

Community Engagement Initiatives: Exploring Audience Development in West Coast Symphony Orchestras


by
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Abstract

This graduate research project serves as a guide for emerging leaders and arts administrators in understanding audience development and community engagement initiatives of symphony orchestras. Studies have shown a consistent decline in symphony orchestra audiences over the past few decades, as well as a shift from “outreach” to “community engagement.” This project explores current issues supported by information discovered through an extensive literature review. The conceptual framework provides an overview of societal issues that contribute to the problem of declining and changing audiences in symphony orchestras. This study presents a collective case study of the San Francisco Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Seattle Symphony, and culminates in a set of recommendations for symphony orchestras interested in implementing innovative community engagement initiatives in their organizations.

Keywords

Audience development initiatives

Community engagement initiatives

Outreach

Symphony orchestras

West Coast

Arts participation

Arts audiences

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.01 Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, there has been a decline in the participation of symphony orchestra audiences. The decline in audiences and participation is due to many factors, including changes in lifestyle and leisure behavior, decrease in arts education, and lack of awareness of the value and benefits of the arts in people's everyday lives (Bernstein, 2007; Wolf, 2006). People are also choosing to consume classical music in alternate settings, such as in their homes and cars, instead of in the concert hall (Knight Foundation, 2002).

Some symphony orchestras have begun to look at new ways of attracting audiences to their concerts and events after realizing that the old audience development techniques are no longer working. There has been a shift in the ways symphony orchestras connect with their potential audiences; some orchestras are now using the term "community engagement" instead of "outreach." Community engagement suggests more of a collaborative focus with other organizations in the community, and orchestras are looking more at partnerships that might be formed to benefit both the orchestra and the community. Audience development is crucial to the sustainability of symphony orchestras, as their survival is dependent upon the community's support.

There is a gap in the research in regard to the shift from the term "outreach" to "community engagement." This seems to be a newer concept and practice that has not been studied, at least as it relates to the performing arts. More information about current community engagement initiatives taking place in symphony orchestras is needed in the field. Updated information will be helpful for the future growth of symphony orchestras, and will be useful to other organizations as well by raising awareness of this important issue (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001). Performing

arts in general will benefit from research into the shift in terminology and the trend of community engagement initiatives.

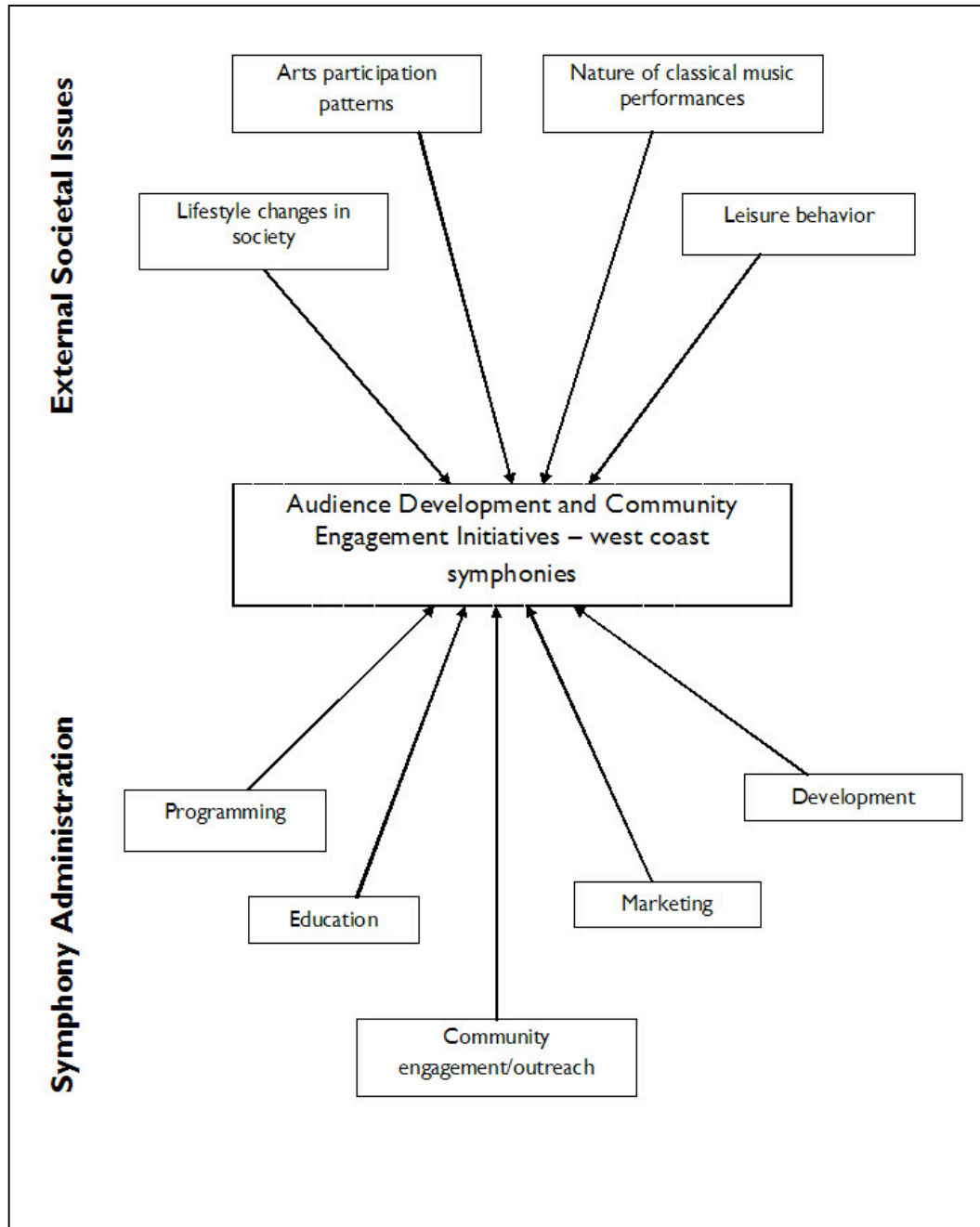
I.02 Conceptual Framework

This collective case study looked at three sites: The San Francisco Symphony in San Francisco, California, the Oregon Symphony, in Portland, Oregon, and the Seattle Symphony, in Seattle, Washington. These sites were chosen based on their large annual budgets and their status as major symphony orchestras, as a way to delimit the study. The study observed the relationships that each of the three symphony orchestras has with its local community, and how the strategic planning of the administration in engaging with its communities seeks to develop current and future audiences. There are many external societal factors as well as internal administrative factors at work influencing new initiatives employed by the symphony orchestras.

The different internal and external issues impacting the change in symphony orchestras' community engagement initiatives can be seen in the conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 1.1). The top half of the conceptual framework shows the external societal issues that are influencing the symphony orchestras. These issues, including changes in leisure behavior, arts participation patterns, and general lifestyle changes, have been part of the impetus for change in the symphony orchestras' internal operations. The bottom half of the conceptual framework represents the internal workings of a symphony orchestra's administration. Each of the departments, including Education, Artistic/Programming, Marketing, and Development, should be involved in adapting community engagement initiatives in

reaction to the external issues affecting the symphony orchestras (see Chapter 3 for a literature review outlining these concepts).

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework Schematic



I.03 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this collective case study was to explore and gain deeper understanding of the audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast.

I.04 Methodological Paradigm

Due to the exploratory nature of this research topic, I positioned myself in the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. I sought to understand an overall social phenomenon, which fits in well with the characteristics of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. This paradigm allows for interaction between the researcher and the participants in the research, as it is only through interaction that deeper meaning can be uncovered (Neuman, 2006; Ponterotto, 2005).

Within the methodology of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, we obtain knowledge through observation, interviews, and participation with those being researched. We construct our own realities through interaction and communication, which influences my research design. I interacted with the participants (key personnel of symphony orchestras to explore the social phenomena taking place in each location. The paradigm also allows for emergent design; I expected that as I conducted research in the field, my interaction with the participants may lead me in a slightly different direction, and to change some aspects of my research design.

I.05 Role of the Researcher

In coming into this research, I acknowledge my personal and professional biases as they are related to my background in the performing arts. I grew up

benefiting greatly from the many performing arts groups in my town, and went on to receive my Bachelor's degree in music performance with a concentration in symphonic music. Because of this, I appreciate the traditional ways in which symphony orchestras present their art. While I think that they need to change the ways they are marketing to and developing their audience bases, I do not know that this necessarily means changing the way the music is presented in the concert hall.

I.06 Research Questions

For this research project, I wished to address the problem of the declining audiences of symphony orchestras. To do this, I collected and analyzed data regarding the current initiatives that are being implemented to engage with their communities. I looked at the overarching changes taking place in our culture as they are the cause of many of the struggles that symphony orchestras are facing today. The literature review in the next chapter shows that symphony orchestras have been encountering problems more frequently over the last few decades, and that existing methods of audience development and participation are simply not working. I focused on these issues using a collective case study to gain a deeper understanding of how the issues are socially interrelated. The following is a list of questions that were used to guide me in exploring this topic.

Main research question: What are innovative audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast?

Subquestions:

1. How are the roles of symphony orchestras changing in their communities?

2. Are symphony orchestras responding to changes in audiences?
3. What are the barriers keeping symphony orchestras from attracting and retaining audiences?
4. How are symphony orchestras researching their current and potential future audiences?
5. What is the difference between “community outreach” and “community engagement”?

I.07 Definitions

For the purpose of this study, terms are defined as follows:

Arts participation: participation and involvement of audiences in any type of arts activity

Audience development: the long-term planned management process of attracting and engaging target arts participants, audiences, and markets through education, marketing and programming, and retaining them by establishing and maintaining strategic, dynamic, and sustainable relationships.

Collective case study: an in-depth exploration of a particular context that involves the collection of extensive qualitative data of multiple case study sites usually through interviews, observation and document analysis.

Community engagement: the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people in assessing, planning and implementing programs or activities that are mutually beneficial to both sides; community engagement is a two-way exchange consisting of collaboration and cooperative partnerships to enrich the lives of community members.

Leisure behavior: the decisions people make regarding how to spend free time outside of work or other essential activities

I.08 Delimitations and Limitations

The scope of the study was narrowed geographically by researching symphony orchestras on the west coast only. For purposes of this study, the “west coast” refers to the states of Washington, Oregon and California. To further delimit the study, I

only conducted research on “major” symphony orchestras with annual budgets of \$10 million or more.

This collective case study consisted of interviews and document collection and analysis. The participants of the study were upper-level arts administrators within the organizations, such as directors of marketing, education, outreach, or executive directors. They have the most relevant information regarding strategic plans and visions for their organizations in audience development and community engagement.

This research study was limited to a specific geographic region of the country, resulting in findings that are not generalizable to other organizations. The purposive sampling used to select sites also contributes to the decreased generalizability of any research findings. The qualitative nature of this study could result in other interpretations being made from the same set of collected data.

My purpose in this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that symphony orchestras work to develop their audiences through community engagement. This is a relevant topic as presently symphonies are struggling to retain their current audiences and attract new demographics to create future audiences. There is much in the field that needs to be studied to add to the body of knowledge in this area. It was my hope that this research study would begin to add to current literature so that the body of knowledge may continue to grow.

1.09 Benefits of the Study

The group to receive the greatest benefit from this research will be arts administrators working in symphony orchestras and emerging leaders in the field. One of the main benefits of this study is that it fills a gap in the research and

literature regarding symphony orchestras and their work to engage with audiences and other organizations within their communities. Currently, there is not much in the literature that discusses symphony orchestras' work on audience development in terms of community engagement.

This research also begins to look at the shift in terminology from “outreach” to “community engagement” as it relates to the symphony orchestras' audience development goals. Benefits to the field and to participants include a set of recommendations regarding ways that symphony orchestras can engage with their communities to build future audiences.

1.10 Introduction to the Document

This chapter focuses on the statement of the problem and background to the research topic. The next chapter of this document outlines the research approach as it relates to this study, and provides a brief literature review regarding the strengths of the collective case study for the research questions posed. The three symphony orchestra sites are introduced in the second chapter as well. The third chapter contains an in-depth literature review that provides the context for the problem summarized in the first chapter.

