

THE ECONOMIC, AESTHETIC, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL
VOCAL ENSEMBLES: TOWARD A THEORY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

by

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Abstract

The Economic, Aesthetic, and Nonprofit Organization of Professional Vocal Ensembles:

Toward a Theory of the Performing Arts

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Professional vocal ensembles have few published resources to assist their managers in navigating the economic and societal currents of the performing arts. Yet, professional choral performance is growing across America. This study seeks to theorize and codify the practices of professional vocal ensembles as they balance musicianship with organizational efficacy and financial security. Theoretical concerns of today's performing arts are addressed in the areas of economics, aesthetics, audience relationships and development, organizational structure, and strategic management. Discussions in these areas are necessarily interdisciplinary because so are the professional performing arts. Conclusions are drawn to suggest successful practices and philosophies professional ensembles can adopt to better their operations.

This study utilizes a combination of resource-based research and field observation with five anonymous ensembles, all of which are exemplars of professional vocal ensemble performance. After an introduction, chapter 2 deals with matters of professionalism in choral performance. Chapter 3 presents basic economic concerns and offers a new definition of economic output in the performing arts. Chapter 4 works within that definition by quantifying and qualifying aspects of the presentation of artworks and developing audience relationships. Chapter 5 suggests means of structuring professional ensembles through designing effective performance events. Finally, chapter 6 closes the study by applying theories discussed in chapters 3–5 to the practical and strategic management of professional vocal ensembles.

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Dedication

This paper is lovingly dedicated to my wife, Crystal; to my parents, Don and Val;
to my sister, Vanessa; and to the memory of my grandmother, Emily Louise Day.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Professional choirs were once a great American cultural export. The Robert Shaw Chorale, as part of the US Department of State's Cultural Exchange Program, visited the Communist Bloc and Latin America at the height of the Cold War.¹ The Roger Wagner Chorale, amidst other touring, was invited to perform as part of the festivities surrounding the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and recorded for the BBC while in London.² One reviewer for *The Musical Times* wrote of the Roger Wagner Chorale, "There can be few if any small choirs in [the United Kingdom] which can come anywhere near to this choir's quality in matters of balance, dynamic range, rhythmic precision and accurate chording."³ Times have changed, at least to some people.

In 2010, NPR music journalist Tom Huizenga interviewed James Inverne, editor of *Gramophone Magazine*, about the magazine's then soon-to-be-published list of the world's twenty best choirs. Huizenga says in the interview, "It's funny, that although I could come up with a few [great American choirs] for sure . . . the list was rather small compared to my favorite British choirs, a list which is indeed easily three times as long. I even spoke to one of [America's] leading choral conductors, and while he chuckled at the rankings, his own list of great American choirs did not come tripping easily off the tongue."⁴ No American choirs made *Gramophone's* list, which included thirteen British choirs. While the list was divisive, especially among American choral musicians, much of the debate surrounding it rested on the fact that a

1. Joseph A. Mussulman, *Dear People...Robert Shaw* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 149–163.

2. William Belan and Roger Wagner, "An Interview With Roger Wagner " *The Choral Journal* 32, (1991): 7, accessed March 25, 2015 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23548287>.

3. Alan Frank, "Radio Music" *The Musical Times* 94 (1953): 69–571, accessed March 25, 2015 Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/933556>.

4. Tom Huizenga, "Where Are The World's Best Choirs? Not In America" *Deceptive Cadence*, December 21, 2012, accessed April 4, 2016 <http://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2011/03/22/132207464/who-sings-best-gramophone-ranks-the-worlds-top-20-choirs>.

British publication published a list of the world's greatest choirs, most of which happened to be British.⁵ However, Inverne notes in the NPR interview, "The 'we're Brits waving the flag' charge is a red herring. Our jury included judges from . . . Russia, Germany, America, Brazil and Australia as well as the U.K. and even the non-British judges tended to vote overwhelmingly for British choirs."⁶ Whether or not American choral musicians agree, there is an international jury who believes the best choirs in the world are currently British. The praise extended to the Roger Wagner Chorale by *The Musical Times* seems to have reversed itself. There can be few, if any, choirs in the United States that can come anywhere near to the quality of the best British choirs.

The American choral landscape has noticeably altered since the days of Shaw and Wagner. Mid-twentieth-century repertoire, ideal vocal style, and organizational structures have given way to new compositional directions, the aesthetic directions of historically informed performance, and nonprofit fundraising models. These trends have produced a professional choral environment that in many ways, in the United States at least, is more vibrant than it has ever been. In the years since *Gramophone* published its notorious list, five American groups have won Grammy Awards for Best Choral Performance. Compare this to two European groups, only one of which was British (though it was conducted by an American). In addition, the Pulitzer Prize for music composition, traditionally dominated by instrumental music, has recently gone to three choral works.

While none of this indicates that American choirs are now somehow ahead of their European colleagues, we must recognize that change is afoot in professional American choral

5. For example, see David Stabler, "Update: Why British Choirs Are the Best in the World" *The Oregonian* January 11, 2011, accessed April 4, 2016 http://www.oregonlive.com/performance/index.ssf/2011/01/why_british_choirs_are_the_bes.html; and Chloe Veltman, "Choirs: Top 20 Lists and some thoughts about the use of space in holiday concerts" *Lies Like Truth*, December 22, 2010, accessed April 4, 2016. http://www.artsjournal.com/lies/2010/12/choirs_top_20_lists_and_some_t/.

6. Tom Huizenga, "Where Are The World's Best Choirs? Not In America."

music. Choral musicians should seize the opportunity to capitalize on it. This paper represents one attempt to do so. We will ask how the above trends affect professional choral performance and seek to reveal strategies current professional vocal ensembles can enact to connect to their constituencies and structure their organizations. We will venture to place these trends within an interdisciplinary synthesis of concepts drawn from cultural economics, conducting, musicology, arts management, the structuring of organizations, marketing, the history of performance, and other relevant areas. We return therefore to Shaw and Wagner in order to understand where these trends began and to briefly chronicle how American choral performance arrived at its current condition.

Epochs of Professional American Choral Performance

The Robert Shaw Chorale recorded and toured from 1948 until Shaw took over directorship of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 1967.⁷ The Roger Wagner Chorale was formed as the Los Angeles Concert Chorale in 1946, changing its name a year later.⁸ Shaw and Wagner helped to bring about what Paul Salamunovich, a disciple and successor of Wagner's and an important American choral conductor in his own right, called "the 'Golden Age of [American] Choral Music'—the [19]40s, the 50s, and the 60s."⁹ We cannot discount, however, that this Golden Age was in part brought about because Shaw's and Wagner's business acumen

7. Joseph A. Mussulman, *Dear People...Robert Shaw*, 163. It bears mentioning that Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians, who gave Robert Shaw his professional start in 1938, had been active in recording and touring the United States as well. However, I leave them out of this discussion because, as Fritz Mountford explicates, the organizational model of his ensemble resembles a dance band more than a professional choir. This in no way diminishes the important role that Waring played as an educator, performer, and advocate for choral music. However, I believe his group to be, in organizational terms, part of a different movement than Shaw's and Wagner's, even as it may have prepared some of the ground for mid-twentieth-century professional choirs. See Fritz Mountford, "Fred Waring and American Choral Singing: His Career, Philosophy, and Techniques," (DMA diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1992).

8. Michael Lee Scarbrough, "Portrait of a Leading Choral Conductor, The Life and Work of Roger Wagner, 1914-1992," (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 1996), 38-39.

9. William Belan and Roger Wagner, "An Interview With Roger Wagner."

was rivaled only by their musicianship. As Matthew Sigman on behalf of Chorus America details in the “Rise of the Professional Chorus,” Shaw

was careful to retain legal and financial counsel such that contracts were beneficial to him and the chorus. His recording contract at RCA Victor gave him great leeway, enabling him to produce highly commercial recordings that would supplement more serious repertoire. Hit recordings primed promotions for tours and, in turn, touring sold records. Wagner, who had a long-term recording contract with Capitol Records, was also good with money, says Salamunovich. The Chorale received a lump sum for tours and Wagner negotiated each singer's contract individually, ensuring that he got the best voices for the least amount of money.¹⁰

The business models of professional choirs during the Golden Age were financed through active touring and recording. But, how many touring and recording choirs could the United States sustain at once? As the twentieth century progressed, choral musicians began to look locally for professional choral performance.

The popularity that luminaries such as Shaw and Wagner brought to choral music spawned professional choirs in many American cities. Sigman writes, “Instead of home bases exclusively in New York and Los Angeles, professional ensembles bloomed in Houston, Phoenix, Santa Fe, Kansas City, Omaha, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toronto, Vancouver, Chicago, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Norfolk, and Boston.”¹¹ The formation of regional professional ensembles such as these was an important step in the furthering of the professional choral art in America. However, without lucrative record deals, television and film

10. Matthew Sigman, "The Rise of the Professional Chorus" *Voice Of Chorus America* 33 (2010), 10. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2016).

11. *Ibid.*, 12

contracts, and extensive touring that paid for groups like the Shaw and Wagner chorales, ensembles began to look for other funding possibilities. In 1964 The Roger Wagner Chorale ceased operations so the conductor could organize the Los Angeles Master Chorale. The latter ensemble, according to Michael Lee Scarbrough, “was the nation’s first professional choral organization to be sponsored on this scale by private enterprise. Sponsored by the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce, it was organized on the plan of a symphony orchestra association, including a board of directors.”¹² The trend continued through the 1970s and 80s, which brought about the rise of the nonprofit professional chorus. Rather than funding their activities through touring nationally or internationally, these local choruses built constituencies in their hometowns. Their ensembles were comprised of nearby singers. These groups funded themselves largely through sponsorship and donorship, which remains the primary mode of funding professional vocal ensembles today. We can therefore recognize two distinct organizational epochs of professional choral singing in the United States beginning with the Golden Age. The first was funded through extensive recording and touring and the second through building a constituency who would be both financial supporters and listening audience.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a third epoch, defined by a new model for performing organizations, has begun. Groups who operate under this third model still cultivate a local base of supporters and volunteers as in the previous two epochs (although social media and digital music distribution are making it easier to reach constituents outside of the ensembles’ communities), but their singing membership is constantly changing. It is a mix of local vocalists and others who live elsewhere but travel to sing with the group. These ensembles, often called fly-in choirs or American airlines choirs, can to date be found in Florida, Arizona, Texas, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Georgia among other states. But, these groups share many of the

12. Michael Lee Scarbrough, “Portrait of a Leading Choral Conductor,” 46.

same singers. In other words, the roster of one fly-in choir is very likely to overlap with that of every other.¹³ This is, in a certain way, a melding of the Golden Age model with its successor. Singers still tour the country creating a very high standard for professional choral performance nationwide, but ensembles cultivate home constituencies and audiences in order to fund their activities. While this arrangement surely puts a financial strain on organizations who would not otherwise have to pay for singers' travel expenses, it does come with certain benefits. As groups are developing their constituencies, they are able to sell their ensembles as being comprised of the very best singers available. Under other circumstances, the extra expense might not be justified. In this way every community willing to support one can have a world-class choir focused on its needs rather than waiting for one to visit who may or may not know the community.

Need for this Study

The strategy of flying in the best choral musicians available rather than relying on local talent is relatively new to American professional choral performance. It represents one way that ensembles are adapting to today's cultural and economic climate. The twenty-first century has witnessed troubles for symphony orchestras and opera companies, which have manifested themselves as labor disagreements, lockouts, and bankruptcies. Moreover, large performing organizations like symphony orchestras and large choirs are limited in the variety of performances they can present. They almost always perform in concert halls. But, successful performing arts organizations are adapting to and embracing new trends that favor varied performance. Increasing numbers of professional vocal ensembles and artist-led instrumental chamber groups are benefitting from these trends. They are very nimble organizations relative to

13. This point was made by nearly every music director, ensemble singer, and board member who participated in research for this study, discussed below in the section on participating Ensembles.

a symphony orchestra or large chorus. They have small and often flexible membership, allowing them to perform almost anywhere. Having fewer musicians to pay allows for smaller operating budgets and for groups to more easily adapt their programming to their budget limitations without sacrificing their artistic ideals. While nothing makes the process of fundraising any easier, these types of ensembles can be organized to weather changing cultural and economic circumstances.

Fledgling ensembles that are searching for an organizational model that balances artistic creativity with financial security have several resources to which they can turn. There are notable guides for arts organizations by Michael Kaiser, Thomas Wolf, and Lidia Varbanova that can assist groups and their boards in strategic planning, fundraising, crafting a mission statement, and developing audiences and constituencies.¹⁴ There are economic studies focused on the arts like those by Robert Flanagan, Ruth Towse, and Henry Hansmann that reveal the past financial performance of arts organizations and draw conclusions about what the cultural economy holds for the future.¹⁵ Finally, there are many musicological resources that examine performance practice, historical performance conditions and reception history, meaning, and aesthetics. Many, including John Butt and Richard Taruskin, have written important books on the historically informed performance (HIP) debate.¹⁶ Lydia Goehr, Emily Lowe, and many others have

14. See Kaiser, Michael M., and Egan, Brett E. *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations*. Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2013; Lidia Varbanova. *Strategic Management in the Arts*. (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Thomas Wolf. *Presenting Performances: A Basic Handbook for the Twenty-First Century*, Washington: The Association of Performing Arts Presenters, 2000.

15. See Flanagan, Robert J. *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012; Ruth Towse ed., *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2011); and Henry Hansmann, "Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts," *The Bell Journal of Economics* 12 (1981) 341–361.

16. See John Butt, *Playing with History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

contributed to our understanding of the listener's experience of performance.¹⁷ However, there is no literature that attempts to integrate the economic, aesthetic, and structural aspects of performing arts organizations despite the need for such theories demonstrated in the search for new performance paradigms, changing audience tastes, and concomitant crises of funding. Professional vocal ensembles are not exempt from these trends.

Published material that might assist performing arts managers in strategically navigating their ensembles through the troubles these changes create is scarce despite the resources listed above. Even less exists specifically for professional vocal ensembles wishing to be financially stable organizations that offer creative artistic products to active constituencies. Chorus America is helpful in this regard. Chief among its published offerings is *The Chorus Leadership Guide*, which is an excellent resource for ensemble organization and operation.¹⁸ However, it does not, and probably cannot in its short format, address economic issues surrounding professional choral performance. Nor does it adequately address the ways in which audiences experience performance. As the number of professional choirs increases, there is an ever-growing need to uncover the deep connections among financial health, an efficient organizational structure, and artistic output. The practices of a new generation of professional vocal ensembles need theorizing and codifying. Furthermore, American choral music has not typically wrestled with the philosophical and aesthetic theories common to the critical treatment of instrumental music, opera, and other performing arts. Doing so offers great potential for developing new modes of thought within choral performance and may offer choral music a new authority as an important avenue of professional performance in the twenty-first century. Such theoretical work must be

17. See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Melanie Lowe. *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

18. Matthew Sigman, *The Chorus Leadership Guide*, Washington: Chorus America, 2009.

incorporated into models with which beginning and existing performing organizations can guide their activities. Through such a models, professional vocal ensembles might come to understand the ways that musical artistry, building constituent relationships, and economic forces affect one another. This paper presents one such model.

Purpose and Terms

The general purpose of this study is to theorize and codify the practices of professional vocal ensembles as they seek to balance musicianship with organizational efficacy and financial security. To accomplish this aim, this study addresses certain concerns of today's performing arts and suggests successful practices and philosophies professional ensembles can adopt to better their operations. Much of the ensuing discussion is necessarily theoretical and interdisciplinary. It is theoretical both in the sense that it attempts to synthesize existing theories related to musical performance and in the sense that there is little practical research available covering the organizational aspects of professional vocal ensemble performance. The ensuing discussion is interdisciplinary because so are the professional performing arts. Successful ensembles must account for economic and market influences. They must understand the ways in which constituencies amalgamate around performances. They must operate within structures that enable sound leadership, decision making, and action. The following discussion intentionally covers theoretical ground that is uncommon in discussions of choral music. It does so in part as a challenge to typical conceptions of choral performance, believing wholeheartedly that deeper theoretical engagement is essential to positive growth and development of any practice. The theory that forms the basis for the ensuing discussion presents economic basics intended for musical ensembles and offers an artistic perspective to cultural economics. It uncovers cultural trends affecting the ways that audiences receive musical performance and establish collectives. It

examines organizational structures that might assist in successfully maintaining high artistic standards, fostering constituent relationships, and encouraging sound financial practices.

While aspects of the following discussions may be of interest to musical organizations of all types, research here has been undertaken specifically to uncover the philosophies, activities, and relationships that govern nonprofit, professional, independent chamber choirs and other vocal ensembles currently active in the United States. For the purposes of this study, the above terms are defined as follows:

Nonprofit: Organized and incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.¹⁹

Professional: Ensembles of the highest standards of musical and vocal-technical excellence demonstrated in preparation, rehearsal, and performance; whose members show deep commitment to the ensemble, its activities, and its art by continuously growing the ensemble's constituency and donorship; and who demonstrate long-term fiscal stability through fair compensation of artists, sound organization, and strategic management.

Independent: A choir of any size that raises its own funds through donorship, sponsorship, and grants. Independent groups do not fall under the funding umbrella of a larger organization, as would a professional symphony chorus that is funded, entirely or in part, by the orchestra with which it is associated.

Chamber Choir: A choir where typically three or more members sing each part and where the size of the entire group does not exceed thirty-six. The purpose of so defining the chamber choir is to distinguish it sonically from other ensembles. A minimum of

¹⁹ Internal Revenue Service, "Exemption Requirements – 501(c)(3) Organizations," accessed March 17, 2015 [http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501\(c\)\(3\)-Organizations](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501(c)(3)-Organizations)).

three singers per part helps to ensure that each section's sound is a composite of voices and not that of soloists. Thirty-six singers allows for the musical texture to divide four times per part and maintain the three-person standard, which is adequate for *divisi* in most repertoire.

Vocal Consort: An ensemble in which there are one or two singers per part and where the size of the ensemble does not typically exceed twelve singers. In this setting, the group may achieve a composite sound (as in a chamber choir), but the individual voices singing each part are often distinguishable.

Vocal Ensemble: This term is used to indicate choirs of any size. It is used here in a general way such that professional choirs might be easily situated within the professional performing arts and associated with other types of performing ensembles.

