding new audiences, refining creative approaches, and reallocating effort where it matters most. It's how we redirect efforts from what's habitual into that high impact 20% zone. Once we've challenged assumptions, the next step is to ask better questions. Sounds simple, right? But most of us don't actually ask questions. We look for confirmation. AI flips that. It rewards specificity, context, and curiosity. The better the question, the better the thinking that comes back.

So this wonder isn't about prompting for the perfect answer. It's about learning to frame the right question. Like most organizations, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, our hosts today, want to turn single-ticket buyers into subscribers. Now, often, organizations jump to solutions, asking things like what perks should we offer them before asking questions? But what if we ran a deep research project, which is a capability AI has to search publicly available information across the Internet, find all different sources, and synthesize them? What if we did that on four different tools? ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot to uncover, again, based on publicly available information, why single-ticket buyers aren't subscribing?

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In a second, you're going to see what happens when we process all of that information. Ah, press the wrong button. One more second. Okay. So, I'm going to drop in my prompt, and then I'm also going to drop in that deep research I told you about. Now, I didn't tell—I'm not telling the tool which tool is which. I'm not saying, "This is Claude, this is ChatGPT, this is Copilot." I want it to be anonymous. So, you can see tool one, but this is 238 pages of information that came back from these tools that I'm including along with the prompt.

Okay. Great news for the BSO, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. I see you, Boston. They've already solved most of the classic barriers. The remaining ones are a lot more subtle. The product exists. The problem is awareness and navigation. They have genuinely flexible lower commitment options like Passport, CYO, free exchanges. Many single-ticket buyers likely don't know these exist or don't understand how they're different from a traditional subscription. Passport may be cannibalizing subscriptions. Programming resonates selectively, not seasonally. Parking is a friction point. Some trust scars maybe haven't healed from a 2019 lockout or a 2022 schedule cut. There might be a lot of historical stuff.

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Anyway, here are the insights from all of that data. Now, it's great to have a list, but I'm just going to reformat the content a little bit because what I want to do is make sure that this list is actionable by, again, quantifying the issues by estimated impact to subscribing and the impact if we solved it. And I want another ranked list so that I can very quickly identify what steps or actions I might want to take. And we're not—

Well, Passport cannibalization comes up as number one. Their own advancement officer calls it the "best deal in town." It's not a stepping stone. It's a destination. So maybe thinking about how Passport and subscriptions work together. Low awareness of flexible options. High barrier impact. Solving it is low-effort and could move a meaningful slice of buyers immediately. Single-ticket buyers are completing transactions without ever learning CYO or Passports exist. A post-purchase email sequence or in-car call-out is cheap to test and addresses buyers at peak intent.

So again, lots of options for how to think about the issues that the research is surfacing. Okay, when we start asking better questions, our work gets sharper. We stop guessing and we start learning about our audiences, our creative choices, even our internal blind spots. For orchestras, that means campaigns that connect more deeply, data that tells better stories, and strategies built on understanding, not assumptions. Wonder in this case is curiosity turned into strategy.

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Better questions improve decision-making, resource allocation, and focus. So far, we've talked about challenging what we think we know and asking sharper questions. This next wonder is about people and remembering that behind every click, every donation, every purchase is a person with context, history, and emotion. Now, AI can't feel, but it can help us see. It can simulate experiences, analyze feedback, and show us patterns that help us empathize more deeply before we act. It's how we design better experiences for real people and not just audiences.

Here's an example of how AI can help you see your experience from a ticket-buyer perspective. I'm going to share with the tool of customer journey map along with multiple screenshots of what the San Francisco Opera's first-time ticket-buying experience looks like. The tool is going to review all of this information and outline friction points based on everything that I'm giving it.

So, grabbing my prompt. And this time, I'm going to drop in the screenshots that I told you about. One are images, and the other outlines the customer journey.

