

A New Board Member's Guide to the Landscape of American Orchestras

October 6, 2026

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00:02:20.640 --> 00:02:22.889

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Welcome to the League's

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00:02:23.000 --> 00:02:24.810

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Latest webinar

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David Styers, League of American Orchestras: on A Board Member's Guide to the Landscape of American Orchestras. My name is David Styers, and I am Director of Learning and Leadership Programs at the League, and I serve as the Constituent Liaison for Orchestra Board Members. And I've worked with orchestra and nonprofit boards for nearly three decades, so please contact me if I can ever be of assistance, and I'll put my information in the chat. But thank you so much for joining us today.

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David Styers, League of American Orchestras: This webinar is made possible by a generous grant from the Howard Gilman Foundation and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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00:03:09.460 --> 00:03:12.930

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Just a few quick notes about this Zoom.

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00:03:13.420 --> 00:03:27.860

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Feel free to introduce yourself in the chat with the name and your orchestra, and if you have any questions for our speakers, please put them in the Q&A box as we go along. The presentation will last approximately 45 minutes with questions.

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00:03:27.860 --> 00:03:39.040

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: for a further 15 minutes at the end, and you can find the closed captioning live transcript option through the icon in the Zoom toolbar, but everyone who's registered for today

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00:03:39.040 --> 00:03:53.430

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And we've had over 325 registrants, and so we're thrilled to have so many people interested in this topic. They'll receive an email with the recording, slide deck, and transcript of this webinar soon. And also, additional

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00:03:53.710 --> 00:04:07.039

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: resources are available on our website for this webinar in the Related Resources tab, and you can scan it from the PowerPoint, but I'll also put a link in the chat to that tab as well.

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David Styers, League of American Orchestras: This is our third opportunity in the past,

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00:04:11.100 --> 00:04:35.880

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Three years to welcome orchestra board members, particularly those who are new to their orchestras, to the League and also a better understanding about not only orchestra governance but the state of the American orchestra field and so it gives me great pleasure to welcome our presenters for today, Simon Woods, the president and CEO of the League of American Orchestras, and Doug Hagerman, the League's immediate past board chair and the former.

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00:04:35.880 --> 00:04:42.649

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: former chair of the Milwaukee Symphony. So thank you both for joining us again today, and I will hand things over to Doug.

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00:04:43.300 --> 00:05:02.350

Doug Hagerman: Hey, good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to this, hopefully fast-moving, seminar. I come at this with three premises. The first is that in order to serve effectively in your orchestra, it helps an awful lot to know what's going on nationally in our field.

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00:05:02.380 --> 00:05:16.800

Doug Hagerman: And you're taking your first step toward following trends in our field. Secondly, you'll find that there are national resources that help will help you with local discussions. We'll talk about how to access those today.

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00:05:16.870 --> 00:05:33.990

Doug Hagerman: John Murcott, And third, I think you'll get a sense of strength and determination as a result of knowing that whatever it is you're struggling with, you're not alone. There's someone else struggling with the same thing. So, with that, let's look at our agenda for today, and we'll...

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00:05:34.110 --> 00:05:50.249

Doug Hagerman: Yeah, I think we covered most of that. All right. And as I said, you'll be getting, this deck. We do have this publication that David has up there now that shows, the benefits that orchestra board members get from being

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00:05:50.270 --> 00:06:05.919

Doug Hagerman: affiliated with a member orchestra. So, we will, tag team it between Simon and David and myself, and we're going to start with an overview of the orchestra field, led by Simon.

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00:06:10.960 --> 00:06:28.879

Simon Woods: Yeah, good afternoon, everybody. I apologize for that, not very, good, use of slides. For some reason, my slides weren't advancing, so it was a little chaotic. Anyway, good afternoon, everybody. It's wonderful to see you. Wherever you are in the country, you're very welcome.

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00:06:28.880 --> 00:06:31.050

Simon Woods: Doug and I are happy to see you.

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00:06:31.050 --> 00:06:39.500

Simon Woods: I think everybody on this call here on this Zoom cares deeply not only about Orchestras, but about governance and how they're governed.

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00:06:39.520 --> 00:06:51.789

Simon Woods: We all have a deep interest in this, and as David pointed out, we're a resource for you, so please reach out at any time if we can support you. So, here goes. Let's, let's.

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00:06:52.170 --> 00:06:53.950

Simon Woods: Let's launch in here.

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00:06:53.950 --> 00:07:17.209

Simon Woods: So, we have a document called Orchestras at a Glance. There's a, you'll see as we go here, through here, I put both QR codes, which you can pull up easily on your phone, and also when you get the slides, you'll see the links as well. And this document I commend to you because it really does give you... and this is... I just put the first page up here. It really does give you an overview of how extensive our field is.

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00:07:17.210 --> 00:07:19.269

Simon Woods: And, and, you know.

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00:07:19.340 --> 00:07:33.879

Simon Woods: What is our influence and what is the scale, what it looks like, how Orchestras behave in their communities, how they contribute, what their value is. And if you're a new board member to an American Orchestra, it's really, really worth a look. So please have a look at that.

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00:07:33.880 --> 00:07:47.039

Simon Woods: But this is a kind of quick summary, which we always like to remind everybody. Orchestras are in every state, they're in suburbs and cities, they're professional, they're volunteered, they're salaried, they're unionized, they're not unionized, and they're the most famous orchestras in the world, and they're

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00:07:47.040 --> 00:07:54.879

Simon Woods: tiny little community organizations. They play many concerts a week, or a handful a year. They're adults, they're youth.

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00:07:54.880 --> 00:08:11.090

Simon Woods: And they have enormous endowments, or they're working just week to week on their finances. So, our field is very diverse, and actually, it's that kind of variety about the field that I think makes it interesting. And if you come to our conference at some point this year, we're going to be

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00:08:11.090 --> 00:08:22.589

Simon Woods: in Atlanta in the beginning of June, you will get a sense of how vibrant this community is because of this enormous, you know, variety of what orchestras actually

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00:08:22.590 --> 00:08:25.420

Simon Woods: What that... what does that actually look like?

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00:08:26.340 --> 00:08:48.780

Simon Woods: This is, an interesting, slide, which comes, from some research in, 2023. And, the point I just want to make out up here, which I think is interesting, is just to show our scale. So this is total audiences, \$22 million audience... 22 million audiences, I think this was 23, it might have been...

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00:08:48.780 --> 00:08:50.370

Simon Woods: Might have been 22.

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00:08:50.370 --> 00:09:12.230

Simon Woods: And you know it's interesting to note how high we are up on this list, and you know, not that I want to cast aspersions on our other art forms because I happen to love opera, but it's interesting to compare us with opera and just remember that you know we're about 10 times the size of the orchestra field.

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00:09:12.230 --> 00:09:29.210

Simon Woods: in terms of the orchestra in terms of audiences. There are orchestras in every community in this country of any size. And so anybody who tells you well orchestras are dead or classical music is dead, it is it is so incredibly not true.

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00:09:30.270 --> 00:09:47.490

Simon Woods: So this is our a little snapshot of who is a member of the League. We have about 400, this is about adds up to about 700 orchestras in total. We have 460 Adult Orchestras, 190 youth orchestras, very, very vibrant youth orchestra field.

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Simon Woods: 70 international orchestras, and then we have some collegiate orchestras who are members. Then, you know, we have a lot of individuals, people who choose to buy their own personal membership of the League to get access to our networks.

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00:10:01.440 --> 00:10:18.939

Simon Woods: And we have all our business partners. And if you come again, if you come to conference, you'll see incredible selection of business partners who exhibit at conference and, and also support us with, with presentations about their professional insights, and everything from, you know, sales, CRM.