These elements are isolated here because they are indicative of common practices and vocabulary among professional ensembles. In order to establish a platform for discussion, additional terms require clarification and redefinition.

Redefining Audience

The first of these terms requiring redefinition is audience, the general use of which would seem to include anyone in the world who has the potential to encounter an ensemble in any number of ways. Let us consider a more specific definition of the term here both for clarity and in the hope that such clarity might lead to more specific and fruitful discussion of this mass of people. The general term “audience,” inclusive of virtually everyone as it has just been described, will here be termed “the public” or “the general public.” Within the general public, this study recognizes two concentric groups: the “audience” and the “constituency of listeners” (or simply “constituency”). The audience is a very specific group of people who are in

attendance for a given performance listening to it live. The constituency of listeners is a more general group of people comprised of fans, social media followers, supporters and donors, and others who have some relationship with the ensemble regardless of geography. They are past and potential audience members.

Community

The second term ripe for redefining, and one that is connected to the discussion of audience, constituency of listeners, and general public, is the term “community.” It often and very vaguely refers to the people who surround the ensemble socially or geographically. In the former sense, it is similar to the constituency of listeners. To avoid confusion of the two terms, we will use “community” to refer to those people who live in the locality where the ensemble is based and who surround the ensemble geographically. Some members of the community will inevitably be part of the constituency of listeners, some may at times be audience members, and some may simply be the general public, unaware of the ensemble and its activities. These four terms—general public, community, constituency, and audience—form a complex network that impacts the way that ensembles plan and structure performances, raise funds, develop relationships with their constituencies, and advertise.

Methodology

The theoretical work of this study attempts to synthesize seemingly disparate areas including conducting, vocal technique, economics, aesthetics, musicology, nonprofit leadership, arts management, organizational structuring, and marketing. Research in these areas relies on representative texts, which are detailed below. Additionally, five professional vocal ensembles currently active in the United States have been interviewed and observed. Rather than detailing every aspect and operation of the participating ensembles, this study seeks to integrate certain of

their practices into the relevant areas of theoretical research. The intention behind this method is to develop a basic understanding of the many ways that professional vocal ensembles operate today, to engage with their practices and philosophies, and to uncover commonalities that might be applicable to other similar organizations. This information is aimed toward a qualitative theory rooted in real-world examples, of which the participating ensembles represent the genesis. These ensembles were chosen because of their musical successes and because they represent a breadth of musical styles, a variety of sizes and organizational types, and are spread throughout the country geographically. This variety enables a richer understanding of the ways ensembles balance artistic and musical concerns with financial and organizational pressures.

Each ensemble was approached via email regarding participation. Interviews were conducted individually and in small groups with music directors, vocalists, and board members from the ensembles. Each interview was tailored to the ensemble being interviewed, and sought to discover some general information about the group, its philosophies of music and performance, how it connects with its constituency, and how it handles financial and administrative governance. Ensembles were observed in rehearsal and performance before and after interviews were conducted. Sample interview questions can be found in appendix A. In keeping with the University of Washington Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (appendix B), and to protect the identities of this study's participants, the groups and their members remain anonymous. Ensemble members were informed of the conditions of this study's IRB approval and were given means of contacting the University of Washington Human Subjects Division.

Participating Ensembles

The participating ensembles share several common traits and activities. Each ensemble has been incorporated during the past fifteen years and so understands the challenges of being a

new organization in the current financial and societal climates. All five ensembles have navigated and grown financially and organizationally through the Great Recession and are exemplars of performance and organization. They are all 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, which is integral to their fundraising activities either because the grants and institutional funding they receive require it, because the tax deduction available to donors is a major factor in individual giving, or both. All five groups use their nonprofit status to create multiple revenue streams so that they are not reliant upon a single type of funding that could dry up as the economy fluctuates. Each of the ensembles had a modest constituency of listeners built into their original organization. These constituencies came from various places: a church where an ensemble was based, an academic institution, or the surrounding community. As a means of expanding their constituencies, all groups have produced commercial recordings and expect to continue recording throughout the lives of the ensembles. All ensembles have commissioned composers with the exception of Ensemble I, whose repertoire precludes the practice. Still, Ensemble I focuses their attention on new experiences for their audiences by means of new scholarship and rediscovery of lost repertoires. Finally, all engage in some kind of discussion or interaction with their audience before, during, or after performance, taking the opportunity to contextualize the concert's repertoire and build relationships.

Ensemble I

Ensemble I is an award-winning early music ensemble based in the Midwest. Membership rotates and fluctuates in size from a consort to a small chamber chorus depending on the repertoire. At its founding in 2000, the group sang mostly plainchant, which is still the core of its repertoire. However, the second and current music director has expanded the group's repertoire to include more polyphony. Ensemble I is dedicated to the performance of repertoire

composed prior to 1600 and highlights what it calls underserved repertoires. It brings a strong scholarly foundation to its work, and presents that scholarship as a contextualizing element in performance. Singers come from the surrounding community and are brought into the group solely by recommendation from the group's current membership.

Ensemble I is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It relies heavily on institutional support, having enjoyed residencies at a number of cultural and educational institutions in its community. The group has received generous grant funding and also has a small private donor base. The board of directors considers itself to be a "friendly" board, meaning its members are not required to contribute financially to the group. Instead, they are the group's chief administrators. The music director is a member of the board and handles programming and grant writing. Another board member is a tenor in the group and acts as the group's manager, handling some marketing, booking, and other tasks. Ensemble I also relies on marketing assistance from the institutions where it holds and has held residencies.

Ensemble I offers roughly five concert series per year and often assists in educational lectures as live models for musical examples. It has released a number of independent recordings and has recently released their first major label record. In addition to its community-based concert series and educational work, Ensemble I occasionally tours to festivals and universities to perform. Its local audience is comprised largely of its community's early music devotees, whom the group describes as very loyal. Because the group so effectively incorporates scholarship into performance, its constituency is frequently introduced to new repertoire, even if that repertoire is more than four hundred years old.

Ensemble II

Ensemble II is a small men's chorus based in the Midwest. It has a set number of voices and does not vary its personnel. The group was established in 1999 primarily as a touring ensemble and by 2003 had increased their activities and funding enough that singing in the group became a full-time job. This remains the group's model. Ensemble II sings a very broad variety of repertoire and is an active commissioner of new works for men's ensemble. Ensemble II contextualizes its performances through establishing a narrative to which all concert pieces are attached. The group keeps three to five such programs in repertory at a time. New voices are found through an extensive, yearly audition process that begins with recorded screening, passes through live auditions and interviews, and culminates in a social gathering with current members of the ensemble and all auditionees.

Ensemble II is fiercely collaborative. Therefore the audition process must determine not only which voices suit the group, but which personalities fit as well. The group does not have a music director. Instead, individuals in the group are assigned musical works to "produce," (*i.e.*, to introduce; to manage and present text, translation, and history; and to hand off to the group), and everyone is responsible for collaboratively interpreting and polishing pieces. The group concedes that the chamber-music model is not the most efficient way of preparing music for performance, but its members believe that it is integral to their accomplishing the group's mission of giving voice to the shared human experience.

Ensemble II performs continuously throughout the year, touring for approximately fifty performances, performing often on radio and television, and offering roughly thirty concert performances in their home community. The group currently has about fifteen commercial recordings available and is actively producing more. They have a loyal following in their home

community, many of whom know ensemble members by name and voice type. Ensemble II fosters these relationships by tirelessly greeting audience members after every performance. Doing so surely benefits their local fundraising efforts, and as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the group receives funding from multiple private and public sources. They have established strong revenue streams of both performance and nonperformance income.

The administration is led by an executive director and additionally consists of a director of marketing and finance, an audience development assistant, and an operations administrator. The organization is highly developed. They have systems in place for yearly peer assessments of singers and administrators, membership reviews for individuals who are not keeping up with the standards the ensemble sets for itself, and a clearly defined mechanism for dismissing singers should such a regrettable situation present itself. Singers from the group rotate on and off an artistic council, which is responsible for programming and artistic decisions. The council receives feedback from all members of the group regarding repertoire choices and the way that those choices might be incorporated into the narrative thread essential to Ensemble II's performances. The spirit of collaboration pervades the ensemble's every facet and is the paradigm through which Ensemble II finds its success.

Ensemble III

Ensemble III is a female vocal quartet formed in 2009 as an extension of its singers' study of contemporary performance. In 2011 the group performed on a well-known contemporary-experimental music series in New York and has since been an active part of American contemporary music. Members of Ensemble III do not live in the same community, but come together for touring performances and academic residencies. They use a set roster of singers but will occasionally substitute one singer or another as individual schedules require. The

singers themselves comprise the ensemble's board of directors and administration (with one additional board member who does not sing in the ensemble), making the group part of the growing movement of artist-run ensembles. Singers in Ensemble III share many responsibilities but are individually assigned the roles of executive director, director of development and marketing, programming director (who is also the treasurer), and grant writer. The group became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2014, and at the time of writing are establishing a donor base. They receive much of their current funding from grants, residencies, and workshops. Additionally, the group crowdfunded their first commercial recording, a funding campaign that surely owes some of its success to the great effort the ensemble makes to connect with its constituency in person and over social media.

Ensemble III is dedicated to performing the works of living composers and to providing wider exposure for the use of extended vocal techniques. Much of their repertoire is chosen from works of their own commissioning. The group works closely with composers to explore new possibilities for the voice; it instructs singers in workshops and masterclasses on appropriately executing contemporary techniques in a healthy manner, and the group often speaks on new music entrepreneurship. Like Ensemble II, Ensemble III stresses the need for collaboration in twenty-first century vocal music. They see themselves as a chamber ensemble and as such act as each other's coaches and musical partners. Moreover, they strive to work with venues that are open-minded about contemporary music and that develop safe places for artists to be artists. Ensemble III makes every effort to create a safe musical space for their audience as well. It recognizes the challenges presented to listeners by some of its repertoire and seeks to unravel those challenges in conversation with the audience.

Part of this conversation, both on and off the stage, is the role that Ensemble III plays as a group of women in contemporary music. The group is one of few that exist in part to be stewards of contemporary vocal techniques and repertoire. Through advocacy, teaching, and performing, Ensemble III makes known the cultural and musical importance of the female voice. Through collaboration, commissions, and recording, the group demonstrates the equalizing and empowering aesthetics available through contemporary vocal music. They join an important succession of female musicians who have furthered the cause of contemporary music by means of vocal performance.

Ensemble IV

Established in 2004, Ensemble IV is a chamber choir based in the Southwest whose singers come from around the United States. Like a growing number of American professional groups, Ensemble IV is a fly-in choir, meaning that in addition to some local singers, it brings singers into its community—rather than using local talent alone—in order to achieve the highest possible standard of performance. The group is also comprised of a core of instrumentalists, which is central to their purpose of performing choral masterworks in their community. The group's repertoire, therefore, tends toward large-scale, vocal-instrumental works, which it performs in multiple venues over roughly six concert series per year. Because the group is conducted and because Ensemble IV's musicians work together for a very short time prior to performance, there is not room for the kind of collaborating found with Ensembles II and III. However, musicians and the conductor of Ensemble IV enjoy excellent rapport in rehearsals as an efficient means of making music to a very high standard.

The group's activities are supported by three administrative staff, one of whom is the music director. Assisting him is an administrative director and a PR/marketing coordinator. The

group also utilizes an assistant conductor drawn from a local university. Additionally, Ensemble IV is supported by a strong volunteer base who usher, take tickets, and assist with other performance-related tasks. Ensemble IV grew very quickly through rapid and successful fundraising efforts, even amidst the Great Recession. Its board of directors is a strong advocate and fundraiser for the ensemble in the community, and members of the board are drivers of the group's independent, nonperformance income. Additionally, the group maintains corporate sponsorship, has actively sought institutional funding, and has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and other important cultural organizations. The group has found that the location of its concerts matters a great deal to its potential audience. It is therefore intentional about reaching the public through performances in many locations. This tactic has helped to garner Ensemble IV strong personal relationships with its constituency, and the group cultivates these relationships through post-concert receptions and face-to-face contact. Moreover, every donor, no matter the amount, gets a personal thank you call from the music director. Such personal touches are central to Ensemble IV's beliefs, identity, and success.

Ensemble V

Ensemble V is an eight-member vocal consort based in the Northeast that specializes in contemporary music. Their focus is on expanding the expressive potential of the voice by incorporating extended and non-western techniques into contemporary vocal composition. The group began singing together in 2009 with a three-week residency. Their singers began learning new vocal techniques and working with composers on incorporating those techniques into their music. The group's sound, therefore, remains very flexible and often does not resemble that of a typical professional vocal ensemble. Such aesthetic variety is surely one of the keys to the ensemble's artistic success, for which they have won a number of prestigious awards.

That Ensemble V has been so successful over such a short period is partly attributable to how they were organized. The group's founding director established a funding base through forming a board of directors during the year before the first rehearsal, prior even to naming singers. This left the group on secure financial footing and enabled it to take the kind of artistic and musical risks that are central to its purpose. The director and a part-time assistant handle the majority of the group's administration. They receive PR and marketing assistance from its record label and also work with a booking agent who understands the vocal demands of the group's repertoire. The group strives to have one day off between performances, and the director works closely with the singers to ensure that their set lists have comfortable vocal transitions. If this model more closely resembles a pop group than it does a vocal ensemble, then that is intentional. Members of the group refer to themselves as a band (rather than a choir), which recontextualizes their aesthetic principles for the group's constituency.

Ensemble V seeks to prove to the public that vocal ensemble performance need not be stale or monochromatic, and the group is succeeding. Its performances are in demand around the United States, and they often participate in workshops and masterclasses for singers and composers. These activities sustain the group financially and supplement commercial recording, which helps the group to expand the reach of its commissioned repertoire. Every summer the group revisits its beginnings and comes together to learn new techniques and work with more composers. Like Ensembles II and III, Ensemble V works collaboratively within the ensemble and outside it. Their director privileges the unofficial guiding principles of kindness, respect, and fairness in approaching all activities. This attitude enables members of the group to remain open to new techniques and aesthetics, and it brings the best out of what is sometimes unusual music and physically demanding vocalism. This openness reveals itself in the group's performances,

which—whether or not they are in a concert hall—are purposefully informal. The group presents challenging but exciting sounds to their audiences in an open and constructive way. Ensemble V's unique musical offerings are central to their success, but no less so are its mode of presentation, its organization, and its ethos.

Paper Outline with Relevant Literature

This introduction has presented some of the context surrounding professional choral performance and its history in the United States. It has defined three epochs of professional American choral performance and has described some of the organizational concerns of today's professional vocal ensembles. Noting the limited published resources specifically written for new and growing professional choirs, this study will theorize and codify the practices of the performing arts relating to professional vocal ensembles. To facilitate the ensuing discussion, the very general term audience has been redefined as consisting of three parts: the general public, the constituency of listeners, and the listening audience. As part of the research for this study, five ensembles have been observed and their members interviewed. Their practices are the starting point for the theoretical aspects of the following chapters and offer real-world perspective on conceptual matters. Chapter 2 further details the problematic of professional vocal ensemble performance. As a remedy, the chapter proposes twenty tenets intended to assist ensembles in irreproachably professional operation. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 represent the theoretical core of this paper. They are intended to introduce the beginnings of a new critique of choral music and necessarily cover topics that may be unfamiliar to many choral practitioners. To accomplish this aim, chapters 3, 4, and 5 first approach these topics from the broad perspective of the performing arts, relying on the participating ensembles for occasional examples. Finally, chapter 6 returns to

the tenets of professionalism by relating how they can be exercised during the incorporation, operation, and strategic management of professional vocal ensembles.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 offers additional context to professional choral performance by expounding upon this introduction. In addition to confronting the financial challenges experienced by most performing arts organizations, professional choirs must battle a long-existing perception that choral singing is the purview of amateurs. Chapter 2 addresses the roots of this perception through a discussion of certain trends in early nineteenth-century music as described by Michael Musgrave and Chester L. Alwes.²⁰ John Potter's *Vocal Authority* further suggests that the instructional method originated by John Curwen in the mid-nineteenth century confined choral musicians to amateur performance.²¹ Though modified and further developed during the twentieth century, Curwen's system is still used today.

The perception of choral singing as amateur is equally present in the ways that conductors and singers are prepared for professional careers. Chapter 2 compares and contrasts a sampling of conducting texts intended for choral conductors with those intended for instrumental conductors. The chapter then treats higher-educational rifts between choral conductors and voice teachers through a discussion of writings by Richard Miller, Margaret Olson, and Scott McCoy.²² The amateur history of choral singing and its related instruction have created a wide-ranging

20. See Chester L. Alwes, "Choral Music in the Culture of the Nineteenth Century" in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* ed. André de Quadros (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 27–42 and Michael Musgrave "Performance in the Nineteenth Century: An Overview" in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* eds. Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 577–610.

21. John Potter, *Vocal Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

22. See Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Margaret Olson, *The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting*, (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2010); Scott McCoy, "The Choir Issue, Part 1" *Journal of Singing* 67 (2011), 297–301;

definition of what qualifies vocal ensembles as professional. Chapter 2 seeks to settle the debate by defining professionalism utilizing Chorus America's requirements for professional ensemble membership and through opinions expressed by Robert Shaw and Craig Jessop.²³ Given this new definition, chapter 2 concludes by proposing tenets of professional choral performance intended to assist vocal ensembles in embracing cultural economics, binding artwork and audience, and structuring for growth.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 introduces cultural economics and demonstrates its importance to performing arts organizations. Toward this goal, *The Handbook of Cultural Economics*, edited by Ruth Towse offers a comprehensive overview of recent perspectives written by more than fifty of the world's most eminent cultural economists. Chapter 3 relies on the volume's treatment of the economics of the performing arts. The chapter will first cover general economic topics such as improving productivity through economies of scale and scope and the use of technology. These concepts lead to increased profit in commercial enterprise. However, they are often rendered moot in the nonprofit performing arts by phenomena like Baumol's cost disease and pervasive structural deficits, as Robert Flanagan concludes in *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras*. Chapter 3 reports Flanagan's three-part solution necessary to the sustained financial stability of performing arts organizations. First, ensembles must raise performance revenues through ticket sales, either by raising ticket prices, selling more tickets, or both. Second, orchestras must lower performance costs, often achieved by curtailing the cost of personnel. Third, orchestras must be

23. See Robert Shaw, *The Robert Shaw Reader* ed. Roebert Blocker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and Kira Zeeman Rugen, "The Evolution of Choral Sound: In Professional Choirs from the 1970s to the Twenty-First Century" (DMA diss. University of Arizona, 2013).

diligent about raising nonperformance revenue through continually adding to their constituencies, donorship, and investment income.