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You're probably getting used to seeing all of my charts. I do love a chart. It's a secret. Okay. So, here we have the journey stage, the potential barrier, why it matters for first-time opera buyers, evidence, severity, and recommended improvement. So we start with the website homepage. No obvious new-to-opera pathway. First-time visitors may not know how to start evaluating whether opera is for them. Homepage screenshot emphasizes subscribe, digital, buy tickets, but provides no newcomer guidance. And then here's some recommendation, maybe a first time at the opera CTA, to take people through that journey. Again, this goes all the way through the ticket-buying experience. Check out donation, mobile experience, pre-performance communication. Here's one. Missing first-time preparation content, new visitors frequently worry about etiquette and expectations. Journey map only notes confirmation and reminder emails. Send a dedicated "your first time" at the San Francisco opera email.

When we empathize more deeply, our choices become more human. We can build programs and campaigns that reduce friction and increase participation. We can stop asking, "How do I get people to buy?" And start asking, "What's keeping them from feeling welcome?" When we understand our audiences more deeply, we create experiences that connect and not just convert.

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We stop creating for audiences, and we start creating with them. Okay. This probably feels familiar to most of you. Limited time, limited budget. But constraints aren't the enemy of creativity. They're often what makes it possible. This wonder is about designing with what you have and not waiting for perfect conditions. AI can be an incredible partner in that process. It can help you move from blank page to a starting point. Okay, this is going to feel familiar to the marketers in the room. You want to promote a concert but you don't have any assets. For this example, I'm going to use AI to suggest low-fi ways I could promote Peter and the Wolf. The one thing that I have specified in the prompt is that we are not aligned with AI-created assets. So all of the ideas need to be things that we can make ourselves. Demo.

We're going to go to Gemini this time. You may have noticed I'm swapping between LLMs because we are LLM-agnostic, and I think they all have opportunities. So you are seeing all of them as we demo. So this time I'm going to use Gemini and drop in my prompt. I love this stance on avoiding AI art.

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Now that is ironic. You are AI telling me you love avoiding yourself. Okay. The musician character intro. Since the magic of the piece is how instruments represent animals, use your actual orchestra members. Here's the concept. Grab a smartphone and film five to ten second vertical videos of individual musicians. Have them play their characters' theme, then look at the camera and say who they are. Here's an example. Two, the nostalgia bait. Smartphone photo. Tap into the fact that this is a core childhood memory for so many parents. Find a vintage copy of the Into the Wolf, a vinyl record or children's book. Here's the caption, and look, here's why it works. It feels warm, organic, and instantly triggers nostalgia. Three, four. I had it output five options. I could have it output 500. And what I want you to notice is that these are concepts. These are not finished products. We get to decide if we like them, if they work, make adjustments, and then ultimately make them ourselves. Designing with constraints is how most of you already work. AI just gives you new ways to do it. You can use it to sketch campaign concepts, test donor messaging, or brainstorm organizational strategy with your limitations. The goal isn't perfection. It's progress. AI helps us spend less time staring at the wall and more time sharpening the work that matters. Creativity is not about unlimited options. It's about making something impactful within the limitations that you have.

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Now, while sometimes it's important to stay within our limits, other times we need to stretch beyond them. This wonder is about imagination, the kind that says, "What if our season didn't look like a typical season?" Or, "What if our fundraiser wasn't just an event, but a movement. AI makes it possible to prototype those ideas really fast and really cheap. It allows us to explore what's possible and de-risk innovation before spending any money. One thing AI is really good at is ideas. If you give it context, and you tell it, "Here's something I'm thinking about. Here are things we've tried. Now give me 10 more ideas." It really, really exceeds. So for this example we're going to use AI to help us imagine an alternative way to host a standing event. In about two weeks, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra will host its 10th anniversary Maestro's Wine Dinner. Now what if next year they were thinking about a hybrid event, or even one that's fully remote? What could that look like? How could they capture that in-person event feeling? We're going into Copilot now, for all you Microsoft ecosystem people. Copilot might take a minute, so if anybody has any other questions while it thinks, I'm happy to answer them but also no pressure.

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Yes?