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00:10:18.940 --> 00:10:36.520

Simon Woods: and technology and AI. So it's a, it's a, we're, we're a very kind of interesting, ecology of different, you know, different kinds of members. And it's also important to, to remember that we don't only serve staff

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Simon Woods: boards, we also serve musicians, we have many musician members, we have many composers who are connected with us, we have artists who are connected with us, so it's a vibrant network of people.

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00:10:49.110 --> 00:11:03.109

Simon Woods: This is how we divide up orchestras, and these group numbers you'll see down the side, these are our meeting groups, and so you will instantly, when you see this, you will be able to.

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00:11:03.220 --> 00:11:20.250

Simon Woods: you know, recognize which group you are in. And one of the, you know, immediate observations that I always want to remind everybody about here is that while, you know, we all know the kind of marquee names, the most famous orchestras, you know.

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00:11:20.670 --> 00:11:32.369

Simon Woods: top 10 orchestras in this country, let's say, the majority of the field is smaller. You know, that's 127 orchestras in our tiniest category, and

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00:11:32.810 --> 00:11:37.839

Simon Woods: And you know, big youth orchestra constituency. So this is just interesting to

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00:11:37.890 --> 00:11:55.939

Simon Woods: to remind us, and, you know, particularly if you're in a large orchestra, I think sometimes the largest orchestra boards, you know, who operate in, you know, in a way in their own kind of ecosystem, don't always realize just how this great depth of orchestral experience that there is across the country.

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00:11:56.810 --> 00:12:04.170

Simon Woods: So that's really just a very, very quick snapshot of the field, and I'm going to pass it back to you, Doug.

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00:12:04.480 --> 00:12:18.660

Doug Hagerman: Okay, great. Let's go to the first slide. So I want all of you to download this publication, literally all of you. We have recently reissued version two.

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Doug Hagerman: of our Effective Orchestra Governance Guide. Think of it as a booklet-sized document. It is organized around the...

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00:12:26.740 --> 00:12:40.770

Doug Hagerman: duties of orchestra boards, and you will find it incredibly useful. You can... you can get a PDF through that link. If you'd like a hard copy, they're available for sale.

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00:12:40.770 --> 00:12:54.979

Doug Hagerman: If you'd like to buy a bulk order for all the members of your board, feel free to do that. That is available as well. And I think you will find that you'll be pulling it off the shelf frequently in conjunction with your board work.

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00:12:55.060 --> 00:13:08.329

Doug Hagerman: Okay, next slide. There are 10 things that I've outlined here that are somewhat unique about orchestra board governance that are different from perhaps other nonprofits, and certainly different from

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00:13:08.330 --> 00:13:21.730

Doug Hagerman: corporate boards. I'm not going to go through all these, but there's just a couple I want to mention. And one is that three-headed leadership model. Most boards, or I'm sorry, most orchestras have three leaders. They have a staff leader.

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00:13:21.790 --> 00:13:32.180

Doug Hagerman: They have an artistic leader who's often called the music director, and they have a volunteer governance leader who's usually called the board chair or board president or something like that.

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00:13:32.330 --> 00:13:40.389

Doug Hagerman: So that's a little bit different to have 3 leaders that all have to figure out how to work together and get along. So, bear that in mind.

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Doug Hagerman: I also want to mention the third one. We involve musicians in governance in our orchestras, and that is a best practice. It is a tried and true method.

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00:13:51.660 --> 00:14:07.080

Doug Hagerman: Of including some of the people with the biggest stake in our orchestras in the governance of the orchestra, and obviously conflicts of interest exist there that need to be managed, but it's worth it, because they are a very important stakeholder.

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00:14:07.140 --> 00:14:16.770

Doug Hagerman: And the last one I want to mention is number 8, which is that we are... if there's one thing we could change about our field that would make us.

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00:14:16.980 --> 00:14:35.150

Doug Hagerman: easier to build audiences, easier to raise money, easier to get support from governments, etc, etc. It would be combating the perception that we are a narrow art form for a narrow demographic, and that that demographic is elitist. And,

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00:14:35.150 --> 00:14:51.789

Doug Hagerman: I think everything we need to do needs to be driven by making the orchestra more accessible and more welcoming of everyone. I'll leave the rest of the slide for your reading. Let's go on to the next one.

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Doug Hagerman: So, I've listed here the constituents of an orchestra, and I've done that because that's really what governance is all about, right? It's about relationships between constituents. Who gets a voice?

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00:15:08.680 --> 00:15:12.570

Doug Hagerman: Who gets to decide things? Who's in the room?

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00:15:12.850 --> 00:15:27.090

Doug Hagerman: Whose interests are pursued? And so, in one way or another, you need to be attending to all these constituencies, and a board that only attends to the audience.

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00:15:27.170 --> 00:15:34.999

Doug Hagerman: or only attends to donors, or only attends to musicians, is missing the bigger picture. So I urge you to think about that.

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00:15:35.190 --> 00:15:47.239

Doug Hagerman: As legal entities, we all are subject to state statutes, and we're all subject to bylaws. And if you haven't read your bylaws, you should.

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00:15:47.520 --> 00:15:48.560

Doug Hagerman: Let's move on.

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00:15:50.620 --> 00:15:51.520

Doug Hagerman: So...

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Doug Hagerman: I talked a little bit before about the fact that there's 3 leaders in most orchestras, and this creates a number of things. Who reports to who?

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Doug Hagerman: For example, the one that gets talked about a fair amount is whether the music director should or does report to the board chair or the full board as opposed to reporting to the CEO.

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00:16:16.490 --> 00:16:31.420

Doug Hagerman: There are pros and cons to different models, and there are... there have been trends over the years, a little bit more toward having music directors report to CEOs, but that's not universal, and it varies very much by budget size.

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00:16:31.560 --> 00:16:34.420

Doug Hagerman: There are different processes for how.

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00:16:34.520 --> 00:16:39.370

Doug Hagerman: CEOs and music directors and board chairs get selected.

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00:16:39.550 --> 00:16:54.380

Doug Hagerman: Almost always in situations where the orchestra has a collective bargaining agreement, that agreement gives them rights to be involved in selection of music directors and CEOs, so bear that in mind.

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00:16:54.410 --> 00:17:08.069

Doug Hagerman: But fundamentally, these are about effective leadership working relationships, right? The three individuals need to find how to collaborate. They need to be thought partners.

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00:17:08.190 --> 00:17:20.460

Doug Hagerman: And one thing I would urge you to think about is job descriptions. In my experience, most orchestras, perhaps almost all, have a job description for the CEO.

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00:17:20.460 --> 00:17:36.850

Doug Hagerman: That is not the case with regard to music directors, and there's great confusion about what the job of a music director is. Is it simply to make the orchestra sound great and to lead great performances, or is it to pursue all the other facets of the mission of the orchestra?

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Doug Hagerman: If that's not clear, writing a job description and discussing that would be a good idea.

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00:17:44.890 --> 00:17:59.189

Doug Hagerman: Finally, I just want to say that I think the board should represent the community and take an external vantage point. And that will... that will keep the board on the right path. Okay, let's go on to the next slide.

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00:17:59.880 --> 00:18:00.740

Doug Hagerman: So...

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00:18:01.100 --> 00:18:14.530

Doug Hagerman: So what does the board do? As I said, we represent the public. We represent the public to maintain the orchestra's mission, vision, to ensure that the orchestra acts with integrity and values.