In addition to these challenges, the performing arts face new forms of competition from for-profit businesses. B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore's *The Experience Economy* describes ways that businesses are now working to incorporate into their customer relations aesthetic experiences that were once the purview of the performing arts. The combination of this new competition, growing potential for structural deficits, and cost disease demands a new economic understanding of the performing arts. To this end, chapter 3 follows an important suggestion made by David Throsby in "The Production and Consumption of the Arts: A View of Cultural Economics." Namely, that new definitions of output are necessary if cultural economics is to adequately illuminate the economic conditions of the performing arts for policy makers and performing organizations. The chapter closes by positing that a more artistic perspective of performing arts output might be usable by economists and equally demonstrative of new ways for performing arts organizations to understand their own activities. Drawing on the economic models presented by Henry Hansmann in "Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts," chapter 3 proposes that any measurement of the economic output of performing arts organizations must synthesize metrics of artwork and audience. In a word, the output of the performing arts must be studied as culture. In order to work with this complex term such that it might meet the needs of economists and of performing arts organizations, chapter 3 seeks to define it broadly. A brief exegesis of the term from Raymond Williams *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* allows for a definition after the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively."²⁴

24. "culture, n." OED Online. September, 19 2015. Oxford University Press. See also Raymond Williams. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Chapter 4

Having defined the output of the performing arts as culture, chapter 4 seeks measurements of output through defining quantitative and qualitative parameters for artworks and collective regard. In order to develop a vocabulary surrounding the presentation of artworks, the activities of this study's participating ensembles are viewed through the lens of Thomas Turino's *Music as Social Life*. By adapting Turino's four fields—participatory music, presentational music, Hi-Fi recording, and studio audio art—chapter 4 proposes a four-step process for measuring quantities related to the presentation of artworks. As a qualitative measure, chapter 4 adapts aesthetic value as defined by Hans Abbing in *Why Are Artists Poor: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*. By doing so, qualitative judgments of presented artworks can encompass more than compositional quality and begin to illuminate ways that ensembles bind their artwork and their constituencies.

The aspect of output thus far called artwork is relatively self-explanatory. Understanding collective regard, however, requires some explanation and development. Chapter 4 examines historical orderings of collective regard through a new reading of Jacques Attali's important-if-controversial *Noise: A Political Economy of Music*.²⁵ Attali's four orders—ritual, representing, repeating, and composing—are reinterpreted here to be indications of ways that people coalesce around musical performance. By buttressing this reading with concepts from Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* and Melanie Lowe's *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony*, chapter 4 concludes that today's regard of musical performance is often more individualist than it is collective. Therefore, in order to enact Flanagan's strategy of continually increasing performance and nonperformance revenue, performing arts organizations

25. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 2009).

must foster relationships of increasing loyalty with their constituents. As a means of measuring this process, chapter 4 borrows the so-called loyalty ladder first described in *Relationship Marketing* by Martin Christopher, Adrian Payne, and David Ballantyne. By modifying the ladder to suite the purposes of performing organizations, chapter 4 proposes means of enumerating collectivity such that collective regard can be measured as an aspect of output in the performing arts.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 treats the structure of professional vocal ensembles by first addressing performance, which is the nexus of artworks and collective regard. Chapters 3 and 4 respectively recognize the aesthetic competition present in the experience economy and the growing individualism of music's societal reception. Chapter 5 draws on this recognition, determining that performances must be conceptually rooted in their programming and equally account for audience experience. This determination is based in part on the arc of engagement developed by Alan Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin in *Making Sense of Audience Engagement*.²⁶ The arc divides the experience of performance into five sections: build-up, intense preparation, central performance, post-processing, and impact echo. Chapter 5 presents a means of designing the experience of performance events by rooting the outer sections of the arc in the music of the central performance and proposes a means of utilizing this design in measuring the output of the performing arts.

Through the arc of engagement, chapter 5 suggests that the design of performance events should enable ensembles to nurture loyal constituent relationships by bringing them into contact with artistic performance. Creating conditions for such performance is the work of every member

26. Alan Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin, *Making Sense of Audience Engagement: A critical assessment of efforts by nonprofit arts organizations to engage audiences and visitors in deeper and more impactful arts experiences*, (San Francisco: The San Francisco Foundation, 2011).

of an organization. Chapter 5 addresses the structuring and management of professional vocal ensembles toward this end. The chapter discusses the basic parts of organizations presented by Henry Mintzberg in *The Structuring of Organizations*. Chapter 5 adapts these basic parts for professional vocal ensembles and analyzes the structure of three of this study's participating ensembles.

Chapter 6

After a summary of the theoretical foundations laid in chapters 3, 4, and 5, chapter 6 reasserts the tenets presented in chapter 2 as practical grounds for the incorporation, organization, and strategic management of professional vocal ensembles. Chapter 6 addresses their incorporation in conjunction with discussions of the virtues and shortcomings of *The Chorus Leadership Guide*. The chapter depicts the development of ensembles' mission, vision, and guiding principles, relying on *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations* by Michael Kaiser. Additionally, chapter 6 applies concepts from *Building Communities, Not Audiences* by Doug Borwick to demonstrate ways that professional vocal ensembles can develop and enrich constituent relationships. Finally, Lidia Varbanova's *Strategic Management in the Arts* enables a discussion of strategies for operational assessment based on the measures of output proposed in chapters 4 and 5. Such assessment empowers ensembles to rely on their past successes, identify areas for improvement, and strategically plan for the future. Chapter 6 concludes this study by offering areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Amateurs and Professionals

Introduction

Among the challenges to professional choral performance is a general perception that choral performance is not a professional activity. This chapter will examine choral music's recent history, which betrays choral music as a traditionally amateur form of music making. The perception of choral music as amateur is shaped in part by the differences between training choral singers and training soloists. We will see also that choral conductors are themselves trained to teach voice and musicianship from the podium. This has encouraged wide participation in choirs but equally suggests that choral performance is a primarily amateur activity. Choral music's generally amateur status is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, amateur choral performance relies on singers' love of music and performance, as we will see in Robert Shaw's account of amateurs in the arts. On the other hand, if choral performance is perceived as the purview of amateurs, professional ensembles may need to justify their professionalism to constituents while at the same time distinguishing themselves musically among other professional ensembles. We will suggest that ensembles best demonstrate their professionalism in the areas of economics and finance, art and audience, and organization and operation. These areas will be discussed in brief here and then developed fully in succeeding chapters. To conclude, twenty tenets of professional choral performance are presented within these areas. These tenets are offered so that their adoption will assist ensembles in demonstrating their professionalism, thereby encouraging other ensembles to do likewise. Our discussion of choral amateurs and professionals begins by examining the shifting musical and professional landscape of music's recent history.

A Musical and Professional Shift

Over the course of the eighteenth century, music was in the midst of a great liberation from extra-musical context. Music became an art unto itself as it shifted from the predominantly vocal art form of the century's beginning to an instrumental one by its end. Carl Dalhaus describes the transition: "Now instrumental music, previously viewed as a deficient form of vocal music, a mere shadow of the real thing, was exalted as a music-esthetic paradigm in the name of autonomy—made into the epitome of music, its essence."²⁷ Instrumental music's rise to preeminence during the decades prior to the turn of the nineteenth century is by no means a pronouncement of the death of vocal music. Vocal music flourished in the nineteenth century, which was, after all, the century of Donizetti, Verdi, and Wagner. Their music to this day comprises a substantial portion of professional vocal performance. In addition to operatic developments, the nineteenth century also saw the rise of the choral society and with it new forms of choral instruction. Rather than pronouncing vocal music dead, instrumental music's rise to prominence as an autonomous art created a new stratification of vocal performance. Opera and solo vocal work joined instrumental music in the upper echelon of elite, professional musicianship. By contrast, participation in choirs became a form of music-making open to virtually anyone, an amateur pursuit.

It is perhaps too convenient to interpret the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' musical-esthetic shift as bearing the sole responsibility for democratizing vocal ensemble performance. Europe's vast political and social transitions dislodged music from its previous social and religious context. As William Weber describes,

27. Carl Dalhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 7.

The breakup of musical life took place within a context of deep instability in European politics and society between 1789 and 1848. . . . Along with political upheaval came an efflorescence of utopian thinking about ideal communities and the reform of professional or cultural worlds. . . . Thus the idealistic movement in musical life formed part of a broader rethinking of culture and politics within Europe as a whole.”²⁸

The reformation of cultural life helped to create a Romantic-era ideal of performance in which concert music was played within a solely musical context divorced from the social and religious activities it usually accompanied. Audiences’ desire to so experience performance—and no less musicians’ desire to present performances in this way—gave rise to purpose-built concert halls. Of these Michael Chanan writes, “First, the spatial-acoustic arrangement [of concert halls] was intended to create a balanced sound. Second, came a new seating arrangement, with more of the audience facing the orchestra directly; this suppresses individual display in the auditorium, and displaces it to corridors, bars and salons.”²⁹ The public flocked to these new performance spaces to experience music anew and for its own sake.

This Romantic performance ideal brought about new definitions of professionalism in musical performance. Concert halls enabled new forms of listening and even changed music composition. As Michael Musgrave notes, “After 1800 there [was] an increasing desire of professional musicians attached to the court to explore emerging and more challenging repertoire clearly perceived as beyond effective amateur performance.”³⁰ Instrumental music explored new and difficult repertoire intended for attentive listening. Within vocal music, this trend toward a

28. William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

29. Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism* (New York: Verso, 1994), 157.

30. Michael Musgrave “Performance in the Nineteenth Century: An Overview” in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* eds. Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 588.

public, professional class of repertoire and musicianship manifested itself in opera, which made its way from courtly entertainment to public spectacle. As Musgrave describes it, “The traditional focus and glory of court music had been ‘high opera’: the cultivation of vocal performance at the most refined level, regarded as offering the most direct appeal and entertainment. . . . This role has remained continuous to the present.”³¹ By 1800, professional instrumental music was creating for itself an autonomous aesthetic space, and professional vocal music continued to be cultivated through operatic performance.

Choral Instruction

Choral music, on the other hand, became an almost strictly amateur art form. Amateur choral societies were organized around oratorio repertoire, and amateur involvement in church choirs blossomed. New concerns with pedagogy arose to instruct undertrained musicians who had a desire to participate in both these arenas. For example, most American choral singers are familiar with William Billings and his music. He was an important early American composer and also an itinerant teacher of music and singing. Much of his educational and compositional work centered on the needs of new American church choirs. In Europe, musician-educators like Joseph Mainzer, Gillaume-Louis Wilhelm, and John Pyke Hullah were prolific sight-singing teachers and choral instructors. John Curwen adopted Sarah Glover’s Sol-Fa Ladder into a moveable-doh system of hand signals corresponding to each of the tone syllables. The system was further developed and advocated in the twentieth century by Zoltan Kodaly and continues to be a mainstay of music education and choral development.³²

31. Michael Musgrave, “Performance in the Nineteenth Century,” 579.

32. See Chester L. Alwes, “Choral Music in the Culture of the Nineteenth Century” in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* ed. André de Quadros (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31–32. See also John Curwen, *Tonic Sol-Fa* (London: Forgotten Books, 2012). For a brief overview of the Kodaly-Curwen connection, see Paul F. Roe *Choral Music Education* (Edgewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1983); James Jordan advocates the use of solfege syllables “as long as syllables are always used with the entire harmonic structure being

Curwen's system was hugely popular in England. Its growing popularity encouraged the masses to participate in choral music and brought countless amateurs to church choirs and choral societies. However, John Potter identifies a limiting aspect that has developed over the system's history of use.

Those who had learned, however studiously and comprehensively, from solfa, were barred from serious participation in the higher levels of the music profession. . . . Solfa certainly produced an additional audience for choral music as well as choir-fodder, and this must have compounded the tendency inherent in the system to create a gap between professional singers and amateurs.³³

In essence, Curwen's Tonic Sol-Fa helped to cement choral music as a form of amateur performance. This must have especially been the case as tonality began to dissolve toward the end of the nineteenth century; Curwen's system is dependent on there being a definable key-note with which to align all other pitches. We get a sense of the tension between tonality and its dissolution, and of the distance between "an exceptional singer" and "the generality of chorus-singers" in Curwen's own words published in 1893:

It is asserted by some that singers strike their notes by measuring the distance from one to the other—a second, a sixth, a diminished seventh, an octave, etc., without regard to the key. . . . The singer, they say, should not be perplexed by the relationship of the tones, which in modern music changes rapidly; all he has to do is move along by remarking at a glance the number of semitones from the note he is on to the next. It may be true that here

sounded at all times around them," which is how Curwen would have preferred it as well. James Jordan, *Evoking Sound: The Choral Rehearsal, Volume One: Techniques and Practices* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2007), 139.

33. John Potter, *Vocal Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 83.

and there an exceptional singer possesses this power, but it is certainly not possessed by the generality of chorus-singers.³⁴

Curwen himself distinguishes between exceptional singers, into which category would presumably fall professionals, and the masses of amateurs making use of his method. As Potter recognizes, Curwen's system came to exacerbate the gap between these groups.

Today's choral participation derives from these nineteenth-century trends. Chorus America reports that the number of regular participants in choirs in the United States exceeds 42 million people, only a small percentage of whom sing in professional choirs.³⁵ This lends some statistical support to Percy M. Young's claim that "choral music . . . is largely a concern of amateur musicians—volunteers; those who are, more often than not, conscious of their limitations rather than their virtues."³⁶ We cannot, as Young seems interested in doing, generalize on the level of performance quality across amateur choral ensembles. However, most choral conductors are trained to be voice teachers, general music educators, and music directors all at once because choral ensembles tend to receive vocal and musical instruction in rehearsal as a matter of course. By contrast, amateur instrumental ensembles are expected to receive their

34. John Curwen, *Tonic Sol-Fa*, 3. While not explicit, Curwen's remarks may have been directed at Hullah, who was a proponent of fixed doh, and who was critical of Curwen's method. For a brief explanation of Hullah's "Wilhelm Method" (adapted from Joseph Mainzer and his disciple Gillaume-Louis Wilhelm) see Percy A. Scholes, *The Mirror of Music 1844–1944: A Century of Musical Life in Britain as Reflected in the Pages of the Musical Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 11–13.

35. Chorus America's *The Chorus Impact Study* is unclear as to exactly how many professional choral singers there are. The study is based on a survey of 2053 choral singers. Their findings would seem to suggest that roughly 16 percent of those singers surveyed are "professional." However, the study distinguishes between sacred and secular professional singing without indicating how many of the surveyed singers do both. Furthermore, the study appears to have left the meaning of "professional" up to each individual respondent. These two problems suggest the reported 16 percent is likely too high. See Chorus America, *The Chorus Impact Study*. (Washington DC: Chorus America), accessed March 23, 2015, <https://www.chorusamerica.org/publications/research-reports/chorus-impact-study>.

36. Percy M. Young, *The Choral Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 10. Young's claim was made about choral singing in the twentieth century in the United Kingdom but clearly is very applicable to twenty-first century American choirs as well.

instrumental training outside of rehearsal. Of course the fact that a choir is comprised of a singular instrument, namely the voice, versus the many instruments of the orchestra facilitates technical instruction in rehearsal. But, the difference in attitude regarding instruction between choral and instrumental directors resembles that between amateur and professional ensembles. Generally speaking, amateurs can expect to have music taught to them in rehearsal; professionals are expected to arrive at rehearsal with their music already learned.

Conductor Training

We suggested above that perception of choral music as a form of amateur musical involvement has its roots in nineteenth-century choral instruction. However, that instruction set something of an amateur cycle in motion. John Curwen and his colleagues were interested in involving as many people as possible in choral singing, which is a laudable intention. It is safe to assume that most choral musicians—including professional choral singers and directors— would want the same today. Yet involving musicians of little to no experience required choral directors to provide as much vocal and musical instruction as possible for the good of their singers and in order to create the most successful performances possible. I would argue that this conductor perspective equally created an expectation among singers that they could come and be taught. This condition continues and has become systemic. Universities train choir directors to help their singers grow into better vocalists and musicians. These conductors then train others to do the same. We can see this dynamic at play in the textbooks used as accompaniments to conductor education.

Texts by James Jordan, Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford, Colin Durant, Robert L. Gareston, Abraham Kaplan, Robert W. Demaree and Don V. Moses, and Wilhelm Ehmann, to take but a sampling, all contain sections on training voices as a group from the podium. This

stands to reason: the voice is the choir's instrument.³⁷ But, Lloyd Pfausch goes as far as saying that most choral singers receive no other vocal training. "In every rehearsal, a choral conductor must remember that he will provide the only vocal training most of the singers will receive—a tremendous responsibility which cannot be treated lightly. He must help these singers learn to use their voices correctly, to eliminate bad habits, to breathe and so on."³⁸ Pfausch seems to describe amateur musicians as having little experience and as needing instruction with correct vocal production in order to make music in the ensemble. Following suit, James Jordan, dedicates substantial sections of the first volume of *Evoking Sound: The Choral Rehearsal* to teaching the choir in various ways. He writes, "One of the most important aspects of planning a masterful and artistic rehearsal is for the conductor/teacher to have a broad pedagogical overview of what is most important in any choral rehearsal."³⁹ Of course, there is a certain degree of instruction implicit in all conducting, but Jordan goes as far as conflating the roles of pedagogue and conductor. We might surmise that one of the emphases of choral conductor training is to utilize sound pedagogy on the podium. But, does the weight this topic receives in conductor training indicate that choral conductors themselves do not believe that their singers can be relied upon to bring musicianship and vocal technique into rehearsal? Sound pedagogy is important, but I would argue that it equally has come to propagate the gap Curwen recognizes between

37. See James Jordan, *Evoking Sound: The Choral Rehearsal, Volume Two: Inward Bound* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2008), 163–169; Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford, *Choral Conducting: A Symposium* (Edgewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973), 4–55, 64–65, 77, 80–82; Colin Durrant, *Choral Conducting: Philosophy and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 153–165; Robert L. Gareston, *Conducting Choral Music* (Edgewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993), 65–154; Abraham Kaplan, *Choral Conducting* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 15–25; Robert W. Demaree and Don V. Moses *The Complete Conductor* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1995), 117–122; and Wilhelm Ehmann *Choral Directing* trans. George D. Wiebe (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 1–144.