Next, my field research and the three case study sites are presented in depth, including information collected through interviewees at each location and through document analysis. The chapter also includes a concise overview of six other national symphony orchestras as a way to compare across the information. The concluding chapter analyzes the information discovered through the study, presents findings, and includes recommendations for symphony orchestras seeking innovative community engagement strategies.

Chapter 2: Research Design

2.01 Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to look at three symphony orchestras through a collective case study to gain an understanding of how each is engaging with its communities in order to build and develop audiences. As research was conducted for this study, one expectation was to find information about changing arts audiences in the performing arts, specifically in symphony orchestras. I also sought evidence of work being done by symphony orchestras' administrators to strategically plan for audience development within their communities. The duration of this research study was six months, from January 2008 to June 2008.

2.02 Research Approach

This study was conducted to answer the question, "what are innovative audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast?" This was basic, applied research through which I was looking to understand a social phenomenon and advance fundamental knowledge in this area as well as suggest recommendations for emerging and future leaders in the field. Due to the nature of this type of exploratory process, the best method for this research was a collective case study.

2.03 Strategy of Inquiry

There are many different strategies of inquiry that can be used to conduct qualitative research; in this case, a collective case study was the best method to gain the greatest depth of knowledge. A collective case study looks at multiple cases to explain one type of social phenomenon. This can help to increase the generalizability

of the information when data are corroborated across multiple cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The collective case study is a research method that works well to gain insight and deep understanding of a social issue or phenomenon. In a case study, a researcher examines and investigates the features of one or more cases over a duration of time (Neuman, 2006). The literature describes the case study as an excellent method with which to study social phenomena, because several data collection techniques are used to gain meaningful understanding. For this reason, a case study was the best method for my research topic, which deals with the social issues of a few major symphony orchestras in regard to their audiences and communities.

According to Miller and Salkind (2002), the key elements of a case study include providing an in-depth study of a bounded system, forming research questions about the issue under examination, gathering multiple forms of data, describing the case in detail, analyzing key issues or themes and situating the case in a context or setting, and interpreting the meaning of the case analysis. These multiple steps will facilitate a reliable study, and help the researcher gain a deeper understanding than other methods alone.

Excellent case studies carefully select cases and multiple research tools in order to increase the validity of the study and the depth of knowledge (Soy, 1997). Data collection methods used in a good case study include interviews, structured surveys or questionnaires, observations, and analyses of organizational documents and records. The use of several methods and sources allows the researcher to triangulate the data for stronger, more reliable research (Hakim, 1987). I employed some of these methods of data collection to gain a deeper understanding of the social

context in which certain major symphony orchestras engage with their communities. One benefit of a case study is that cases “are seen in the context of their actual life situation (as opposed to an artificial situation); their experiences are not isolated from their environment, but are viewed in their specific context” (Kyburz-Graber, 2004, p. 56). Case studies must have defined boundaries—what is included in the study, what is excluded, and why. Boundaries must also include the timing of the study, and how much information will be gathered and analyzed (Burton, 2000).

Several examples of case study research in the existing literature discuss the merits of using multiple small cases together instead of just one case. This strengthens the reliability of the research by allowing the researcher to triangulate even further. Corroborated data between cases reinforce the research. Burton (2000) states, “one approach is to study more than one case. Evidence from multiple cases is often more compelling and more robust than single case studies and enable the results of the studies to be contrasted and some tentative generalizations made” (p. 224). She goes on to say that examining multiple cases allows for greater flexibility in the research process, and that this flexibility contributes to the attractiveness of the method. That being said, the researcher must work extremely carefully to ensure that the research method is rigorous enough to collect the type of data that can be interpreted and analyzed. It must have all the important components of case study research—many perspectives for triangulation, a theoretical basis for the research, and a way to report the data so they are able to be interpreted and analyzed, to name a few (Soy, 1997).

After looking carefully at existing literature on the strengths of collective case study as a research method, I utilized this method for my particular research topic. This is a strong research method because it uses a number of data collection

techniques, and allows for a deeper understanding of the overall issues of symphony orchestras and their relationship with their audiences and communities. There are many perspectives from which to draw information when several collection techniques are used, and each offers a specific type of insight. This resulted in a stronger set of data from which to interpret and analyze information, and lead to more meaningful understanding overall.

In considering the strengths of the collective case study through an initial literature review, I chose it as my main strategy of inquiry to look at the innovative audience development and community engagement initiatives being implemented in west coast symphony orchestras. I chose the geographic location of the west coast as a way to narrow down the focus of the research, and selected three symphony orchestras through purposive sampling. The focus was further narrowed down by choosing symphony orchestras by the sizes of their budgets; I expected that organizations with larger budgets may have more available resources with which to explore and implement community engagement initiatives. The use of similarly-sized orchestras allowed for possible comparability of the findings.

Participants in the research included staff of the three symphony orchestras included in this case study. This study took place within a specific timeframe; field research began in January 2008, and concluded in June 2008.

Multiple data collection methods were employed throughout this collective case study for greater triangulation and the broadest perspective possible. The study included collection of documents from the different organizations involved, and analysis of the information within those documents. Key personnel in each of the symphony orchestras were interviewed through a structured process; interviews were recorded and documented in a summarized transcription. All collected data

were compiled and analyzed for information that aided in understanding the overall social issues addressed by the research.

2.04 Overview of Research Design

In looking at the innovative audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in west coast symphony orchestras, I chose three sites through purposive sampling. I conducted the research study on the Seattle Symphony in Seattle, Washington, Oregon Symphony in Portland, Oregon, and the San Francisco Symphony in San Francisco, California. These sites were selected for their geographic locations and for their budgets of over \$10 million annually.

Using my chosen data collection methods of interviews and document analysis, I researched these sites through several key informants. These key informants were upper-level managers in education, marketing, and outreach and community engagement. I contacted three to four people per organization, and recruited each key informant with a recruitment letter (see Appendix B) explaining the process of my research. In the interest of collecting the most relevant information, I excluded subjects who were not in the upper levels of their departments of each site, and who may not have had access to strategic goals and visions for the organization. Human subject compliance protocols were followed for all data collection methods of this case study.

2.05 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

In addition to a review of related literature, the study utilized interviews and document collection and analysis. Interviews were conducted with key personnel at each of the three symphony orchestras to gain in-depth information regarding

perspectives on community engagement and audience development (see Appendix D for a list of interview questions). Interviews took place in person and over the phone, and lasted between half an hour and one hour each. After obtaining the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were audio recorded; interviews were partially transcribed for accuracy of quotes and information (see Appendix F for a list of interviewees at each site).

Document analysis consisted of collecting documents pertaining to strategic plans, visions for audience development, and other relevant information to which I gained access through the key participants of each organization. Some of the information was publicly available, such as brochures and information from the organizations' websites, as I was unable to gain access to internal documents; other information was only accessible through the upper-level arts administrators with whom I worked.

2.06 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments were created to assist in collecting and organizing information as research is conducted (see Appendix D). Each form was specific to a strategy of inquiry; for my research, there were forms for interviews, and document collection and analysis. The forms included places to record all relevant information regarding the type of strategy of inquiry, as well as fields to record codes to help organize the data for later analysis.

2.07 Recruitment and Consent Forms

Recruitment letters and consent forms were used in the process in order to work with the key informants from each organization (see Appendices B and C). The

recruitment letter included an overview of the study, and what I hoped to gain in conducting this research. The letter was sent out to potential participants by mail, and was followed by a phone call a few days after the participant received the recruitment letter. Once he or she agreed to participate in my research study, consent forms were reviewed and signed at the time of the interview.

2.08 Data Collection and Disposition Procedures

The data collected were recorded in multiple ways. Audiotapes were used during interviews of key informants in each location, which aided in transcribing the interview. During interviews, in addition to recording, I took field notes using my data collection instrument forms. The field notes included anything relevant to the study that the interviewee discussed during the interview. The document collection was organized using the research instrument form, and lists of all collected information were stored in a computer spreadsheet.

Maintaining the confidentiality of participants was extremely important in this process. The consent forms sent out to participants allowed them to specify if they did not wish to be identified by name in the study. Confidentiality was also maintained by storing all data in a locked filing cabinet. The only two people who had access to the research data were me and my research advisor. Data will be erased or destroyed one year after the project has been completed; no data will be kept.

2.09 Coding and Analysis Procedures

Coding for this research study assisted in organizing and analyzing all data. The codes were keywords or phrases that allowed the data to be grouped and

organized according to their topics or categories. Preliminary codes were used as data collection began; others were determined as the research continued. As more data were collected and coded, themes and patterns began to emerge for analysis.

2.10 Strategies for Validating Findings

The data collected and the findings of this research study were validated through several techniques. Triangulation ensured that data were looked at from several different angles and increased validity. Member checks were used to ensure that the participants agreed with my interpretation of the data from interviews. I also used peer-debriefing to make sure that my findings and interpretations were reasonable and valid.

The research design of this collective case study allowed me to increase my understanding of the topic of audience development and community engagement initiatives of symphony orchestras. The next chapter will look at this topic from the perspective of what is presented in current literature about symphony orchestras.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.01 Introduction

The topic of declining arts audiences and the resulting audience development and community engagement initiatives is complex due to manifold factors involved. With the purpose of exploring the past and current state of symphony orchestras in their communities, and the many internal and external factors impacting them, it was necessary to conduct a literature review of the subject. Scholarly works directly related to the topic of this study are limited; however, the literature provides important background for how symphony orchestras have arrived at their current state. This chapter begins by giving a brief history of symphony orchestras, and then outlines major changes that have taken place over the last few decades. The literature review then examines the changes that have taken place in lifestyles, ticket sales, symphony orchestras' relevance in communities, target populations, and the shift to community engagement. Lastly, the chapter explores the need for entire organizations to be involved in community engagement.

3.02 Overall changes in symphony orchestras

There are many social issues external to the symphony orchestra that have been part of the impetus for change within the organizations. Overall changes in lifestyle, such as the pace at which people live their lives, have affected the way they choose what types of activities in which they would like to be involved. This is connected to people's leisure behavior—they are more selective about the ways they choose to spend leisure time.

The issues of lifestyle changes and leisure behavior are in flux, which in turn affect arts participation patterns. As these issues change, symphony orchestras are forced to react to what is happening in the society in order to retain audiences and

remain relevant to the people in their communities. Internally, all areas of symphony orchestras must work together to build up and retain their audiences, and create new ways of engaging with the community. The marketing, development, education and programming departments must work with the executive leadership, artistic director, the board, and musicians as they all have a role in changing the future of the organization. The external forces influence what the symphony does in terms of audience development and community engagement to ensure its own survival while benefiting the community.

For the past several decades, the symphony orchestra has been a cornerstone in the cultural landscape of the performing arts in our society. Changes in our society and culture have caused performing arts organizations to assess their roles in communities as participation in the arts has waned. Symphony orchestras have struggled with declining audiences as well, but have been less proactive than other types of performing arts organizations in creating new ideas, programming and marketing to attract audiences (Wolf, 2006). The vast collection of research that has been conducted on this issue over the years shows its importance in the field of arts and culture.

The first symphony orchestras as we know them today were created around the mid-1800s, when they were collaborative groups led by musicians. The New York Philharmonic was the first organization that was governed by a board and supported philanthropically. This is the model that is most often seen today, and which has worked well until now. There was a financial boom for symphonies in the 1960s, which is around the time that subscriptions became one of the main sources of revenue for the organizations (Starr, 1997).

Research conducted on symphony orchestras in the past several years has shown that even though audience attendance at concerts is waning, interest and consumption of classical music is increasing (Knight Foundation, 2002). This is shown to be a result of higher consumption of classical music at home and in the car. A Knight Foundation (2001) consumer study shows that “nationally, the most common setting for experiencing the art form is the automobile, followed by the home” (p. 8). Audio and internet technologies are constantly being improved, so the quality of music on CDs and from files downloaded from the internet are increasingly high in quality. An article from *The New York Times* (2005) reads:

is classical music as we know it dying? Pessimists say it is at least on the decline, and blame a lack of music education, shorter attention spans, an image-obsessed culture and a vast new world of entertainment options. Another point of view says classical music is alive and well, with more listening than ever occurring at home or in the car. Maybe, this line of thought goes, the problem is not demand but supply: too many orchestras are playing too many concerts. (p. 1).

This does not bode well for symphony orchestras, whose audience numbers decrease when patrons choose to listen to the music elsewhere.

3.03 Changes in lifestyle

One of the main reasons symphony orchestras are seeing a decrease in ticket sales, and especially in subscriptions, has to do with people’s changing lifestyles (Starr, 1997). As they become busier with the events of their everyday lives, and as their leisure time decreases, customers become more selective of the ways in which they spend their leisure time. Some have actively decided that during their leisure time, they would prefer to participate in activities other than the arts (Kopczynski & Hager, 2002; National Endowment for the Arts, 1981). Leisure experiences that are flexible and adaptable will become more attractive to customers (Bernstein, 2007;

McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001). Symphony orchestras will have to adapt to the marketing challenges created by groups of patrons who want shorter, more intense experiences (Knight, 2002; Reiss, 1995). Numerous reports have also shown that audiences are more likely to attend if there is some type of social element incorporated into an event (Brown & Bare, 2003; Knight, 2001; Thakar, 2003).

3.04 Changes in ticket sales patterns

In this high-tech age, people are used to faster, more customized service (Bernstein, 2007). They are less likely to buy subscriptions because this commits them to a certain number of concerts on specific dates. Many people are not willing to commit their time so far in advance—they prefer to decide closer to the date that a performance takes place. Customers are also looking to spend their leisure time differently with regard to the types of experiences they have. Orchestras will have to adapt to the marketing challenges created by groups of patrons who want shorter, more intense experiences (Knight, 2002).

The change in trends of subscription sales has become a challenge for symphony orchestras for a couple of reasons. The first is that if customers are not buying subscriptions, but are waiting to buy single tickets closer to the date of the event, the symphony does not have the initial influx of money at the beginning of the season. This affects the type of programming and events the organization can implement for the rest of the season. The other challenge is that it is much more expensive to market to a single-ticket buyer than it is to a subscriber (Brown & Bare, 2003). With an audience made up more of single-ticket buyers, it is difficult to find people to come to the newer or less well-known programs that are being presented.

One consumer segmentation study (Knight Foundation, 2002) found that about half of arts consumers plan their attendance at arts events within ten days of the event, and three-quarters plan within several weeks of the event. Interest in a specific work or program is the biggest motivator for attendance at a live event. All of the research shows that single ticket buyers must be valued by the organization, as they appear to make up the future of arts audiences. The key is to find a way to build loyalty among the single ticket buyers that make up symphony orchestras' audiences. As Bernstein (2007) states, "with the changing consumer attitudes and behavior...it is more and more crucial for arts marketers to treat single ticket buyers as *valued* patrons. This means developing messages and offers that meet the needs, wants, interests, and concerns of occasional ticket buyers" (p. 235).

3.05 A shift to community engagement

In recent years, the literature has begun to reflect a change from the term "outreach" to "community engagement" when referring to the ways in which performing arts are building and developing their audiences. As Mossey (2003) explains, "the term 'outreach' itself is becoming outdated, as many organizations now prefer the terms, 'community engagement,' 'community relationships,' or 'partnerships.' These terms capture the spirit of interaction, often an important feature of some of the more successful outreach programs" (para. 2).

Organizations are moving away from "outreach," which implies a one-way directive of offering opportunities or activities to communities without the collaborative aspect (San Francisco Symphony, 2008). As Johnson (2006) states,

I dislike the word "outreach." It comes from a time when orchestras thought of themselves (positively or negatively) as somehow separate from a large part of their communities, either exclusive or excluded. It implies an 'us versus

them' dynamic. Instead I like to describe what [the Philadelphia Orchestra does] as artistic work in schools and communities. Describing the work in this way goes to the heart of what I find to be most valuable and interesting about it, both for orchestras as organizations and for the musicians who participate in it. (www.polyphonic.org).

The engagement activities that symphony orchestras are now using to work with audiences and the community are more cooperative in the sense that there is a two-way dialogue between the organization and the community to explore what audiences want and need. In a document on the website of the City of Minneapolis (2008) regarding community engagement, it is stated that

community engagement involves interpersonal trust, communication, and collaboration. Such engagement, or participation, should focus on, and result from, the needs, expectations, and desires of a community's members. Community is not solely defined by geographic boundaries and may include residents, users, community organizations and institutions, neighborhood associations, businesses and workers, cultural communities, advocacy groups, students and youth. (p. 1).

Symphony orchestras are looking for ways to engage with their communities by forming partnerships and collaborative efforts to strengthen and increase their visibility. Winzenried (2003) states,

orchestras, museums, and other arts groups are making beautiful music together, it seems, banding together on projects designed to attract, entertain, and enlighten audiences of all ages—students, sure, but adults, too. In the process, the organizations involved are building alliances to make the arts a recognizable force in their communities, and a regular option in the leisure/recreational schedule for individuals and families. (p. 26).

This move away from outreach towards community engagement will be a more sustainable option for symphony orchestras that are recognizing that audiences and lifestyles are changing, and that better marketing and reduced ticket prices are not all that are needed to attract audiences to the concert hall (Ravanas, 2008).

The research that performing arts organizations are conducting about their audiences is showing that their audiences are, not surprisingly, similar; by pooling their resources and joining together with each other, they are able to reach more people than they would be able to alone (Winzenried, 2003). “It is important in order to develop the partnerships to take into account this theory of cities, to demonstrate to all of your constituencies that your orchestra is an important element in what could be a unique public-private partnership that could make your community significant in the 21st century” (Chema, 1995, p. 5).

Another place where the shift to community engagement can be seen is in the documents on the website of the League of American Orchestras (formerly the American Symphony Orchestra League); their suggested guidelines for symphony orchestras’ self-evaluation are useful tools for measuring success in partnering with the community. The rubric’s six specific guidelines are:

- Goals and objectives of the community engagement program indicate a clear focus and measurable outcomes.
- The community engagement program demonstrates a clear relationship with the mission and resources of the orchestra.
- The community engagement program embodies artistic worth and develops an audience for symphonic music.
- The community engagement program advances the role of the orchestra in the community.
- The community engagement program is a creative model that maintains the integrity of the orchestra’s mission, identifies and addresses community needs/interests, and offers ideas and strategies for programs in other communities.
- The community engagement program is intentional about data collection, analysis of evidence, honest interpretation of data, and program modification in view of both systematic and anecdotal feedback. (League of American Orchestras, 2008).

The guidelines also use phrases such as “sustained relationships,” “embraces distinctive aspects or qualities of the community,” and “fosters a sustained relationship beyond specific time-limited events” (League of American Orchestras,

2008). This is one more example of the collaborative, cooperative aspect of community engagement; the focus is on symphony orchestras building relationships with communities to connect with them in the most meaningful ways possible.

To reach new audiences, symphony orchestras are collaborating with many types of institutions, such as schools, community centers, churches, libraries, and other arts and cultural organizations (Knight Foundation, 2002; McPhee, 2002; Rosser, 1995; Walker-Kuhne, 2005; Winzenried, 2003). Having multiple points of entry for the arts increases the chances that people who are not attending will be engaged by the art form (Walker-Kuhne, 2005; Winzenried, 2003). The goal is to bring the arts into communities with different demographics than the typical makeup of the symphony orchestra audience. Demonstrating the role of the symphony orchestra in communities is equally important when trying to reach these new audiences. McPhee (2002) states

I would argue vehemently that a community doesn't need an orchestra just for the sake of saying it has an orchestra. The mere existence of an orchestra in a community does not contribute to the community's vitality. Communities need vibrant, relevant orchestras that give meaning to people's weary, humdrum lives.....the caliber of the playing, the renown of the conductor, the architecture of the world-class hall mean little or nothing if the sound doesn't resonate throughout the community. (p. 25-26).

3.06 Relevance in the community

Perhaps one of the largest challenges that symphony orchestras are facing is a lack of relevance in the communities in which they exist. The symphony orchestra is a very old institution, and little has changed in the overall structure of the organization or in the artistic offerings. To someone who is not familiar with classical music, it would seem that there is not much in it that can be connected to our daily lives. As Botstein (1996) states, "we must find ways to make the orchestral

concert uniquely memorable and an experience that cannot be gotten elsewhere” (p. 192). Besides just being memorable, it must be something to which audiences can relate. This may be one of the most difficult things that the symphony orchestra can undertake. The Knight Foundation (2002) conducted a segmentation study that asked, “how can orchestras help people find meaning in classical music in places like churches, schools, cars, private homes and on the radio—places where they actually experience the art form on a daily basis? Can orchestras leverage these different settings and mediums into audience development opportunities?” (p. 13).

Studies conducted on the subject of audience development have produced helpful suggestions for ways that orchestras can change to become more relevant and attractive to their communities. There have been several ideas for engaging segments of the community who are not currently participants. Some of these suggestions include “loosening” the boundaries of what is acceptable at symphony orchestra concerts. This could consist of short introductions of the piece from the stage, longer intermissions to allow for more social time, thematic lighting, and a more informal process in general (Knight, 2002; Reiss, 1995). Orchestras must be careful, though, to not alienate current patrons who prefer a more traditional concert-going experience, or sacrifice their artistic and aesthetic integrity in the process. Symphony orchestras must strike a very delicate balance between serving their artistic missions, and keeping current patrons happy while trying to reach out to other types of audiences.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is one example of an organization that has dramatically changed its operations to successfully draw in new audiences by connecting with the community and providing relevance in the lives of community members. New programming reflects requests by the community to be more

accessible as an institution. The CSO now offers performances and events with earlier starting times during the week to cater to audiences who do not want to be out too late on weeknights. Some of their series are aimed at attracting younger audiences by performing music that may be more relevant to a younger generation. The CSO has also reworked its website to be more accessible and user-friendly. All of these changes have helped to bring new people into the concert hall and have also changed the financial situation of the organization: the budget was balanced in 2008 for the first time in six years (Ravanas, 2008).

3.07 Researching target populations

In looking at the vast research that has been conducted regarding the plight of the symphony orchestra, it is clear that these organizations must make major changes in the ways in which they relate to their communities in order to ensure their survival. One way they can do this is to look more closely at who their target populations are within the community. According to McCarthy and Jinnett (2001), arts organizations can build participation in three ways: they can diversify participation by attracting different kinds of people than they already attract, they can broaden participation by attracting more people, or they can deepen participation by increasing the level at which current audience members are involved. It is important for each organization to distinguish its goals in building and developing audiences, because each of these methods of building participation requires different strategies and tactics (Botstein, 1996). Rosser (1995) asserts that “activities in the concert halls themselves, on the campuses of schools and colleges, in neighborhood centers, churches, parks, etc., are proving to be effective means of

building interest, trust, and ownership, i.e., creating more synergistic relationships with communities” (p. 4).

One of the ways that symphony orchestras can attract more audiences is to add in a social component to the performances or events. Numerous reports have shown that audiences are more likely to attend if there is some type of social element incorporated into an event (Brown & Bare, 2003; Knight, 2001; Thakar, 2003). For many, it is the invitation to a concert that is their motivation to attend. There are two types of people involved in the attendance of a concert: initiators and responders. The initiators will organize excursions for their friends, and invite others to participate. The responders might not consider attending an event or performance if the initiators had not extended an invitation. Symphony orchestras can utilize the initiators to help to build up audiences externally from the organization through invitations and planning events (Brown & Bare, 2003).

In conducting market research in their communities, many organizations neglect the one group they should be looking at the most closely: the people who are currently not participating in any way. In looking at the groups of people who do or do not participate, symphony orchestras should learn as much about them as a whole as possible. This includes their attitudes about leisure time, their motivation for participating in the arts, and whether they participate to be enriched or entertained (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001). It is stressed in the literature that arts organizations must look at their target populations from a behavioral and attitudinal perspective; most arts groups only know the socio-demographics of their target populations. The socio-demographics do not give insight into people’s motivation for participation or their attitudes about the arts, which is crucial information to have in order to build audiences.

Walker-Kuhne (2005) states that the most important part of audience development is research of audience and community demographics, and that this research should continue throughout the life of an organization. Identifying the target audiences and groups in the community an organization would like to attract will assist with crafting the symphony orchestra's plans for developing those audiences. The two necessary types of audience research are quantitative, which will provide statistics regarding percentages of ticket buyers and purchasing habits, and qualitative, which will provide more insight into behavior and lifestyle patterns (Walker-Kuhne, 2005). Research offers insight into how different audiences will respond to marketing strategies, as well as potential solutions for working with different types of people. If arts organizations do not have accurate information about their target populations, they will be unable to align their goals and tactics with what those target populations need (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001).