MALE VOICE: Do you have a methodology or, I don't want to call it a checklist, but a way to think? These prompts are very elaborate, and if I was sitting here and you assigned me to write a prompt in the next 20 minutes I could not do that. So is there a way to—

TAYLOR: Yes, so context, task and resources. When I think about context, I always give the LLM a role. I tell it how it should think about who it is. Because it knows so much, if you give it a perspective, it comes back with more nuanced output. Also what are we trying to do and why? Then I think about task. What is it I want the tool to do? What are the constraints and details around that? And what specifically do I want the output in? Is it paragraphs? Is it bullet points? Is it a chart? How do I want it formatted? And then resources. These could be examples, brand voice, a framework, kind of resources to help support the context and the task. It's still thinking. And that is how I think about building out my prompts. I think it's easy to know what you know in your head and not tell the tool that, and then be confused that it's not outputting with the context in your head. If you don't tell this tool, it doesn't know. And telling it could be through something like custom instructions or another method. But if it doesn't have the information, it's not going to use it. Come on, Copilot, you can do it. I know you can. I've run it. I ran it just this morning, and it worked. Yes, another question.

MALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: I think that is the perfect way to think about it. I imagine if I asked my mom to write a Facebook ad, how much information I would need to give her, not just about, like, what we're doing and why, but, like, how it's constructed and what the pieces are. It's a perfect way to think about it. Yeah, one more question.

MALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: Yes, so you can't prompt it not to source from the information it has, but you, as the human, can make the choice of what you're going to ask for. I could say I want you to copy exactly what this person does, or I could say kind of what I'm looking for, without asking for that. As far as, you know, AI-created content, I will say most organizations that I'm working with don't use it. They don't have AI generate something from scratch that they then use as their assets, but they are using AI capabilities to accelerate their creative work—for example, expanding backgrounds or resizing.

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So I think there are different ways to use AI for kind of different functions. Okay, we have an output. It checked my enterprise data first. Wait, what is going on? Come on. Okay, we're just going to leave Copilot. I checked for enterprise data. Did not find any internal images. You know what? It's my fault. See, it's always my fault. I had work checked, and for those of you

that use Copilot, if you have it on work, it's going to prioritize your internal ecosystem. I've now clicked Web. It will now go to external sources. So I'm going to give Copilot a chance to redeem itself, although you are getting some insight into some of my preferences on platforms, but we are agnostic, and we work with all of them.

Okay, I'm going to give it another minute. Let's see if we can get there. It did a beautiful job this morning. Yes?

MALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: Remember when I said a minute can feel like an hour? It's happening right now. Yes?

FEMALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: Yeah, so what I didn't say when I talked about how I think about prompting is there are two more things that are actually part of prompting, and that's evaluate and iterate. So part of the prompt experience is not just writing the prompt and inputting it.

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When you get the data back, that is the moment that you engage with it. You check all the sources. You make sure you're aligned. We are the experts, right? We shouldn't believe something it tells us just because it says it. Maybe it's right. You can dig in and say, "Why do you think that? Give me the sources. Give me your thinking." Or you can say, "Hey, here's what I think. Here's what I know. Here's why this is wrong." And it'll be like, "Oh, yeah, you're right. Thanks for pointing that out," and continue on.

So again, that's why these tools are collaborators. If you were working with an intern, if you were working with a co-worker of your own level, you would have those same interactions and those same conversations. Copilot. Dropping it in Gemini in the meantime. Give Copilot another second. It says, "I'm organizing a response." Like, it's trying. It's really, really trying.

MALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: It is. It's like, "I'm working really hard. I want to make you happy."

MALE VOICE: Just like an intern.

TAYLOR: Just like an intern. Just for funsies. Oh, look. Hey, Gemini. You gave me an answer already. Come on, Copilot. I really want to show you off. You know, you can lead a horse to water. Yes?

FEMALE VOICE: [INAUDIBLE]

TAYLOR: Yeah, so that is really the framework because every single prompt is going to have different context, task, and resources, depending on what it is that you're working on. So I think through each of those pieces—you look confused. Am I not answering your question correctly?