38. Lloyd Pfausch, "The Choral Conductor and the Rehearsal" in *Choral Conducting: A Symposium* eds. Harold A. Decker and Julius Herford (Edgewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973), 80.

39. James Jordan, *Evoking Sound: The Choral Rehearsal, Volume One*, 208.

exceptional singers and the generality of chorus-singers. The former are likely professionals and the latter amateurs.

Professional Singer Training

This gap has been institutionalized in the many contemporary universities and conservatories where vocal-technical rifts divide choral directors and voice teachers. Teachers of voice are rightly concerned with the vocal and musical development of their students. We might say that voice teachers wish to assist their students in becoming “exceptional singers.” Some of these students will attempt careers as professional singers, others may not. However, most voice teachers guide their students through solo vocal performance, which as we have seen is traditionally viewed as the professional path. The common requirement of conservatories and universities that those students spend time in choir—on the amateur path—therefore creates conflict. Scott McCoy writes,

I suspect there always will be conflicts between singing teachers and conductors. . . . To a certain extent, this probably is unavoidable, given the basic difference between solo training, which emphasizes individuality and projection, and choral training, which prizes uniformity and the ability to blend.

This conflict easily is exacerbated by the fact that developing singers usually spend far more time working with their conductors than their applied teachers, often by a ratio of five (or more) to one.⁴⁰

From a voice teacher’s perspective, singing in a choir during some of the most important years of a young singer’s development may be doubly harmful. First, the perception of choral music as an amateur pursuit might undermine students’ progress towards becoming professional soloists.

40. Scott McCoy, “The Choir Issue, Part 1” *Journal of Singing* 67 (2011), 297–298.

Second, many voice teachers see choral vocal production as harmful to the voices of their students.

The vocal-technical centerpiece of these disagreements is often the use of vibrato. The stereotype says that choral conductors prefer vocal sounds without it. Many voice teachers, on the other hand, view it as an all-important element in healthy vocal production. Certain choral conductors might prefer nonvibrato sound because they believe it “blends” and tunes better.⁴¹ Certain voice teachers view vocal production without vibrato as technically deficient, colorless singing. Richard Miller exemplifies the latter’s perspective:

Instead of aiming for one bland concept of timbre [achieved through singing without vibrato], a responsible choral conductor ought to look carefully at the singers and discover ways to balance their diverse tonal potentials, raising the less skilled to a higher level. Unfortunately, in order to find peer approval, many choral conductors prominent in academic choral associations feel compelled to conform to a super-imposed, uniform concept. . . . Every voice instructor at the collegiate level groans under this burden. . . . As responsible teachers of singing we must not abdicate our responsibility to insist that enlightened choral conductors be sought, hired, and retained. We must not continue to function as a wagging tail to the choral dog.⁴²

Miller’s portrait drips with disdain for “choral conductors prominent in academic choral associations.” The root of his dissatisfaction would appear to be the “uniform” sound that choral directors achieve through nonvibrato singing. Miller assumes that choirs contain a wide mix of

41. See for example, the discussion of vibrato in chapter 7 of Julia Davids and Stephen LaTour *Vocal Technique: A Guide for Conductors, Teachers, and Singers*. (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2012), 127–142.

42. Richard Miller, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 237–238.

vocal abilities and that choral singers' lack of vibrato arises out of low technical ability. There is in Miller's words a perceptible superiority of solo singers who likely use vibrato over choral singers who do not. The former are—or are training to be—professionals. The latter are amateurs.

However, there is a flaw in any logic stating that only solo singing can be professional, as Margaret Olson and Scott McCoy both point out. Olson writes,

One should consider that most singers do not earn a living as soloists, but through a combination of choral and solo work. Therefore it is imperative that solo singers in training learn to use their voices successfully in the choral environment.”⁴³

Scott McCoy agrees:

We teachers need to help our students learn to sing easily and with relative freedom when a nonvibrato sound is required. This feat demands balanced, easy breath support, laryngeal freedom, muscular release in the articulators (especially the tongue and jaw), and the willingness to make a different sound quality. This latter point is perhaps the most important; singers who are willing and able to adapt their vocal output to match the style at hand will optimize their opportunities for professional advancement.⁴⁴

Olson and McCoy indicate that the perceptions of choral singing that inspired Miller's comments may be changing. Certainly untrained singers will not become professional choral musicians, and professional soloists will continue to use the technique that Miller and others advocate. But, the qualifications for professional vocal production are expanding to include the flexible technique McCoy describes. Whereas Miller's perspective does not appear to value a singer's ability to produce differing qualities of sound, both Olson and McCoy see in that quality the potential for

43. Margaret Olson, *The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting*, xvii.

44. Scott McCoy, “The Choir Issue, Part 1,” 298.

professional advancement. Such flexible vocal technique is essential to professional choral performance. In interviews for this study, singers from every participating ensemble note that they regularly modify their technique to produce vocal sounds that are repertoire-appropriate or that suit artistic directions. Many of them, just as Olson describes, make their living partly as professional soloists and partly as professional choral musicians.

Recent growth in the number of and quality of professional vocal ensembles indicates an increasing demand for singers who can be technically flexible, but they must equally be exceptional musicians. Quickly adapting to musical requirements, stepping into a difficult scenario at a moment's notice, and immaculate sight-reading are all prized abilities among professional choirs. Simon Carrington says in an interview with Deanna Joseph,

The essential skills include: musicianship, sight-reading skills (it is critically important to be not only a good reader but a very quick and fearless reader), highly developed ensemble skills (the equal to those of a member of an accomplished string quartet), an unassuming sensitivity to the musicians around you, and a natural and easy collegiality.⁴⁵

However, the preponderance of fly-in choirs (described above in our discussion of the epochs of professional American choral performance) must be taken as an indication that such singers remain the exception and not the rule. If professional singers with the technical ability and desire to make different sound qualities were readily available across the country, professional vocal ensembles would not spend their limited budgets on travel expenses and housing. We may take this situation as an indication that perspectives surrounding choral music are changing. However, the states of choral instruction and conductor training remain. They perpetuate the view that choral singing is an amateur form of performance and may indicate to some that it *should* be so.

45. Deanna Joseph, "The Changing Paradigm of Professional Singing: An Interview with Top Singers and Conductors in the United States," *The Choral Journal* 56 (2015): 29.

Professional vocal ensembles are therefore presented with a quandary. How do they achieve professional standards of performance while maintaining the democratic qualities of choral music that have made its wide participation possible? The remainder of this paper tussles with this very question.

Professional Choirs

The predicament in which professional choirs find themselves is more than ideological. If professional vocal ensembles cannot overcome the perspective that choral music is an amateur art form, they will have difficulty making a case for its worthiness as charitable cause. As a result, they will struggle to build relationships with willing supporters and may even be unable to garner sufficient audience for performances. Additionally, the predominantly amateur history of choral music discussed above has created problems defining the term “professional” as it relates to choral performance. Are choirs professional simply because they pay their singers, or should professional choruses be measured by their artistic achievements? Can an ensemble be considered professional if it does not have a strong organization to support its musical activities? The debate over this topic will likely continue in journal articles, dissertations, and online forums.⁴⁶ However, it will be useful to review the debate here. While there is no easy resolution, I would argue that ensembles must demonstrate their professional credentials in the areas of economics and finance, art and audience, and organization and operations.

Financial and Organizational Criteria

The debate over what makes choral ensembles professional centers around whether the simple act of paying singers is sufficient to indicate professionalism. According to Chorus

46. See, for example, Kira Zeeman Rugen, *The Evolution of Choral Sound: In Professional Choirs from the 1970s to the Twenty-First Century* (DMA diss. University of Arizona, 2013), 14–17; and Matthew Sigman, "The Rise of the Professional Chorus" *Voice Of Chorus America* 33 (2010), 10. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2016), 12–13.

America, the answer is a qualified yes. Vocal ensembles are considered professional as long as they pay singers above a certain threshold. Chorus America was founded in 1977 as the Association of Professional Vocal Ensembles specifically “to gain recognition for professional choruses.”⁴⁷ Though the organization now provides resources to hundreds of varying types of vocal ensembles across the United States and abroad, they maintain active interest in professional choral performance. Ensembles must register as members of Chorus America in order to access the organization’s many resources, and in so doing they must declare the kind of ensemble they are. To declare themselves professional, ensembles must meet the following two requirements:

1. Minimum pay to singers: Twice the minimum federal hourly wage for each hour singers are contracted to rehearse and/or perform (based upon an average of combined rehearsal and performance hours per production)
2. Seasons and concert requirements: Minimum of two consecutive performance seasons with at least three different programs per season.”⁴⁸

Current to writing, the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, which means that a chorus must pay its singers at least \$14.50 “for each hour [they] are contracted to rehearse and perform.” This is a very reasonable rate, especially considering union rates for hiring instrumentalists.⁴⁹ Taken from the perspective of the first point alone, it would seem that Chorus America makes it

47. Chorus America, “About Chorus America,” <https://www.chorusamerica.org/about> accessed March 12, 2015.

48. Chorus America, “Chorus Membership,” <https://www.chorusamerica.org/membership/chorus-membership> (Accessed March 12, 2015).

49. For example, New York rates for union instrumentalists are \$274 for a performance (up to 2.5 hours) and \$137.50 for a rehearsal (up to 2.5 hours). See “Single Engagement Classical Wage Scales” Associated Musicians of Greater New York, accessed April 10, 2016 http://www.local802afm.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/classical_single.pdf.

relatively easy for an ensemble to declare itself professional. But, the second point complicates matters considerably. Under point two a chorus would be unable to call itself professional unless it has paid its singers by Chorus America's guidelines for two concert seasons. So, only in the third season of an ensemble's life will it be considered professional by Chorus America's criteria.

The financial impact of Chorus America's two criteria is deceptive, especially in light of the relatively low hourly wage required. For example, if we assume an ensemble of sixteen singers, a modest three or four rehearsals each of approximately three hours, and one to two performances of about two hours each, a professional chorus must pay each singer \$174–\$261 per concert cycle (or different program to use Chorus America's words). Assuming there is a conductor and an accompanist who are paid the same, the total personnel for such a concert would cost a minimum of \$3,132–\$4,698.⁵⁰ Because Chorus America requires three different programs per year for an ensemble to be considered professional, the yearly personnel budget for this ensemble would be \$9,396–\$14,094. These costs do not include venue rentals, printing and advertising, administrative costs, publisher and composer fees, nor any other expenses the ensemble might incur during the course of its activities. Taken together, the two years that Chorus America requires before allowing choirs to claim professional status for membership will cost the ensemble a minimum of \$20,000. This is a steep figure for beginning ensembles, and one that is likely unachievable apart from an ensemble's dedication to long-term fiscal stability.

50. It is standard practice for accompanists and conductors to be paid more than singers. I use equal pay both for ease of calculation and to show that, even estimating low, the cost of personnel to ensembles who wish to meet Chorus America's standards is very high.

Artistic Criteria

Despite these financial and organizational criteria, Chorus America's requirements would appear to set no musical standard for professionals. Craig Jessop, in an interview with Kira Zeeman Rugen, says, on the other hand, "It's not enough to say that money itself is the factor that makes excellence. Excellence can spring out of anywhere depending on the commitment and engagement of the director and singers."⁵¹ While excellence is perhaps a broad standard, most trained singers and conductors recognize it when they encounter it. Excellence should be displayed in all an ensemble's activities, artistic or otherwise. Robert Shaw, who remains among America's most highly respected choral conductors, put it this way: "Payment, or the amount thereof (for making music) is neither the final proof nor sliding scale of either professionalism nor amateurism in art."⁵² Whereas Jessop identifies excellence as the *sine qua non* of professionalism in choral music and Chorus America defines professional through financial responsibility, Shaw relies on a recognizable and deep love of musical art. He writes,

the word "amateur" comes to us through the Latin *amo, amoris*—the English equivalent of which is L-O-V-E—and the *am-a-tor*: one who loves. . . .The *amateur spirit* in the Arts is not necessarily limited to those who do not receive a weekly paycheck. The greatest amateurs in my life have been Pablo Casals and Rudolf Serkin—whose concert fees were the highest of the highest.⁵³

Shaw's expectations of excellence speak for themselves through his recordings and his reputation, and he was very experienced working with every kind of paid musician. For him,

51. Kira Zeeman Rugen, *The Evolution of Choral Sound*, 15.

52. Robert Shaw, *The Robert Shaw Reader*, ed. Robert Blocker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 441. Emphasis original.

53. *Ibid.*, 418-419.

however, it is their love of music that sets musicians apart, and he believed that love could be jeopardized by pay. To adapt a phrase from Christopher Morley, it could be dangerous for music lovers to become professional musicians.⁵⁴ Shaw might agree.

The importance Shaw places on loving the art and Jessop's excellence ideal are seemingly ignored by Chorus America's standards for professional ensembles. However, I would argue that these two qualities are therein implied. For a professional ensemble of low artistic standards to raise the necessary minimum of \$20,000 over two years in order to meet Chorus America's requirements would be near to impossible. An ensemble would be equally unlikely to raise such funds without members who are devoted to it, who love the music it performs, and who readily display their love and devotion to donors and supporters. It is quite simply too difficult to raise funds and develop a constituency under circumstances other than these. And yet, excellence and devotion are very difficult to demonstrate empirically, which may explain why Chorus America does not include them in its requirements. Instead, Chorus America has elected to set financial requirements that are very likely unachievable without them. Deep devotion to the organization, its mission, and its art; long-term fiscal stability; and high standards of musical and vocal-technical excellence are all essential components of professional vocal ensembles.

Twenty Tenets: A Model for Professional Choral Ensembles

In keeping with this study's general purpose of theorizing and codifying the practices of professional vocal ensembles as they seek to balance artistry with organizational efficacy and financial security, this study proposes twenty tenets as a model for ensembles. These tenets are representative of successful practices and philosophies professional ensembles can adopt to better their operations. Here the twenty tenets are arranged into categories based on the

54. "I keep telling you bookselling is an impossible job for a man who loves literature." Christopher Morley, *The Haunted Bookshop* (Pleasantville: The Akadine Press, 1998), 46.

theoretical core of this paper, which follows in chapters 3, 4, and 5: economics and finance, art and audience, and organization and operation. The model is born in part out of the observations of and interviews conducted with this study's participating ensembles and in part out of current literature and common practices of nonprofit organizations, musical groups, conductors, fundraisers, and boards of directors. This model is indicative of an ideal and seeks to synthesize the many conceptual areas that impact the operations of professional performing ensembles.

The model is dependent upon the board of directors incorporating the ensemble prior to beginning regular public musical performance. It may seem out of order to form the board before gathering together musicians, but the board of directors plays three important roles. First, they are the initial investors and fundraisers for the group. Second, the board of directors oversees all of the group's activities and ensures that its mission is ethically and responsibly carried out. Third, members of the board of directors represent an ensemble's first constituents, and they share in responsibilities for developing new constituent relationships. By establishing the board prior to public performance, ensembles ensure as best they can that they will have the necessary initial funding, that board members and ensemble members agree on and support the ensemble's mission, and that there is a core of constituent relationships developing around the ensemble. Having this initial structure in place will aid in devising the rest of the organization.

Funding is the primary obstacle facing any group wishing to undertake professional performance. If funding were no object, every ensemble would pay the very best singers exceedingly well and would undertake as many performances of as much repertoire as desired. Professional vocal ensembles are, in some ways, fortunate that funding is not endless. Fundraising and maintaining fiscal responsibility present opportunities for ensembles to develop personal relationships with their constituents and donors. This model is formed under the firm

belief that financial security and artistic success are not mutually exclusive. Rather, financial security is integral to professional musical performance. Fundraising and developing relationships are not necessary evils; they are the means by which performing arts ensembles foster their constituencies and advocate art in the twenty-first century. The danger of voraciously seeking funds is that ensembles might be tempted to relinquish their artistic and aesthetic ideals in order to bring in more money. The focus of the following twenty tenets, therefore, is to balance the independent professional vocal ensemble's need for loyal constituent relationships and funding with its artistry, beliefs, and ideals.

Economics and Finance

Tenet 1: Demonstrate professionalism through financial trustworthiness.

Tenet 2: Seek to understand the economic context into which ensembles perform and create advantages from that understanding.

Tenet 3: Use 501(c)(3) nonprofit status to create multiple streams of performance and nonperformance revenue including ticket sales, individual and corporate donations, and grants.

Tenet 4: Recognize the importance of personal relationships in effective fundraising and marketing and seek to develop and maintain those relationships.

Tenet 5: Understand the economic role played in the community and endeavor to serve the community through collaboration and volunteerism.

Art and Audience

Tenet 6: Demonstrate professionalism through artistic leadership and by setting high standards for performance.

Tenet 7: Be aesthetically trustworthy and present works of high aesthetic value.

Tenet 8: Create experience of performance events through context; know that repertoire and audience experience cannot be conflated.

Tenet 9: Ensure that every member of the organization—and not only the musicians—contributes to the audience experience of performance events.

Tenet 10: Engage singers with flexible vocal technique and attend to their vocal needs.

Tenet 11: Understand the role that loyal relationships play in the presentation of artworks and seek to develop those relationships.

Tenet 12: Maintain personal relationships with constituents that help to ascertain constituents' regard of the art the ensemble presents.

Organization and Operation

Tenet 13: Demonstrate professionalism through organizational trustworthiness.

Tenet 14: Work toward sustainable growth through strategic management.

Tenet 15: Create a virtuous cycle of vision, organization, action, and assessment in all operations. Endeavor always to improve.

Tenet 16: Expect the best from ensemble members. Outline in writing expectations of musicianship, preparedness, timeliness, and organization. Equally, foster personal and professional relationships based on respect, understanding, and dignity.

Tenet 17: Establish a board of directors who are developers of and advocates for the organization.

Tenet 18: Venture to understand constituents' loyalty and use that understanding to develop new and richer relationships.

Tenet 19: Discover and utilize the strengths of all members—volunteers, musicians, and administrators.

Tenet 20: Value collaboration. Work cooperatively with people and other organizations.

Conclusion

These twenty tenets recognize that the common perception of choral music as an amateur discipline necessitates that ensembles continually demonstrate their professional credentials. They equally suggest areas of theoretical concern to be discussed in the ensuing chapters. The discussion found in chapters 3, 4, and 5 relies on these tenets for direction but does not discuss them explicitly. Instead, these chapters broadly investigate the performing arts, believing that one way to demonstrate the professional capabilities of choral performance is by including it in theoretical discussions of the professional performing arts at large. We will return to the tenets explicitly in chapter 6 as this paper concludes by demonstrating ways in which theory can be applied toward practical solutions for incorporating, structuring and strategically managing professional vocal ensembles. The following theoretical discussion then attempts to lay foundations on which new and existing ensembles can make decisions and create policies that are appropriate for themselves, their constituencies, and their art. The first of these foundations is laid by examination of the economic context surrounding the performing arts.

Chapter 3: Economic Concerns

Introduction

Conservatories, colleges, and universities prepare students of music to be professionals, whether performers, educators, or academics. Included in this training is extensive musical study. For those studying education, they are required to learn the education system as well as those musical and pedagogical techniques that will assist them in being successful teachers. However, higher education has not traditionally included business or economic training as part of musical study. For some, especially those who upon graduating will win fulltime jobs in symphony orchestras, this area is of little concern. They will earn salaries and benefits just as any employee of any company would. However, increasingly more musicians, especially professional singers and conductors, earn a living as freelancers, traveling extensively from gig to gig. Many of the members of the ensembles participating in this study are such musicians, as stated above. They note that there were no business or economics requirements throughout their undergraduate and graduate programs, even if occasional elective courses on music business or grant writing were offered. Few were introduced to the business of their business prior to beginning their careers.

Deanna Joseph's interviews with top American singers and conductors express similar sentiments. The tenor Kyle Stegall reports that

Time-management and self-management are the two most important skill sets for the self-employed professional musician. The successful self-employed musician must be his or her own accountant, scheduler, boss (work-enforcer), and sometimes marketer and manager. In the highly structured academic setting, self-worth and accomplishment are too often gauged from the completion of assigned tasks and from singing in required

concerts. In the world of the full-time performer, one must discipline oneself to work toward personal, musical, and career goals.⁵⁵

Some degree of business and economics training for students of music is useful for all who pursue performance careers. Such training is essential for conductors, however, who almost certainly need a working knowledge of nonprofit organizations. Some conductors will choose to pursue leadership of a professional ensemble; others will lead community groups or part-time professional organizations. Yet little if any nonprofit study is part of conductor education. This chapter will expose some of the economic context necessary to nonprofit leadership, demonstrating just how helpful economic understanding can be to music and artistic directors. There is room here only to introduce and discuss certain concepts, but in doing so I will highlight those that will prove most fruitful in the artistic, organizational, and financial workings of professional vocal ensembles.⁵⁶ Although some useful concepts and strategies are beyond the scope of this paper, this chapter will offer suggestions about how artistic and administrative leaders of professional vocal ensembles can utilize a working knowledge of the marketplace to improve their practices and foster their organizations.

What follows introduces new perspectives into the performing arts and cultural economics. Along with the surrounding chapters, the proceeding discussion forms a holistic examination of the organization and practices of professional vocal ensembles. These discussions are intended to demonstrate the usefulness of economic understanding to leaders of professional performing organizations and to reveal some of the ways in which that understanding bears on

55. Deanna Joseph, "The Changing Paradigm of Professional Singing: An Interview with Top Singers and Conductors in the United States," *The Choral Journal* 56 (2015): 30.

56. For a complete and orthodox look at market economics, see Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1997), which despite its age is still well regarded and foundational. For an overview of cultural economics with a good deal of in-depth analysis, see Ruth Towse ed. *A Handbook of Cultural Economics* (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2011).

the organization of ensembles and ultimately influences the development and implementation of their missions.

Economics and the Performing Arts

Lest any be deterred by the misconception that economics is solely about money and mathematics, this examination begins as Alfred Marshall begins his *Principles of Economics*, by stating unequivocally that the discipline studies people and their behavior as revealed through financial activity. “[Economics] examines that part of individual and social action which is most closely connected with the attainment and with the use of the material requisites of wellbeing. Thus it is on the one side a study of wealth; and on the other, and more important side, a part of the study of man.”⁵⁷ Economics is still, despite its reputation for mathematical complexity and opaque modeling, more interested in behavior than market activity alone, and for this reason will be helpful to those performing ensembles who choose to use it. Economics examines the two most important aspects of professional performance: the way that funds flow through the production of professional performance, and the behavior of its participants, be they artistic or music directors, other performers, administrators, donors, volunteers, or audience members. A performance is something held among people, and there would be no professional performances without the funds to produce them.⁵⁸ Nonperformance activities such as audience development, educational outreach, and marketing require funds of their own and often bear greatly on the audience experience. Economics is an ideal paradigm for studying and analyzing the performance and nonperformance activities of professional ensembles.

57. Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1.

58. See chapter 2’s discussion of what makes a choir professional.

Production and Efficiency

Just as it is to the performing arts, the process of production is central to market economics; its surrounding variables yield much of the data required for economic analysis. A colloquial understanding of production may conjure images of factory workers and assembly lines, but every tangible good goes through production whether or not that process involves machinery. Prior to production, certain expenses, called inputs, must be met. Production then results in output, tangible goods that can be sold. The ideal, of course, is that the amount of money required for the production process to take place be exceeded by the amount garnered from the sale of the goods produced. This excess is called profit, and it is the basis for all market-economic activity. Both input and output can be measured in monetary terms, either as cost (the former) or profit (the latter). Typically speaking, a for-profit business can measure its production's effectiveness and efficiency, its productivity, by comparing output per unit of input. The task of a business, then, is to discover ways to maximize productivity such that profit continually and increasingly exceeds cost—the resulting profits of output ideally exceed input.

In other words, market economics assumes that individuals and businesses tend to maximize returns on their limited (sometimes referred to as scarce) resources. As Charles M. Gray describes, “Each person strives to meet his or her own wants or needs as fully as possible subject to limited command over resources, inadequate time, cognitive errors and other constraints.”⁵⁹ Businesses and other types of firms are seen to do likewise. Whereas an individual wants the most utility for his or her time and money, businesses seek to maximize the profit they derive from production by continually improving efficiency and concomitantly lowering the cost of production by using technology, increasing the scale of production, or increasing scope of

59. Charles M. Gray, “Participation” in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse, 327–328.

products offered.⁶⁰ Consider a company making ready-to-drink cold-brewed coffee. Each employee working by hand with the help of a funnel is able to fill and cap an average of 250 bottles in an hour. By adding technology to this process, a bottling machine for example, each employee is able to oversee the filling and capping of 1200 bottles per hour. The bottling machine's technology has increased the scale of production, thereby increasing the potential for profit. In this scenario, the cost of operating has been increased by the fixed cost of each bottling machine the company buys. Notice, however, that other inputs per unit (labor costs, for example) have dramatically decreased. Therefore, after the sunk cost of each machine has been met, economy of scale yields greater output, thereby increasing profit and lowering the average costs of production. If the same company, realizing that not everyone likes cold-brewed coffee, wishes to reach a greater share of the market, it might expand its offerings to include iced tea. Because the company already has systems in place for brewing and bottling, economy of scope allows them to brew and bottle tea with minimal additional inputs. Increasing the scope of the company's business allows for the greatest possible profit.

The above example is hypothetical and rudimentary, but there are innumerable examples of real companies utilizing technologies and economies of scale and scope to maximize their profits through efficient production. Consider how much banking and other financial activity takes place with the help of computers and similar technology. Bulk retailers like Sam's Club and Costco are able to sell items at lower prices than other retailers in part because those items are sold in such large quantities. Apple used to be no more than a personal computer company.

60. It should be noted that the economic concept of utility is more complex than the word itself might suggest. Rather than being about simple usability, utility is a reflection of consumer satisfaction (for example, with their choices of the goods and services they have purchased). A utility function is an economic expression of what guides an individual's choices. See John Black, Nigar Hashimzade, and Gareth Myles, "utility," in *A Dictionary of Economics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, accessed April 10, 2016. <http://www.oxfordreference.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199237043.001.0001/acref-9780199237043-e-3278>.

However, in recent years the corporation has increased its share of business in areas other than personal computing such as smart phone, entertainment streaming, and cloud-based systems.

Economies of Scale and Scope in the Performing Arts

While increasing efficiency through technology and utilizing economy of scale are standard practices among for-profit businesses, they are not altogether helpful in the performing arts. First of all, an economy of scale is very difficult to achieve in live performance. The cost of artistic production is not substantially lowered—if it is lowered at all—by adding performances. Labor costs, which are often the highest production costs in professional musical performance, do not decrease as the number of performances rises. It is therefore difficult to lower overall costs; instead they rise with each additional production. Second, there is essentially no technology that can replace a musician in live performance. The distinguishing element of live performance (as opposed to a sound or video recording of a performance, whether or not it is live-streamed) is that members of the listening audience are in the physical presence of the musicians playing the music. There are, of course, technologies that can make the listening experience more enjoyable, but there is none to improve the economic efficiency of the labor required for live performance. In the now famous words of cultural economists William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, whose *Performing Arts, The Economic Dilemma* is among cultural economics's first studies, "No one has yet succeeded in decreasing the human effort expended at a live performance of a 45-minute Schubert quartet much below a total of three man-hours."⁶¹

61. William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts, The Economic Dilemma: A Study of Problems Common to Theater, Opera Music, and Dance* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966), 164. NB: It is most likely that Baumol and Bowen were offering a simple example without reference to a specific piece of music. However, presuming they refer to string quartets, there are two of approximately 45-minute duration: D. 804 *Rosamunde* and D. 810 *Der Tod und das Mädchen*. The only other quartet roughly of this length is Schubert's final quartet, D. 887, which lasts approximately 55 minutes.

Though performing ensembles do not benefit from economies of scale in performance, they can benefit from adding scope to their activities. If the core activity of professional performing organizations is to prepare music for performance in front of a live audience, then any activities that fall outside the rehearsal or concert halls add scope to such organizations. For example, economy of scope might arise from recording and education and outreach. They are not necessary components of rehearsing and performing music for a live audience, but recording and outreach improve an ensemble's relationship with its constituency and have the potential to make the experience of performance more valuable. For these reasons, making and selling recordings and engaging in outreach and education have become requisite for professional ensembles, even to the extent that it is difficult nowadays to view these activities as broadening the scope of professional ensembles' activities. Throughout the years, recording and outreach have earned their status as requisite activities by providing economic benefit to professional performing organizations. The ubiquity of recording and education and outreach then is some indication of the possible benefits to ensembles of economies of scope.

Funding the Performing Arts: Baulmol's Cost Disease

Despite creative ways of maximizing efficiency in production, funding the performing arts presents constant challenges to organizations and their managers. Robert J. Flannigan's *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras* details orchestral economics during the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. Flanagan's conclusions—based on statistical models of data from 63 orchestras who had the 50 largest budgets in the United States for two of the fiscal years between the 1987–1988 and 2005–2006 concert seasons—are useful to all ensemble types. The study's substantial sample takes into account various economic climates and cultural-historical events. Unfortunately, however, the data collection was complete prior to the 2007–2008 financial

crisis.⁶² As a result, analyses of Great Recession orchestral finances, which alone would be edifying for the discussions of lockouts in Minnesota, Indianapolis, and Atlanta, are not part of his study. Still, the book offers tremendous insight into the struggles of funding performing arts organizations.

Underlying *The Perilous Life* is the condition of cost disease, which was first described in William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen's landmark 1966 study, *Performing Arts, the Economic Dilemma: A Study of Problems Common to Theater, Opera Music, and Dance*. Flannigan writes,

if productivity in the low-productivity-growth industry [which includes professional classical music ensembles] increases at 1 percent annually (rather than zero), pay increases of 3 percent will produce unit labor cost increases of 2 percent per year... This arithmetic is the essence of [Baumol's] infamous cost disease.⁶³

In other words, the average growth in the symphony orchestra's sector of the economy is 1 percent per year. The average yearly increase in labor costs is 3 percent per year. Between them is a 2 percent gap, meaning that orchestras' costs will rise by two percent every year despite efficient management.

If performing organizations were similar to for-profit businesses, revenues would exceed production costs or, like businesses, they would close. The challenge for performing arts organizations in general and musical organizations specifically is that their model is upside down

62. The US Government's report on the crisis states that "the profound events of 2007 and 2008 were neither bumps in the road nor an accentuated dip in the financial and business cycles we have come to expect in a free market economic system. This was a fundamental disruption—a financial upheaval, if you will—that wreaked havoc in communities and neighborhoods across this country." The Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, "The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report," (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2011), accessed March 9, 2015 http://fcic-static.law.stanford.edu/cdn_media/fcic-reports/fcic_final_report_full.pdf, xv.

63. Flanagan, Robert J. *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 9.

from for-profit businesses. Orchestras' revenues from production—their performance income—are only rarely equal to the cost of running such organizations. Flanagan found, for example, that “by the 1990–91 concert season, performance revenues averaged 46 percent of performance expenses before declining further to 41 percent in the 2005–6 season.”⁶⁴ When performance expenses continually exceed performance income, there exists a structural deficit. The persistent decline in performance revenue is concomitant with persistent increase in performance expenses; cost disease exacerbates growing structural deficits. Most ensembles try to close the performance income gap through raising nonperformance revenue, which comes largely from private donations, grants, governmental support, and investments. In order to do so as effectively as possible, most American organizations incorporate themselves as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, which allows them to receive tax-deductible donations from individuals and organizations. Facilitating receipt of these funds, most ensembles establish divisions of their organizations that are dedicated to fundraising. However, Flanagan writes,

there is no guarantee that the various sources of nonperformance income . . . will exactly cover the structural performance deficit in any particular year. Nor is there a guarantee that nonperformance income will grow rapidly enough over time to offset the growing deficit that is a consequence of the cost disease. . . . [Therefore] nonperformance income provided by private donors, government, and investment earnings must increase indefinitely.⁶⁵

Even through donations, performing organizations do not guarantee themselves strong fiscal footing from year to year. Raising nonperformance income is not in itself a solution to the problems of cost disease or structural deficits. To further elucidate these issues and to discover

64. *Ibid.*, 16.

65. *Ibid.*, 17.

other ways in which the performing arts are misaligned with market economics, we turn to the growing discipline of cultural economics.

Cultural Economics

Economics measures more than money changing, market trends, and consumer activity, to paraphrase Alfred Marshall's dictum. It examines the behavior and relationships collectively revealed in the marketplace. Cultural economics, then, is that branch of economics that seeks to examine such behavior and relationships as they specifically relate to the creation and preservation of heritage and culture. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) defines cultural economics as "the application of economic analysis to all of the creative and performing arts, the heritage and cultural industries, whether publically or privately owned. It is concerned with the economic organization of the cultural sector and with the behaviour of producers, consumers, and governments in this sector."⁶⁶ The cultural sector comprises the creative economy and cultural industries. While there remains much disagreement around the boundaries of the creative and cultural industries, their definitions have expanded beyond the cultural and historical preservation sectors in recent years to include the for-profit arts sector, digital and web design, the culinary industry, and even sports. As a result of this expansion, there is scarcely a corner of the greater economy that the creative economy has not touched in some way. UNCTAD notes, "The creative economy extends into a wide range of areas of political responsibility and government administration . . . almost all areas of government policy have some sort of interaction with [the creative] industries."⁶⁷ The report then lists examples, including economic development, trade, regional growth, labor, domestic and

66. UNCTAD, *Creative Economy Report*, (United Nations, 2010), 5.

67. *Ibid.*, 27.

foreign investment, technology and communications, culture, tourism, social affairs, and education.⁶⁸ From the cultural economic perspective of independent professional vocal ensembles, this expansion indicates a new kind of economy, one in which aesthetic experience is transforming market interactions. The expansion therefore demonstrates a new kind of competition where the performing arts do not compete economically against themselves alone. Finally, the expansion offers justification for public subsidies to the performing arts. The economic benefits of the performing arts extend to an area's entire economy, well beyond the experiences they create for patrons, and therefore should receive reciprocal benefits in the form of public subsidy.

The Experience Economy and Competition for the Performing Arts

It would be dangerous to limit the expansion of the creative and cultural economies to the realm of economic study without recognizing their manifestation in people's everyday lives. Cultural economics continues to include more under its umbrella in part because aesthetic experiences that simulate live performance are a growing part of economic transactions. As the general public enjoys these experiences outside the theater or the concert hall, the lines blur between experienced-based events such as plays or concerts and market-based transactions such as buying a new computer or grocery shopping. This idea is at the heart of the so-called experience economy that B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore describe. Their book's original subtitle, "Work is Theater and Every Business a Stage," gives some indication of the extent to which concepts from the performing arts have invaded, or at least influenced, typical market interactions. They write,

Experiences have always been around, but consumers, businesses, and economists lumped them into the service sector along with such uneventful activities as dry cleaning,

68. *Ibid.*, 27–28.

auto repair, wholesale distribution, and telephone access. When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages—as in a theatrical play—to engage him in an inherently personal way.⁶⁹

Pine and Gilmore view businesses as borrowing from the performing arts in order to establish more personal connections with customers. If “uneventful activities” have adopted qualities formerly available only in the aesthetic experiences of performance, it is logical that cultural economics in its study of the cultural and creative industries has sought to incorporate an expanding list of economic sectors into its analyses. As businesses continue to incorporate cultural and creative aspects into their practices, cultural economics is able to develop more detailed analyses to describe them, and the more useful those analyses will be.

The expansion of the creative economy indicates that the breadth of competition for musical performance now extends beyond the other performing arts. In other words, symphony orchestras, opera companies, and professional vocal ensembles not only compete with each other and other performing arts such as theater and ballet but also against other creative and leisure sectors for the time and money of their patrons. Flannigan notes in *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras* that, just as performing arts attendance has waned in recent years,

sales of fishing and hunting licenses have declined as new generations of young people find other uses for their time. . . . Golf memberships have also declined. . . . Motion picture attendance peaked in 2002, and by 2008 was 86 percent of that peak. Public television viewing has declined, although the audience for noncommercial radio has increased. . . . It has been easier to record these trends than to explain how time formerly

69. B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Updated Edition* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), 3.

spent on these diverse activities has been reallocated. New generations face an ever-growing variety of personal entertainment options not available to prior generations—video games, YouTube clips, social networking activities, and the like.⁷⁰

Flannigan demonstrates that the crisis in which so many would claim classical music finds itself is by no means limited to classical music. When we add this knowledge to the growth of the experience economy, we begin to see a situation emerging where desires for entertainment and aesthetic experiences—formerly available only through live interactions—are being met through impersonal means. Classical music’s “crisis” is shared by all activities that ask for the public’s non-digital, out-of-the-home leisure time. These activities are almost invariably less expensive than the performing arts. But, they do not offer the cross-economy, external benefits that UNCTAD argues the creative industries do.

Direct and Passive Subsidies to the Performing Arts

Bruno S. Frey describes that the external benefits of the arts allow members of society to benefit from the arts without paying for them directly. He writes,

People may value the *option* of visiting an artistic production although, in fact, they never spend any money to actually attend themselves . . . Artistic production may also contribute to a *liberal* and *broad education* and lead to *social improvements* among the participants. The experimental nature of (some) artistic endeavours may foster innovation and risk-taking in quite different parts of society. In all these cases, the producers of art are not fully compensated in monetary terms for the benefits created.⁷¹

70. Robert J. Flanagan, *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras*, 59–60

71. Bruno. S. Frey, “Public Support” in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse, 371–372. Emphasis original.

These external benefits form part of the rationale behind public subsidy for the performing arts, subsidies that take two forms. First, direct subsidies are those funds given by governments directly to arts organizations. Second, passive subsidies are funds given to arts organizations through individual and corporate donations that governments incentivize through tax relief. Direct subsidies allow for the greatest artistic experimentation at the lowest financial risk to performing organizations. They are popular across Europe where subsidies may take a number of forms. A lump sum subsidy is one where a cultural organization is simply allotted an amount of money in order to assist its operations. Governments may also choose to subsidize organizations' budget deficits. Some governments may allocate subsidies based on ticket sales or admissions.

By contrast, in the United States, nonprofit firms receive most of their funding through donations from non-governmental agencies and individuals. The former are typically given by businesses and corporations and the latter by private citizens. However, passive governmental support on the part of the US does not mean that the government necessarily supports the arts any less than its European counterparts (as goes one typical argument heard in discussions of the impending doom of the arts and of classical music specifically). Every nonprofit firm is eligible to receive tax-deductible donations in order to supplement production expenses. While these funds do not pass through government coffers, they do represent a loss of government taxation income. In other words, the government does not distribute funds to performing organizations, but it does accept lower tax revenue than it would if it did distribute funds. There are, of course, benefits and detriments to such a policy. For example, passive governmental subsidy tends to democratize support for the arts because the people doing the supporting are able to decide which organizations get their donations. On the other hand, passive governmental support can lead to a fractured cultural landscape because such a hands-off approach eschews centralized

cultural leadership. Passive support also makes artistic experimentation a riskier venture because experimental art can be less appealing to certain members of the general public who support the arts.

Perhaps the greatest argument for passive support, however, is that it encourages organizations to be more fiscally responsible. Frey and Pommerehne make clear that because future direct support is often the result of an organization's previous budget deficits, there is negative incentive for managers to run balanced budgets. "A direct consequence of linking current subsidies to past deficits is that reducing its deficit has a double cost to the management of the performing arts institution. . . . Therefore, the directors of a public theater have strong incentive *not* to reduce the deficit, but rather to increase it above the projected level."⁷² American nonprofits must keep a very watchful eye on their budgets if they are to weather Baumol's cost disease and the aforementioned structural deficits. They benefit from fiscal transparency and responsibility because doing so encourages future donorship and efficient production. This is a fact of which the public (and no shortage of arts managers) might be more mindful. Funding for the arts is scarce regardless of whether governments offer funding directly. Instead of bemoaning the American system of passive subsidy, we might celebrate and encourage the fiscal transparency and responsibility the system requires. Doing so might shift the perspective of those who view artists as forever with their hands out and might help the general public to realize that great art costs real money, money that can be effectively managed to benefit society.

72. Bruno S. Frey and Werner W. Pommerehne "A Comparative Institutional Analysis in the Arts: The Theater," in *Social Institutions: Their Emergence, Maintenance, and Effects*, Michael Hechter, Karl-Dieter Opp, Reinhard Wippler eds. (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1990), 182. Emphasis original.

Quality and Cultural Economics

Arguments like the above have not taken hold in the United States in part because cultural economics is still establishing itself as a discipline. Statistical evidence as to how much the arts benefit the general welfare is incomplete and often holds little sway with policy makers. Furthermore, economists differ amongst themselves as how to best define certain concepts. For example, economists view quality in the performing arts in many different ways. David Throsby writes that quality grows as an ensemble moves closer to “the ‘serious’ arts.”⁷³ George J. Stigler and Gary S. Becker rather circuitously note that “educated persons consume more good music (i.e., music the educated people like!).”⁷⁴ Henry Hansmann, whose work on nonprofit enterprise has become something of a touchstone in cultural economics, describes two ways for achieving quality performances.

First, the organization could seek to make its production of any given work as impressive as possible, for example by hiring exceptionally skilled performers, constructing lavish stage sets, and so forth. Second, the organization could choose to produce works that appeal only to the most refined tastes, avoiding the more popular items in the repertoire.⁷⁵

Ruth Towse writes,

As far as quality is concerned, Baumol saw it as having to do with sustaining the ‘classic’ repertoire—performances of the great works for orchestra, string quartet, opera and ballet, the theatre and so on. This raises the question whether smaller-cast plays or

73. David Throsby, “The Production and Consumption of the Arts: A View of Cultural Economics,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 32 (1994): 13, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2728421>.

74. George J. Stigler and Gary S. Becker, “De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum,” *The American Economic Review* 67 (1977): 79, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1807222>.

75. Henry Hansmann, “Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts,” *The Bell Journal of Economics* 12 (1981): 347, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3003560>.

chamber orchestras performing a different repertoire (say of Baroque music) are offering lower quality supply.”⁷⁶

To summarize, the small sampling of economists above view quality performance only as serious art, as based on the tastes of educated consumers, as deriving from spectacular performance, as appealing to only the most refined tastes, or as deriving from the classic repertoire. None of these examples alone defines the quality of a performance as a musician might, based on simultaneous musical accuracy and expression, on compositional craftsmanship, on the repertoire’s historical influence or newly-composedness.

Perhaps most important, musicians view quality as being influenced by all of these factors and more in combination, and not as the singular reductions put forth by many economists. As Ruth Towse concludes, “[Musical quality] is clearly a subjective matter on which economists are perhaps not sufficiently expert.”⁷⁷ In other words, economists use quality as a variable in their analyses of performing arts organizations despite the fact that they may not be expert enough to determine what aspects of a performance comprise its quality. In this discrepancy we can see one of many places where a better understanding of each discipline’s point of view is useful to the other. Economists would benefit greatly in their assessments of quality performance if it were viewed as the multi-faceted and complex arrangement of factors that artists see. On the other hand, musicians might be more cognizant of how quality affects economic output were they to adopt some of the perspectives of economists.

Output in the Performing Arts

The idea that economists and performing arts organizers might mutually benefit from each other’s expertise is logical enough. That cultural economics and professional vocal

76. Ruth Towse, “Performing Arts,” in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse, 341.

77. *Ibid.*, 341.

ensemble performance have not intersected more may be attributable to any number of factors. These include the struggles for time and resources faced by performing arts organizations, a shared lack of expertise in the other's discipline, the high levels of pragmatism necessary to the nonprofit performing arts, and the highly theoretical (and often mathematical) nature of cultural economics. This is to say that there can be tremendous value in cultural economics for performing artists and substantial interest in the realities of the nonprofit performing arts on the part of cultural economists. David Throsby notes that in order for cultural economics to be of real use to cultural practitioners,

It will be necessary to search for more appropriate measures of output, and to make better use of existing measures. . . . If advances can be made in these respects, one possible benefit could be that future work in the economics of the performing arts may be more useful to managers of performing arts companies than has been the case in the past.”⁷⁸

Twenty years have elapsed since that was published, and it would appear that few have heeded Throsby's advice to search for more appropriate measures of output. But, appropriately defining output is essential to accurate economic analyses. A close study of output necessarily includes many other economic factors important to production. Examinations of output should yield fruitful descriptions of productivity that inform analyses of inputs and expenses, profit, and pricing. In the performing arts, such examinations might include other forms of nonperformance income, monetary and in-kind donations, and volunteer hours.

Furthermore—and perhaps most important to professional vocal ensembles—output is a market-based manifestation of an organization's purpose, which is distinguishable from its mission. Purpose is defined as the reason an organization or firm exists. Mission is defined as the

78. David Throsby, “The Production and Consumption of the Arts,” 11.

beliefs, actions, and activities that govern the way in which an organization fulfills its purpose.⁷⁹ Mission is the means of doing business; purpose is the ends. Consider again the coffee and tea company above. Its purpose, its *raison d'être*, is to brew, bottle, and sell iced coffee and tea. In order to accomplish this purpose, the company develops for itself a mission. The company *believes* in the good it can do for the communities who grow the coffee they sell. They take *action* by only purchasing coffee from growers whose business practices include transparency and fair wages and with whom they can work together personally. The company's *activities* reflect its beliefs as it brews and bottles coffee from those growers, gives charitably to nongovernmental organizations that support the growers' localities, hosts events to support their growers directly, and raises awareness of the economic and political situations in coffee-growing regions as part of their advertising. The company's mission defines the way in which it will produce its goods. Its purpose is realized in the market as the tangible results of production. For our coffee company that is bottles for sale. The number of bottles sold is a measure of the degree to which the company fulfills its purpose.

Viewing output as the market-based manifestation of purpose is perhaps nontraditional, but the concept is implicit in microeconomic analysis. When a company analyzes its profit against its expenditures in order to understand its efficiency of production, that company is, in essence, using pecuniary measurements to examine how effectively it accomplishes its purpose. In seeking such measurements of the performing arts, cultural economists have utilized a variety of strategies. Some view measures of output to be based on ticket sales. Others understand them in terms of repertoire quality or quantity. Still others believe that output is a complex metric of ticket sales, repertoire, and nonperformance income. Nonetheless, it is only through accurately defining output in general economic terms that we can abstract from a performing arts

79. Mission and purpose are further developed in chapter 5.

organization's activities that which comprises its economic output. David Throsby suggests that this is something cultural economics had not accomplished in 1994, and—I would argue—has yet to accomplish still.

In order to create more appropriate measures of output, we must find ways of more completely describing the ways in which the purposes of performing arts ensembles are manifested in the marketplace. As a first step toward this end, let us first review ways in which some of the current theories position the purpose of the performing arts.

Measures of Quantity

A business's productivity—its output measured against units of input—enables us to understand the degree to which its production is efficient. For example, we noted that adding a bottling machine enabled our hypothetical iced coffee and tea company to increase its bottling capacity from 250 to 1200 bottles per hour without adding to the labor input needed for production. Measuring in terms of output (in this case bottles) per unit of input (in this case hours), the bottling machine increased productivity from 250:1 to 1200:1. This increase clearly points to greater efficiency; it is also strictly quantitative. It tells us nothing of whether the quality of the coffee or tea has changed. We noted above the subjective nature of measuring quality in the performing arts; measuring quantity is itself uncertain. Ruth Towse writes,

Should [quantity of output] be the number of performances of a given work, the number of works performed (even the number of new works performed) or the number and 'type' of people attending performances (new audiences, disadvantaged people, and so on)?

Obviously, each measure of output would yield a different result for productivity.⁸⁰

There is, of course, some virtue to be found in these varied analyses. They allow individual situations and organizations to be understood case by case. They do not assume that every

80. Ruth Towse, "Performing Arts," in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse, 341.

performing arts organization has the same goals or that all ensembles are similarly organized. However, Towse's differences in productivity will exist across the performing arts sector of the economy if cultural economists do not agree on macroeconomic measures of output. Under these circumstances, the use of microeconomic measures of output (i.e., those tailored to a specific ensemble) cannot offer an organization a clear understanding of how it fares in the marketplace.

It will be helpful here to restate the ways in which output has thus far been discussed. It is defined above as the tangible result of production and as such should be the market manifestation of an organization's purpose. We might then speculate that quantitative analytical differences such as Towse enumerates recognize an either/or proposition in the purpose of performing arts organizations. Either purpose as revealed in output is the creation of artworks, or it is the development of one or another kind of audience. When output is considered to be only the artworks performed, analysis ignores the fact that an audience is an integral part of the performing arts. Likewise, when output is measured only through the audience (either in type or number of attendees), analysis disregards the important role that artworks play in cultural production. Neither the artworks produced nor the attending audience is by itself an appropriate measure of output. A more holistic approach, one that combines quantitative and qualitative measures of both audience and artwork, will produce more effective metrics, as the nonprofit models developed by Henry Hansmann demonstrate.

Hansmann's Nonprofit Enterprise

Henry Hansmann's "Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts," published in 1981, contains one of the more influential theories of output in the performing arts. In it Hansmann describes three types of nonprofit performing arts organizations: quality-, audience-, and budget-maximizing firms. Each has as its own objectives through the process of production, as the

names suggest, though in practice a performing arts organization may move fluidly between types during the many seasons of its existence. Hansmann details the firms' respective missions as follows:

One likely possibility—particularly if control over the organization lies with professionals who have devoted their careers to a particular art form—is that the organization will place special emphasis upon the quality of its performances. . . .

Alternatively, a performing arts group might feel a mission to spread culture to as broad a segment of the populace as possible, and consequently seek to maximize attendance for any given production. Or, as yet another possibility, control might lie in the hands of managers who are organizational empire-builders, and who seek simply to maximize the total budget they administer.⁸¹

Hansmann's formulas use output to define each of these archetypes. He combines the size of the audience of a given production (or of all productions combined), the quality of the work(s) performed, the various ticket prices for each production (or combined productions), and the donations received by the organization into his measure of output.⁸² Notice that his formula incorporates certain of Towse's quantitative measures outlined above and the qualitative measures already discussed. In this regard, Hansmann's is among the most complete formulations of output in the performing arts.

Yet, I would argue that one way toward more appropriate measures of output in the performing arts is to add scope to Hansmann's formulations. They are very useful in examining mission as this paper defines it, but what might be the implications of approaching Hansmann's

81. Henry Hansmann, "Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts," 347.

82. *Ibid.*, 347–348.

work in terms of purpose? In fact, one of the limitations of Hansmann's analysis is his definition of the purpose of performing arts organizations. "In sum, it appears that nonprofit firms in the performing arts, like their for-profit counterparts, serve primarily to sell entertainment to an audience."⁸³ Hansmann writes similarly in his earlier article, "The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise," that "nonprofit firms in [the performing arts] sector are in essence serving precisely the same general role as the for-profit firms—that is, they are selling performances to an audience."⁸⁴ It is unclear what prompted the slight change in the vocabulary of what is sold from "performances" to "entertainment." The first seems undeniable, the second less so.

Furthermore, *selling* accounts for an economic perspective of the purpose of performing arts organizations, but it perhaps unfairly characterizes that purpose from artists' perspective. One would not have to look far to find performing organizations that do not sell tickets at all; rather they manage business on grants and donations alone. Economist and artist Hans Abbing thusly describes artists' relationship to business. "*As an artist* (and an art lover) I believe that art is special. And therefore I am convinced that *money should not interfere with art*. . . . But at the same time, it confuses and annoys me that I have to deal with money to keep my little enterprise in business."⁸⁵ Selling, from an artist's perspective, is a necessary evil. And I doubt if even economists would equate the necessary evils of any business with its purpose. Hansmann's view that selling entertainment is the purpose of performing arts organizations would then seem out of alignment with the perspective of artists.

83. *Ibid.*, 346.

84. Henry Hansmann, "The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise," *The Yale Law Journal* 89 (1980): 859, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/796089>.

85. Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 37. Emphasis original. It should be noted that Abbing here is referring to visual artists, but the sentiment remains unchanged in the performing arts.

Among the goals of this paper is to begin to reconcile the perspectives of cultural economists with those of artists such that the work of each discipline might become more useful to the other. Hansmann's organizational archetypes are very clear, even if his definition of purpose would benefit from further specificity. His views on the latter would seem to take into account only the perspective of the marketplace and absent artists from consideration. Therefore, we might learn much from adopting his archetypes and simultaneously reimagining his definition of purpose in the performing arts.

Culture and the Purpose of Performing Arts Organizations

Recall that purpose manifests itself in the marketplace as output. Output, therefore, is more than an economic indicator; it is the core around which all organizations—and no less professional vocal ensembles—establish themselves. We can recognize in the preceding discussion two ever-present yet undeclared sides to this core. Arts organizations organize themselves around the art they produce on the one hand and the audience available to receive it on the other. Neither is more important than the other to an organization's purpose, and no performing arts organization exists without representing both (though an organization might prioritize one over the other in its mission). Hansmann's own analysis of performing arts organizations recognizes this dialectical condition: it synthesizes quality of works of art and numbers of audience members into a formula for identifying organizations' objectives. Our definition of purpose should seek a synthesis similar to Hansmann's but should exceed his in scope. Consider *The Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of culture: "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively."⁸⁶ Notice the two important aspects of this definition. The first part contains what I will call cultural works (i.e.,

86. "culture, n.". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/view/Entry/45746?result=1&rskey=8jugu8&> (accessed November 4, 2015).

“the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement”). The second part contains the audience, those who collectively regard cultural works. Artistic production results in the synthesis of artwork and audience—it results in culture itself.

Output as Culture

Over the course of the 20th century, the definition of culture became so multifarious that the term is in danger of being unusable. The influential cultural critic Raymond Williams writes that culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language . . . it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.”⁸⁷ Many of these disciplines study the interconnectedness of given aspects of culture. Their project is to understand the specifics of cultural organization and occasionally moralize over the state of things. For example, the important theorists of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, write in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,

Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together. Even aesthetic manifestations of political opposites proclaim the same inflexible rhythm. The decorative administrative and exhibition buildings of industry differ little between authoritarian and other countries.⁸⁸

The tone of “infecting everything with sameness” suggests a degree of moral outrage at the state of the culture Horkheimer and Adorno address. Furthermore, they identify film, radio, magazines, and architecture as the culprits, effecting cultural sameness even under circumstances

87. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 87.

88. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 94.

of opposite political (and therefore societal) structuring. Horkheimer and Adorno do not include television, the Internet, and social media in their cultural system, which dates their statement. Yet its specificity remains. They write of a particular array of cultural works and the collective regard of those works. They seek to define an inter- and post-war European culture rather than the broader concept of culture. By contrast, we must create a paradigm in which culture can be understood as purpose in the performing arts and therefore analyzed as economic output. We must define culture not as Western or American, but as culture qua culture.

For his own part, Raymond Williams did describe three uses of culture, the third of which is most relevant here. Culture is “The independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film.”⁸⁹ Williams seems here to expand Horkheimer and Adorno’s list of cultural works. From the perspective of theory in whatever discipline, such definitions can be of great interest and import. But, there is in both Williams’s and Horkheimer and Adorno’s definitions an implicit and unspoken variable that must be confronted by the performing arts: the audience. Culture in any sense is impossible without a collective, however loosely or tightly bound. If studying cultural works like music, literature, painting, film, radio, and architecture is capable of revealing something of the society out of which those works were born, then we must acknowledge that the organizations presenting those cultural works (including performing arts organizations) play some role in shaping that society.

However, when we study culture, we tend to do so from the receiving end. And we often prioritize cultural works in the process. Williams states that “in archaeology and in cultural

89. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, 90.

anthropology the reference to culture or a culture is primarily to material production, while in history and cultural studies the reference is primarily to signifying or symbolic systems.”⁹⁰ Whether it investigates material goods like ancient pottery and weaponry or symbolic systems like the canon of Western literature, cultural inquiry cannot begin until culture has been created and shaped. Creating and shaping culture is the very purpose of performing arts organizations and the result of cultural production. In the performing arts, to produce an artwork is to perform it. Engaging constituents in that production—through combinations of relationship building, listening, donorship, and volunteerism—is to foster collective regard. The output of the performing arts is not limited to new works, nor is cultural production. Cultural works of any type, age, or aesthetic can be used to join art to audience. Through this wedding, culture is created and shaped. From the perspective of cultural producers therefore, the OED’s definition is most instructive. The active collective regard of cultural works is how the purpose of the performing arts manifests itself in the marketplace. Culture is the output of performing arts organizations.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced and examined certain economic and cultural economic phenomena. We came to understand that businesses can improve their productivity (i.e., their efficiency in production) through economies of scale and scope and by implementing new technologies. In live performance, however, new technologies do not improve the efficiency of production because there is no way to reduce labor costs, a condition that gives rise to Baumol’s cost disease. This presents a serious funding predicament for the nonprofit performing arts that must be addressed through direct and passive government subsidy and the constant increase of performance and nonperformance income. The performing arts face at least two challenges in

90. *Ibid.*, 91.

this regard. First, the experience economy creates aesthetic experiences outside the concert hall, which discourages people from performing arts patronage. Second, new and cheaper digital entertainment makes leisure time outside the home less desirable and less financially practical. However, if artists and economists are able to align their views and learn from one another, performing ensembles might find new ways of surmounting these growing obstacles. To this end we compared and contrasted artists' and economists' views of quality and quantity in the performing arts. We applied these views in an attempt to better understand economic output in the performing arts. We suggested that the true output of performing arts organizations is culture. Rather than relying on definitions of specific cultures, we chose to base our own definition on that in the OED because of its broad generality. We concluded that culture has two parts: the arts and those who regard them collectively.

Defining effective measurements of culture as output in the performing arts is the project of the next chapter. Having presented many economic views here, we take up the next chapter from an aesthetic perspective and establish parameters within which artworks and collective regard might be measured. Drawing on the practices of the ensembles participating in this study, we will investigate the component parts of artworks and collective regard. We will look at the ways that organizations in general, and professional vocal ensembles in particular, establish the aesthetic value of the works they present. Focusing on the work of Hans Abbing, Jacque Attali, and Lydia Goher, we will trace the historic and ongoing establishment of the collective regard of artworks. We will ask and attempt to uncover whether the collective constituencies necessary to ensembles' success now prefer individualistic reception of music, thus challenging ensembles' work of increasing the size of their audiences, growing their constituencies, and fostering collective regard through performance. Finally, the following chapter purposefully treats critical

and Marxist analyses that may lie outside typical thinking on choral music. I would argue, however, that these and similar analyses are essential to the positive growth and development of professional choral music in the twenty-first century. As choral music receives greater theoretical treatment, choral musicians will have an ever-deepening pool of thought from which to draw artistic inspiration and with which to guide the relationships that form around it.

Chapter 4: Art and Audience

Introduction

The previous chapter describes the result of production in the performing arts as culture, which we have defined as being comprised of artworks and their collective regard. This duality is essential to the functionality of performing arts organizations. Without artworks, ensembles would have nothing to perform. Without people to receive artwork in performance, performance amounts to little. Many musicians know all too well the deprecating trope that, at certain concerts, performers have outnumbered audience members. It means that an ensemble or the music they present is not worth hearing, but equally the statement indicates something of society's view of the importance of an audience. The "Who Cares If You Listen" attitude adopted by some musicians is outmoded and dangerous for today's performing organizations.⁹¹ Instead, musical ensembles should offer the best art they can create and involve in it as many people as possible. Ensembles must foster collective regard through the artworks they present. The work of the previous chapter was to offer some of the economic context that surrounds ensembles as they do so.

This chapter, therefore, will examine the artistic activities of professional vocal ensembles. We will categorize these activities within the duality of culture as we have thus far defined it, namely as participating either in presenting artworks or in fostering collective regard. Detailing aspects of these activities offers an effective way for economists to view the output of the performing arts as culture. It equally allows performing arts organizations to understand the

91. "Who Cares If You Listen" is an article written by the American composer Milton Babbitt. To summarize, Babbitt suggests that classical music in the twentieth century has advanced, much like science, beyond the capacity of the layman. Babbitt considers contemporary composition the realm of specialists and believes that, just like medical research, it should be undertaken as an act of discovery. It therefore needs no patronage outside the academy. Milton Babbitt, "Who Cares if You Listen" in *Composers on Music* ed. Josiah Fisk (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 387–393.

efficacy of their attempts to grow their constituencies through establishing and strengthening collectives around the artworks they present. The following discussion necessarily presents aesthetic and critical theories that may be outside the experience of some choral musicians. However, engaging with such material is increasingly important to twenty-first-century performance. A wider body of knowledge held among choral professionals will yield new developments even in the pragmatic world of ensemble operations. New types of critical thought have the potential to offer innovative solutions to the current challenges of the professional performing arts. The chapter begins, therefore, by developing a vocabulary for professional vocal ensemble performance through Thomas Turino's four fields of musical activity: participatory music, presentational music, Hi-Fi recording, and studio audio art. Through this paradigm we will develop a means of quantifying artworks as an aspect of output and discover that ensembles often work within a hybrid participatory-presentational field. We will then turn our attention toward measuring artworks qualitatively, suggesting that "quality," as it is often viewed, is perhaps not a useful metric. Instead, we will define qualitative measures in terms of aesthetic value, demonstrating that aesthetic valuation offers a more complete qualitative portrait of the artworks that ensembles present. It is, therefore, a more appropriate measure of artworks as an aspect of output.

After measuring artworks in terms of quantity and aesthetic value, we will further elucidate the concept of artwork's collective regard. To enable this process, we will distinguish between collectivity—or the ensemble's various relationships with its constituents—and constituents' acts of artwork-related participation and reception that are rooted in those relationships. We will study historical arbiters of collective regard as defined by Jacques Attali's four historical orders: ritual, representing, repeating, and composing. Comparing these to current

societal conditions surrounding the performing arts will suggest that musical individualism is challenging the collectives necessary to live musical performance. We will finally propose a metric for collective regard based on constituents' behavioral loyalty and see that to foster collective regard is to encourage constituents to deepen their relationships with ensembles. We begin, however, by briefly exploring the various ways that people encounter music.

The Four Fields

Thomas Turino's *Music as Social Life* presents a paradigm that categorizes activities within the wide realm of musical performance. Turino outlines four "fields" of musical activity: participatory music, presentational music, Hi-Fi recording, and studio audio art. Each of the fields represents one way that music is made and that people are brought into contact with it. The first two of the fields encompass live performance; the third and fourth rely on recording. In the field of participatory music, the goals of making music are social. The field's priorities are participation and interaction, such that elements important to the other fields—melodic and formal development, intonation, and virtuosic performance, for example—are held at bay in the interest of allowing all people, no matter their ability, to play, sing, and often dance along. Although participatory music is not as prevalent in the United States as it is in some non-western cultures, we have well known examples of our own. Hymn singing is perhaps the most obvious. More common to the American musical experience is the presentational field. As the name suggests, presentational music is meant for musicians to perform to a captive audience. Turino stresses that listening is a form of participation but holds that the audience members are not participants as they would be in the field of participatory music. "Participatory music is *not for listening apart from doing*; presentational music is prepared for others to listen to."⁹² Thus presentational music increasingly requires virtuosity, compositional development, musical

92. Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) 52.

accuracy, and other similar points of interest for members of the audience, who are, after all, in attendance in part to be captivated by the performance.

Presentational music shares many qualities with Hi-Fi recording and studio audio art, the third and fourth of Turino's fields. Hi-Fi recording came about at the end of the nineteenth century. It seeks to capture the sonic essence of presentational music in a reproducible format. A studio recording (by any group from a symphony orchestra to a boy band) is typically intended to document an ideal performance, a Hi-Fi recording of presentational music. Studio audio art, on the other hand, is music that is meant for recording and no other medium. Pierre Schaeffer's work on *musique concrete* in the 1940s is perhaps the field's earliest example. And, just as with Schaeffer's first experiments in the field, listeners experience studio audio art only through the playing of recordings. Today, recorded music is the most widely encountered of all. Hi-Fi recording and studio audio art are played in restaurants and on the street. Many people listen to the latter two fields on their iPods or on other personal media players, which 45 percent of Americans, and 63 percent of those under 30 owned by 2013.⁹³ It is reasonable to assume that those percentages might be higher today.

Despite the popularity of recorded music, the four fields exist on a continuum. Turino notes that most musicians involve themselves in more than one field at a time. For example, a violinist may participate in jam sessions at a local bar or coffee shop and also attend (or even perform in) symphony concerts. Likewise, many classical music ensembles engage in both presentational music and Hi-Fi recording. By examining ensembles' activities in terms of Turino's four fields, we can begin to develop a vocabulary for how the presentation and creation of artwork can be measured within the output of performing arts organizations.

93. Andrew Dugan, "Americans' Tech Tastes Change With Times: Internet-connected devices growing in popularity," *Gallup*, January 6, 2014, accessed March 27, 2015, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166745/americans-tech-tastes-change-times.aspx>.

Measuring Artwork as an Aspect of Output

For guidance in applying Turino's four fields to output in the performing arts, we look to the five ensembles participating in this study. They are exemplars in professional vocal ensemble performance, and as such their practices indicate something of the way that performing arts organizations—and especially professional vocal ensembles—engage in cultural production, present artworks, and connect with people. All of the participating ensembles are involved in presentational music and Hi-Fi recording; they all offer live performances and have made commercial recordings. Studio audio art, however, is logically absent from their recording activities. Studio audio art has become highly influential in popular music (consider the whole genre of electronica and artists such as Aphex Twin and Trent Reznor), but its effect on professional vocal ensembles has not been so dramatic. The nature of vocal ensemble performance requires multiple vocalists making music together. Studio audio art, on the other hand, is often realized by a composer creating music that requires no live performers, or where the composer plays the additional and simultaneous roles of performer and recording engineer. Furthermore, the difference between Hi-Fi recording and studio audio art is minimal to the end user. Both are experienced via digital or analog media. The choice between the two recorded fields then is compositional. Put simply, the music made by professional vocal ensembles is often better suited to Hi-Fi recording.

Similarly absent from the activities of our participating ensembles is Turino's first field. None of them engages in participatory music per se. However, we must note that all of them work within a hybrid participatory-presentational field by offering substantive educational opportunities to their constituents. For example, Ensemble IV offers pre-performance lectures, and Ensemble I provides extensive verbal program notes in performance. Ensembles III and V,

whose repertoire is focused around contemporary music, give master classes for singers and composers. Members of Ensemble II frequently hold clinics for young singers. These belong in the participatory field; master classes and clinics encourage broad participation and involve constituents in making music. Though not performances themselves, such educational opportunities are quasi-performance events that function as performances in the sense that their focus is the creation of artwork. Nonperformance events like lectures similarly connect constituents to the artwork an ensemble presents. Non- and quasi-performance events (NQPEs), therefore, are among the most important activities in which ensembles engage their audiences in the art that they create. NQPEs strengthen relationships between groups and constituents, and they encourage the collective regard of ensembles' artwork.

The ubiquity of a hybrid participatory-presentational field among this study's participating ensembles (and indeed throughout the performing arts) suggests the importance of musical participation even among professional performing organizations. However, as Christopher Small notes, classical music as we have come to experience it—namely, in the concert hall—eschews active participation on the part of the audience.

Today's concert audiences pride themselves on their good manners, on knowing their place and keeping quiet. Nor does the design of the [concert hall] allow any social contact between performers and listeners. It seems, in fact, designed expressly to keep them apart. It is not only that the orchestra musicians enter and leave the building by a separate door from the audience and remain out of sight when not actually playing, but also that the edge of the platform forms a social barrier that is for all practical purposes as impassible as a brick wall.⁹⁴

94. Small, Christopher, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performance and Listening*. (Middletown: Wesleyan University, 1998), 27.

Our participating ensembles have noted in various ways the presence of this brick wall. The hybrid participatory-presentational field allows ensembles to at least partially break through it by encouraging participation while working within the traditional construct of presentational music. The fact that so many ensembles have sought ways around Small's brick wall might lead us to conclude that performance is not the only way that organizations connect constituents with—and even deeply engage them in—the artwork ensembles present. In fact, Turino's four fields suggest that artwork-related connections between constituencies and ensembles can occur in live performance, through recorded media, or via the hybrid participatory-presentational field.

Because our current task is to measure artwork-related connections as aspects of the output of performing arts organizations, we must first find ways of analyzing the presentation of artworks. As we saw in the previous chapter, many economists have sought either to quantify or to qualify such presentation. However, these types of analyses are of equal importance: the perceived aesthetic value of an artwork will affect collective regard, as will the number of opportunities the collective has to engage with that artwork. For example, public performances are essential to ensemble operations, and the number of people attending them will tell something of the amount of artwork-related interactions an ensemble creates. But, an ensemble will have a difficult time fostering continued collective regard if its performances are so notoriously poor that audiences become unwilling to attend. We cannot accurately understand an ensemble's output without both quantitative and qualitative analyses of artworks and their presentation. We will take up qualitative measures momentarily, but first something must be said of how quantity should be considered in terms of the present discussion.

Determining Quantity

Our purpose in reexamining quantity determination is twofold: first, to encourage ensembles to consider the opportunities they create for their constituencies to connect to the artworks they present, and second, to offer a new perspective on the economic work discussed in the previous chapter. To review, economists variously suggest that the number of audience members, the number of artworks, and the number of performances might all be appropriate measures of quantity. We noted also that Henry Hansmann in “Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts” preferred synthesized over singular metrics in formula for output, an approach that we will expound upon here.

We have already stated that artwork-related connections between constituencies and ensembles can occur in live performance, through recorded media, or via the hybrid participatory-presentational field. Every ensemble must strike a balance between the number of works it presents under these circumstances and how frequently presentations are made. Few groups perform new artwork daily—new pieces of music take time to prepare.⁹⁵ Few give daily performances even of prepared pieces. The human and monetary resources needed to do so preclude such activity. Likewise, recording is time-consuming and expensive. However, recordings can be repeatedly sold. While quantities relating to audience will be addressed below as we examine collective regard, we should note that the audience of a performance is limited in number by the size of the performance space. The audience for commercial recording, however, is limited only by the interest in purchasing the record. We can then pose the following questions to determine quantities of artworks presented:

- 1) What is the length of time under consideration?

95. “New works” here indicates music that the ensemble has not yet performed regardless of its date of composition and not necessarily newly composed music.

- 2) How many programs are presented during that time?
- 3) What is the total number of performances and NQPEs offered over the course of all programs?
- 4) How many artworks are presented over the course of all performances and NQPEs?
- 5) How many copies of commercial recordings were sold during the season?
- 6) How many artworks did those recordings contain?

These quantities are measurable as average rates. For example, Ensemble IV offered six programs and twenty-three performances and NQPEs during the seven months comprising their 2015–2016 season, averaging approximately 4 performances per program. During their 41 performances and NQPEs, they presented twenty-eight works. During the seven months of their season, Ensemble IV presented an average of four works per month. These numbers and averages variously state quantities related to Ensemble IV’s 2015–2016 season. More specifically, they quantify the opportunities Ensemble IV created for its constituency to interact with the artworks the ensemble presented during that time. By additionally examining the quality of each opportunity, we will begin to see their effectiveness.

Quality versus Aesthetic Value

Quality is, of course, much more difficult to codify than the rates described in the previous paragraph; it is not possible to get an impression of quality from sheer numbers of artworks, performances, and record sales. Rather, quality is highly subjective, as Ruth Towse has already reminded us. Complicating matters, I would argue, is a sense that quality in musical composition can, despite this subjectivity, be formalistically determined. That is, the quality of a piece of music can be determined solely from the notations in its score. As Robert Hullot-Kentor describes it, quality can be viewed as compositional right and wrong: “The most difficult

problem of music aesthetics [is] that of musical quality in the sense of compositional right and wrong as it is known in the most intimate experience of any composer in deciding to set—or not to set—one note next to another.”⁹⁶ Whether or not this method of quality determination is theoretically viable is not pertinent here. Compositional right and wrong is secondary to the output of the professional performing arts. Artworks, once programmed, must be performed as compositionally “right” regardless of their formalistic quality.

Of course, music that can be formalistically described as low quality because of its technical or aesthetic deficiencies may prove ineffective in performance. Can we not, however, imagine a circumstance under which the effectiveness of production in the performing arts would increase because the performance of such a work might provide greater opportunity for collective regard? Consider calls for scores by young or emerging composers. Many ensembles, including those participating in this study, hold competitions in which young composers submit scores. The winning pieces are then performed in concert and perhaps recorded commercially. Furthermore, Ensemble III frequently works with young composers on composing for the voice, and occasionally perform student composers’ pieces as part of its various academic residencies. Given that these artworks are written by composers of lesser experience, it is reasonable that some of them would be less technically proficient pieces (and therefore of presumably lower formalistic quality) than Ensemble III’s typical repertoire. However, such performances are likely to expose people outside the ensemble’s constituency to the ensemble’s work, thereby increasing the potential for garnering greater audiences and establishing a collective. We can posit that the ability of an ensemble to attract constituents does not rely simply on the compositional right and wrong of the artworks it presents.

96. Robert Hullot-Kentor, “Translator’s Introduction: Things Beyond Resemblance” in Theodor W. Adorno *Philosophy of New Music* ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xvii.

Setting aside for now the nonartistic aspects of an organization that the general public might find attractive (which will be discussed in the following chapter), let us confine this discussion to the necessity of looking beyond formalistic quality in attracting constituents. First of all, many constituents of performing ensembles probably do not have the compositional or theoretical training necessary to determine formalistic quality for themselves. Unless all of the constituents of a particular organization are expert in musical composition and analysis, they are unlikely to knowingly engage with compositional right and wrong. Even if such a constituency of experts exists, it is doubtful that every member would have the time necessary to know so deeply every piece the organization might present. Instead, constituents trust ensembles to make determinations of formalistic quality before production takes place, and ensembles must continually prove their aesthetic trustworthiness through the artwork they present. I would suggest, therefore, that instead of concerning ourselves with quality per se, we should consider aesthetic value. The trust constituents must have for ensembles is one of the deciding factors of aesthetic valuation, and it is more relevant to production in the performing arts than is formalistic quality.

Aesthetic value encompasses formalistic quality and more aptly demonstrates the artistic attractiveness of performing arts organizations. As described by Hans Abbing, experts establish aesthetic value. “Aesthetic value is what experts call aesthetic value. The experts include artists, critics, mediators, and consumers with authority in the [music] world. . . . Not everyone wields the same amount of authority in the establishment of aesthetic value: the influence of some experts is larger than that of others.”⁹⁷ Presumably in valuing an artwork, the experts and artists whom Abbing mentions consider formalistic quality; their reputations depend in part on an

97. Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 55.

ability to do so. However, aesthetic valuation must also account for the context of performance. It is well within the purview of music journalism for critics to discuss an artwork's appropriateness to the ensemble performing it and to the program on which it appears. Critics might also consider the consistency with which ensembles program music apropos to their circumstances over a period of time. These factors cannot be addressed as compositional right and wrong. Furthermore, experts who discuss artworks often speak historically in an attempt to contextualize the art under consideration. Doing so adds external elements to the understanding of the music, which a formalistic determination of quality would minimize. "Consumers with authority," knowledgeable constituents who promote artwork to other constituents or to the general public, might discuss the experience of performance rather than the technical proficiency of a given composition.

Aesthetic value is more useful and specific than quality as an aspect of output in the performing arts. It encompasses elements of formalistic quality, contextual elements important to the artwork in question, and enables discussion among constituents. Appropriately measuring "quality" of artworks as related to output in the performing arts then is a matter of aesthetic valuation. Similar to determining quantity of artworks above, we propose the following questions developed from Abbing's description in order to establish aesthetic value:

- 1) Is the artwork one in which the ensemble feels it will uphold its aesthetic trustworthiness among its constituents?
- 2) Is the artwork appropriate to the ensemble, the program, and the performance?
- 3) Is the artwork one of which experts outside the ensemble might acknowledge and expound upon the artwork's formalistic quality?

4) Is the artwork one that knowledgeable constituents can discuss with and promote to other constituents and the general public?

All of the above are yes/no questions. They can therefore be understood numerically: 1 for yes and 0 for no, giving a piece of music an aesthetic value score between 0 and 4. Ideally then this type of aesthetic valuation is usable by economists. I would also argue that aesthetic valuation is preferable to definitions of quality discussed in the previous chapter because it demonstrates quality multiplicatively through the incorporation of artistic and expert perspectives and indicates how quality might assist in developing a collective. Therefore, these aesthetic valuation questions are additionally able to encourage performing artists to consider their repertoire choices in terms of the benefits to collective regard.

Consider briefly a performance attended during the research for this study. Ensemble IV presented Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria* alongside Arvo Pärt's *Adam's Lament*. Regarding the former, all of the above aesthetic valuation questions are easily answered affirmatively. However, Ensemble IV would likely not answer yes to question 4 regarding *Adam's Lament*: it is not a piece that the ensemble's knowledgeable constituents would be able to discuss with other constituents. Still, by considering questions 1 and 2, *Adam's Lament* becomes an excellent programming choice despite its potential opacity to Ensemble IV's audience. *Adam's Lament* is a piece that will certainly uphold the group's aesthetic trustworthiness, and due to the contemporary techniques of its composition, has the potential to extend that trustworthiness beyond its current state. However, doing so requires programming that supports this goal. From this perspective, Vivaldi's *Gloria* is an excellent selection. It has a certain proto-minimalist, repetitive quality familiar to audiences of Baroque music. While *Adam's Lament* may be less familiar, it is written in Pärt's own idiosyncratic and minimalist style. Connecting these stylistic

components creates a new listening paradigm for Vivaldi's familiar *Gloria* and an aural inroad to the less familiar *Adam's Lament*. Furthermore, the pieces' respective subject matter are poetical foils for one another. In simple terms, Vivaldi's *Gloria* rejoices in God's salvation while *Adam's Lament* grieves for the separation that made that salvation necessary in the first place. Therefore, an aesthetic value score of 3 out of 4 does not preclude *Adam's Lament* from performance. In fact, the process of aesthetic valuation uncovers the hidden benefits of programming the piece in the context of this particular performance.

The quality of NQPEs and of performance has not yet been discussed because quality in these areas is determined as much by the audience's reception as it is by the ensemble's presentation. Performance- and NQPE-related quality, therefore, sits at the nexus of artworks and their collective regard. It is a measure of communicability, and its definition requires first a more thorough understanding of collective regard, which for its own part must be defined within the output of performing arts organizations. We will therefore benefit from understanding how the concept has changed over time and the ways in which society inherits aspects of its relationship to artworks from its history. Turino's four fields offer a small chronological glimpse into this relationship. The field of Hi-Fi recording would not exist without the technological advances of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We noted also that studio audio art has its origins in the 1940s, but it took time to develop into the field we recognize today. As we have seen, development of the latter two fields has left a noticeable impact on the way that contemporary society interacts with music. An examination of the history of collective regard will similarly suggest effective ways of understanding how collectives surround classical music today. Just as Turino's four fields revealed the importance of the participation in seemingly non-participatory music-making, a historical inquiry into collective regard will reveal the ways in which today's

classical music ensembles might be relying on outmoded assumptions about presenting artwork to audiences. For a frame around this historical inquiry, we examine a paradigm strikingly similar to Turino's: the four musical orders—ritual, representing, repeating, and composing—outlined by Jacques Attali in *Noise: A Political Economy of Music*.⁹⁸

Perspectives on Collective Regard

In order to best use Attali's work in our current context, it will be helpful to further distinguish between the members of the collective and their artwork-related interactions with ensembles that constitute collective regard. As we learned from Robert Flannigan, an ensemble's financial success rests on its ability to surmount cost disease and structural deficits by continually increasing both its performance and its nonperformance income. The efficacy of Flannigan's strategy depends on an ensemble's relationships with ticket buyers, patrons, and volunteers. These are members of the collective; they are the ensemble's constituents. Deepening relationships with constituents such that they buy more tickets, donate in greater amounts, and volunteer with greater frequency should ensure financial success, but it equally increases collective regard. Professional performing ensembles primarily work within the presentational field. Therefore, constituents and audience members do not regard music as directly as they might if they were themselves playing or singing. Instead, attending performances and NQPEs, financially supporting musical production, and otherwise assisting in administration and logistics are the actions constituents take to engage with an organization and the artwork it presents.

98. I have elected to use the term "Ritual" rather than Attali's "Sacrificing" because I believe it better underscores the usefulness of Attali's theory in the current context. Attali often uses "Ritual Sacrifice." My hope in eliminating "sacrifice" from the term is that it might mitigate some of the controversy surrounding Attali's work and also acknowledge that there are rituals in which music is central that do not involve human sacrifice. For Attali's discussion of "Ritual Sacrifice," see Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* tr. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, 2009), 4–5 and 21–45.

Collective regard is the totality of ensemble-constituent relationships and the various artwork-related interactions that define them.

The actions surrounding musical engagement, and therefore the nature of ensemble-constituent relationships, have changed over time. We will use Attali's *Noise* as a means of identifying certain historical orderings of collective regard and the ways in which those orderings persist to this day. To do so, some of Attali's claims must be qualified. First, his point of view is political. As he puts it, his intention is "not to theorize *about* music, but to theorize *through* music."⁹⁹ In other words, Attali is attempting to understand broad cultural machinations via historical arrays of musical activity. When he describes music as "prophetic," he suggests that shifts in musical relationships among artworks, composers, performers, and audiences prefigure changes in societal and political structures. Doing so, as John Erikson points out, "reverses the base-superstructure relationship in conventional Marxist analyses of culture, at least in the initial stage. Attali asserts that the forms music takes in any age are prophetic of new social forms that will arise in the superseding era."¹⁰⁰ Our purpose here, however, is to apply Attali's description's of social forms to an understanding of the artwork-related interactions that surround—and have previously surrounded—musical production.

The second claim of Attali's that must be qualified is that music in the modern era originates as a simulacrum for, or as a "minor form" of, ritual sacrifice. His logic for so describing the modern-age beginnings of musical performance proceeds as follows: "First, that *noise is violence*: it disturbs. To make noise is to interrupt a transmission, to disconnect, to kill it. It is a simulacrum for murder. Second, that *music is a channelization of noise*, and therefore a

99. *Ibid*, 4.

100. John Erikson, Review of *Noise, The Political Economy of Music*, by Jacques Attali, *Theater Journal* 41 (1989), 118.

simulacrum of the sacrifice.”¹⁰¹ Based on this description it is easy to understand why some have objected to Attali’s theory of noise and music, which is not to say it holds no use or insight. As Susan McClary writes in her afterword to the English translation of *Noise*,

The subject of Attali’s book is noise, and his method is likewise noise. His unconcealed ideological premises, his penchant for sully the purity of pitch structures with references to violence, death, and (worst of all) money . . . jar cacophonously against the neat ordering of institutionalized musical scholarship, especially as it is practiced in the United States. It is therefore quite conceivable that those trained in music will perceive the book’s content also as noise—that is, as nonsense—and dismiss it out of hand.¹⁰²

McClary suggests that to get lost in Attali’s sometimes inflammatory language is to lose the import of his book. Part of Attali’s theory is that music’s origins lie in a ritual-based simulacrum for sacrifice, which is a role music can certainly play. However, part of music’s tremendous power lies in its ability to stand as simulacrum in infinite human and spiritual contexts. It is not limited to the role of ritual sacrifice, even for Attali. The collectivity surrounding that particular channelization of noise changed just as Western societal formations have changed. The usefulness to the present discussion of Attali’s theory is that it conceives cultural and musical trends through experiences of performance in religious ceremony or the concert hall, through speakers or headphones, or by yet unknown means. Taking McClary’s recommendation, then, we must not get lost in Attali’s noise. Instead, we will draw from it descriptions of historical collective regard across centuries of musical production.

101. Jacques Attali, *Noise*, 26.

102. Susan McClary, “Afterword: The Politics of Silence and Sound” in Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* tr. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, 2009), 149.

The Four Historical Orders

The first of Attali's four orders is ritual, both secular and sacred. We can understand these as the political and the religious respectively. Under the order of ritual, the collective is established by virtue of common involvement in a shared ceremonial experience. In this context, musical performance serves the purpose of increasing the meaning of the ritual and people's involvement in it. Collective regard, because it is based on people's actions related to musical production, is shaped by the ritual. This circumstance is not altogether different from how music is used in religious and secular ceremonies today. The audience, or the congregation, regards music in its ritual context. Under the order of ritual, artworks are purely contextual. Here music is not autonomous; it is subject to the ritual's needs.

Music's autonomy arose in Attali's second historical order, representing. The very fact of music's performance, rather than the social or spiritual rituals it supported, catalyzed collectives whose actions began to resemble those we might recognize today. Under the order of representing, today's concert paradigm, with its idealization of a silent and attentive audience, began to take shape. Performance began constructing Small's impassible brick wall. Lydia Goehr describes this change in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*.

It was only with the romanticization of fine art around 1800 that theorists found a really successful way to give substance to the idea of a musical product. At this moment, the work-concept became the focal point, serving as the motivation and goal of music theory and practice. All references to occasion, activity, function, or effect [*i.e.*, components of the ritual order] were subordinated to references to the product—the musical work itself.¹⁰³

103. Goehr, Lydia, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. Oxford University: Oxford (2007) 152.

Goehr's idea of the work-concept is essential to collective regard under the order of representing. The work-concept becomes the musical commodity, the essential component of an order we are often still subject to when we attend live performance. Collective regard in today's performing arts is part of a commodity-based system. The previous chapter dwelt on cultural economics because today, whether through donations, ticket sales, or commercial recordings, money is exchanged for performance. The object of this exchange is the work-concept. The relationships and actions that govern collective regard are still somewhat subject to ideas of the imaginary museum, which we might better understand as an imaginary commercial gallery. Inside it, and under the order of representing, collective regard arises through the purchase of musical works.

If in the order of representing the work-concept, the musical marketplace's all-important commodity, catalyzed collectivity and fostered collective, then Attali's next historical order, repeating, is representing's logical successor. Attali writes,

A new society emerged, that of mass production, repetition, the nonproject. Usage was no longer the enjoyment of present labors, but the consumption of replications.

Music became an industry, and its consumption ceased to be collective. The hit parade, show business, the star system invade our daily lives and completely transform the status of musicians. Music announces the entry of the sign into the general economy and the conditions for shattering representation.¹⁰⁴

Under the order of repeating, the work-concept's establishment of collective regard as autonomous from sacred and secular ritual begins to give way to individualistic consumption. Collectivity here begins disintegrating into individual ownership of reproducible musical commodities in the form of records. The actions that constitute regard—now taken by many individuals rather than a single collective—amount to the purchasing of and listening to recorded

104. Attali, *Noise*, 88.

media. These actions are encouraged by the many aspects of the music industry and not, as it was in representing, only by the live performance of musical works.

Musicologist Melanie Lowe suggests that repeating is today's most common form of collective regard. Her characterization of a contemporary American's typical first encounter with classical music shares striking similarities with Attali's order.

The wide availability of the classical "Top 40," and the heightened marketing of classical recordings, the popular media, along with the incessant soundtracking of life, introduce most Americans to Western art music.¹⁰⁵

Lowe refers to the classical "Top 40" (a jab both at the classical canon and its increasing attempts to present itself in the popular vein); Attali refers to the hit parade. Lowe describes the heightened marketing of classical recordings; Attali writes that music became an industry. Lowe's soundtracking of life is another description of how the hit parade, show business, and star system invade our daily lives. These similarities would suggest that the order of repeating remains a cultural musical condition, where heightened marketing, repeatability, mass production, and exchange govern constituencies' relationships to ensembles and the artworks they present.

However, digital media players soundtrack our lives in ways the order of repeating may not have foreseen. Attali writes, "*People buy more records than they have time to listen to. They stockpile what they want to find the time to hear.*"¹⁰⁶ He exposes the true difference between "the enjoyment of present labors" and "the consumption of replicas." The former depicts the time-bound experience of performance. A stockpiled consumption of replicas digitally stored

105. Lowe, Melanie, *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony* (Indiana University, Indianapolis 2007), 165.

106. Attali, *Noise*, 101. Emphasis original.

could make it possible for an individual to play far more music than he or she has time to hear at the simple tap of a touchscreen. The time-and-place collective regard of ritual and representing has been supplanted in repeating by an anytime-anyplace mode of individualist consumption—the very essence of the soundtracking of life. As a result, individuals can control nearly every aspect of their own personal audio environments. The disruptive (or violent, to use Attali’s word) noise that was an inevitable part of life has been, over the course of the order of repeating, sublimated to individual taste and not merely channelized into real-time musical performance.

Still, we cannot proclaim the real beginning of composing, Attali’s fourth historical order. We are in transition, as Attali himself identifies. “We see emerging, piecemeal and with greatest ambiguity, the seeds of a new noise.”¹⁰⁷ In composing, Attali declares the listener to be the operator, writing, “to listen to music in the network of composition is to rewrite it.”¹⁰⁸ For our purposes, we can understand the ubiquitous use of digital media players in exactly this way. They allow for listener-operated, stockpiled arrangements and juxtapositions of sounds and musical styles such as were not possible prior to the iPod’s release in 2001. As such, *composing* may ultimately refer not to musical works as we have come to know them, but to the listener’s own audio environment. Arved Ashby, author of *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction*, takes this concept further, arguing that “people love their [digital] music players and are happy to let them shape their musical tastes.”¹⁰⁹ Through personal media players, collective regard has been abandoned by the order of repeating in favor of something individual and based on the listener’s personality and preference. If music were ever understood as self-expressive on the

107. *Ibid*, 133.

108. *Ibid.*, 135.

109. Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 165.

part of its creator, then this kind of self-expressive, preference-based, metamusical creation is a form of composing in Attali's terms.

Individual Consumption and Live Performance

Over time, catalysts of collectivity surrounding the performance of music have changed. In the Western tradition we can recognize collectives structured around societal and religious rituals, around musical works themselves, and around the workings of the music industry. However, the trajectory of collective regard includes its very disintegration. The collectives surrounding socio-political and religious rituals were (and remain) participatory in Turino's sense of the term. Conceptually speaking, whether performer or listener, all people attending the ritual play a role in it by virtue of their presence. This changes under the order of representing—and thereby in the presentational field—when Small's impassible brick wall delineates the participants in music-making from the receivers of it. Now, instead of one collective group of participants as in the ritual, two groups participate in concert performance. The advent of recording technology brought about still newer possibilities for experiencing music. Collectivity gave way to individual preference, which was then fomented by the music industry.

As the collective regard of music changed, the mass production of music in the form of recordings helped to sublimate the listening experience to other activities. Whereas under the order of representing listeners focused their attention on the music and its performance, Hi-Fi recording made possible new kinds of musical backdrops to non-musical activity. We might view this as a prototype of the experience economy, as an aesthetic experience infiltrating Pine and Gilmore's "uneventful activities." