International Journal of Music Business Research • 13(2) • 2024
DOI: 10.2478/ijmbr-2024-0006

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International Journal of **Music Business Research**

Newton, Travis (2022) *Orchestra Management Handbook: Building Relationships in Turbulent Times*, Oxford University Press, New York. 246 pp.

Book Review

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Received: June 30, 2024; accepted: June 30, 2024

ISBN 9780197550687 (paperback; €33.62),
ISBN 9780197550670 (hardback; €114.00),
ISBN 9780197550700 (epub; €17.54),
ISBN 9780197550717

The discipline of orchestra management has not been comprehensively addressed in recent years. Although scholars have covered specific aspects, much time has passed since Brezinka (2005) and Mertens (2015) more fulsome coverage, which emphasized the German/European approach. Mertens's second edition (2018) and three recent publications represent a valuable contribution to the field: Hermans (2022), Newton (2022), and Salvaggio (2023). It is a timely topic, as classical music and orchestras continue to struggle to remain cost-efficient and relevant to our societies.

Travis Newton is Associate Professor at Le Moyne College (Syracues, NY), where he teaches courses in Music and Arts Administration. He writes from the vantage point of a thorough background in violin performance, conducting, and orchestra management in different U.S. professional symphony orchestras, including The Florida Orchestra in Tampa Bay, and the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

For this publication, the author has held interviews with many thought leaders in orchestra management, arts management, and related fields. Regarding the sources, only three of the fifty-two symphony orchestras acknowledged belong to Group 1 of the League of American Orchestras (LAO) list—which includes eight groups (size is determined by total operating expenses), seven to Group 2, and five to Group 3. Despite having less information from the top of the list, one of the book's strengths is the fact that some orchestra leaders submitted interesting "Innovative Practice case studies", which are interspersed through. This feedback from orchestra managers and scholars enriches it greatly. So do the accompanying resources: companion website, glossary, and documents (sample statement of activities, sample balance sheet, and orchestra organizational charts). The book does offer a very detailed index as well, but it would have perhaps benefited from a more detailed table of contents in the three formats offered, for a quicker reference.

This practical "Handbook" focuses on the North American orchestra model, and it is meant to be useful to those working within the orchestra field as well as those teaching Arts Management. The book title encapsulates the author's central point of view/perspective: a relationship-oriented framework. "Building, maintaining, and sustaining relationships must be at the core of the orchestra manager's daily routine" (p. 1). This includes internal and community relationships, relationships with donors, key partners (unions, sponsors, etc.), and other arts organizations in the region. It focuses on relationship as the unifying principle not only for the orchestra manager job, but for the orchestra as an institution as well—and those relationships are built on trust.

In the Introduction, Newton describes orchestras as complex ecosystems. Perhaps due to the more pragmatic approach of the book, he does not go into theoretical detail about systems theory, complex systems or network science in relation to the music industries, or the cultural and creative industries in general, which could have perhaps given the model/book a more solid foundation.

Chapter 1 offers a brief explanation of the evolution of orchestras, repertoires and concert venues, before defining orchestra management and its components (operations, personnel, marketing and PR, development, financial management, education and community engagement, artistic planning, and executive leadership). A short history of North American orchestra organization models gives way to the main challenges faced by orchestras: economics, relevance, venue availability, musician contracts, and innovation.

Chapter 2 focuses on the orchestra's internal relationships between the main functional areas: artistic planning, community engagement, equity, diversity and inclusion, education, development, financial management, marketing and public relations, media production, music director/conductors, musicians, operations, and orchestra personnel management. Most of the chapter is devoted to issues related to musician contracts and hiring (collective bargaining agreements, negotiating committees, the role of the orchestra personnel manager, auditions, supporting musicians, administrative staff selection).

"Steering the Ship" is the subject of Chapter 3. Since the book addresses the North American not-for-profit orchestra model, it delves into the creation, membership, size, duties, running, strategies and challenges of the orchestra's board of directors, as its governing body. Involving musicians in the orchestra's governance is recommended, but it must be done carefully. Newton emphasizes the need for good strategic governance, based on a clear mission, vision, and values statements, as well as a solid business model. He stresses the need for a thorough SWOT analysis and a correct identification of the most relevant stakeholders. Strangely enough, he does not comment on a PESTEL analysis, which is a standard tool at that stage.

Creating and maintaining collaborative community relationships is key to both an orchestra's financial and social sustainability. In Chapter 4, the author explains how the orchestra is a community unto itself, and how utmost care must be taken in shaping a healthy relationship with the community. This includes labeling each community engagement initiative in the most positive and friendly way. Many orchestras have "education and outreach" programs or departments. He proposes using "education and community engagement", since "outreach" may be understood as a one-way initiative. He also warns orchestras from conflating outreach programs with audience development initiatives—actually, a chapter on today's audiences/consumers and audience development would have been quite an important asset. Possibilities for education and community engagement initiatives range from young people's concerts or family concerts to youth orchestras, ensemble performances, open rehearsals, pre- and post-concert talks, media and concert supplements, community concerts and collaborations, and listening tours.

