



Orchestras Canada/Orchestres Canada
Professional and Leadership Development Research Project
Final Report, April 26, 2010

By Angela Birdsell and Catherine Smalley

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Background

While OC has, over a period of many years, endeavoured to offer professional development to members through workshops, national conferences, newsletters and publications, the effectiveness of its work in this area has been spotty, hampered both by an inconsistent approach and funding instability.

In 2008, OC unveiled a three-year plan that specifically committed the organization to progress in two strategic areas: advocacy for Canadian orchestras and leadership development for current and future orchestra managers. OC opted to focus on management development specifically because its consultations and experience told it that where a strong, capable and well-supported CEO is in place, boards function better, community engagement flourishes and the artform is well-served.

In Year One of the plan (2008-09) efforts were focused on strengthening advocacy work. In 2010 OC began some fundamental work in the area of professional and leadership development of managers. Two consultants (Angela Birdsell and Catherine Smalley) were engaged to do the research necessary to help OC answer the following questions:

- What kinds of leadership and professional development opportunities might (current and future) management professionals with Canadian orchestras require?
- What are the existing opportunities for leadership/professional development? Where are the gaps? What are the barriers?
- What role in leadership/professional development might Orchestras Canada best play on its own? in partnership with other Arts Service Organizations, institutions of higher learning, other partners?

OC recruited a Leadership and Professional development Task Force, made up of individuals familiar with the issues in the community and committed to leading change. This group worked with OC's Executive Director and the consultants to advise on the research plan, and will shape implementation recommendations to the OC board of directors.

Methodology

This research phase of the project took place between January and March, 2010. It included:

- electronic surveying of OC members
- in-depth interviews with key informants within and outside OC, who could provide useful opinions and perspectives
- a context of recent relevant reports and research

Survey Highlights

1. Survey Distribution

The survey link was distributed by OC to 216 orchestra administrators across Canada in a variety of positions, in English and French.

	EN	FR	TOTAL
Sample	155	61	216
Respondents	(29%) 44	(28%) 17	(28%) 61
Completed all Qs	35	9	44

2. Who Responded?

2.1 Demographics

Female	71%	78%	74%
Male	29%	22%	28%
age 51-60 yrs	39%	44%	41%
41-50	24%	11%	21%
31-40	9%	33%	15%
25-30	18%	0%	15%

2.2 Current Role in the Orchestra

Ex Dir/Gen Mgr/Dir General	38%
marketing	11%
dir of operations or touring	11%
artistic	9%
personnel	9%

- “other” positions included: administration (3), education (1), customer relations (1), production (1), and board liaison (1)

2.3 Years in Current Role

< 1 yr	22%
1-2 yrs	14%
2-3 yrs	24%
3-5 yrs	7%
5-10 yrs	22%
> 20 yrs	10%

- 60% of respondents have been in their current roles for less than 3 years

3. The Orchestras

Budget >\$5 M	23%
\$500-1 M	22%
\$1-3 M	20%
\$3-5 M	18%

- 92 % have been in operation for more than 20 years
- 58 % are evenly distributed between Ontario and Quebec; 17% in BC; 15% in Alberta
- 48% of respondents report their orchestra has a budget for professional development; 37% say no; 15% are unsure
- 17% of respondents say their orchestra does have internal professional development programs: staff meetings, retreats, planning sessions, technical training such as internal phone or computer systems, budgeting, marketing
- 71% of respondents say their orchestra does not have internal professional development programs; 12% are unsure

4. Training and First Point of Entry to the Orchestra

undergraduate degree	63%
postgraduate degree	34%
fine arts or conservatory	25%

“Other” training included: management courses (3), production/technical training (3), music performance (2)

entry as a manager	35%
in a staff position	31%
as a musician	21%

5. Determining the Need for Professional Development

5.1 Identifying Their Own Professional Development Needs

they become clear to me as I do my job	57%
through reading or research in my field	18%
in discussion with my peers	14%
all of the above	8%
in discussion with employer or performance review	4%

5.2 Identifying the Professional Development Needs of Others

through supervision or performance review	30%
they self-identify and discuss with me	38%
both	19%

- 76% of respondents said that they had supervisory responsibilities in the orchestra
- they are significantly more likely to use supervision or performance review with others (30%), than their employers do with them (4%)

6. Most Important Professional Development Needs

Answers for 6.1 and 6.2 were written by respondents (not multiple choice). All lists are descending in importance, by the number of times the topic was mentioned.

6.1 Most Important **Individual** Professional Development Needs

General Knowledge - 84%

Collective bargaining and agreements (11)
Economic and social trends (7)
Peer and industry information, best practices (6)
Orchestral music (6)
Political trends (4)
Taxes, adapting to change, communications

Technical or Specific Skills – 56%

New technologies in general (9)
Marketing, fundraising (9)
New media (5)
Accounting, second language training (2)
Box office, Computer assisted design, all of the above

Management Skills – 63%

Communications, HR (7)
Interpersonal skills (4)
Leadership, all of the above (5)
Planning, Board relations (2)
Negotiation, time management, facilitation, peer relations with other orchestras, legal issues, self sufficiency, archive management

6.2 Most Important **Community** Professional Development Needs

General Knowledge - 76%

Social and political trends (7)

Better ways to network, share best practices, identify prof. development needs (6)

Economic trends (6)

Fundraising, collective agreements, communication, taxes (4)

Marketing (3)

Innovation, understanding of changing tastes of the public, orchestral music, cultural and business management skills

Technical or Specific Skills – 62%

Marketing (9)

Fundraising (8)

New technology (6)

Keeping staff skills upgraded (3)

Music education as audience development, budgeting, programming, accounting / finance

Management Skills – 62%

Communications (7)

Board management (7)

Time management (4)

Interpersonal skills, HR (3)