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00:18:14.530 --> 00:18:23.029

Doug Hagerman: And ultimately, an effective board translates community investment into public value and public impact.

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00:18:23.270 --> 00:18:25.499

Doug Hagerman: And that's what we ought to aspire to.

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00:18:28.120 --> 00:18:33.559

Doug Hagerman: You will find in your day-to-day board work that you frequently come across, the...

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00:18:33.800 --> 00:18:48.220

Doug Hagerman: need for role clarity between the role of the board and the role of the staff, the difference between oversight and management, the difference between making policies and implementing policies, and so forth.

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00:18:48.390 --> 00:18:53.430

Doug Hagerman: And I think it's exceptionally important

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00:18:53.890 --> 00:19:04.309

Doug Hagerman: to recognize the limits that you should put on pushing your own ideas onto the staff of your orchestra.

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00:19:04.850 --> 00:19:22.220

Doug Hagerman: Think about how many people are constantly telling these professionals what they should be doing. You should be doing this, you should be doing that. The symphony wouldn't be struggling if it would just do this instead of that, right? Why haven't you done this? I told you a year ago to do this, why haven't you done it yet?

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00:19:22.430 --> 00:19:26.270

Doug Hagerman: The, the staff of Orchestras live with that dynamic.

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00:19:26.530 --> 00:19:33.309

Doug Hagerman: from hour to hour, and I would urge you as board members not to make it worse. In short, stay in your lane.

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00:19:34.370 --> 00:19:35.969

Doug Hagerman: Let's go to the next slide.

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00:19:38.090 --> 00:19:45.190

Doug Hagerman: So one of the things we've done with the effective orchestra governance guide that we

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00:19:45.210 --> 00:20:01.750

Doug Hagerman: we started with, that publication I talked about, is that we've talked about how in these areas, mission, strategy, leadership, finances, fundraising, programs, board, and standing, which is really, you know, image, reputation.

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00:20:01.990 --> 00:20:06.730

Doug Hagerman: What we do as individual board members, and what we must do as a group.

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00:20:06.820 --> 00:20:24.249

Doug Hagerman: And so, hopefully your orchestra has a job description for board members, or a statement of expectations of board members. Hopefully it's provided to people before they're elected to the board, so they know what they're signing on to.

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00:20:25.530 --> 00:20:39.289

Doug Hagerman: One of the areas that is consistently a problem is the whole question of whether individual board members have committed to be involved in fundraising in one way or another.

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00:20:39.290 --> 00:20:45.779

Doug Hagerman: Whether that's as an ambassador, an introducer, an advocate, or a solicitor.

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00:20:45.900 --> 00:20:50.980

Doug Hagerman: It is part of the job to do something to help the orchestra raise money.

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00:20:51.110 --> 00:21:08.969

Doug Hagerman: And every orchestra board member has to accept that responsibility or you're going to have dissonance. And so, and as a result of doing that, the board as a collective will be able to ensure that there's adequate resources for the organization.

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00:21:09.350 --> 00:21:23.979

Doug Hagerman: So think about these roles and responsibilities. On the right, you essentially have the things that the board has to deal with over a cycle of board and committee meetings.

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00:21:23.980 --> 00:21:35.540

Doug Hagerman: All these things need to be dealt with from time to time. Some things like financial oversight might be monthly or quarterly. Other things like strategy and mission might be

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00:21:35.600 --> 00:21:48.590

Doug Hagerman: You know, periodically every 3 to 10 years. But one way or another, all these things need to be on the board's agenda and covered adequately so that the board does its job for the organization.

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00:21:49.370 --> 00:21:50.300

Doug Hagerman: Okay.

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00:21:50.470 --> 00:21:51.700

Doug Hagerman: Let's go on.

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00:21:52.380 --> 00:21:54.940

Doug Hagerman: So

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Doug Hagerman: Many years ago, people studying nonprofit boards recognized that boards operate in three different modes.

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00:22:05.810 --> 00:22:16.779

Doug Hagerman: and should operate in 3 different modes. One mode is really the fiduciary role of board members to oversee the organization.

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00:22:16.890 --> 00:22:30.319

Doug Hagerman: to make sure that funds are accounted for, that compliance occurs, the organization stays faithful to its mission, operates within its bylaws, and so forth. That's everything from

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00:22:30.400 --> 00:22:37.609

Doug Hagerman: overseeing asset investment to financial performance to fundraising.

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00:22:37.840 --> 00:22:45.800

Doug Hagerman: The problem is that if you don't manage your board Agenda. You will spend...

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00:22:46.330 --> 00:22:55.099

Doug Hagerman: most of your time on fiduciary, and you'll never get to the other two. So the big takeaway from this slide is be sure you make time for strategic work.

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00:22:55.280 --> 00:22:57.990

Doug Hagerman: Which is basically planning, in my view.

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00:22:58.080 --> 00:23:09.080

Doug Hagerman: And generative work, which is really thinking about the big issues that we're wrestling with for the long-run health and success of the organization. So...

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00:23:09.140 --> 00:23:20.480

Doug Hagerman: Ideally, your board, between your... between your board leaders and your staff leaders, is adequately covering all three of these areas, and not.

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00:23:20.730 --> 00:23:26.569

Doug Hagerman: Overly emphasizing the fiduciary part. It takes, it takes real work.

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00:23:26.700 --> 00:23:37.089

Doug Hagerman: not to let the fiduciary part overwhelm your board meetings. And so, if your board meetings feel like a series of staff reports and a series of committee reports.

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00:23:37.280 --> 00:23:41.590

Doug Hagerman: Maybe you need to rethink about the allocation of time.

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00:23:42.210 --> 00:23:44.940

Doug Hagerman: All right, let's go on.

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00:23:47.460 --> 00:23:48.320

Doug Hagerman: So...

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00:23:48.870 --> 00:24:03.070

Doug Hagerman: One of the things that we're responsible for as board members is building an effective board. And I'm not going to go through all this, but obviously there's a pipeline where we identify, cultivate, and recruit people.

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00:24:03.250 --> 00:24:21.950

Doug Hagerman: We need to go outside our usual network to find people. But then there's a whole series of things that need to take place with regard to onboarding and ongoing board communications that really can help lead to an effective board.

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00:24:22.100 --> 00:24:23.580

Doug Hagerman: Okay, next slide.

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00:24:25.880 --> 00:24:43.059

Doug Hagerman: So we thought we'd share as the last part of my presentation here a little bit of information about the demographics of our field and the diversity of our field. You'll see some statistics on this page.

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00:24:44.350 --> 00:24:49.510

Doug Hagerman: The, I guess the most important points is that the field is making progress.

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00:24:49.740 --> 00:24:54.470

Doug Hagerman: In some areas, it's slower than we'd like.

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00:24:55.700 --> 00:25:12.559

Doug Hagerman: There are good reasons why the artist side of this equation is moving slower than the other parts of the equation. People have tenure in orchestras, and orchestra positions turn over slowly, and so there's reasons for that.

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00:25:12.610 --> 00:25:22.119

Doug Hagerman: In any event, these kinds of things are intended to provide context for your orchestra. We're not suggesting that anyone have quotas.

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00:25:22.570 --> 00:25:39.080

Doug Hagerman: Let's go on to the last slide of my section here, which is on... a little bit more on equity, diversity, and inclusion. We've thought about this a lot, and, like, what's the case for it? And...

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00:25:39.150 --> 00:25:47.550

Doug Hagerman: So most orchestras are working on this. There are very good business and artistic reasons for that work.

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00:25:47.720 --> 00:25:53.790

Doug Hagerman: It's not... Wokeism, it's... it's good business, it's good artistic.

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00:25:53.870 --> 00:26:11.230

Doug Hagerman: reasons. Most orchestra EDI programs are about creating access and opportunity for those who have perhaps been excluded in the past. It's not about lowering standards, no one's suggesting that.

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00:26:11.300 --> 00:26:27.420

Doug Hagerman: There is a history of exclusion in our field, and so we need all the talent we can get. And so I, for one, am in favor of welcoming everyone in to participate and make their contribution to our orchestras.

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00:26:27.930 --> 00:26:30.540

Doug Hagerman: So with that, over to you, Simon.

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00:26:35.960 --> 00:26:43.699

Simon Woods: Thank you, Doug. I might just add, if I can just go back, to, just... whoops, I'm just gonna go back.

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00:26:43.880 --> 00:26:48.150

Simon Woods: to this, to this slide. And Doug made a, you know, great point about.

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00:26:48.200 --> 00:26:55.370

Simon Woods: You know, the fact that the artistic side of this work is in some ways the most difficult to change, particularly who's sitting on stage.

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00:26:55.380 --> 00:27:03.810

Simon Woods: And I do just want to let you know that the League has a really significant program, which we're in the third year of now, called Inclusive Stages.

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00:27:03.810 --> 00:27:16.019

Simon Woods: We have 45 orchestras in a partnership working really hard to rethink opportunity, to rethink inclusion cultures, to rethink audition process and tenure process. It's among

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00:27:16.020 --> 00:27:18.479

Simon Woods: The most important piece of work that,

137

00:27:18.480 --> 00:27:26.960

Simon Woods: that the League has done in recent years. And some of you on this call may be in Orchestras that are actually part of the inclusive stages.

138

00:27:26.960 --> 00:27:43.429

Simon Woods: cohort, and if so, that's something that is really worth looking at. David, I don't know whether you're able to just pull quickly the total cohort list of inclusive stages. If you are, maybe just drop that in the chat, and people can just see who's part of that.

139

00:27:43.430 --> 00:27:46.089

Simon Woods: Very important program. Okay, so...

140

00:27:46.570 --> 00:28:00.419

Simon Woods: What we're going to talk about now for the next little bit is some data and themes that are going on in the field. And I'm not going to be able to do a deep dive on this, because this is about, kind of, 2 hours worth of presentation.

141

00:28:00.420 --> 00:28:25.289

Simon Woods: In the next, you know, next little handful of slides. But I at least want to give you some kind of overall context, and then you'll be able to take these slides away and look at them at your leisure. And I think what it does is it just, you know, gives a kind of a little overview of the context you're coming into in your organization. But I want to just point out something that, you know, you'll hear

142

00:28:25.290 --> 00:28:38.539

Simon Woods: You'll hear us say a lot at the League, which is every orchestra is different. We always say if you've seen one orchestra, you've seen one orchestra. Every orchestra has different dynamics, different business models.

143

00:28:38.540 --> 00:28:50.079

Simon Woods: It has different patterns going on in its community as relates to sales and fundraising. So the generalizations are are guidance, not a benchmark.

144

00:28:50.190 --> 00:29:04.770

Simon Woods: And the data that I'll show you is, is, is, sorry, guidance, not a benchmark, wrong, wrong phrase. Guidance, not, not something to kind of measure yourself against.

145

00:29:04.770 --> 00:29:28.059

Simon Woods: recognizing that you know you may not be. You probably won't be the same as every other orchestra in your group, in your cohort, in your region. But nonetheless we do have a group of orchestras who work together with us on a cohort basis to share their themes. It's about 45 orchestras who are involved in that program, and it's in partnership with

146

00:29:28.250 --> 00:29:42.450

Simon Woods: with TRG Arts, which is a major consulting firm. And we report a couple of times a year on key themes that are going on from those 45 orchestras. Again, not a total picture of the field, I can't emphasize that enough.

147

00:29:42.450 --> 00:30:01.029

Simon Woods: but guidance and interesting learning for us. And here on one slide is the kind of very, very, very high-level headlines about what's been going on the last handful of years. So, the two left boxes are around sales, and the right box is around individual giving. So.

148

00:30:01.680 --> 00:30:25.829

Simon Woods: Let's start with subscriptions and membership. So, you know, we've been hearing for a very long time, like, literally many decades, that subscriptions are dying. They're not really dying.

The data doesn't support that. If you take a snapshot of how much revenue Orchestras derive from subscriptions now, as against 30 years ago, as a proportion of their total revenue, then yes, it will

149

00:30:25.830 --> 00:30:47.950

Simon Woods: lower, there has been decline, but actually it is holding quite steady. And one of the reasons why it's holding quite steady is that a lot of medium-sized and larger orchestras are starting to experiment with the membership model. And what the membership model means is it's basically the Netflix model. It's the model where you pay \$25 a month and you get access to

150

00:30:48.210 --> 00:30:51.730

Simon Woods: 6 unlimited, whatever a number of concerts.

151

00:30:51.830 --> 00:30:58.340

Simon Woods: every month, and this is a huge growth area. It's more difficult for smaller orchestras to do it because they don't have enough concerts.

152

00:30:58.340 --> 00:31:18.070

Simon Woods: But for medium and larger size orchestras, it's a real growth area, so any... so what I would say about subscriptions and membership is they're not... they're not really declining, but they are changing. And I think they are changing as, you know, we see the demographics of the country shift, we see younger generation audiences look for different things, and being...

153

00:31:18.070 --> 00:31:20.850

Simon Woods: You know, more interested in, kind of.

154

00:31:20.850 --> 00:31:36.349

Simon Woods: mixed subscriptions, you know, they want to maybe buy something in a classical series, something in a pop series, they want to buy a movie, they might want to buy something for their kids. So it's a... we're in a much more flexible environment than the old, you know, buy

155

00:31:36.350 --> 00:31:42.029

Simon Woods: 8 classical concerts model. So it's changing, not not declining.

156

00:31:42.420 --> 00:32:01.289

Simon Woods: On single tickets, again, you know, we actually had a big, big rise after COVID, and at one point, we were significantly higher, after COVID than we were even going into COVID. And I would say.

157

00:32:01.880 --> 00:32:04.210

Simon Woods: Broadly speaking, again, it's kind of...

158

00:32:04.320 --> 00:32:14.940

Simon Woods: You know, it's it's it's certainly not in crisis, but it's not growing. It's not growing fast. What we are seeing in single tickets is a lot of new audiences coming in.

159

00:32:14.940 --> 00:32:27.269

Simon Woods: Lots of what, you know, what we call new-to-file audiences, buying tickets for the first time, different generations, different people who are interested in different kinds of programs, like films and, you know, movies and...

160

00:32:27.270 --> 00:32:31.029

Simon Woods: and things like that. And and

161

00:32:31.260 --> 00:32:45.389

Simon Woods: the job is to keep them and try to make them more loyal, because in this rapidly expanding single-ticket world, there's a tremendous amount of churn. You get people in, and then you lose them, and you have to bring more people in.

162

00:32:45.390 --> 00:32:55.619

Simon Woods: So it's a rapidly changing environment. But again, the indication from this group is that it's holding broadly steady.

163

00:32:55.770 --> 00:33:07.979

Simon Woods: Now, when we go over to philanthropy, we're into a very, very complicated environment, because what have we seen going on in philanthropy? Well, we've seen, obviously, you know, dramatic.