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Okay. I'm going to just read the Gemini output, and sorry, Copilot. Okay, so Gemini is giving me three hybrid or fully digital event concepts. The conductor's table, a global salon, and sommelier box. This is hybrid. It talks about what the donor experience is, the emotional benefits preserved in this experience, fundraising support, and some risks and trade-offs. So again, all of these ideas talk about what they are, how they kind of preserve some of the emotional elements of that in-person event, and what some risks and trade-offs are. Here are three more ideas outside of the core dinner. So like, what if we didn't even want to do a dinner? Maybe it's a symphonic sommelier circle, year-round virtual tastings. Maybe it's the vintage legacy vault, rare wine and score auction.

Yeah, Copilot is just still not outputting. You know, I tried. I did. Okay. Imagining alternatives isn't about being futuristic. It's about being flexible. It's giving yourself permission to reimagine the familiar, the copy that always sounds the same, the events that always look the same, the front-of-house experience that always follows the same playbook. AI lets us test ideas that might feel too risky or too weird to pitch in a meeting, but it can lead to something that works. Innovation doesn't start with answers. It starts with imagination. When we imagine alternatives, we stop asking, "What can AI do?" And start asking, "What can we do differently because of it?"

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AI is really great at making things simple. But the arts aren't simple, and neither are we. Holding complexity means refusing to reduce everything to a headline or a metric. It means using AI to illuminate nuance and not eliminate it. We live in a world where we won't always have clear answers. It's about having the courage to hold competing truths and move forward anyway. Here's an example. Your website needs to speak to multiple different audiences. I've built out three fictitious audience profiles for different audiences for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. I have first-time ticket buyers, returning ticket buyers, and subscribers. These are three audiences who visit their website. Now the complexity is that the website can't be fully tailored to address the needs of all three audiences. I'm going to show you a prompt that outlines who each of the three audiences are, what their needs are, and shares an image of the homepage of their website so that it can identify the

experiences for each of the audiences. We're going back to Claude. So I'm dropping in my prompt, and I'm dropping in a screenshot of their homepage. Now some of you might be wondering why a screenshot and not just a URL.

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And the answer to that is the tool sees things differently when you actually give it a visual versus kind of scanning the back end of the website. What it sees when it scans it is going to be impacted by how the website is built. It has everything it needs. Let me build a well-structured, interactive report widget. Whoa, it hasn't done that before. Let's see what comes out. Oh, wow, yeah. Claude really wants to show off for you guys. It didn't do this this morning. Here's our beautiful little widget. Here's each of our three audiences, the cultural explorer, the experience collector, the loyal insider. This is just the same one. Okay, audience one. First time ticket buyers. Where the homepage wins. It's green. The hero image is atmospheric and visually compelling. A packed hall signals energy and occasion, not stiffness. And then some opportunities, and look how kind Claude was. It's yellow, not red. No beginning entry point anywhere on the page. Film concerts and crossover programming, the number one entry point for this persona aren't surfaced predominantly. Oh, it's still going.

So it did audience one. Audience two and three are coming. I know they are. Here we go. A few things worth flagging. The subscription hero is doing too much work for too many goals simultaneously. The concert calendar section labels our jargon to anyone not already inside the culture. There's no emotional language or experiential copy anywhere. So I think these do click. Yep, these were meant to click. We have audience one, audience two, and audience three. Okay. What I want to do next is, again, I just want to see these things together.

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Now I understand kind of the perspective of each audience and the complexity and nuance, but I want the tool to now compare them to each other. So specific to the home page, where do our audience needs align, and where do they compete? Now I have a table of the audience need, each of the three audiences, and whether they align or attention. So again, it's not telling me what to do, but it's helping me focus and see—it's helping me think about where I might want to focus based on all of the information. It's my last screen trick, so enjoy it.

Okay. Our world is complex. Audiences, boards, artists, your co-workers often see things differently. Leaders who can articulate trade-offs clearly will guide through the noise. When we embrace that messiness, we design strategies that are more resilient. Our final wonder. Our last wonder is to choose intentionally, not every use of AI is good. Not every use is

aligned with our values. Choosing intentionally means pausing before we reach for the tool. It means asking, what is this for? Does it save us time? Or does it save us thought? Does it expand creativity? Or is it replacing it? Does it strengthen our values or chip away at them? The difference between responsible use and reckless use isn't technical, it's ethical, and that's where our leadership matters the most. This is where technology meets our values. Choosing intentionally means using AI to amplify our mission and not undermine it.