3.08 The Magic of Music

One of the more comprehensive studies to be conducted regarding the changes taking place in the symphony orchestra field is "The Magic of Music," which was an initiative of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The final report from this study was entitled "The Search for Shining Eyes," published in 2006. This report provides excellent insight into the current problems symphony orchestras face, and recommendations for implementing change within organizations. The Magic of Music program disbursed more than \$13 million from 1994 to 2004 in order to address one of the problems the foundation was facing—there were increasing numbers of symphony orchestras going through financial crises and requesting emergency funding.

The Magic of Music sought to find the root of the problem by funding and studying fifteen orchestras throughout the country. The study was initiated after symphony orchestras internationally had been going through a crisis for several years. Starr (1997) paints a bleak picture when he states, “the ticket-buying public had grown older and its numbers had peaked; a new generation approached adulthood with no exposure to music in the schools and no habit of concert-going; regular seasons contracted; pop stars were engaged as part of a pathetic and demeaning effort to court new audiences; deficits soared; endowments were consumed, and salaries frozen” (p. 80).

The research represented “the largest discipline-specific study of arts consumers ever undertaken in the United States and involved more than 25,000 people in 15 distinct markets” (Wolf, 2006, p. 5-6). The Knight Foundation began this study hoping to see the concert hall experience revitalized. It believed that artistic excellence in the concert hall was enough to invoke major change and rejuvenate the entire organization, and this in turn would reverse the decline in audience attendance. This turned out to be a highly oversimplified theory, as the impetus for change would have to come from all within their individual organizations. The lessons learned through this study, however, are very useful, and would be realistic goals for a symphony orchestra to undertake in order to build participation.

The report includes a section for “lessons learned” by the symphony orchestras and the foundation through the study. One of the main findings is that transformational change within an orchestra depends on all sectors of the organization: the musicians, leadership, administrators, music director, volunteers and trustees. This is such an important realization for the field because no

significant change can take place unless everyone is involved (Knight Foundation, 2002; McPhee, 2002). Other lessons include the idea that the orchestra cannot cater to everyone; there are simply not enough resources in any organization. Symphony orchestras must choose their target audiences to build up and retain. This should be laid out clearly in the mission statement of the organization.

A third lesson from the Knight Foundation study is that orchestras must, as stated earlier, be relevant and of service to the communities in which they exist, despite aspirations to be recognized nationally and internationally for artistic excellence. There is only so much an organization can do with its resources, and it must build up or maintain its relevance in order to ensure survival within the community. Other lessons include useful information, such as the finding that free programming and outreach “do not turn people into ticket buyers. It simply turns them into consumers of free programming” (Wolf, 2006, p. 6).

There is growing evidence that participatory music education will turn people into ticket buyers as adults, but that exposure programs (such as field trips to listen to the symphony) will not. This is also reinforced by literature written specifically about the effects of arts education on arts participation (Bergonzi & Smith, 1996). The last lesson in the Knight Foundation report states that in order to build and develop audiences, symphony orchestras need to do more research on the people who are not attending live performances instead of focusing on those who are.

The lessons learned from the Magic of Music study are very relevant in the face of the many changes currently taking place in the field of symphonic music. The lessons align well with other studies conducted, and other literature written on the subject. Much of what was learned has to do with looking outside of the symphony orchestra at the external issues, and realistically adapting to the changes.

3.09 Involvement of the entire organization in change

What has become very clear through the studies and research conducted in this area of audience development is that many different departments of symphony orchestras need to be involved in the process of building audiences for their organizations. Building audiences is a crucial activity for any arts organization, and these organizations need to have the correct tools to engage with their communities and reach the audiences that will ensure their continued existence (Rosser, 1995). All areas of organizations need to be invested in creating change—development, marketing, education, the board, music director, executive leadership, and even volunteers. One of the most important groups to be involved in audience development is the musicians of the symphony orchestra. They are rarely utilized for anything besides performing the music, yet they should have a vested interest in the future of the organization. Starr (1997) states that “in spite of decades of study in renowned conservatories and alone, musicians’ judgments are rarely sought in rehearsals. Most know the tastes of the local audience far better than does the musical director, yet their views are rarely solicited as programming decisions are made” (p. 85-86).

Once all sectors of the symphony orchestra organization are working together on the issues of audience development and building participation, they must carefully define the goals they are working to accomplish. When discussing audience development, they need to decide who they are trying to reach; who the target populations are. Within this framework, they must then decide whether they will broaden, deepen, or diversify their audiences. These decisions will determine what types of strategies and tactics they must use to engage their audiences in their communities and in the concert hall. The next decision is how to serve these

populations and audiences within the context of the organization's mission. In framing audience development within the mission statement, symphony orchestras will be able to offer programming and events that reflect who the organization is and who it serves (Bernstein, 2007; Dreeszen & Korza, 1994).

Symphony orchestras have endured some significant challenges over the past few decades, and have struggled to retain audiences in the concert halls. Currently, symphony orchestras must work to engage audiences and stay relevant to the lives of those in the community. The way to accomplish this is to have all areas of the organization collaborate in making important decisions for the future, which will keep symphony orchestras a part of our performing arts culture.

3.10 Conclusion

This literature review has set up the various issues that are currently affecting symphony orchestras in terms of their audience development and community engagement initiatives. These changes have happened relatively quickly over the last few decades; many organizations are exploring these issues and looking at ways that they can adapt. The next chapter will look at the ways the three case study sites, the San Francisco Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Seattle Symphony, have responded to these changes to stay relevant in and shape the cultural life of their communities.

Chapter 4: Collective Case Study

4.01 Introduction

In looking at the ways that symphony orchestras engage with their communities, this research study utilized a collective case study of three major symphony orchestras on the west coast. These orchestras studied were the San Francisco Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Seattle Symphony. Each organization was chosen for its annual budget of \$10 million or higher, as well as its location, as a way to delimit the study. All three organizations illustrate the ways that symphony orchestras are working more collaboratively with partners and with their communities as a way to educate, engage, and attract audiences.

This study looked specifically at symphony orchestras' audience development and community engagement initiatives through such avenues as programming, marketing, and education, and how these initiatives have shifted from traditional outreach activities addressed in the literature review. Information was collected through interviews with key administrative staff at each site, and through document analysis of organizational materials pertaining to community engagement. In-person and phone interviews yielded information regarding the shift from "outreach" to "community engagement," the orchestras' roles in their communities, changing audience demographics, and goals and strategic plans for the future.

This chapter includes a comparison of community engagement information from other major symphony orchestras across the United States, in order to help illustrate the shift from traditional outreach to more collaborative and inclusive community engagement. Following the national comparison, each of the three case study sites will be described in detail. In collecting data for the collective case study, personnel from the three case study sites were recruited to participate. It was intended that they would illustrate the changing dynamics of symphony orchestras'

experiences and would provide insight into how these organizations are working to provide meaningful, engaging experiences for the citizens of their communities.

4.02 National symphony orchestra comparison analysis

The overall trend from outreach to community engagement can be seen in the analysis of symphony orchestras across the nation that are of comparable size to the three case study sites. Many of these organizations have mission statements, programming, and activities that reflect that their relationships with communities are more partnership-oriented than the more traditional outreach activities of the past. Based on data collected from each of these organizations, I created a chart that compares pertinent community engagement information across the six symphony orchestras (see Figure 4.1).

Detroit Symphony Orchestra

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra has been serving the people of Detroit and its surrounding areas since 1914. With an annual budget of over \$30 million, the organization programs a large number of performances designed to attract a wide array of audiences. Its education program brings thousands of students to the hall each year, and offers educational resources to nearly 26,000 school children from the metro area (www.detroitssymphony.com). The education department focuses a large part of its attention on the community; Charles Burke, Director of Education, states

it has been our goal to find efficient and innovative ways in which the symphony industry can effectively connect with the community while bringing a diverse audience together under the unifying umbrella of quality. Further, through training, exposure and partnerships, our goal has been to reshape the role of a cultural institution by fulfilling the needs of the community while providing artistic excellence in a diverse array of genres.

Figure 4.1: National comparison chart

National Comparison of Major Symphony Orchestras				
	Mission Statement	Department Titles	Types of Programming/Activities	Role in Community
Boston Symphony Orchestra	The mission of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) is to foster and maintain an organization dedicated to the making of music consonant with the highest aspirations of musical art, creating performances and providing educational and training programs at the highest level of excellence.	Education and Community Programs	Youth and Family Concerts, community education partnerships, Days in the Arts, Musicians in the Schools, Community Chamber Concerts, the BSO Education Resource Center, professional development workshops	"We promise to use our position to help shape the future of young people by encouraging music education and by developing and strengthening ties with our surrounding community."
Cleveland Orchestra	Founded in 1918 and long considered one of America's great orchestras, The Cleveland Orchestra stands today among the world's most-revered symphonic ensembles and continues to set standards of performing excellence and imaginative programming for audiences and performers alike.	Education and Community	Family Concerts, neighborhood concerts, educational programs in schools, libraries and community locations, Campus Club student tickets, Youth Orchestra, concert previews and music study groups in the neighborhoods	"More than 70,000 area schoolchildren, teachers, families, young musicians and adult learners participate in the Orchestra's educational programs at Severance Hall and in schools, libraries and community locations throughout the region designed to nurture a lifelong love of music."
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra	The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra provides musical experiences at the highest level of expression to enrich the community and to satisfy the needs and preferences of our audiences. We work together to support an internationally recognized orchestra and ensure a viable long-term financial future; a fulfilling environment for our Orchestra, Staff, Volunteers and Board; and the unsurpassed satisfaction of our customers.	Education and Community Engagement	Family concerts, "Audience of the Future" program, "Tiny Tots" concerts, Schooltime concerts, high school student/Pittsburgh Symphony Side-by-Side Program, community engagement concerts	"It is the mission of the Education and Community Engagement Department to engage individuals in experiences of the highest artistic and educational quality to create informed, enduring, and evolving connections to music and to the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra."
Chicago Symphony Orchestra	The central mission of the CSO Association is to present classical music through the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to Chicago, national and international audiences. The mission is supported by four mutually reinforcing elements: Artistic excellence: continued international preeminence in the field of orchestral excellence. Audience development: leading audience development initiatives. Education: superior education and community programs. Financial stability: fiscal responsibility for long-term stability.	Education, Community Relations and Diversity Department	Community Partnership Programs, youth education concerts, <i>Armonia</i> partnership with the National Mexican Museum of Art, People's Music School Partnership, <i>MusiCorps</i> music and education advocacy program	The CSO offers some of the most comprehensive education, community relations, and diversity programs of any U.S. orchestra. Education and community programs will engage nearly 100,000 area schoolchildren, teachers, families, young musicians and concert in Chicago Public Schools, and numerous community locations throughout the Chicagoland area.
Philadelphia Orchestra	The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, recognizing that music brings personal joy and profound meaning into the lives of its listeners, is committed to bringing the world's greatest music to diverse audiences in the Philadelphia region and around the world, through its dedication to and support of the world's most renowned symphony orchestra.	Education and Community Partnerships	Access Concerts, Community Music Project, family concerts, student competitions, Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concerts, Neighborhood Concerts, School Partnership Program, Suburban Sound All Around, Teacher Workshops	"The Philadelphia Orchestra extends its reach into the community on an ongoing basis with the goal to be an active, energetic, and musical participant in the lives of area residents, organizations, and community partners."
Detroit Symphony Orchestra	The Detroit Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to the very highest quality of music performance and education programs, through the operation of an orchestra and concert hall among the best in the world.	Education	Civic youth ensembles, concerts for students and teachers, concerts for children and families	"Since its founding in 1914, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra has been a leader in music education by bringing thousands of students each year to its annual educational and youth concerts at Orchestra Hall."

We must be willing to step out of our comfort zones and be willing, with great enthusiasm, to explore new genres, incongruous partnerships and embrace change at a rapid pace. (www.polyphonic.org).

Boston Symphony Orchestra

At just over \$80 million, the Boston Symphony Orchestra has one of the largest annual budgets in the nation. The organization offers many types of programming, with this year's attendance rate at 1,470,000. Activities of the orchestra include the Symphony Orchestra, Pops, Tanglewood (summer home of the Orchestra), Chamber Players, and the Boston Symphony Youth Concerts. The Youth and Family Concerts reach approximately 40,000 young people each year to develop future audiences for the organization. Information on the website states,

the Boston Symphony Orchestra takes very seriously its role as one of the foremost arts organizations in the country. We promise to use our position to help shape the future of young people by encouraging music education and by developing and strengthening ties with our surrounding community. The BSO works with students and teachers across a wide range of ethnic, economic, and racial groups. Our programs include community education partnerships, Days in the Arts, Musicians in the Schools, Community Chamber Concerts, the BSO Education Resource Center, professional development workshops, and curriculum resource materials for teachers. The BSO is also a partner in Project STEP, String Training and Education Program for students of color. (www.bso.org).

Cleveland Orchestra

The Cleveland Orchestra maintains a high level of commitment to community engagement through programming and activities for youth musicians, college students, adults, schools and teachers, and children and families. Family Concerts are hour-long narrated concerts performed by the Cleveland Orchestra and joined by dancers, actors, or other musicians. Throughout the year, the organization partners with other local organizations or institutions to perform concerts in neighborhoods and around town. The website explains,

the Cleveland Orchestra's commitment to education and community service began when the Orchestra was founded in 1918, and has remained a top priority ever since. Today, more than 70,000 area schoolchildren, teachers, families, young musicians and adult learners participate in the Orchestra's educational programs at Severance Hall and in schools, libraries and community locations throughout the region – all designed to nurture a lifelong love of music. (www.clevelandorchestra.com).

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra has been one of the top orchestras in the United States for over a century. Annually, it features 22 weeks of classical concerts, a Pops series, and the Fiddlesticks Family Concert series. The organization offers a wide range of community engagement activities throughout the season, in many different formats. The "Audience of the Future" program gives high school students the opportunity to plan and implement a Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra concert, while the orchestra performs numerous Community Engagement Concerts in the surrounding areas throughout the season. In 2007, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra became the first orchestra to receive both the Bank of America and MetLife Awards for Excellence in Orchestra Education. (www.pittsburghsymphony.org).

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has some of the most broad community engagement programs of any orchestra in the country. The programs are very diversified in their offerings, and are far-reaching in the community. The Education, Community Relations and Diversity Department developed many of their programs as part of the implementation of their Community Engagement Initiative in 1998. The planning and strategic development of the initiative was a three-year process, resulting in programming and activities that would make the Chicago Symphony

Orchestra more relevant in the daily lives of the community members of Chicago and its surrounding areas. The website describes,

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's education, community relations, and diversity initiatives include Community Partnership Programs, stationed at community centers throughout the city of Chicago; youth education concerts and programs at Orchestra Hall and in Chicago Public Schools; the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in performances designed for the whole family; learning opportunities for adults; and advanced-level training and performance opportunities for young musicians. Ongoing, community-based musical programs, collaboratively designed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and community partners, Community Partnership Programs have been a vital component of this work (www.cso.org).

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Community Partnership Programs work to build bridges between the orchestra and communities of the Chicago area, and to increase the diversity of the CSO itself. Some examples of their unique activities include *Armonía*, an educational program in partnership with the National Museum of Mexican Art, and the People's Music School Partnership, in which people who would not otherwise have the chance to study music receive free classical music training.

MusiCorps is a music and education and advocacy program in which music awareness, appreciation and training are provided by select members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (CSO's training orchestra) in sites located around the community. Community members are mentored and trained in order to promote audience development.

Philadelphia Orchestra

The Philadelphia Orchestra was founded in 1900 and is known as an innovative organization in its media and recording endeavors. The organization has also created extensive school programs, family concerts, and community events designed to get the orchestra out into the community, as well as draw audiences in. As the Philadelphia Orchestra's website explains, "the Philadelphia Orchestra

extends its reach into the community on an ongoing basis with the goal to be an active, energetic, and musical participant in the lives of area residents, organizations, and community partners.” This is echoed in the remarks made by Sarah Johnson, the Director of Education and Community Partnerships, in an online virtual discussion panel, where she states,

in Philadelphia we have a range of education programs that fall into three major categories. First, we have programs that connect with children and grandchildren of our core audience and invite new families into the fold. Second, we have programs that are designed to support music educators and music students in the region. Third, we run programs that fulfill our responsibilities as a major cultural citizen in the city of Philadelphia. Several of these programs go into great depth, and make significant contributions to the cultural life of the community. (www.polyphonic.org).

The information presented on each of the organizations shows that the some of the country’s largest and most well-known symphony orchestras have a strong organizational commitment to their communities. This is demonstrated in such ways as in the titles of administrative staff and departments of each of the symphonies, which include the word “community.” Currently, most have departments and personnel titles that reflect a strong focus on the community. Their mission statements indicate that there is high regard for what takes place in the community, and the symphony orchestras are taking a close look at their roles within those communities.

The formats of the concerts are flexible; an example of this can be seen in the Cleveland Orchestra’s hour-long narrated concerts for families, and in the pre- and post-concert social events of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Many orchestras are becoming more of a visible presence in their communities, instead of assuming that people will always come to them in the concert halls. Free community concert

series can be found on most symphonies' season programs, and the concerts that do take place in the concert hall oftentimes have pre-concert talks and more informal formats to increase accessibility. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra works with community partners to bring the Orchestra into community centers and other unique venues. Many are offering short performances and are presenting programs at different times than traditional concerts to fit better with, in many cases, people's highly scheduled lives. Education programs are working to engage with students as arts education in the schools has decreased across the country.

All of these programs and activities demonstrate the collaborative, community-based focus of each of the symphony orchestras, and signal a departure from the traditional outreach model that has for so long been a part of classical performing arts organizations' operations. The outreach model discussed in the literature review of Chapter 3 implies that "outreach" is not the two-way dialogue and cooperative effort that seems to be a part of symphony orchestras' current thinking. The collaborations and partnerships with other arts and cultural organizations, as well as foundations, corporations, and institutions suggest a shift in thinking; arts organizations do not exist in a vacuum, and to stay relevant in people's lives, they must find ways to engage with all different types of people within those communities.

4.03 Case Study Sites

Many of the changing trends found in the comparison of the previously discussed symphony orchestras can also be found in the three case study sites: the San Francisco Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Seattle Symphony, suggesting that the changes are national in scope. The shifts can be seen in the structure of the

organizations, as well as the titles of personnel and departments, mission statements, and artistic programming. The next sections will outline information discovered through data collection at each of the three sites.

4.04 San Francisco Symphony

Overview

Located in Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall in the heart of San Francisco, California, the San Francisco Symphony is one of the nation's most well-known and beloved symphony orchestras. After the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, establishment of a symphony orchestra was one of the city's major priorities (www.sfsymphony.org). The Symphony was founded in 1911, and has flourished under its music directors, such as Henry Hadley, Pierre Monteux, Seiji Ozawa, Edo de Waart, and Herbert Blomstedt. The Symphony has been under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas since 1995.

The San Francisco Symphony has won awards worldwide for its recordings, and has toured extensively through the United States, Europe and Asia. While at home, the Symphony performs in Davies Symphony Hall, which has a seating capacity of over 2,700 seats. The hall was built in 1980 and underwent a major \$10 million renovation for acoustic and aesthetic improvements in 1992.

With a budget of over \$53 million annually, the San Francisco Symphony is considered one of the country's most financially stable arts organizations. It programs a wide array of over 230 concerts and performances each year; many of these are focused on providing music and musical experiences for the greater Bay Area. The mission statement of the organization states that

the San Francisco Symphony sets the highest possible standard for excellence in musical performance at home and around the world; enriches, serves, and

shapes cultural life throughout the spectrum of Bay Area communities; Maintains financial stability and gains public recognition as a means of ensuring its ability to fulfill its mission” (www.sfsymphony.org).

Data Collection

The San Francisco Symphony has a strong commitment to serving the people of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. Through interviews of key personnel within the symphony administration and document analysis, I found that its community engagement activities are designed to be far-reaching in scope as well as geographic area. Recruitment letters for interviews were originally sent out to the Executive Director, Director of Education Programs, the Director of Marketing and Sales, and the Audience Development Manager. All of my original interviewees declined participation in the study, but I was provided the names of other key members of the administrative staff to interview. The interviewees for this research study were Gary Ginstling, Director of Communications and External Affairs, and Sammi Madison, Associate Director of Education Programs (see Appendix G for a list of interview questions). Internal organizational documents were provided by the interviewees for analysis as well.

The role of symphony orchestras in their communities was discussed with both interviewees; as Ginstling stated, “we try to think of ourselves as an integral part of the arts community, the cultural community, and even in some ways the popular culture community of San Francisco. We want to make sure the San Francisco Symphony is visible and present in as many ways as we can be” (G. Ginstling, personal communication, April 4, 2008). These sentiments were similarly echoed in Madison’s statements that the San Francisco Symphony sees its role in the community as being a good cultural partner for the greater Bay Area beyond just the city itself (S. Madison, personal communication, April 4, 2008).

The Symphony is sophisticated in its segmentation of audiences and communities through marketing efforts in order to build audiences, but at the same time is thinking of the larger community, and how it can be a part of people's lives even if they never buy a ticket to a performance. This seems to be at the core of community engagement; the Symphony's efforts are for the benefit of the people of the community even beyond their audience development goals.

In response to the questions regarding the use of the terminology of "outreach" versus "community engagement," Ginstling said that the Symphony does not use the term "outreach," and that what it does as an organization is more about partnering with other local institutions, organizations, and members of the community.

Although the Symphony aims to engage with as broad a community base as possible, there are certain populations with which the organization is working to connect. "The Latino community is the fastest growing ethnic community and also the youngest ethnic community, and those two points have certainly led us to identify that as a community that we'd like to engage with in a meaningful way," explained Ginstling. In November of 2007, the Symphony presented the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Through that performance, the Symphony partnered with many Latino community organizations, corporations and foundations to bring the Latino community into Davies Symphony Hall. Engagement efforts for the concert included a press release in Spanish, and many of the people at the performance were first-time attendees.

When asked about attracting younger audiences to the Symphony, both Ginstling and Madison discussed the programs they have that are designed for a younger demographic. College students are offered reduced ticket prices on

subscriptions and single tickets. In addition, the program Friday 6.5 was implemented to help attract younger audiences to the hall; the programs start at 6:30pm, and are shorter than traditional concerts so attendees can still go out after the concert for dinner or other social events. The programs are also more informal than other concerts and the conductor typically talks before the performance. The Symphony's approach to drawing audiences is to target them in a way that makes sense with their lifestyles.

One of the areas in which the San Francisco Symphony's program activities stand out is the area of education. This is a large focus of the organization, and one which ties in directly with community engagement. The Symphony has a long history of educating the people of the community, dating back to 1919. Today's education efforts target and reach thousands of school children around the Bay Area. Madison stated that "we are doing our best to work as a partner with school districts around the Bay Area to help in providing a well-rounded education. We want the children to have the very best."

One of the most prominent of all of the Symphony's education programs is Adventures in Music (AIM), which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. This program is a long-term partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) that provides five years of music education for school children in first through fifth grades. The program is multi-disciplinary and melds music education with the core curriculum of the SFUSD. AIM serves over 22,000 children annually. The program consists of in-school performances by a diverse range of ensembles, private concerts for the schools at Davies Symphony Hall, materials and resources for teachers, and partnerships with local organizations to enhance the programming.

Madison stated that AIM is not attempting to fill the niche of an on-site music teacher, but “what we are doing is recognizing where the school district is right now, and providing, as a partner, a program that is ensuring that every child, first through fifth in the San Francisco Unified School District, has equal access to music so that it becomes a natural part of their school experience.” AIM is also a program that helps students learn about culture and diversity through the ensembles that work with them and the curriculum of the program itself. AIM is a mirror of its communities, and students experience their own culture through the program (San Francisco Symphony, 2008). An evaluation of AIM outlines the mutual benefits to the Symphony and the community of this type of program. The San Francisco Symphony and SFUSD are working in tandem in this community-building process.

One of the main goals of the unique educational programs is to make the experiences as engaging as possible for the students and teachers who participate. Madison explained,

the further and further away that we get from the live experience, the more difficult it is to make that leap that humans are making this music, that humans are actually producing these sounds. For so many children, what they experience is the technology of the form, as opposed to the music-making side of the form. It’s really empowering for them to understand that these professional musicians that are part of the San Francisco Symphony or any professional musician that goes into the classroom, it’s their job to be a musician, and [the children] can do that too.

The Symphony has many other educational programs designed to engage children and young audiences as well, including Concerts for Kids, the Youth Orchestra, and Music for Families. As Ginstling stated,

we focus on keeping an eye on the continuum of offerings that we have that reach children, families, and young musicians through our youth orchestra, that reach different neighborhoods where we do community concerts and that reach specific targeted communities like a Latino community or a Chinese community....planning for the future and building longer-term visions and goals in this area are a key part of how we think of community engagement.

4.05 Oregon Symphony

Overview

The Oregon Symphony is located in downtown Portland, Oregon. The first concert was performed in 1896 under the name of Portland Symphony Society. In 1899 the organization was already playing annual concert series, and started touring the state as early as 1902. Music directors for the Oregon Symphony have included Carl Denton, Willem van Hoogstraten, James DePreist, and currently, Carlos Kalmar. The mission of the Oregon Symphony is to “inspire a love and understanding of music in our lives by bringing great music to all.”

James DePreist was appointed Music Director in 1980; during that time, the Symphony moved from the Portland Civic Auditorium (now Keller Auditorium) to the historic Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, run by Portland Center for the Performing Arts. This move occurred at the same time the organization was increasing its concert activity, as well as placing greater emphasis on education, community programs and recording. Carlos Kalmar became Music Director in 2003; the Symphony has enjoyed rave reviews and sold out concerts during his tenure.

The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, the Symphony’s current home, has a seating capacity of almost 2,800. The organization’s annual budget is approximately \$15 million. A list on the Oregon Symphony website of this year’s performances includes:

- 14 Classical concerts (3 performances each)
- 7 Pops concerts (3 performances each)
- 3 Kids concerts (1 performance each)
- 40 Youth Concerts (4 full orchestra; 36 ensemble Kinderkonzerts)
- 4 Inside the Score concerts
- 9 concerts in Salem, Oregon
- 5 Specials including: Gospel Christmas, Yuletide Celebration, Smokey Robinson, Eartha Kitt and Van Cliburn

- 4 Community concerts in Portland parks, Eastern Oregon and Newberg, Oregon (www.orsymphony.org).

In addition, education and community engagement activities consist of over 350 Community Music Partnership residency activities, 36 Kinderkonzert performances in Multnomah and Washington Counties, 16 Symphony Storytime visits in Multnomah County Libraries, 42 Concert Conversations, and 42 Prelude performances. The Oregon Symphony is committed to being a cultural partner in the arts in Portland and around the state of Oregon. The state-wide community orientation of the Oregon Symphony is an important aspect, as it focuses on such a broad area beyond the Portland Metro area.

Data collection

To collect data for this research study, I approached the President, Director of Marketing, and Director of Education and Community Engagement at the Oregon Symphony for interviews. Due to internal changing conditions of the Oregon Symphony administration, participants declined formal interviews, but conducted an informal discussion of the education and community engagement activities of the organization. Much of the data collected from the Oregon Symphony was publicly available information.

The Oregon Symphony considers itself to be one of the threads of the cultural fabric that makes up Portland, and Oregon in the larger context; as a thread of that fabric, it is not more important than any other arts or cultural organization in the community. Partnerships are highly valued, as the Oregon Symphony collaborates with many organizations and institutions in the state to engage with different communities. One of the benefits of partnering with other arts organizations in the area is cross-promotion of events and activities. Frequent partners of the Symphony

are the Portland Opera and Oregon Ballet Theatre; audiences who attend the ballet or opera performances and events may be more likely to become future attendees of Oregon Symphony events. Other partners include the Jazz Festival and the Rose Festival, both popular events in which a partnership with the Oregon Symphony can increase its visibility in the community.

The Oregon Symphony's education and community engagement programs are innovative and far-reaching around the state. One of its largest programs is the Community Music Partnership, which was started in 2001, and is funded by the Ford Family Foundation. As stated on the Oregon Symphony website,

too often, [the Oregon Symphony's] presence in Oregon's rural communities was fleeting at best, making a lasting impact on music and music education virtually impossible. In 2001, Oregon Symphony staff, musicians, board, and past community partners undertook a comprehensive review of its statewide presence to answer the question: "What does the 'Oregon' in the Oregon Symphony mean?" One result was the creation of a program designed to challenge communities' understandings of how the arts enrich schools and the broader community.

The Community Music Partnership is a residency program in which a rural community with a population of 30,000 or less is selected through a competitive application process. The program lasts for two years in each community, and includes partnering with schools to create deepened experiences with orchestral music for the participants.

A key component of the program is building in future sustainability; the residency helps the public access community resources to continue the learning and sharing after the residency is complete. This extensive program demonstrates that the Oregon Symphony's commitment to community engagement goes beyond traditional audience development; the organization is focused on enriching the lives of communities state-wide. The 2007-2009 residency is centered in La Grande and

Cove, Oregon; past residencies include Estacada, Baker City, Redmond, North Bend, and Klamath Falls.

Another community engagement program is Oregon Symphony in the Neighborhoods, which is an annual program of concerts around the neighborhoods of the Portland Metro area. The Symphony collaborates with local neighborhoods and arts and community groups to provide the free concerts for the communities of Portland. An article in *Oregon Symphony in the Neighborhoods* (2007) publication explains,

because the arts are a catalyst for community-building and essential to the health of every community, Oregon Symphony in the Neighborhoods benefits Portland's neighborhoods through: 1) neighborhood development; 2) youth involvement and education; 3) neighborhood recognition and enhancement; and 4) promoting a sense of neighborhood unity. Oregon Symphony in the Neighborhoods is designed to build significantly on the work RACC [Regional Arts & Culture Council] initiated through its Neighborhood Arts Program. (p. 20).

The Symphony recognizes its communities as multicultural and multilingual, and creates programs and events that engage with its broad base of community members. In an article in *Insymphony* (2008), Oregon Symphony's magazine, a feature in the education and community engagement section states,

as we travel to schools, libraries and communities outside of the Portland metropolitan area, we see evidence of our state's growing ethnic diversity. In an effort to deepen the Oregon Symphony connection with families, teachers and children who attend our education and community events, we are incorporating some interesting bilingual and multicultural elements. We hope to acknowledge the diversity of both our audiences and the Symphony musicians. This addition also encourages participation from those in the audience for whom English is not their first language (p. 14).

The scope of these programs and events reaches beyond traditional audience development to engage with audiences as one thread in the fabric of their lives.

4.06 Seattle Symphony

Overview

The Seattle Symphony makes its home in Benaroya Hall in downtown Seattle, Washington. The Symphony made its debut in 1903, and is now under the artistic leadership of Music Director Gerard Schwarz. With its annual budget of \$22 million, the Symphony programs almost 220 performances each year to audiences of over 315,000, and has a subscriber base consists of over 36,000 people. The mission statement of the Seattle Symphony is “to present symphonic music of the highest quality in a distinctive way for the cultural enrichment, education, engagement and enjoyment of the people of our community.”

Gerard Schwarz has been the Music Director since 1983; since that time the Symphony has been known to program a large number of works by twentieth-century composers. Benaroya Hall was built in 1998, and was followed three years later by the *Soundbridge* Seattle Symphony Music Discovery Center. The Symphony is well-known for its extensive education and community engagement programming.

Data Collection

For this research study, I contacted the Director of Education, Senior Director of Audience Development, and the Director of Sales & Service for interviews. Due to lack of response and temporary change of personnel, I was not able to interview the Senior Director of Audience Development or the Director of Sales & Service. Interviews were conducted with Nancy Gosen, Director of Education, and Beth Engel, Interim Senior Director of Audience Development.

The Seattle Symphony has a strong tradition of education and community engagement activities. The number of programs created to educate and engage, and the depth of each of those programs clearly shows that community engagement is a

high priority for the organization. When interviewed, Director of Education Nancy Gosen stated, “we give voice to the single person that is in our community, and then we integrate the self and the whole. Our mission statement is to make symphonic music part of everyone’s life” (N. Gosen, personal communication, April 17, 2008). She went on to say that the Symphony’s role in the community is rich and complex, and that the organization has an obligation through its mission to the people of the community. When questioned regarding the use of a community engagement approach versus outreach to build audiences, Gosen stated,

outreach is more like a directive from the center outward, where engagement is usually a dialogue. We influence and are influenced by. We don’t operate in a vacuum. If people come to any one of our concerts, whether in our hall or out in the community, if they don’t see themselves in the reflection, then we lose them.

Interim Senior Director of Audience Development Beth Engel discussed the importance of building audiences as the Symphony’s subscriber base is declining (B. Engel, personal communication, April 28, 2008). She stated that the Symphony has not necessarily seen a decline in the number of people attending concerts and events; there has actually been an increase in single ticket sales, but some subscribers are leaving altogether. She stated that research into further reasons for declines would be beneficial, and she would like to talk with people and conduct focus groups to gain insight into the changes that are causing the Symphony’s numbers to decline.

Engel thinks that one of the reasons that subscriptions are dropping has to do with societal shifts—people do not necessarily want to purchase a full season package, and be committed to the dates so far in advance. She also believes that patrons are seeking more variety in their performing arts experiences. Some have approached Engel regarding the possibility of choosing their own packages, or a “starter culture package,” in which they would buy one package that would allow

them access to the opera, ballet, symphony or other performing arts groups all in one. For now, that is not a financially feasible solution, but these requests demonstrate that patrons are looking for changes in subscriptions.

One of the ways the Symphony has shown itself to be committed to the education and engagement of the community is through the creation of *Soundbridge* Seattle Symphony Music Discovery Center. *Soundbridge* opened in 2001, after a gift of \$5 million was donated to the Symphony and \$1 million of it was specified to be used to create a learning center. *Soundbridge* is housed within Benaroya Hall. A task force was created to generate a set of recommendations for the center.

According to the Symphony website,

the Symphony hired an outside consultant, Toni Aspin, to lead a Task Force of 25 business and community leaders consisting of public school teachers, a high school student, leaders of local arts and education organizations, information and communications technology specialists, a curriculum consultant, and Seattle Symphony musicians, Board members, and administrative staff. While every member brought a distinct point of view, the common factor among the group was a passion for classical music and a strong belief in the value of music education for everyone. (www.seattlesymphony.org).

Soundbridge is open most days of the week, and includes opportunities to explore symphonic music through exhibits, lectures, classes for all ages, student recitals, workshops, and other interactive activities. Since its opening in April 2001, more than 100,000 people have visited *Soundbridge*.

Although *Soundbridge* is a learning center for all ages, a large number of its programs and activities are aimed at engaging children. Like many other organizations across the country, *Soundbridge* is working to incorporate music into core curriculum of the public schools of the Seattle area. Third grade children in the Seattle schools learn about the science of sound as required study. *Soundbridge* integrates that curricular area with instrument exploration and workshops. It has

offered programs for similar purposes, such as a songwriting workshop for first and second grade students.

Connecting with students and youth and trying to make music a part of their daily lives is something for which *Soundbridge* and the education department of the Seattle Symphony are continuously striving. Gosen explained,

a large part of it is the fact that we do not have music education as a core, and some equity in music education across our education system here in Seattle and in the greater Northwest. We have pockets where there is a wonderful focus on arts, and pockets where it suffers greatly, and I sense that that is a large part of where we have the problem because there is no enculturation of students. They don't see the connection between learning to play the instrument in fourth or fifth grade and what's going on onstage, so we focus a lot of our energy on connecting the dots.

Other education programs of the Symphony include young composers workshops, and the Tiny Tots concerts. Tiny Tots is designed to introduce music to children from birth to five years of age. As Gosen stated,

to us, audience development is at birth. Early exposure is everything. The core thing with music education is that it is a social learning experience, and it's a way that we transmit culture and social structures that are embedded in our society and it's an important part of higher education.

To date, Tiny Tots has reached over 17,500 people. Side by Side is a program for older students, in which local high school symphonies perform with the Seattle Symphony. Each of these different programs was created to engage and educate a different group of children and students to make music a part of their daily lives.

WolfGang, the Seattle Symphony's Young Patrons Group, is a program that was create to attract a slightly older demographic of people in their twenties and thirties. Social events created around the performances give younger audiences a chance to connect with the music and with other young patrons in a fun, informal way. Benefits to WolfGang members include pre- and post-concert lectures, wine intermissions, and opportunities to meet musicians and guest performers.

According to Engel, concerts and events are so well-attended that the Symphony recently had to move the social component to a larger venue. The program is seven years old, and currently has over 160 members. This is one way that the Symphony works to connect itself to members of the community who may not typically attend a Symphony performance. By adding other elements into the offering, the Symphony is engaging with audiences in a way that fits with their lifestyles.

To get out into the community more and engage with new types of audiences, the Symphony has created several programs and activities. The ACCESS Project (Artistic and Cultural Community Engagement with Seattle Symphony) began as an initiative of the Community Engagement Council, which was made up of members of the Seattle Symphony Board of Directors as well as members of the Asian, Latino, and African American communities of the Seattle area. Partners in the ACCESS Project include Seattle Public Schools, the public library, and numerous community and service organizations. As listed on the Seattle Symphony's website, the goals of the ACCESS Project are to:

- Expand Seattle Symphony's audience base to reflect the demographics of our community
- Sustain community partnerships
- Create interdisciplinary pathways to the arts
- Increase understanding and appreciation of the relationships among musical genres
- Provide resources for people to deepen relationships with symphonic music and musicians
- Feature artists of color

The ACCESS Project has presented free community concerts in different venues throughout the city, arranged concerts for local school and community groups to attend in Benaroya Hall, made class visits and positioned Composers-in-Residence in local schools. The schools targeted by the ACCESS Project are typically those that have had arts education funding cut, and are not meeting national testing standards,

so the programming provided by the Seattle Symphony is an excellent resource for the school children.

Another community engagement project of the Seattle Symphony is the Viva la Música Club, which was formed to connect with diverse communities of the Seattle area. The Seattle Symphony website states,

the Viva la Música Club became a reality as a result of the enthusiasm expressed by members of the Hispanic community who attended the first Viva la Música Club Community Engagement event in January 2003. Their mission is to introduce the cultural perspectives of Hispanics of all heritages in the Puget Sound area and beyond, and to support Seattle Symphony Community and Engagement Programs. Club members plan numerous social and cultural events throughout the season (www.seattlesymphony.org).

The concerts associated with the Viva la Música Club bring in a wide range of performers and guest artists for the members.

The third strong program the Seattle Symphony offers to engage the community is the series of Community Concerts. As Engel stated, “we have Community Concerts as well, those are free, and we go out into different neighborhoods that might not normally get to see the Symphony perform....that’s really been growing as well.” For the 2007-2008 season, the venues for these concerts included Seattle City Hall, West Seattle High School, South Park Community Center, the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, and the University of Washington campus.

To reach communities who may not be regular attendees of the Symphony, the organization has tried different methods of marketing, including putting out press releases in different languages and working with the Hispanic newspapers to increase visibility. Engel explained, “we almost doubled our attendees at the Community Concerts this last year.....we don’t have a huge budget, but now that

we've worked with those communities, they're helping us promote the programming farther in advance and it's just gained traction.”

The Seattle Symphony is a dynamic organization that works with its many partners to educate and engage the people of Seattle and surrounding areas. The creation of *Soundbridge*, the community concerts, educational program and changes in concert formats and types of events demonstrate that commitment that the organization has to the people of the community.

4.07 Conclusion

Through analysis of the data collected for this research study, it is clear that the three case study symphony orchestras, as well as symphony orchestras across the country, are working towards more collaborative and partnership-oriented efforts to engage with communities and build future audiences. This can be seen on many levels within the organizations. On the surface, the titles of departments and administrative personnel show the relationship to community. The titles are very similar, and most include the words “community” and “engagement” or “education.” The mission statements include their efforts to reach out to the broader community in order to engage and educate people, and to shape the cultural life in their surrounding areas.

On a deeper level, the interviews with the personnel at each of the symphony orchestras show that they are working to integrate a more collaborative model of community engagement and education into their organizations. Changes in the types of programming and concert and event formats that each symphony orchestra offers demonstrate the greater flexibility of each organization in its attitude toward drawing in members of the community. Examples include types of programming

aimed at attracting younger audiences in their twenties and thirties, such as Seattle Symphony's WolfGang, or San Francisco Symphony's Friday 6.5. Flexibility is also shown in the changing starting and ending times of concerts and events that are a better fit with people's changing lifestyles.

The free community concerts in neighborhoods that all three of the sites offer illustrate the attempts of each organization to get out into the community, instead of expecting that audiences will always come to the concert hall. Each symphony orchestra is increasing its visibility and raising awareness within the community.

The education departments of each symphony orchestra are working to collaborate with the school systems in their areas to create music education programs that help fill the void left by decreasing arts education funding. The personnel of each symphony orchestras have said that they are not attempting to take the place of regular music education, but are working to make sure that music is a presence in the lives of the children in the schools. The number of children that each of the programs reaches is astounding; all three of the symphony orchestras are reaching tens of thousands of school children every year. The experiences the children have vary widely and are very participatory in nature. The symphony orchestras are incorporating music into the everyday curriculum created by the school districts, in areas such as science, math and history. With this type of exposure, the symphony orchestras are hoping to instill in the children a love of symphonic music that will last throughout their lives.

The number of partnerships with which symphony orchestras have engaged demonstrates the commitment that each organization has made within its community. These partnerships encompass a wide range of groups including libraries, schools, museums, other performing arts groups, foundations,

corporations, and community centers. Some of the partnerships are unexpected, such as the San Francisco Symphony's venture with the Exploratorium Museum of Science, Art and Human Perception, but these creative partnerships help the organizations pool resources and connect with new audiences.

Changes in the ways in which the symphony orchestras are marketing to their different constituencies is another way that the organizations show their commitment to community engagement. They are working to connect with specific groups in the community, and their marketing efforts are a good demonstration of that effort. An example of this is the series of press releases and advertising materials distributed in different languages by the San Francisco Symphony and Seattle Symphony, or the efforts of all three symphony orchestras to use social networking sites and blogs to reach out to younger audiences.

The research into the three case study sites and the comparison of other symphony orchestras across the country illustrates that these groups are looking more closely at the roles they play in each of their communities. The organizational commitment to audience development through community engagement can be seen on many levels. While the results are not generalizable to all symphony orchestras, it is clear that those studied are working not only to build audiences and secure their own sustainable futures, but to enrich and be a part of the lives of the people of their communities as well.

Chapter 5: Findings and Recommendations

5.01 Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to explore and gain deeper understanding of the audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast. I wished to address the issue of the declining audiences of symphony orchestras, and collected and analyzed data regarding the current initiatives that are being implemented to engage with their communities. I looked at the overarching changes taking place in our culture as they are the context within which many symphony orchestras are struggling today.

The literature demonstrates that symphony orchestras have been encountering problems with declining audiences more frequently over the last few decades, and that current and older systems of audience development and participation are unsustainable. Current shifts in lifestyle trends and increasing diversity in communities are two reasons that symphony orchestras need to change the way they are building audiences.

Through a collective case study of the San Francisco Symphony, Oregon Symphony and Seattle Symphony, I focused on achieving a more in-depth understanding of partnerships and collaborative efforts of symphony orchestras with constituents in their communities, and how they are changing the ways they engage with those communities.

5.02 Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

- *What are innovative audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast?*
- *How are the roles of symphony orchestras changing in their communities?*

- *Are symphony orchestras responding to changes in audiences?*
- *What are the barriers keeping symphony orchestras from attracting and retaining audiences?*
- *How are symphony orchestras researching their current and potential future audiences?*
- *What is the difference between “community outreach” and “community engagement”?*

I began this research study intending to collect data through interviews of key personnel in each symphony orchestra, through document analysis, and through participant observation. Three to four members of the administrative staff were contacted from each symphony orchestra; many declined to participate based on a lack of time, or because they felt as if they were not able to accurately represent the organization. For all three case study sites, I interviewed a total of six people. The information gained from these interviews was valuable, but due to the limited access to the sites and administrative personnel, findings are limited and suggest multiple avenues for further research. Much of the data I collected was publicly available information.

5.03 Summary of Findings

Through data collection at each of the three case study sites, I found that there has indeed been a shift from outreach to the more collaborative, cooperative community engagement. Based on information from interviews, I discovered that the organizations used to have a model of audience development that was focused on bringing new people into the concert hall. They were offering newer types of programming, but were not getting out into their communities very often. Currently, the organizations are realizing that creating partnerships with other arts and cultural organizations, schools, community groups and other institutions will help attract

new audiences and new community constituencies. They are able to engage with and enrich the lives of people in the communities and connect with them in a meaningful way. It is becoming equally important to enrich their lives as it is to draw them into the concert hall.

When connecting with new audiences and community constituencies, it is important that symphony orchestras connect with people in ways that fit those people's lifestyles. Symphony orchestras are old institutions that are typically very rooted in tradition, but they must adapt and change to stay relevant and significant. The three symphony orchestras of this research study have significantly changed the ways that they have tried to associate with current and potential future audiences; as people become busier and have more activities competing for their time, they have changed the ways they participate. Subscribers oftentimes do not want to subscribe to an entire season and be committed to specific dates so far in advance; rather than lose that subscriber, symphony orchestras are now offering flex passes or exchangeable ticket dates. Concert formats have changed; some are less formal, and some have starting times that allow greater flexibility for younger people or families. All three case study sites have offered press releases or marketing materials in different languages to attract audiences who may not have ever attended a symphony concert or event before. These changes are a result of the awareness of evolving lifestyles and demographics of performing arts audiences.

The process of engaging communities and attracting audiences has become much more collaborative and cooperative through the creation of partnerships with organizations around the local community. Each of the three case study sites provided long lists of community partners; some were unexpected partners who were able to connect new audiences with the organizations in unique ways. These

connections provide a good opportunity for the partners to pool resources and share audiences who may not have participated in events or performances before.

Partnerships also increase visibility and awareness for the organizations in the community, and pave the way for future collaborations with other groups. For the three case study sites, the longest-term partners are the public schools for the communities in which the symphony orchestras reside. The purpose of these partnerships is to build up a love for symphonic music early on in children's experiences, and to make it something that is a part of their daily lives.

Related to the school partnerships, another finding is that symphony orchestras are working to educationally engage with the youngest members of their communities by incorporating music into the core curriculum specified by the public school districts. Funding for arts education has been cut drastically in the cities in which the three case study sites exist, and while the symphony orchestras are not trying to replace music teachers in the schools, they are working to make music education a part of children's education as much as possible. They are discovering that music can be integrated into almost any subject that the children are learning, such as math, science, and history. Growing up with this type of exposure to music allows the children to see music as something that can be a part of their lives, not just a "special" class that they have with a music teacher once a week, if at all. Each of the three symphonies has worked with curriculum specialists to generate extensive beneficial programs for the school systems. The goal is to increase the participatory aspect of music education; by making it a part of the everyday experience for the children, hopefully they will continue to be patrons of symphonic music throughout their lives. Based on the findings of this study, I have created a chart that outlines

ideal characteristics that a symphony orchestra with a community engagement orientation might embrace (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Community engagement chart

Characteristics and elements of an organization with a community engagement orientation
<p>The symphony orchestra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a mission statement that reflects the focus on the community • includes all members of the organization taking part in and embracing community engagement • works to enrich and enhance the lives of its community members • strategically plans and implements community engagement, has documents outlining goals and strategies • creates partnerships and collaborative ventures with others in the community • has personnel and department titles that indicate the focus on the community • mirrors the community, in both the orchestra and the administration • assists schools with integration of music education into curriculum • educates audiences of all ages • brings the orchestra out into the community • works for accessibility and inclusion of all communities • has specific marketing strategies for different segments of the population • works to fit in with people's changing lifestyles • programs a wide range of music, performance and event formats • conducts research on communities, barriers to attendance/who is not attending and why

5.04 Recommendations

This section summarizes recommendations for emerging leaders in the field of symphony orchestra management and arts administration. It should be noted again that, due to the purposively selected case studies and the lack of participation from many of the staff members in the symphony orchestras of this study, findings are not generalizable, and recommendations are based on the limited information I was able to collect.

Through this study, I sought to explore the community engagement initiatives of symphony orchestras. As stated in my findings, each of the orchestras shows more of a focus on the community through its mission statement and title of departments and personnel within the organization. However, when talking with members of each organization to recruit interviewees for the study, many who were not directly part of the education or community engagement departments did not want to participate because they felt as if they would not be able to adequately answer questions related to community engagement. This was a significant disconnect between the surface-level changes the symphony orchestras seem to be making (in departments, titles, and mission statements, for example) and the actual deeper strategic planning and organizational culture of each case study site. In accordance with mission statements, community engagement should occur in all parts of the organization, such as through marketing, artistic planning and development. I recommend that **all members of the symphony orchestra be involved in community engagement – it is the responsibility of all in the organization to embrace it.** Each person has his or her own part, including the musicians. They need to mirror the community, and can be good resources for the organization. Community engagement should be incorporated through all facets of the symphony orchestra and through its organizational strategic direction.

Another recommendation for emerging leaders is to **bring their organizations out into the community as much as possible for performances and events, instead of expecting that audiences will always come to them.** Symphony orchestras have gained a reputation with some for being “elitist” or “exclusive;” bringing the orchestra out into venues with which people are familiar, and possibly less formal (parks, community centers, schools), can be a

better way to engage with new audiences and community members. Based on information I learned from interviews, community members expressed interest in having the symphony orchestras perform in smaller groups, and in smaller venues. They felt as if the smaller venues made the orchestra appear more accessible, and the less formal atmosphere gave them the opportunity to engage with the music and the entire experience in a more meaningful way. The Seattle Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and Oregon Symphony are currently offering more of these types of events through their free neighborhood concerts and educational school events.

The third recommendation is for symphony orchestras to **connect with audiences in ways that fit their lifestyles**; this recommendation is closely tied to the previous recommendation, as it is a way to increase accessibility and keep the art form more open to all. Symphony orchestra concerts have not changed much over the years in format or expectation; whether this means changing program lengths or starting and ending times, altering the artistic programming of some concerts to present a wider range of music, or offering programs with differing levels of formality, the organizations must adapt to the changes in the ways people live their lives.

The last recommendation from this study is that **symphony orchestras should make their community engagement and audience development initiatives as collaborative as possible**. Partnerships increase awareness and visibility within the community, and give organizations a chance to pool resources. Partnering organizations may have very different types of audiences; by collaborating and cross-promoting at events, the groups may draw in new segments of the population that each organization by itself would not otherwise be able to attract. The focus on an orientation of cooperative partnerships with other arts and

cultural organizations, schools, libraries, community centers, etc. can greatly benefit everyone involved.

5.05 Avenues for Future Research

Despite the large amount of literature that exists on the topic of declining audiences for symphonic music, more will have to be researched to fully understand the reasons behind those declines. One area not addressed in this study that will require further study is the relationship between audience decline and the nature of the presentation of classical symphonic music. Symphony orchestras have a reputation for being somewhat “exclusive” and “elitist,” perhaps due to the traditional nature of a symphony orchestra concert. It is unknown whether audiences are reacting to the music itself, or merely its presentation, and further exploration into the literature will help to give insight into this issue.

This study only researched major symphony orchestras of a certain annual budget size. For a more comprehensive look at community engagement in symphony orchestras as a whole, similar studies of symphony orchestras with smaller annual budgets would provide greater insight into how organizations are managing the issues outlined in this research study.

5.06 Conclusion

This study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that symphony orchestras connect and engage with their audiences as the organizations are adapting to overall changes in society. It was intended to fill a gap in the research, as literature regarding community engagement initiatives of symphony orchestras is not up to date. The outcome of the this study produced valuable lessons

learned that might be useful to emerging leaders in the field of arts administration. While the study only explored major symphony orchestras, the information is broad enough that with slight adjustments, this information can be applied to other performing art forms.

The data collected show that the three symphony orchestras of this case study and the other large orchestras across the country are working to adapt and change to stay relevant in the lives of the people of their communities. I believe that symphony orchestras have the capacity to make the changes necessary to build audiences and secure their own sustainable futures, and to enrich and be a part of the lives of the people of their communities.

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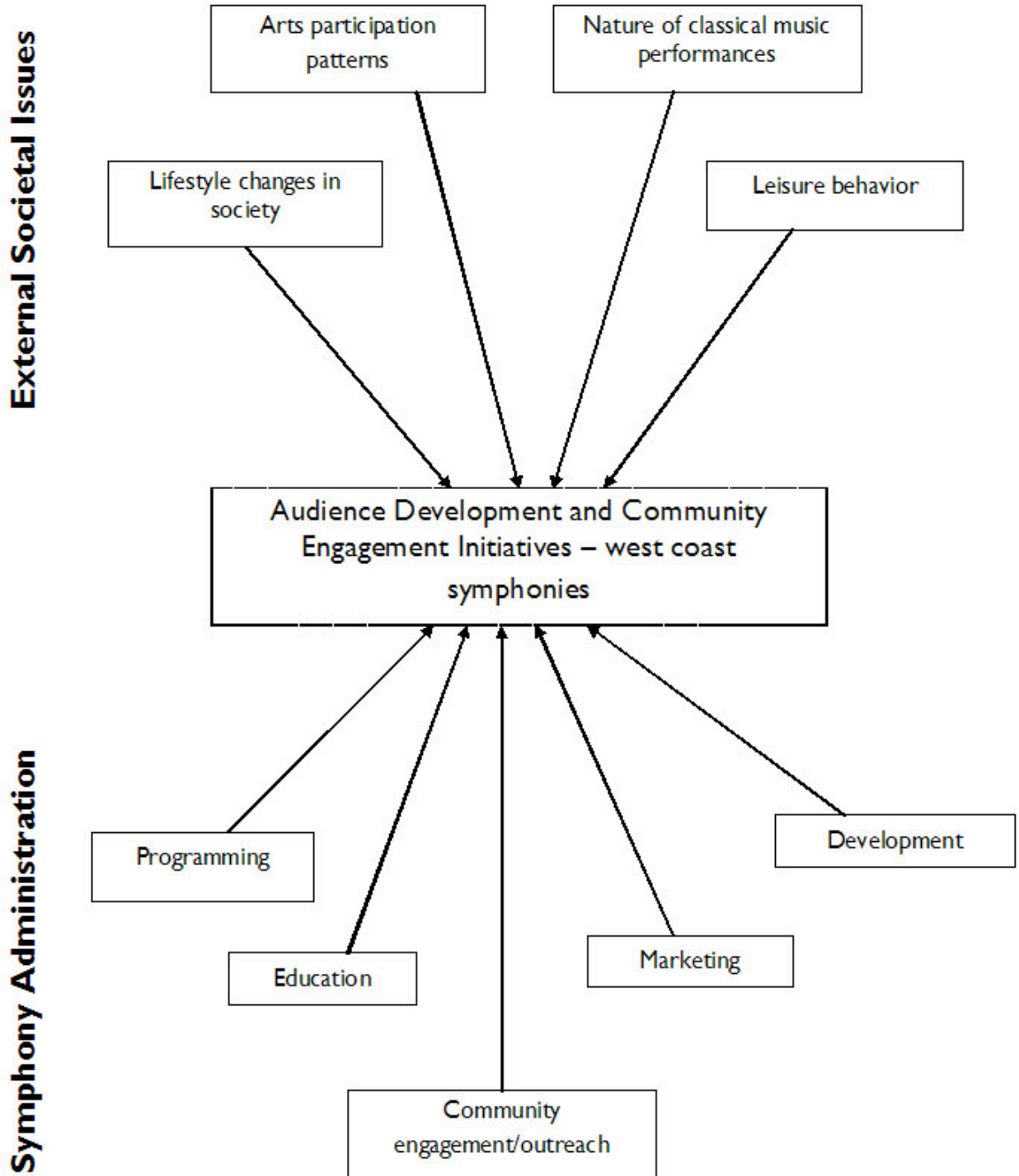
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Appendix A: Conceptual Framework Schematic



Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear (POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEE):

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Community Engagement Initiatives: Exploring Audience Development in West Coast Symphony Orchestras*, conducted by Julia Robertson from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore and gain deeper understanding of the audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast.

Building audiences and participation in the arts is crucial to arts organizations' survival. Studies have shown a consistent decline in symphony orchestra audiences over the past few decades. This study will explore and describe current issues symphony orchestras are facing regarding audience development in their communities. It will look at the roles that symphony orchestras fill in their communities, and investigate ways in which these roles are changing. This study will also look at the reasons that symphony orchestras conduct outreach, education and engagement programs within their communities.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with (NAME OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA) and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to strategic planning within your organization. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during winter 2008. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at (NAME OF ORGANIZATION), or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email. A consent form for participation in this study will be provided at the time of the interview.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (541) 654-2414 or jrober19@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Patricia Dewey at (541) 346-2050. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. If you are interested in participating, please contact me by phone at (541) 654-2414 or by email at jrober19@uoregon.edu to set up a time and location for an interview.

Sincerely,

Julia Robertson
3390 Kinsrow Avenue, Apt. 192
Eugene, OR 97401

Appendix C: Consent Form

Research Protocol Number: _____

Community Engagement Initiatives: Exploring Audience Development in West Coast Symphony Orchestras

Julia Robertson, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Community Engagement Initiatives: Exploring Audience Development in West Coast Symphony Orchestras*, conducted by Julia Robertson from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore and gain deeper understanding of the audience development and community engagement initiatives taking place in major symphony orchestras on the west coast.

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You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with (NAME OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA) and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to strategic planning within your organization. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during winter 2008. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at (NAME OF ORGANIZATION), or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

With your permission, I will observe administrative activities of your organization, such as meetings, to gain a deeper understanding of the planning processes in which you engage. Meetings will not be audiotaped, and no identifying information, such as names, will be recorded.

Your consent to participate in this interview, as indicated below, demonstrates your willingness to have your name used in any resulting documents and publications and to relinquish confidentiality. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your institution. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to symphony orchestras as a whole, especially those on the west coast. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (541) 654-2414 or jrober19@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Patricia Dewey at (541) 346-2050. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate your consent:

_____ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

_____ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

_____ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

_____ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

_____ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Julia Robertson
(541) 654-2414
jrober19@uoregon.edu

Appendix D: Research Instruments

Interview Protocol

Case Study:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent: Written Audio Recording Video Recording OK to quote

Requesting Member Check? "Thank you" sent out?

Notes on Interview:

Key Points:
CODING

INFORMATION

NOTES

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. How do you see your role as a symphony orchestra in your community?
2. How does your organization differentiate between the terms "outreach" and "community engagement"?
3. Have you observed the demographics of your audience changing?
4. If so, what do you believe are some factors causing this change?
5. How do you think changing audience demographics will impact your organization (and the community) in the future?
6. Why do you engage with your community? What do you hope to accomplish?
7. What are your strategic plans and goals regarding community engagement?
8. Do you see a change in the way audiences participate with your organization?

Data Collection—Document Analysis

Case Study:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Document Location:

Supplied by:

Public Information?:

Document Type: Report, Article, Book Gov't Document
 Arts Mgmt. Instructional Materials Cultural Statistics
 Arts Organizations' Written Materials Job Descriptions
 Online Information Notes
 Other:

Reference Citation:

CODING

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Appendix E: Research Timeline

Fall 2007

- Compile full research proposal
- Create research instruments
- Create recruitment letters and consent forms
- Complete and submit human subjects requirements
- Plan final document layout

Winter 2008

January

- Refine research instruments
- Submit human subjects application documentation
- Convert proposal into chapter drafts
- Plan (with research advisor) due dates of chapters
-

February/March

- Begin data collection and analysis
- Prepare detailed outline of full document
- Begin to submit chapter drafts

Spring 2008

April

- Complete data collection
- Continue with ongoing data analysis
- Write full first draft of final document, submitting chapters to advisor for review

May

- Draft of full document to be submitted to advisor
- Feedback from advisor prior to student presentations
- Student presentations of master's research
- Continue revisions to full document

June

- Submit final document and pdf file

Appendix F: List of Interviewees

San Francisco Symphony:

- Gary Ginstling—*Director, Communications and External Affairs*
- Sammi Madison— *Associate Director, Education Programs*

Oregon Symphony (informal discussions only, declined formal interviews):

- Lyndee Cox—*Director of Marketing*
- Monica Hayes—*Acting Director of Education & Community Engagement*

Seattle Symphony:

- Nancy Gosen—*Director of Education*
- Beth Engel—*Interim Senior Director of Audience Development*