Organizational balance,

Sales, team building, project management, building self-sufficiency

7. Sources of Professional Development

7.1 Awareness of Professional Development Sources

- 72% of respondents are aware of relevant professional development programs **in their region**
- 74% of respondents are aware of relevant professional development programs **outside their region**

7.2 Types of Professional Development

	Inside Region	Outside Region
skill specific	92%	91%
web-based	58%	38%
part-time post graduate	46%	24%
undergraduate	56%	33%
coaching/mentoring	43%	53%
peer to peer	34%	41%

- both inside and outside the region, respondents are most aware of skill specific professional development programs

7.3 Professional Development Providers

	Inside R	Outside R
University	68%	25%
Community College	45%	23%
other not-for-profits	45%	25%
tutor, coach	38%	15%
other arts organizations	30%	30%
Chamber of Commerce	36%	2%
OC special program	18%	30%
conservatory	18%	10%
fundors	15%	2%
League of American Orchestras	5%	53%
OC AGM	10%	53%

- inside the region, universities are most recognized as providers, followed by community colleges and other not-for-profit organizations
- outside the region, Orchestras Canada and the League of American Orchestras are top of mind as professional development providers, followed by other arts organizations and OC special programs

7.4 Professional Development Programs or Events Not Readily Available

13 respondents answered this question.

- coaching/mentoring, funded internships (3)
- there are enough programs out there; good arts management and charitable sector training is available (3)
- funding for professional development (2)
- peer to peer meetings, sharing best practices (2)
- job exchange
- advocacy
- engagement with/education of a culturally diverse audience
- learning French by podcast
- courses and programs for those just starting out
- fundraising
- documents and articles of best practice to forward to my Board

8. Professional Development Experiences

- 56% of respondents report having attended a professional development or leadership training course while in their current position

8.1 Types of Professional Development Programs Attended

	total
other not-for-profit	41%
OC AGM	33%
other arts org	30%
skill specific	36%
League of American Orchestras	22%
OC special program	22%
For profit	24%
web based	16%
coaching/mentoring	11%
own organization's program	6%
Community College	6%
post graduate	11%
conservatory	6%
funder initiated	6%

8.2 Best Professional Development Experience

29 respondents answered this question.

- OC program on marketing, OC AGM, the annual personnel manager's conference, League Essentials of Orchestra Management, peer to peer discussion (9)
- Hands-on, practical experience can't be surpassed; on-the-job training (5)
- Being mentored (2)
- Working with a specialist consultant in a group setting, so there is discussion and both individual and institutional learning
- 360-degree peer review
- webinar with teleconference: able to see the materials and ask questions
- pursuing an MBA allowed me to develop skills in many areas that I would not previously have considered relevant
- undergraduate degree
- Banff production program
- Coaching
- York U voluntary sector certificate: one year, high level discussion, learning was immediately applicable to workplace, did program while working (no longer exists)
- Computer programming and web development

- Stanford Graduate School Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders: fantastic 2-week program, perfect balance of reading, instruction, discussion and informal connections
- Association of Fundraising Professionals: good information and networking
- Jerry Yoshitomi: fabulous facilitator, branding and value added activities around performances, marketing and fundraising
- At Bell, they implemented targeted, short term training sessions, with follow up by the trainer, that allowed exchange and clarification of the application of the training. Exchange among participants also helped us share best and worst practices.
- Mentoring – work is more targeted and demanding. Good results.
- Management seminars at HEC, because they allowed us to quickly situate ourselves within the business world, management and the work of orchestral management. However, HEC should provide training solely in arts management for those who come from the business world.... a better understanding of these two ‘worlds’ would greatly improve management and governance in the artistic milieu
- A course: “How to negotiate a collective agreement” given by lawyers. The course was very practical and permitted an immediate application of the knowledge gained.
- Project management.

8.3 Reasons for Not Participating in Professional Development

	total
Organization can't afford it	68%
I have no time	68%
I can't afford it	40%
Organization doesn't encourage it	20%
not sure what's available	24%
no peer group	16%
not sure it's worth it	12%

9. Leadership

9.1 Leadership Development as a Strategic Priority

- 92% of respondents agree that this should be a strategic priority for OC

9.2 Defining Leadership (and the skills and knowledge it might encompass)

34 respondents answered this question:

- ability to motivate, inspire, support others (14)
- strategic thinking, flexible thinking, innovative (12)
- credibility, experience and knowledge specific to orchestra field (7)
- communication and listening skills (6)
- providing guidance, coordination and facilitation (6)
- anticipating future needs (5)

- establish a harmonious environment with people working to the same goals, build consensus (5)
- establish and manage based on a vision (3)
- setting high standards by example (3)
- technical and management skills (3)
- managing relationship between Board and staff (2)
- establish performance indicators, evaluation skills (2)
- ability to make difficult decisions
- calm, assertive
- an advocate
- how to function in an under-resourced environment
- HR management

“Leadership is about capacity: the capacity of leaders to listen and observe, to use their expertise as a starting point to encourage dialogue between all levels of decision-making, to establish processes and transparency in decision-making, to articulate their own values and visions clearly but not impose them. Leadership is about setting and not just reacting to agendas, identifying problems, and initiating change that makes for substantial improvement rather than managing change.” A.M. McSwain, Assistant Professor, Lincoln University

“The ability to really understand the organization and the environment in which it works. The ability to foresee what must be nurtured, changed, started, deconstructed, etc. in order for the organization to thrive. The ability to motivate people to embrace a set of goals and move the organization forward.”

“Leadership is the natural ability to recognize and foster talent, in order to bring out the best in the people one works with. Leaders are visionaries, they are realists, they are well informed and open to working synergistically with different aspects of their environment, whether economic, artistic, demographic, etc. Leaders must also have the power to make decisions, and the ability to exercise this power. These days, there are very few true leaders, because most find it difficult or are afraid to make real decisions. One must carry out studies and consultations, but there comes a time when decisions have to be made. I believe this is very important if we are to grow as a company.”

10. Orchestras Canada

10.1 What are the Most Important Things OC Could Do to Advance Strong and Effective Management Practices for Orchestras in Canada?

Average Rating

(higher number = stronger vote)

	EN	FR
Create regional Professional Development lobby funders for \$	2.41	2
work with other orgs	2.35	2.4
secure its own funds	2.27	2.1
share Professional Development information	2.27	2.3
encourage orchestras to make Professional Development a priority		

- both categories ranked “lobby funders” and “work with other organizations” as a high priority; “share professional development information” was also considered important

10.2 Interested in Continuing the Professional Development Conversation within OC

- 16 individuals included their names and numbers, and expressed interest in participating in further discussions on this subject

A Note on Survey Analysis

For some questions the survey data was sorted to compare the answers of respondents in different categories, such as age, position, or size of orchestra. Because of the number of respondents overall, and because not every respondent completed every question, these categories were small - too small to draw any definitive conclusions.

In some cases, the results were not surprising. For example, younger respondents were much more likely than senior managers to say they were not sure whether their orchestra had a professional development budget, or internal training programs.

However, some interesting differences were noted between managers responding in English and those responding in French. For example, senior managers responding in English were much more likely to report fine arts or conservatory training, and more likely to report entry to the orchestral world as a musician. Senior managers responding in French were significantly more likely to report having an MBA. Senior managers responding in French also indicated much higher usage of coaching/mentoring and post graduate programs. But is this information really representative of the field? Tempting as it may be to speculate about the possible reasons for these differences, or what significance they might have for this discussion, additional research must first be done with a larger respondent group to verify the results.

The Interviews

Key informants for the interview portion of the study included thirteen individuals from the orchestral industry sector including:

- Seven orchestra managers; six from a sampling of large, mid-sized and regional orchestras across Canada, and one from a large orchestra in the U.S.,
- One Music Director from a Canadian orchestra
- One Chairman of the Board of a Canadian orchestra
- Four representatives of funders or industry associations, including the Canada Council for the Arts (two representatives were interviewed jointly), the Association of British Orchestras and the League of American Orchestras

Background of Interviewees

Managers (7)

Almost all managers interviewed have worked in arts management for the entirety of their careers, beginning for some, as early as secondary school or university where they worked in backstage roles, directing musical theatre, as ushers, part-time box office clerks and concert organizers or took on challenging administrative tasks such as tour management and concert production in summer or as part time jobs.

This group consists of individuals with between 15 and 35 years of experience in management roles. For the majority, orchestral management constitutes the bulk of that experience. Two interviewees have managed an orchestra for five years or less.

The vast majority (6) had professional or post-secondary training in music in an orchestral instrument, or in composition, piano or voice.

The points of entry to the orchestra for the managers were in junior or senior management roles;

- As General Manager (4)
 - These were in mid-sized orchestras¹
- As Director of Operations of a mid-sized orchestra
- In a junior management role with a mid-sized regional orchestra, directly out of University
- As a manager of a youth orchestra affiliated with a large orchestra

¹ In the Orchestras Canada Comparative Report, the following categories are used: a small orchestra has an operating budget up to \$1 million, a mid-sized orchestra has a budget between \$1 - \$5 million, a large orchestra has a budget of \$5 million or greater.

Some managers entered the field as GM and subsequently left to take on an executive function in a department of a large orchestra, or to work as GM of another type of organization, before returning to an orchestra as GM.

Remaining Key Informants (6)

The conductor interviewed has conducted with Canadian professional orchestras at various pivotal and critical junctures in their histories, and has worked closely with GMs, Boards, musicians and stakeholders through a series of organizational challenges. The Board Chair is a well known community leader who also mentors managers and teaches management seminars in the private and non-profit sectors.

One industry association leader came to the orchestral industry association following work in a theatre-based industry association. One has training in arts education and experience as a senior administrator, and the backgrounds of the remaining two are music performance, conducting, senior experience with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and as public arts funders.

Comments from Key Informants Regarding their Background and Training

“When, sometime in high school I first heard ‘arts’ and ‘management’ in the same sentence, I was hooked. I studied music because I thought it would give me the background I needed to manage a music organization.”

“I have always worked as a musician or an arts manager.”

“I trained as a musician and moved straight into managing a small orchestra on graduation. I always enjoyed raising funds, promoting concerts, selling tickets, from very early on.”

“I trained as a musician, switched instruments, did NYO, did backstage tech work, then worked as house manager of COC, and also did sound recording tech work on the side. In summers I did backstage work for up to five or six organizations, played in a regional symphony, managed a youth orchestra, did grant applications, booked artists, managed wind ensembles – all before graduating...”

“I first attended an American school at the age of 15 and saw that arts mattered very little in America. That is where my passion for arts education began – I wanted to make arts education matter more.”

“As a child I attended a dress rehearsal of an orchestra for 25¢. I was overwhelmed by the sound of the orchestra.”

#1. What kinds of leadership and professional development opportunities might (current and future) management professionals with Canadian Orchestras require?

- A) One series of questions asked the key informants how they learned to be an orchestra manager, and to identify types of professional development opportunities that were useful to them over the course of their career. They were also asked to identify gaps in their own training.
- B) Another series of questions asked the key informants to identify the primary leadership, knowledge and skill requirements of the job of orchestra manager and to include trends which they could identify overall in the leadership and skills requirements within the field of senior orchestra management.

A) How I Learned To Be An Orchestra Manager

a. On the Job

Job experience was cited by 100% of managers as the primary and in most cases, the *only* means of training for their role. On the job training was cited by other industry representatives as the principal means of training for today's senior orchestra managers. In the words of one:

“to learn in an environment with the smartest people I could be working with – to be challenged but rewarded through the job experience, in an environment where senior people are sharing with one another, where you can ask reasonably smart questions, to not be doing the same thing from one day to the next – this is an environment of inspiration and challenge.”

b. Courses / Seminars / Formal Training

- i. Workshops & Seminars: (4) Workshops were cited as important for providing knowledge of subjects that are orchestra, or cultural sector specific. Individuals cited Association of Canadian Orchestras (ACO) / OC, The League of American Orchestras, Banff School of Fine Arts as places where they received this type of training.
- ii. Courses: (3) Some managers indicated that at certain points in their career they participated in skills training locally at community colleges or other institutions. Subject matters identified were typing, marketing, accounting, HR management, fundraising, IT, contract negotiation, language training.

- iii. In-depth training: (1) One interviewee participated in the Income Managers' Program² with support from (former) ACO, and indicated that it marked a turning point in their career. The Income Managers' Program was mentioned by four individuals interviewed as an important and unique training program in Canada.

c. Degrees / Training in Management

Two managers have MBAs, one holds a PhD, and two other managers are contemplating post graduate degrees in management. One manager (who does not have a management degree) stated that some kind of training in administration, or an MBA, is essential. It creates a management discipline, in which one learns how to ask the tough questions, analyze the organization's capabilities and transcend the *status quo*, or "look at the sacred cows" as it was expressed.

d. Degree / Post-Secondary Training in Music

Six of the seven managers have post-secondary or advanced training in music. At least ten of the thirteen key informants have post-secondary training or advanced training in music or music education. The majority expressed the belief that in-depth knowledge and/or appreciation of music is critical to success as an orchestra manager.

e. Mentoring

Virtually all managers spoke glowingly of an individual who at some point in their career, or even over the course of their entire career, has acted as a mentor or coach. Mentors included direct supervisors, Board Chairs or former Board executives, senior executives from large companies, professional coaches, or consultants from the sector. At least one manager is currently acting in a formalized mentorship role with a young professional from a different sector.

² A one-year intensive program offered by Genovese and Vanderhoof in partnership with a sponsor organization (most recently, the Cultural Careers Council of Ontario) that included course work supplemented with internships with arts organizations. The program focused on marketing, fundraising and sales. The program was not funded in 2009-10. For 2010-11, CCCO is applying to HRSDC for funding for an 8 month program that includes 3 one-day learning intensives (one day each at the beginning, middle and end) along with an internship placement.

What Training Could Have Helped Me Along the Way?

The key informants were more prone to describe the multiple leadership and skill requirements of the job of managing an orchestra (described below), how those skills are learned (or speculated whether they are indeed teachable) rather than identify gaps in their own training. This could be attributed to the average years of experience (19 – 35 years) of over 70 % of the sample group of managers.

One manager indicated a ‘complete’ lack of preparedness for the **fundraising** requirements of the role, a skill that has taken a number of years to develop and master, through working on the job.

B) Key Attributes, Knowledge and Skills of an Orchestra Manager

Key informants were asked to identify the primary leadership, knowledge and skill requirements of the job of orchestra manager. This section groups the responses thematically, indicating in parentheses the number of respondents who cited the attribute. Some outlying responses are also identified; along with a selection of supporting comments from the respondents (paraphrased from the notes).

“In this work you have to have an irrational commitment to the value of the art form or you won’t survive. You have to be musically literate and literate in the industry. You have to have the business discipline. You have to be a manager. Some of that is taught, some not. The challenge is the physical energy that is required. You have to have a positive attitude. You are a bumblebee with a brick on its back.”

“You have to be a manager. I don’t think that can be taught.”

Key Attributes (Management Skills)

- **Leadership**

Key informants spoke passionately about the leadership requirements of a successful orchestra manager, with varying traits attributed to the notion of leadership.

Management of the Board (6 respondents)

“Managing the Board is 40% of what the orchestra manager does.”

“Governance is everything. How well the GM works with the Board Chair continues to be a critical success factor in Canadian orchestras. Together they plot Board development, succession, and are always working on the strategic plan.”

“Managing a Board is all three – a leadership trait, a skill and something that requires knowledge of people and of the community.”

“The GM manages the organization, the Chair manages the Board.”

Managing People / Diversity (6 respondents)

“Exercise complete and full delegation and then support people in what they do”.

“Manage conflicting points of view, and work with diverse cultures and expectations.”

Vision: artistic and organizational (4 respondents)

“In tough economic times, you need people with the ability to focus on visioning and organizational change. Risk taking and long-term visioning is needed, not ‘shrinking’ or being in ‘stabilizing the endowment’ mode”. In times that are not stable, you must move forward.”

Accountability / Responsibility (4)

“You have to provide leadership in moments of stress. You must manage and lead when the institution is under siege.”

“Managing an orchestra is like managing any other non-profit, except on steroids.”

“You have to have the sense, built-in, of accountability and responsibility.”

Be a Generalist (3) / Be Experienced (2)

Among managers of small and mid-sized orchestras, the ability to multi-task and oversee with knowledge and ability, nearly all aspects of the management of the organization is deemed critical. This talent was not stressed to the same degree by managers of large orchestras, where emphasis was placed on hiring well, retaining and supporting the expertise with which the GM surrounds himself or herself. Maturity, life experience, professional experience as well as the ability to devote long hours was also emphasized.

“I am a generalist. I would like to hire more people like me.”

“This is a conundrum, because salaries are low, orchestras often have to hire young people. They can’t afford experienced managers. But experience is critical – not just in orchestra management but also in life - to be able to multi-task and manage in a multi-faceted organization, to daily create the ‘Department of Miracles’”.