164

00:33:08.320 --> 00:33:27.729

Simon Woods: pullback from corporations in the last decade. Some markets are very strong in corporate, I will say, but they're very particular markets, markets where there are a lot of headquarters. In many places, the corporate market has become really, really small. We've seen foundations reprioritize their giving so that they're much more

165

00:33:27.730 --> 00:33:43.070

Simon Woods: They tend to be oriented much more towards community, towards social justice and equity and inclusion and education and global health. And, so that is generally taking money away from

166

00:33:43.070 --> 00:33:49.370

Simon Woods: from the classic art forms, which doesn't mean to say there isn't money out there. There is money out there in the foundation world.

167

00:33:49.560 --> 00:33:52.710

Simon Woods: But it's certainly not growing.

168

00:33:53.240 --> 00:33:57.459

Simon Woods: And then meanwhile, on the... on individual giving.

169

00:33:57.590 --> 00:34:08.760

Simon Woods: you know, one of the biggest trends going on right now, and it's happening right across the arts. This is not only orchestras, this is the... what we call the generational transfer of wealth. We have this

170

00:34:08.850 --> 00:34:18.619

Simon Woods: Massive transition of 15 to \$20 trillion, which are transitioning over this decade from some greats.

171

00:34:18.620 --> 00:34:43.549

Simon Woods: Generation, but mainly baby boomers, to the next generation. And, what's happening there is that, it's making us much more vulnerable because we're losing some of these big older gifts from older, donors who have supported our organizations. It's moving more money into the hands of younger generation audiences who think differently about philanthropy.

172

00:34:43.550 --> 00:34:57.900

Simon Woods: and are not necessarily loyal towards particular organizations in the way that their parents and grandparents were. So there's just a massive transition going on here. And what's it doing to the numbers? Very broadly speaking.

173

00:34:57.900 --> 00:35:13.439

Simon Woods: We are seeing more donors, but we're losing total gift, we're losing ground on the total revenue. And this is one of those trends where I will actually dare to say this is an almost universal trend. It's across our field and across the arts in general.

174

00:35:13.440 --> 00:35:30.110

Simon Woods: And so the necessity to kind of talk to this next generation of donors in new ways that appeals to them about, you know, community and impact is really just so incredibly important.

175

00:35:30.110 --> 00:35:37.459

Simon Woods: So huge implications from, from, from, from that. And you know, that's kind of quick summary of where we are.

176

00:35:37.750 --> 00:36:01.430

Simon Woods: where we are there. When we look at how this adds up into overall finances, again, this is data from... unlike the previous data, which is from the benchmark group of 45 orchestras, this is from our Orchestra Statistical Report, which is the big data dive we do every year with data from our members. And so this is 161 orchestras, so it's a bigger... it's a bigger set.

177

00:36:01.430 --> 00:36:03.829

Simon Woods: And you can...

178

00:36:04.170 --> 00:36:17.210

Simon Woods: compare your own organization with the national picture. Boards do have access to the Orchestra Statistical Report, and, you know, there's all sorts of conclusions you can

179

00:36:17.740 --> 00:36:27.930

Simon Woods: draw from this. But again, you know, just the top line, average change in their assets, about 9% positive across the field. Again, Orchestras.

180

00:36:27.930 --> 00:36:38.019

Simon Woods: You know, experiencing a lot of financial stress, but generally speaking, they are finding ways to make it work.

181

00:36:38.570 --> 00:36:52.789

Simon Woods: And it's hard because expenses continue to go up and revenue doesn't easily go up at the same rate. So it's it's extraordinarily challenging. But you know it's it's the results are not all bad news.

182

00:36:53.880 --> 00:37:09.179

Simon Woods: And this last point here, obviously our ability to provide data to the field, is transformed by the potential of AI, although, you know, we know what's going on in AI is kind of...

183

00:37:09.290 --> 00:37:16.990

Simon Woods: you know, extraordinarily scary and problematic for society in many ways. Nonetheless, at the League, we've done a

184

00:37:17.040 --> 00:37:35.169

Simon Woods: pretty, serious sprint around AI in the last... in the last, 9 months or so, and we are... we have a whole new generation of data tools coming out, which Orchestras will be able to make available. Orchestras will be able to make use of in the beginning of next year. That is really, really going to be a game changer, I think.

185

00:37:35.570 --> 00:37:50.670

Simon Woods: The next 2 slides I'm not going to spend too much time on. But basically, I always start off when we do our professional development training. We have a big program called Essentials of Orchestra Management, which is our major professional development program.

186

00:37:50.670 --> 00:38:01.559

Simon Woods: And I always just remind people of the assets we have as a field around the fact that the art form people and the standards and the importance to communities.

187

00:38:01.570 --> 00:38:09.980

Simon Woods: Because it is when we look at the balance side, it can sometimes seem very challenging, but in fact, we have a lot to celebrate.

188

00:38:10.030 --> 00:38:25.939

Simon Woods: And on the challenges side, you know, it's... you know, I always kind of joke that the typeface is a little smaller on this slide, because once you do start to kind of break down, some of these things that orchestras are wrestling with, it seems quite intimidating.

189

00:38:25.940 --> 00:38:41.709

Simon Woods: And, but this is the summary that we use right now as we talk about, you know, what orchestras are facing. And none of this is really significantly different from what every other art form and many other nonprofits are facing, but it's sometimes useful.

190

00:38:41.710 --> 00:38:43.509

Simon Woods: Just to see it on one slide.

191

00:38:44.510 --> 00:39:06.589

Simon Woods: So, we're gonna talk a little bit, just as we, as we kind of wrap up the presentation part of this, we're gonna talk a little bit about the League, tell you a little bit about the League, and David, I'm gonna pass this back to you to... David, having been with this organization for a long time, nobody knows more about the League's history and where we've come from than David, so I'm gonna let him...

192

00:39:06.640 --> 00:39:08.050

Simon Woods: Talk about a few slides here.

193

00:39:08.720 --> 00:39:27.119

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Thank you so much, Simon. Thank you, Doug, for all the information, and I hope that all of you have checked us out at AmericanOrchestras.org. Again, our website has a wealth of free information available about orchestras and to help you with your orchestras. We also have member-only information, and

194

00:39:27.120 --> 00:39:34.420

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: All of you who are orchestra board members are automatically members of the League through your orchestra's membership.

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00:39:34.420 --> 00:39:49.329

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: We just need you to have an account. So if you don't have your account with the League already set up to access the member-only information, please contact members@americanorchestras.org. Again, member@americanorchestras.org.

196

00:39:49.330 --> 00:40:10.320

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Orchestras.org, I'll put that in the chat, as well as, I hope everyone has signed up for Symphony.org. So, we regularly send out information about what's happening in the news about the orchestra field. Anyone can sign up to get those emails at symphony.org.

197

00:40:10.770 --> 00:40:27.050

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: So, again, as Hamid said, I have been at the League a long time, and this is my second time around. I started in 1992 and was there for 7 years when the League was headquartered in Washington, D.C, and then in 1999, the League moved to New York City, where we've been.

198

00:40:27.050 --> 00:40:46.100

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Since, and I came back to the League in 2020, and so it's been a pleasure, now to be back almost as long as I was there the first time around. And as you can see, founded in 1942, we'll be having our 85th anniversary next year. We have 26 full-time staff, plus various contract

199

00:40:46.310 --> 00:41:03.640

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: who are writers, researchers, etc. And although we're headquartered in New York City, with the pandemic, we became a fully virtual, organization, and now have staff members not only in the greater New York City area, but across, the East Coast, and

200

00:41:03.920 --> 00:41:19.649

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Boston area, Rochester, and then, in the Midwest, Detroit, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Milwaukee, and then even Austin and Houston. And two of our long-term staff members are our two lobbyists in Washington, D.C.

201

00:41:19.650 --> 00:41:28.989

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And our current annual budget is around \$7 million. And again, that divides roughly a third from membership dues, a third from earned revenue, and a third fundraised.

202

00:41:30.080 --> 00:41:32.390

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And as I.

203

00:41:32.710 --> 00:41:40.629

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: organization that is striving to lead the orchestra field. We revise our mission and vision.

204

00:41:40.850 --> 00:42:05.299

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: five years ago, where we are truly about championing the vitality of music and the orchestral experience, support the orchestra community, and lead change boldly. So, we are here for you as our member orchestras, but we are also here to help in the broader orchestra field to achieve our vision of a thriving future for orchestras and their communities that celebrates creativity

205

00:42:05.300 --> 00:42:10.089

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Artistry and inclusion and so that mission vision we just

206

00:42:10.090 --> 00:42:15.190

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Reaffirmed with a new strategic framework that we published this past.

207

00:42:16.630 --> 00:42:25.790

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Spring, and yes, the slides will be provided, with the presentation and the recording as well.

208

00:42:26.270 --> 00:42:27.020

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And.

209

00:42:27.020 --> 00:42:48.739

Simon Woods: David, I might just... I might just say here while we... just before we leave mission and vision, I might just say the other thing that we... I didn't say it earlier, but we also are... we view ourselves both as a membership organization. We really, are... and we'll talk about the board in a second. We really take very seriously our responsibility to our members, but we also see ourselves as a leadership organization as well.

210

00:42:48.740 --> 00:42:53.129

Simon Woods: And that sort of, you know, you'll see that kind of showing up here in the mission statement.

211

00:42:53.460 --> 00:42:54.609

Simon Woods: Sorry, David, just...

212

00:42:54.610 --> 00:43:11.819

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Absolutely. And then, as a national nonprofit and trade association, we have our national board of directors. Doug is our immediate past board chair. We have 61 directors right now, again, representing all major regions of the country, and also.

213

00:43:11.820 --> 00:43:21.349

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: The largest subgroup of our League board are board members of other orchestras, and so we provide opportunity for individuals to become

214

00:43:21.350 --> 00:43:45.520

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: more involved on the national level, but we also, have, in addition to orchestra board members, other music business leaders, musicians, conductors, soloists, staff, composers, educators, and then we also make sure that we have clear field representation through several ex-officio board members who represent the CEO groups of those meeting groups Simon mentioned.

215

00:43:45.520 --> 00:43:50.799

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Of of being groups one through eight, our youth orchestras and our volunteer council.

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00:43:53.070 --> 00:43:55.869

Simon Woods: So I think I think it's back to me. Right, David.

217

00:43:56.290 --> 00:44:15.260

Simon Woods: very briefly, just gonna skim through this, just wanna give you an idea of what we do. We bring people together. It's one of... it's the first slide, not accidentally. It's one of the core functions of the League, is to bring people together in conferences, and our midwinter meeting, and through our professional development programs, and our learning programs, and our leadership programs.

218

00:44:15.350 --> 00:44:33.490

Simon Woods: But we also provide a lot of written resources. We're pushing these out all the time. Many of them come out every year. We've got a new one coming out in December, and there's a vast amount of resource on the website. I'm going to come to that in a second.

219

00:44:34.900 --> 00:44:37.999

Simon Woods: We've already touched on DC.

220

00:44:38.000 --> 00:45:01.409

Simon Woods: We are very strong in this area. And in fact, one of the things I think that's very, very important to recognize here is that a lot of the money that, you know, hundreds of million dollars that came to Orchestras during the pandemic actually came through directly through, not even indirectly, directly through our advocacy work in DC with our two fantastic team members there.

221

00:45:01.410 --> 00:45:16.340

Simon Woods: And they're working not only on funding issues, but assistance with visa support and traveling and supporting orchestras in their communities. And it's just — they are 24/7 on the issues that are affecting orchestras.

222

00:45:16.430 --> 00:45:28.150

Simon Woods: And, you know, this is a really interesting data point. I mean, together, with our members, we don't lobby locally. We don't have licenses for that. You need a license to be able to be.

223

00:45:28.290 --> 00:45:47.370

Simon Woods: to do that in every state. We only do that work officially in the federal government, in DC, but we work very closely with you, all your organizations across the country, and through that, we reach 100% of the Senate and 70% of the House of Representatives. So, at this point, we just

224

00:45:47.370 --> 00:45:48.529

Simon Woods: Always say.

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00:45:48.530 --> 00:46:01.190

Simon Woods: Time and time again, the arts are a bipartisan issue. The arts are strongly supported both across the aisles in Congress. We are a nonpartisan organization.

226

00:46:01.190 --> 00:46:09.670

Simon Woods: And, and we work closely with both sides of the house to advance support for the, for our portion of the arts, but in fact, the arts in general.

227

00:46:10.440 --> 00:46:25.799

Simon Woods: This is the new strategic framework which you can find on our website. It's the you know, the the big things we're working on right now are the AI piece which I mentioned, plus a new digital learning program which you'll hear more about later.

228

00:46:25.980 --> 00:46:41.419

Simon Woods: And then lastly, this is our last slide here, this is a website. The website is dense with information, and there are a couple of different ways in which you can access it. One, you'll see top right, there's the traditional search bar.

229

00:46:41.420 --> 00:47:05.379

Simon Woods: But also, I want to point out this little thing we've introduced bottom right. This is... we just introduced this, like, a matter of weeks ago. This is an AI-based search function where you can ask questions, and you can get answers, and you can be pointed to resources. You can, source different... you can get at different sources of data there. We're still refining it, but it's working very nicely, and it's a

230

00:47:05.430 --> 00:47:18.310

Simon Woods: huge improvement, because one of the things that people have always had a problem with with the League's website is, there's just such a vast amount of content there that it can be difficult to find it. Well, it just got a lot easier. So hope you enjoy

231

00:47:18.310 --> 00:47:33.089

Simon Woods: playing with that. And again, to emphasize, you know, as we kind of wrap up the slides here, just to emphasize where we started with, which is we are always here for you. You can call any

of us, and you can call different departments, you can be in touch with us by email or through Member Services.

232

00:47:33.090 --> 00:47:44.119

Simon Woods: And we will always be here to support the people of the field, which is such an incredibly important part of our mission. We don't only support the institutions, we support the people, including all those of you on this call.

233

00:47:44.190 --> 00:47:51.870

Simon Woods: who Are exceptionally, you know, dedicated to your organizations.

234

00:47:52.780 --> 00:48:02.699

Simon Woods: So I think that's it. And we've got time to address any, any comments or questions.

235

00:48:05.420 --> 00:48:10.469

Simon Woods: And yes, you will be getting that. You will. David, we're going to send out the slides to everybody.

236

00:48:10.770 --> 00:48:17.990

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: So, everyone will receive a copy of the slides, the recording, and a transcript, probably later this week.

237

00:48:19.200 --> 00:48:19.900

Simon Woods: Great.

238

00:48:20.860 --> 00:48:25.440

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And also, you'll be able to Up.

239

00:48:25.450 --> 00:48:50.180

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Brian Kim, be able to access this, and again, this is our third time around doing this over the past several months, and so, we look forward to continuing to provide this information, for you and for any of your board members. As Doug mentioned, feel free to share this information with anyone on your board. And, if you need to determine that your organization is a member, again, please contact our member services at

240

00:48:50.180 --> 00:48:59.840

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: member@americanorchestras.org and they can help you know whether your organization is a member or not and answer any questions you have as well.

241

00:49:03.690 --> 00:49:06.259

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Are there questions that anyone has?

242

00:49:08.620 --> 00:49:16.900

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Or anything anyone would like to share about their own governance, either celebrations or challenges, that you may...

243

00:49:17.260 --> 00:49:18.630

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Have.

244

00:49:19.650 --> 00:49:36.429

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: We do have a lot of resources on fundraising and development, and I'll put in the chat the website, where we list those resources. We just did a wonderful webinar, with the Indiana University, School of Philanthropy last month on.

245

00:49:36.430 --> 00:49:51.309

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: current trends in fundraising, and so we have a lot of materials and a very active constituency group for development directors, but, yes, would be happy to help with any fundraising or development issues that anyone has. And we also

246

00:49:51.380 --> 00:49:56.750

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: fairly regularly do webinars, and also have sessions at our national conference. So I've

247

00:49:56.980 --> 00:50:03.039

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: do recommend that you put on your calendars June 2nd through 4th in Atlanta next year.

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00:50:03.040 --> 00:50:17.749

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: And we, started this year a special orchestra board member forum, which we're planning to continue next year. So specifically on Wednesday, June the 2nd, that's the most important day. If you can't come to all three days of the conference.

249

00:50:17.750 --> 00:50:38.530

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: If you can be there on Wednesday, June the 2nd, with your fellow board members, that would be wonderful. And just as you're planning into the future, next year's conference in 2028 will be in Chicago, June 21st through 23rd. So we'd love to see you in Atlanta in 2027, and in Chicago in 2028.

250

00:50:38.530 --> 00:50:43.300

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: I see a question came in through the chat.

251

00:50:44.800 --> 00:50:49.989

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: About, the current federal administration is actually cutting.

252

00:50:50.710 --> 00:50:55.520

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: EDI, how do we counteract that?

253

00:50:56.410 --> 00:51:09.769

Simon Woods: Well, let me just say something about that. I also want to just make a comment about... somebody's put in the chat here a comment, given the talk about exclusion earlier, it would be nice to hear from a woman leader and people of color in this talk, and

254

00:51:09.780 --> 00:51:24.669

Simon Woods: Like, thank you for calling us on that, because you're absolutely right. And what I will say is that, we work extremely, extremely hard on diversity representation in everything we do.

255

00:51:24.750 --> 00:51:31.040

Simon Woods: And if you see our webinars in general, you see the content of our.

256

00:51:31.040 --> 00:51:32.260

Doug Hagerman: Composition.

257

00:51:32.820 --> 00:51:55.139

Simon Woods: our own board composition, which is extremely diverse. Our staff is diverse and highly diverse on gender as well. So we are deeply committed to this work. You're frankly right to call us on it. But what you're seeing here is that it just so happens that in this particular

258

00:51:55.140 --> 00:51:58.790

Simon Woods: In this particular webinar,

259

00:51:58.930 --> 00:52:15.889

Simon Woods: we are the people who have... who are most connected to the... to the... to the, information and the content that is right for this context. And don't say that to excuse it, but it's just a fact. But I hope that if you engage with, engage.

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00:52:16.000 --> 00:52:19.930

Simon Woods: With us in the future, you'll see how hard we work on that in general.

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00:52:23.370 --> 00:52:23.950

Simon Woods: So.

262

00:52:23.950 --> 00:52:24.670

Doug Hagerman: so.

263

00:52:24.820 --> 00:52:27.939

Simon Woods: Federal government. Do you want to address that, Doug, or do you want me to touch on that?

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00:52:27.940 --> 00:52:33.270

Doug Hagerman: Yeah, I mean, I guess I would just say that,

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00:52:33.390 --> 00:52:39.630

Doug Hagerman: You know, the orchestra community is not of one mind with regard to.

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00:52:39.830 --> 00:52:56.949

Doug Hagerman: you know, the administration's position on all this, and we... we have a Big Ten approach to this. I think that, we've taken the view that, We want access to the broadest range of talent in our field.

267

00:52:57.100 --> 00:53:05.059

Doug Hagerman: And, if... if we can do things that give people access to a chance to compete.

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00:53:05.250 --> 00:53:08.599

Doug Hagerman: And win positions in orchestras, that that's...

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00:53:08.970 --> 00:53:16.620

Doug Hagerman: that that's a good thing, and it's not particularly political. It's, you know...

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00:53:16.740 --> 00:53:34.459

Doug Hagerman: We as individuals can translate that into political positions, but in our case, as a League, it's really just about those five reasons why this work is important to us. We need authentic relationships with communities.

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00:53:34.460 --> 00:53:37.669

Doug Hagerman: We need the broadest range of talent, and so on.

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00:53:37.960 --> 00:53:43.719

Doug Hagerman: I see a question about the role of the board chair, if I may just tackle that, having been

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00:53:44.260 --> 00:53:54.109

Doug Hagerman: both an orchestra board chair and a... and the League board chair. I... you know, there... it's difficult to summarize the essence of it, but

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00:53:54.110 --> 00:54:05.820

Doug Hagerman: You know, there's a few keys to success in the job. One is to manage the board dynamics so that the board feels engaged, and everyone on the board contributes to their optimum extent.

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00:54:06.060 --> 00:54:12.300

Doug Hagerman: That's one thing. Secondly, I think the board chair has to take a lot of responsibility for building a strong board.

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00:54:12.690 --> 00:54:15.290

Doug Hagerman: Third,

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00:54:15.500 --> 00:54:28.820

Doug Hagerman: the board chair has to take a key leading role in, kind of... I'm gonna use the word supervising, but it's really not a fair word. Supervising the CEO in the sense of

278

00:54:28.870 --> 00:54:46.080

Doug Hagerman: scott schnelland: being their partner, helping them with the things they're wrestling with, guiding their decision-making on tough calls, again, while still staying in your lane, right? If Simon is... if I'm the board chair and Simon's the CEO of our organization.

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00:54:46.330 --> 00:54:51.860

Doug Hagerman: He knows 20 times as much about what makes a successful concert as I do.

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00:54:52.260 --> 00:54:55.540

Doug Hagerman: But that doesn't mean that we're not going to talk about

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00:54:55.960 --> 00:55:14.280

Doug Hagerman: successful concerts in our interactions and our regular meetings that we're going to have between us. So, you know, I think those are some of the big areas. Another is making sure you have the right committee chairs so that you don't have to

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00:55:14.280 --> 00:55:26.159

Doug Hagerman: run the finances and the development and the other aspects of the board yourself. Instead, you have room for other board leaders to make those things happen. One thing I do want to say is that

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00:55:26.170 --> 00:55:35.120

Doug Hagerman: as... as board chair of my orchestra for 4 years, I didn't on a single occasion of.

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00:55:35.270 --> 00:55:50.489

Doug Hagerman: Suggest repertoire. I didn't on a single occasion suggest that we, play a particular type of concert. Those are the areas where you need to stay in your lane. But the organizational health is a big deal.

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00:55:50.720 --> 00:56:06.070

Doug Hagerman: sbelzak: So, that's how I view the role of the board chair, and a lot of it's in the slides we covered. You know, attending to all those constituencies, attending to all those collective responsibilities of the board, that's a big deal.

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00:56:06.930 --> 00:56:08.880

Doug Hagerman: So I'm... I'm gonna stop there, but...

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00:56:09.020 --> 00:56:21.269

Doug Hagerman: There's a lot to being the board chair, and there are some great resources on the role of the board chair, both on our website and on an organization I'm kind of a fan of called Board Source.

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00:56:21.550 --> 00:56:25.050

Doug Hagerman: A lot of that is dealt with in great detail there.

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00:56:26.900 --> 00:56:46.890

Simon Woods: Doug, let me say a couple of things about things that have cropped up here in the chat. Do you facilitate contacts between board members of different orchestras? We have, the, opportunity for you to be connected with other board members online. David can provide, maybe, how to do that, and also we have the board forum and conference, which we highly recommend.

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00:56:46.890 --> 00:56:58.869

Simon Woods: But really the most on a specific issue like community involvement, the place to start would be with your executive director or your education director, depending on the size of your organization.

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00:56:58.870 --> 00:57:16.019

Simon Woods: And, because they have access to the network, they have access to all their peers in their similar budget orchestras, and they would be the best route. So it's either through the board constituency or it's through your other

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00:57:16.210 --> 00:57:19.879

Simon Woods: your key staff members.

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00:57:21.310 --> 00:57:31.440

Simon Woods: Might just mention this thing, discussion on, you know, whether it's appropriate for all orchestras to have musicians on their board. I mean, I think, you know.

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00:57:31.440 --> 00:57:43.429

Simon Woods: we never tell... generally, we never tell orchestras what to do. Every decision an orchestra makes is a personal one, related to its own circumstances. In general, I think Doug and I would say, philosophically.

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00:57:43.440 --> 00:57:45.919

Simon Woods: The artist should be at the table somehow.

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00:57:46.300 --> 00:57:59.899

Simon Woods: And there are many different ways, of doing that, which just go from just having a part-time observer, or, you know, non-ex-officio observer, right up to having full voting board members. You've got to decide what is right.

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00:57:59.900 --> 00:58:11.709

Simon Woods: I think I continue to think that there's no reason why all boards shouldn't benefit from having the richness of perspective of having the musicians in the board, but that's... it's a personal choice.

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00:58:14.290 --> 00:58:16.200

Simon Woods: Let's see what else we've got here...

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00:58:16.510 --> 00:58:31.819

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Just add that, the question about having mentors guide new board members, absolutely. Board buddies are a concept that's been around for many years, so absolutely, as you bring on new board members, certainly having them mentored by.

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00:58:31.820 --> 00:58:50.169

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: tenured board member, and maybe helping them get connected to the League. So, hopefully you have some champions on your board about, connecting with the National Orchestra Field through the League, and help them, educate new board members about the resources that the League has to offer as well.

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00:58:51.160 --> 00:59:07.240

Simon Woods: I'd like to just comment on... somebody's put here this, you know, good comment. I'm not a fan of DEI as a driving practice, but in the real world, it does make market sense. You know, how do we find focus on marketing and support while avoiding political hot buttons? You know, I think that... that...

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00:59:07.270 --> 00:59:17.670

Simon Woods: The market point I always want to remind everybody is that the data point is by 2045, this country is a majority minority country.

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00:59:17.670 --> 00:59:39.469

Simon Woods: And so, the degree to which we spend time focusing on the implication for our organizations, it does matter. The representation of who we put on stage, and how we represent communities, and how we include people, it does matter, and it will matter for future donations and for future ticket sales. You just can't avoid that.

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00:59:39.540 --> 00:59:55.839

Simon Woods: The actual, how do we avoid the political hot buttons? That's, of course, something that we've talked about endlessly. It's a matter for individual organizations to consult with their attorneys on.

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00:59:55.840 --> 01:00:10.820

Simon Woods: And we never give a legal advice, but in general, I would say, I, you know, I feel... I continue to feel very encouraged to the degree to which our field does support, inclusion, because they know it's both a kind of business and a moral

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01:00:10.820 --> 01:00:28.140

Simon Woods: imperative. But has there been a lot of rethinking in the last few years about the language and the way that is talked about and approached? Yes, there has. But I think the underlying commitment, I still feel, is there.

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01:00:29.070 --> 01:00:29.720

Simon Woods: I hope that's a help.

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01:00:29.720 --> 01:00:36.960

Doug Hagerman: Yeah. I mean, selling tickets and, attracting patrons, and...

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01:00:37.180 --> 01:00:49.090

Doug Hagerman: Helping the bottom line, first and foremost, is about great events. Beautiful performances, fun activities, service to the community, and none of that's very political.

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01:00:51.840 --> 01:01:09.489

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: The question about youth musicians on your board, nonprofit governance actually resides at the state level, and so as long as there is no laws at your state level that would prevent a youth, and it depends on how you define youth.

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01:01:09.490 --> 01:01:28.260

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Sometimes 18 certainly is considered an adult, and so I think any youth orchestra board musician 18 or older certainly could potentially serve on the board. Some states may define it at 16, but double check with your state on whether or not they have a

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01:01:28.380 --> 01:01:37.179

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Age floor for board members, and there should be an opportunity, to have a youth musician on your board as well.

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01:01:41.050 --> 01:01:46.560

Doug Hagerman: I see Anne's question about, are there mentoring offerings for board members of a new orchestra?

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01:01:46.820 --> 01:02:03.370

Doug Hagerman: I'm not sure I've heard that question before. Do we have something on that? I mean, I think all of our resources would be relevant to a new orchestra, and could be applied in that context, hopefully. Anything in particular about startup orchestras? I'm not sure.

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01:02:04.130 --> 01:02:05.730

Simon Woods: I mean, so...

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01:02:06.060 --> 01:02:29.540

Simon Woods: startup boards are very different boards, very different to mature boards. I mean, it's a completely... it's a completely different thing. I mean, if you'd like to have a conversation about that, happy to, Anne-Louise, I'm happy to chat with you about that. If you feel like reaching out to me directly, I'm happy to chat. I've actually got a couple of slides about, from another

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01:02:29.850 --> 01:02:43.479

Simon Woods: session that I taught about about the different phases that boards go through, and how what's the difference between a new board and a mature board and a boarding crisis. And so it's very interesting subject. So be happy to chat with you about it. If you feel like reaching out.

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01:02:46.470 --> 01:03:11.449

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Top of the hour. Thank you all for being with us today. Again, this is the beginning of conversations for any of you who are new to the League and new to your Orchestras Board. We're excited to get to know you. And again, as Simon said, please reach out to us if we can be of assistance. Again, I want to thank Simon and Doug for their presentation today. And again, we will be selling

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01:03:11.450 --> 01:03:17.350

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: We'll be sending the information to you later this week.

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01:03:17.350 --> 01:03:22.479

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: We also would appreciate your completing the evaluation form, the link of which you'll see when you...

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01:03:22.500 --> 01:03:33.509

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Exit, or in the follow-up email, as we, again, this is our third opportunity for sending this information, and we value your input to improve it each time we do it.

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01:03:33.590 --> 01:03:50.359

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: We do offer digital learning opportunities about every month, and so our next one will be a workshop on opening doors and making the concert experience accessible for all, particularly looking at accessibility issues, and this will be on Tuesday, November the 17th.

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01:03:50.360 --> 01:04:01.710

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: from 1.30 to 4 p.m. Eastern. Again, please reach out to us if we can ever be of assistance, and thank you again, Simon and Doug, and all of you for being with us today.

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01:04:02.340 --> 01:04:09.239

Simon Woods: Thank you all for joining with us, and thank you all for you do for your orchestras and music in your community. That's the most important thing.

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01:04:09.670 --> 01:04:12.009

Simon Woods: Best wishes to everybody. Thanks.

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01:04:12.370 --> 01:04:13.860

David Styers, League of American Orchestras: Have a good week. Bye-bye.