"Get to the 'Why'" would be the author's main advice regarding artistic planning (Chapter 5). "The most important consideration is *why* an orchestra exists. This is a difficult question to answer, but it is critical when clarifying the orchestra's artistic vision, which should guide all of its artistic output and processes" (p. 103). Newton explains the main misconceptions about artistic planning: "it's the MD's job; all orchestras should strive to be world-class; the audience doesn't know the difference; there is a successful formula for a successful concert." Then, he deals with the programming process (series, non-concert events), who is involved in it, and how the orchestra must deal with different venues (from the home concert hall to tours and summer locations).

The financial challenges for orchestras, which were explored by Baumol and Bowen (1966), must be duly addressed through detailed budgeting, and expenses and income monitoring—by means of the statement of activities, the balance sheet, the cash flow statements, program reports, as well as a clear definition of cost types (fixed, variable) and musicians' remuneration options (Chapter 6). "Ultimately, the processes and tools associated with financial management should not dictate an orchestra's trajectory—in fact, the reverse should be true. Proper financial management involves deploying a variety of planning and monitoring systems that help support the orchestra's artistic vision" (p. 118). The chapter has a useful final section that explains additional relevant terms relating to finances. Perhaps it would have been useful to add a chapter on quality evaluation, impact measurement, and innovation, which are now standard tools in arts management for any institution willing to improve over time.

As a complement to the chapters dedicated to internal and community relationships, Chapter 7 deals with "Building Sustainable Relationships" with different stakeholders that represent sources of the orchestra's income, from individuals or private foundations to corporate and government support. Fundraising is everyone's task: the board's, the staff members', the volunteers', and the musicians'. The patron development model suggested by Newton is based on The Patron ModelPTM, by Paul W. Hogle, which includes three steps: patron development, engagement, and advancement.

The author turns to the classical Four P's marketing mix theory as the framework for Chapter 8 (Marketing and Public Relations). He does admit a Fifth P ("People"), but he does not go so far as to include Koichi Shimizu's 7Cs Compass Model. Although the Four P's model is a good reference to explain the marketing basics, the reality of the music industries is now more flexible; perhaps a more modern approach to digital marketing mix and internet marketing mix (including SEM and SEO, for instance) would have been useful. The author stresses the importance of relationships here as well: "Although it is true that ticket sales are often the output of good marketing, the ideal outcome is a new or strengthened relationship with audience members. At a time when consumers are increasingly interested in feeling connected to their chosen brands, orchestras have an opportunity to move beyond transactions by building lasting bonds with their audiences" (pp. 158–159).

Interestingly, Newman leaves the issue of the orchestras' relevance for the penultimate chapter. He quotes the 1993 American Symphony Orchestra League report (*Americanizing the American Orchestra*), which concludes that "orchestras are finding that their current missions and programs lack meaning for many people". It also emphasizes "the image of the orchestra as an exclusive, arrogant, possibly racist institution that resists sharing the secrets and norms of participation" (p. 160). He agrees with Nina Simon, who "suggests that arts organisations consider creating new doors that unlock meaning for those with whom they'd like to connect. […] Employing empathy is paramount […] to unlock these doors (sometimes referred to as barriers to entry) […] She also cautions against approaching the pursuit of relevance as a marketing exercise. Rather, the process is more akin to community engagement" (p. 161).

The author adheres unfortunately to the mainstream agenda of equity, diversity, and inclusion strategies as a means of gaining orchestra relevance, while leaving little space in the last pages of the chapter for a few examples of barriers to relevance—starting from public policy issues but ending with audience-related problems, such as the new attendees feeling like outsiders. As in the book's Introduction, his pragmatic approach to relevance would perhaps benefit from a deeper theoretical reflection on the current state of the arts, classical music, the music industries, stakeholders, audiences, general education, and music education.

The final chapter is devoted to a collection of pieces of advice for future orchestra managers from experienced professionals interviewed by the author. Topics include core competencies, traits and habits of mind, community focus, and professional development.

Newton's *Orchestra Management Handbook: Building Relationships in Turbulent Times* provides a valuable contribution to understanding the different aspects of the North American orchestra management field. Conceived as a practical guide, it will be useful not only to the present and future orchestra managers, but also to anyone working within the orchestra field (e.g., musicians, boards of directors, administrative staff, donors) and the music industries (e.g., music producers and editors, booking agents, concert promoters, music festival organizers) or any of the stakeholders involved. It can also serve as a good textbook for arts management programs.

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