“The job is 24/7. This would be very difficult if you had young children at home.”

Sound Judgment (3)

Strategic planning, implementation, evaluation and re-evaluation (benchmarking) (3)

Positive Attitude (2) / Sense of Humour (2) Sense of Humanity (2)

Demonstrate Clear Expectations (2)

Good Communication Skills (2)

Organizational skills (2) / Multi-tasking (2) Public Speaking (2)

Other leadership traits or attributes identified included:

Passion

Physical Energy

Strength of Character (internal discipline, self-knowledge)

Willingness to Learn

Ability to Build a Team

Knowledge

Musical Literacy (8) / Commitment to the Value of the Art Form

A majority of key informants were of the opinion that an orchestra manager must know, understand and love the product they are selling - music. This comes from training, from an innate curiosity, and from a lifetime of avidly listening to music and following musical trends. Some managers maintain that training in music repertoire or on an instrument, either vocationally or a-vocationally, is necessary to be successful in orchestra management.

“You must love music, understand the repertoire, and love and understand musicians.”

“This cannot be stressed enough. It allows you to make smart decisions. It allows you to either support or challenge the music director. It builds trust with the musicians. Your passion for music makes it possible to get up each day and do a gruelling, thankless job.”

“The danger is knowing either too little, or too much, about music. In the first case it makes it challenging to do your job, in the second instance it can make you a control freak.”

Knowledge of the Community (4)

Knowledge of the community was cited as an example of a future trend in which orchestra managers must engage. The role of the orchestra as a ‘community developer’ was described as an important trend in the future of orchestras.

“The orchestra has to overcome its view of itself as a privileged organization – that audience members are privileged to be there. They have obligations to the community. They have to be part of community discussions that go beyond self interest. They have to learn how to advocate for the community and for all of the things that make a community strong, including recreation centres, green space, poverty reduction etc.”

- **Labour Agreements (3)**
- **Knowledge of Boards and (potential) members (3)**
- **Knowledge (and understanding of) the musicians (3), the three pillars (1)**

“Often the real manager of the musicians is not the Music Director.”

- **Knowledge (and understanding of) guest artists (2)**
- **Knowledge of Audiences (1)**

Important Technical Skills Identified by the Respondents

- **Financial (4)** (reading balance sheets, budgets and cashflow statements)
- **HR** (Hire well, retain, fire well) **(4)**
- **Marketing & Sales (3)**

- **Fundraising & Development (3)**

“An orchestra should never hire a GM who does not have experience in fundraising.”

- **Collective Bargaining (3)**
- **New Media and Digital Dissemination (2)**
- **Grant Writing (1)**

#2 What are existing opportunities for leadership / professional development? Where are the gaps? What are the barriers?

Here is what the key informants had to say about gaps in leadership and professional development, grouped here under a number of themes and including suggestions on recruitment and training of future leaders. While some respondents focussed on how OC could facilitate professional development, many respondents emphasized how the field is, or should be, developing its own management capacity.

The majority of managers agreed that professional development of their internal management team is extremely important. All managers from Quebec stated that it is a requirement of their employees. Of the managers in the rest of Canada, many indicated that professional development within their orchestras is encouraged, where need and funding permit. For many employees, the choices on what kind of training to undertake are self directed. In one case, the Manager stated that the professional development budget of their organization has ‘dried up’.

Comments from Key Informants (paraphrased)

Gaps / Opportunities / Trends

- There is (it was stated) no shortage of management training in institutions such as Humber,³ York and Ryerson.⁴ The sessions offered by the League were described as more or less successful for industry-specific training.
- There are few regional training opportunities targeted to orchestra management. Most orchestra managers have learned on the job and supplement their work experience with high-end training such as offered by speakers brought in by OC, the League or at other international seminars or conferences.

³ The Arts Management program at Humber College is no longer in existence.

⁴ Certificate in Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Management.

- Canada does not have the critical mass or resources to train orchestra managers that the U.S. has.
 - Great Britain does not have the resources to train mid-level orchestra managers. Incoming talent must usually work as unpaid interns to get a foot in the door. Therefore the industry is limited to a pool of people who can afford to work for nothing, which may limit access to the best talent.
- Why do music schools not have courses in business management? How many of their graduates become soloists, compared to those who end up running their own business or running music organizations?

Development of the Management Pool

- The largest performing arts organizations in Canada, such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and the National Arts Centre have typically acted as a training ground for many young people interested in arts management, who have gone on to senior roles within or outside the organization. This same type of scenario could take place with other large orchestras across Canada.
- Those who have worked within large organizations sometimes have a 'fighting chance' when they move into senior executive positions. However, people who come into a small or mid-sized orchestra as a manager, not having risen through the ranks of the departments of larger orchestras are often doomed to fail. There are enormous management challenges posed by small and mid-sized regional orchestras.
- In many cases a young person works within a large orchestra and very quickly moves to a senior (Executive Director or General Manager) role within a small or mid-sized orchestra. This is hugely challenging for them, and one must wonder if this is a desirable scenario for the organization or the individual. Boards should get guidance on their hiring criteria to ensure that they can get a clear idea of the type of leadership experience and qualifications that they really need for the position.

Networking

- The General Managers of the six largest-budget US orchestras self-organize regular conference calls to discuss management challenges and issues relevant to their orchestras.

Internships / Apprenticeships

- Large orchestras across Canada could host apprenticeships. These could be done in partnership with business faculties or community colleges. It could be a formalized program, with a template and connections made by OC.

Internal Training / Development

- There must be professional development *within* the organization. Each person should have someone who shadows their job, and learns the duties and requirements. This creates a back-up in case of sickness or emergency. It also helps in succession planning, and is a form of protection of assets, if a person leaves.
- Everyone in the business has a responsibility to train others on the job... be a teacher... enable, provide support. Don't be a hands-on manager.
- The Board or Chair can have a substantial role in the professional development of the General Manager through a feedback process. If a GM believes that someone is thinking of them, or paying attention to what they do, it can help their growth substantially. The Board should help identify development programs for the GM, or find someone from the non-profit sector with whom they can mentor, even if it is just through a feedback loop.

Recruitment

- Orchestras should be more pro-active in recruiting, 'going after' the brightest, best graduate of a business school for example, who is interested in arts management.
- Orchestras should look to the musician ranks to identify and recruit musicians with a potential aptitude for management and a willingness to learn.

Cross-Pollination / Partnerships

- Overall, we must ask, should the industry really be teaching itself?
- There are many regional training opportunities available in local universities and colleges for knowledge and skill areas that can be applied to various levels of the work, such as accounting, information technology, human resources, marketing, collective bargaining, contract negotiation, interviewing skills. Cross-pollination of sectors is healthy - you can learn a great deal.

- It is very important to learn from other sectors, such as the for-profit media and sound recording industries, presenters and other performance-related industries. Other issues are unique to the non-profit sector however, including board and volunteer management, and fundraising.
- There is a great advantage to sharing information across industries in the non-profit sector. In a leadership class, it is not unusual to have a mix of participants from the private sector, from universities, hospitals, arts organizations and other non-profit groups. Leadership is thematic, cross-sectional leadership training is critical.
- Professional development in the general sense could be achieved within the community college environment. Otherwise it is too restricted. You have to open up to the world.

#3 What role in leadership / professional development might Orchestras Canada best play on its own? In partnership with other arts service organizations, institutions of higher learning, other partners?

Here is what key informants had to say about the role that OC might play in the fostering of strong management practices within the orchestral community. The data from the interviews was also analyzed to prioritize the initiatives that OC has put forward as part of this research. (Fig. 1) Other initiatives suggested by the respondents are included in the table.

Comments from Key Informants (Paraphrased)

The Role of OC in Professional Development

- OC has extremely limited resources. It does not have the capacity to delve into training or professional development.
- The country is too big, the types of orchestras too regional and varied, the resources of OC too restricted. The needs are too vast for OC to consider regional training opportunities. People should be encouraged to attend the national meeting – there should be good and varied professional development seminars offered there.
- It is important that OC not dream too big – after all it is only one person.

Mentorship

- Given the longevity and success of GMs now in the field in Canada compared to 5-10 years ago, there is no better time than now to develop a practical mentorship program. There is also a willingness and generosity of spirit among managers to share knowledge.
- Could the field develop some sort of informal mentorship program? For example, a number of orchestra have very successful GM/Chair relationships. Could they, as leaders, share the successful aspects of this relationship? Success breeds success – this is a good time for the field to develop others and build future generations of leaders.
- Mentorship is an important aspect to consider. It should be self-directed and done locally with leaders of other types of organizations, rather than to try and pair orchestra managers with each other. Use the community. Orchestra must enlarge their horizons.

Income Managers' Program (or similar program)

- OC should find a way to support potential talent to participate in programs such as the Income Manager's Program.
- Consider funding to partially support musicians to take a sabbatical to do training such as the Income Manager's program. Candidates would be selected through a rigorous selection process.
- OC and the community should develop a program like the Income Managers' program but geared specifically toward the general management skills required for orchestra managers. The large orchestras across Canada could agree to take interns each year from this program.

Partnerships / Facilitation

- OC should help orchestras learn from others: facilitate relationships within the management community across the country, through such means as the annual meeting or the managers' meeting, or through communication tools such as conference calls, virtual forums, the newsletter, blogs.

- This is a moment of stability for the orchestral community. So this is the ideal time to address this issue. There should be some movement as soon as possible on community partnerships, especially with colleges or universities. OC should be the connector, not the facilitator. OC should use its networks to open doors between organizations to make this happen rather than do the actual work of making it happen.

Information Sharing

- OC could be an information sharing portal on best management practices through the website or a blog. For example, it could ask: “What are the top three most effective ways of?” “What are the three least effective ways of...?” and run a slate of responses.
- Knowledge of the AFM contract is extremely important – a partnership could be forged here with the American Federation of Musicians

National Workshops / Training

- Bring in professionals from the League to Canada.

Funding for Training

- The goal is the advancement of the field and not the advancement of the individual. So this should be the focus of any professional development funding provided to individuals – perhaps there can be strings attached to make sure the training benefits the field in Canada, at least for a period of time.
- The Flying Squad program at the Canada Council can be used for mentorships – it can provide time and free people up. Some provinces have similar programs for mentorship and professional development.

Resources

- Boards need to know how to hire. Could hiring guidelines be developed for Boards of Directors who are undertaking a General Manager search? Getting it right may require a dramatic shift in mindset for some Boards of Directors – they need to learn how to read between the lines on CVs.

Fig. 1 The following table includes proposed initiatives that the research asked web respondents to prioritize. The data provided in the key informant interviews was analyzed to determine respondents' support for the priorities and to include additional suggested initiatives.

	Most important	Desirable	Least Important	Comments
<i>Share knowledge about successful PD events and initiatives</i>	v v v v		v	Through newsletters, blogs
<i>Encourage orchestras to make PD a stronger priority</i>			v	
<i>Lobby funders to provide more support for PD to individuals/organizations</i>	v v		v	Flying Squad is effective for this.
<i>Secure its own funding to assist orchestras/individuals with their own PD initiatives</i>	v v v	v		To attend sessions such as the League.
<i>Create and provide more national PD events and materials</i>	v	v	v	Electronic tutorials
<i>Create and provide more regional PD events and materials</i>		v	v	
<i>Work with other ASOs on joint PD programs/events</i>	v v	v		Partner with the League to deliver programs, bring in League speakers, translate materials. Consult with other types of organizations, such as museums.
<i>Other</i>				
<i>National Meeting – the sessions and the informal exchange</i>	v v v			
<i>Conference calls</i>	v v			
<i>Provide guidelines to Boards on hiring practices</i>	v v			
<i>Develop an orchestra internship program</i>	v			
<i>Larger managers' forum virtual or physical for all managers, not just for the managers of professional orchestras.</i>	v			
<i>Build a database of good consultants</i>	v			
<i>Distribute League documents in both official languages</i>	v			
<i>Bring professionals from the League to Canada</i>	v			
<i>The newsletter is useful</i>	v			
<i>Partner with business schools to provide internship or short residency opportunities</i>	v			

Conclusions

In this study Orchestras Canada has tried to explore the following questions:

- **What kinds of leadership and professional development opportunities might (current and future) management professionals with Canadian orchestras require?**

This study indicates that, in most cases, individuals are expected to identify their own professional development needs. This is found in the survey results and is supported by the training histories of managers interviewed. Those who have undertaken professional development for specialized skills (anything from typing to fundraising to contract negotiation) have determined their own learning requirements along the way. It is perhaps not surprising then, that better ways to network, share best practices, and identify professional development needs was identified by respondents as a major concern for the orchestral community.

There was strong consistency in the identification of the most important professional development needs for individuals and for the orchestra management community overall. These were in the category of:

General Knowledge

Collective bargaining and agreements, economic and social trends, peer and industry information, and best practices all emerged as important areas of knowledge for managers. Almost all interview informants stressed the importance of musical literacy and knowledge of the community, including the volunteer and Board candidate pool, donors, guest artists and musicians.

Technical Skills

Marketing and fundraising topped the list of specific skills for all informants, with an emphasis placed by managers interviewed on knowledge of finances and HR (in terms of knowledge of legal and professional HR practices).

Management Skills

Ability to Manage the Board was cited as both a skill and a leadership attribute by virtually all managers interviewed as the most critical to the success of the organization. This point was echoed by many survey respondents. A number of key informants indicated that a solid and synergistic Board Chair and Chief Executive could be the key success factor for the orchestra. A couple of respondents suggested that creating a means to share knowledge and experiences by, or among Board Chair and CEO teams could result in an important resource for managers, Boards and orchestras.

HR (managing people and diversity) was also named as a high priority management requirement. Leadership was discussed at some length in the interviews with emphasis on artistic and organizational vision, accountability and responsibility. Communications was also considered important by both categories of respondents, and, for many managers, included both internal communications and public speaking.

When interview respondents were asked to identify what they saw as important requirements for orchestra managers of the future, a number of respondents emphasized areas such as new media, shifting audience demographics and the importance of creating meaningful community

outreach. The majority who answered this question indicated that the need to be closely connected to the community was going to be the most important shift for the future if orchestras are to survive.

The opinions and the training needs identified above are echoed in the findings of *The Leadership Training Review Process*, developed by the League of American Orchestras for 2009 -2010,⁵ which identified as two out of its three most important challenges: “the need for skills around innovation, entrepreneurship and adaptive leadership” and, “the need for greater skills in financial oversight, new media, audience development, community engagement and marketing.”

- **What are the existing opportunities for leadership/professional development? Where are the gaps? What are the barriers?**

A 2000 study of performing arts managers⁶ noted that many of the resources available were not known or accessed by practitioners in the field. In that study, only 9% of the respondents to the survey answered that they were well informed as to the resources available to upgrade their skills and knowledge. In the current study, three-quarters of survey respondents and all interviewees report being aware of professional development programs and events offered by a range of providers, including universities, community colleges, and arts and other not-for-profit organizations. There are also assumptions of the existence of available training (Humber College Arts Management program and the Income Manager’s Program) which is, in fact, no longer available. This would again emphasize that better ways to network, and share best practices and information is an important concern.

Time and money continue to be the strongest barriers to professional development. The majority of survey respondents say that orchestras do not provide internal funds or training programs. A significant percentage of the youngest respondents say they do not know whether any of these resources are available to them within their orchestra. Funding for training is identified as a critical missing link. This is also in alignment with the findings of *The League (Leadership Training Review Process, 2009 -2010)* that “most orchestras (are) not set up to be ‘learning organizations’”. However, this is at odds with some interview respondents, who indicated that professional development is not only stressed within their organizations, but it is a *requirement*. Respondents from Quebec orchestras were able to provide concrete examples of their strategies to implement professional development across their organization.⁷

It is important to emphasize the difference between what respondents saw as generic skills-based training and orchestra-specific professional development. Many interview respondents stressed that training in technical skills is widely available in universities, community colleges and local seminars or workshops, especially in subjects like accounting, IT, marketing, HR and contract negotiation, and training specific to non-profit or arts management is still widely available in colleges or universities such as HEC, Ryerson, York and soon to be at ULaVal. The

⁵ Leadership Training Review Process, *How do We Grow the Leaders Needed Urgently for Today and Tomorrow’s Orchestras?* PPT:, The League of American Orchestras, 2009 -2010.

⁶ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PERFORMING ARTS MANAGERS IN CANADA: A Needs Assessment August 31, 2000 (Janis A. Barlow and Associates). Cultural Careers Council Ontario.

⁷ A law passed in 1995 in Quebec, the “1% Law” initially required all Quebec employers to invest a minimum of 1% of their total payroll on training. In recent years, the legislation was amended to exempt companies with payrolls of less than \$1 million.

desirability of learning in a cohort from a range of private, public and non-profit sectors, was strongly supported by managers and industry professionals, on the basis that “it opens the orchestra to the world.”

Orchestras Canada and the League of American Orchestras are seen as important providers of highly relevant training for orchestras, where these programs are accessible. Interview informants said that orchestra-based professional development could really only be expected to occur at the national, and, more realistically, at the international level, through the well-established and comprehensive League of American Orchestra programs. Some interview respondents stressed that OC is a small organization and should not be expected to be involved in training. Priorities need to remain focussed, stated some, and much along the lines of those of the Association of British Orchestras, on advocacy, data gathering and information sharing. That being said, OC events like the AGM, which may not focus specifically on professional development, are still highly valued by all respondents because they allow for peer-to-peer sharing and discussion. The bar conversations alone are worth the price of admission, reported one.

The 2000 study of performing arts managers noted that “all senior managers are concerned about the next generation of managers. They want to develop a more coherent approach to mentoring the up-and-comers.” This concern persists, referenced by both older and younger managers in this study. Respondents and interviewees agree that on-the-job training, mentoring, and coaching are crucial for the future success of management professionals entering the field.

It was acknowledged that these areas of professional development are not readily available in any formalized sense. Interview respondents emphasized that ‘the field’ needs to look at some way that it might collectively develop an internship program, possibly on a national scale, and / or in partnership with universities and community colleges. One manager stressed that large orchestras “need to ‘aggressively’ recruit from business and management schools...”. The ten largest orchestras in Canada could agree to accept a pool of ten new recruits each year as interns, through a partnership with a business school or schools.

Many of the key informants interviewed stressed that this is a stable and an opportune moment in the history of orchestras in Canada. “Success breeds success” it was stated. A significant number of experienced managers have now been established within their orchestra for a healthy number of years, and have brought it to a relatively strong position. It was surmised that these managers are ready to share their knowledge and experience with the next generation of leaders.

- **What role in leadership/professional development might Orchestras Canada best play on its own? in partnership with other arts service organizations, institutions of higher learning, other partners?**

“We believe that our field lacks effective and connected information about training that might help both consumers and providers find each other at the right time. This premise suggests that the best way to develop a more vibrant and effective learning

ecology would be to focus on improving the effectiveness of the marketplace, rather than seeking to boost either supply or demand.”⁸

The interviewees in this study were not shy about sharing their thoughts on ways the field could develop and build strong management practices within orchestras. These include initiatives such as mentorships, formalized programs, partnerships, information sharing, national workshops, funding and the development of recruitment guidelines for Board members.

The Income Managers’ program, while currently dormant, was viewed as a good in-depth training model for arts managers because it included course work supplemented by a series of internships. Two people indicated that if this program were used as a model for in-depth training, it should specifically focus on training in the general management skills of orchestra leaders. The role of OC in all of this, it was emphasized, should be as a catalyst, or ‘door-opener’ between orchestras and colleges or post-secondary institutions, if a formalized internship program were to be developed.

The 2000 study of performing arts managers concluded: “With the emphasis on peers, mentors and on-the-job experience in the delivering of professional knowledge and skills, it is clear that the leadership and commitment of practitioners is essential if the sector is to see real progress in the area of professional development.” This sentiment is shared by interviewees in 2010, who suggest that established orchestras, senior practitioners, and OC itself could play a role in expanding the possibilities of mentorships and internships in the field, through post-secondary recruitment and individual mentoring, or in a national internship program, ideally in partnership with a degree, or diploma-granting institute or institutes. Other interview respondents, particularly from Quebec, put more emphasis on the importance of internal professional development through job sharing and shadowing, and on skills training at regional community colleges and universities.

With regards to the role of OC in professional development, key informants re-emphasized the scant resources of this ‘organization of one’ and the importance for OC to maintain a sharp focus on its current priorities. A number of respondents indicated that OC’s role (if any) in professional development should be to facilitate knowledge and information sharing through its annual meetings, newsletters and other networks.

Survey respondents and interviewees also suggest that working with other organizations to meet professional development needs is important, and identified possible partners for OC, such as established orchestras, senior practitioners, the League, other arts service organizations, colleges or universities. This could be especially fruitful in the area of peer-to-peer sharing, mentorships and internships, and the development of cross-sector PD opportunities. The League professional development programmes were considered ‘unparalleled’ by some key informants. A number of respondents hoped that OC could play a role through lobbying to secure more funding for this type of professional development opportunity for members.

And, finally, it is worth noting that a significant number of respondents indicated they are prepared to continue this dialogue with OC. This suggests that interest in the topic is widespread, and that OC has internal resources to call on as it moves forward with this file.

⁸ *The Smart Marketplace - Bridging the Gaps in Arts Leadership Training*. Russell Willis Taylor and Andrew Taylor, Reprinted from the Grantmakers in the Arts Reader Volume 21, No. 1 (Spring 2010)

Appendix I

List of Key Informants

- 1) Rob Gloor, Executive Director, National Broadcast Orchestra
- 2) Rosemary Thomson, Music Director and Conductor, Okanagan Symphony Orchestra
- 3) Annemarie Petrov, Executive Director, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra / Winspear Centre
- 4) Christopher Deacon, Managing Director, National Arts Centre Orchestra
- 5) Andrew Shaw, President and CEO, Toronto Symphony Orchestra
- 6) Thérèse Boutin, Directrice générale, Orchestre symphonique de Trois-Rivières
- 7) Sophie Galaise, Directrice générale, Orchestre symphonique de Québec
- 8) Bill Black, Board President, Symphony Nova Scotia
- 9) John Kieser, General Manager, San Francisco Symphony
- 10) Russ Kelley, Head of the Music Section, Canada Council for the Arts
- 11) Daniel Swift, Program Officer, Professional Orchestra Program, Canada Council for the Arts
- 12) Mark Pemberton, Director, Association of British Orchestras
- 13) Polly Kahn, Vice President, Learning and Leadership Development, League of American Orchestras