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It means seeing the human at the center of every workflow, at every campaign and every choice. Intentionality is the ultimate 20%. A few well-chosen boundaries can protect what makes the organization human. There you have it, the seven wonders of the AI world, trying to be a little punny. Okay. Before we wrap, I want to leave you with a simple map for what comes next. You do not need to overhaul your workflows or write a 20-page AI plan tomorrow. But you do need to start wondering. So pick a wonder to inspire a question. Start with that question. One assumption, one challenge, one process, and find a different way to wonder. Then shape an experiment. Choose something small that's really safe to test. An audience insight, a creative prompt, a process you can recreate with AI as a partner. Don't worry about perfection. It's about learning.

And finally, share what you learn. Bring your team in. Talk about what worked, what didn't, and what surprised you. This moment is not about mastering a tool. It's about building a culture of curiosity and collaboration. My first key chain was not art, but it was permission—permission to try, permission to keep going, and permission to get better. "Look, I'm really good at this now." So that's where we are with AI. You don't need to be perfect. Permission to wonder is permission to lead differently. When we focus our curiosity on the few things that truly matter, we unlock impact far beyond what any single tool can deliver.

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I'm going to leave you with one final wonder. What if smaller teams at incredible orchestras could leverage AI in powerful, values-aligned ways? What if we could reach more people, build more meaningful connections, and share more of what we love with our communities? The real promise of AI isn't doing everything. It's discovering which few things change everything. Thank you, guys.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm happy to continue answering any questions anyone has. I know there is a mic.

MALE VOICE: Would you be able to provide a short overview of the costs of some of the systems you use? And I know some of them are free to a limited point, but do you have some insight into what that costs? Are you're using free versions or paid versions?

TAYLOR: Yes, that's a really great question. I do recommend using team or enterprise-level versions in your organization. The data privacy and security level at the free and personally paid, versus the team and enterprise versions are very different. So with the team or enterprise version, your data is more protected. Now, the great news is that these companies do have non-profit discounts. Microsoft, if you're in the Microsoft ecosystem, everyone in the organization has the free version. If you're going to pay, I do not have access to what that costs.

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Gemini, similarly, if you're on the Google workspace ecosystem, everyone in your organization has access to that at no cost. ChatGPT, I think is a \$20 monthly non-profit current rate. Yes, I'm seeing nods. Claude actually has the best deal. It's down to \$8 per person, nonprofit rate. And those prices are a monthly per-person cost. So something like Claude for \$8 a month per person, with the value that you can get from it, I would argue is well worth the investment. He's going to heckle me, just so you know.

MALE VOICE: I would not heckle you. So, \$8 great. I wouldn't know where to begin to structure the right prompt, which means garbage in, garbage out. Which means I'm going to make these prompts that make no sense, and that the output's going to be no sense. So, where do you start with learning how to create a prompt that gives you something valuable back?

TAYLOR: Yes, so one way to do it is to bring in capacity, and I will train all your teams on how to prompt these tools and work with them. One thing that I will do is I will share with this group because you asked. I actually built a tool to support prompts so that you can—It's a custom GPT, which means it's a tool that lives inside of ChatGPT, and it has these, what are called "conversation starters." They're like little buttons and if you click "feedback" on a prompt, you can drop in the prompts that you've worked on, and it will give you feedback based on how I think about prompting, that context task and resource. So, I will share that with this group along with the presentation. I'm sure there's a way to do that.

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And then that would be a great place to start. Just give it your best shot. Drop it in the tool, and it will help you think about context, task, resources, and even ethics a little bit.

MALE VOICE: One quick follow up. Only because we're part of a large arts collaborative. We're a very small part of it. When you say "enterprise," would that be something—And I know they're a Microsoft shop, so, you know, there are teams and everything. So, is this something we could kind of take on, on our own, without involving the whole big organization?

TAYLOR: Yes, so if you're on Microsoft, then you have access to Copilot. If you go to copilot.com and sign in with your work email address, you should be able to just use it. And all organizations should hopefully start to have some guidance for everybody around how to use these tools. But ideally, when doing work, you want to sign into the tool the organization recommends with your work email address.

FEMALE VOICE: Hi. How do we determine which AI platform is best to use?

TAYLOR: Yeah, that's a great question. I think your work ecosystem plays into it, right? So if you're on Microsoft or Google, that pushes you towards Gemini or Copilot. I would actually argue that ChatGPT and Claude are a lot more powerful perhaps than Gemini and Copilot. So what I usually recommend is if you're on Microsoft, it's great. You have Copilot. It's great to kind of dig into your own ecosystem. It's a great way to kind of search your internal files, and the same for Gemini. But I recommend actually then spending on a tool like ChatGPT or Claude. Part of it's personal preference, they all have similar functionality. I do think ChatGPT is kind of the most accessible user experience.

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So for somebody who has never touched a tool, ChatGPT is maybe a little bit more accessible. It also has things like custom GPTs, which Claude doesn't have, but both of them have skills which can ultimately do what a custom GPT does. Claude is really powerful with numbers and data in a way that ChatGPT isn't. So again, I would say try them both, see what they both feel like, maybe starting with the free version, and then you can always make a choice and upgrade.

FEMALE VOICE: Hi. Thank you for this presentation. And I'm sorry, this might be another prompt, prompts question. Do you have any advice if you are at an organization with multiple content producers, everybody is working on very different types of projects, like email, video, print material, community events. Do you have any advice for how to help all these content producers work with AI and produce things in your brand voice, but then it's still nuanced for all these different uses that they'll be working with?

TAYLOR: Yes, that is a really great question. And what these tools have, in addition to just kind of chatting with them, the way most people have probably experienced, right? You hit

"new chat," and you chat with it, and then you move on to the next chat. These tools also have custom capabilities within them. So Claude has this thing called a "skill." So you can build a skill that understands the brand voice and the editorial guidelines, so that everyone in your org can know when I'm working on my specific thing with my specific nuances, I then run it through the brand voice editorial guide skill, and I'll get feedback on that one piece. ChatGPT can do it too. They also have skills and these things called custom GPTs, and either of those paths would work, as well.

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But again, when you have a team's account, you can share these capabilities, like a skill or a custom GPT, with everyone in your organization. I think there were some questions there.

MALE VOICE: So I'm wondering—thanks for all this, Jen. This is great. Jumping back to some of the examples from the very beginning of the talk, the San Francisco Symphony skill you mentioned is a really interesting one around copywriting and brand voice. I'm curious if you're able to share any more about what were the headwinds in that? Were people resistant? I imagine there's probably at least one copywriter on staff or some folks whose job is writing. Were they excited about what that meant for distributing some of the work, or how did you navigate that?

TAYLOR: Yes, that's a really great question. And I will say I was very lucky that Troy Smith, if you know him, he runs marketing over at the opera, is such a wonderful collaborator, and he was just open to learn and experiment. So from his perspective, he was just shocked about how much the prompt you used mattered, and he was blown away by how fast we were able to move. When he runs surveys in-house, it takes weeks to get a first draft, let alone get it built and actually out. We were able to do it in about two weeks. When it comes to kind of the people and the copywriting, that's when we had conversations.

So we did this once, we did the sticky synopsis, we rewrote back up. So what we did when we decided we were going to do this sticky synopsis was we used internal, proprietary data that they had around their first-time ticket-buying audience. We used that to build the audience persona that we then ran the written synopsis against to kind of get the updates and make the edits.

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That did lead to a conversation of like it is important to us that these editors, these people who understand the operas and own the language, that they always write it first, because I did ultimately build them a tool that would either give you feedback based on the audience, or if you just give it an opera, it will write it for you. And their hard line was, "We will never do

that. We will never have the tool write the description from scratch." But as long as kind of our internal team does that first pass, we are open to for this specific audience and the ability to attract and retain new people. They were open to the adjustments.

Well, thank you again so much for spending your morning with me, for waking up after the party and for thinking about AI a little bit.

[APPLAUSE]

[01:01:18]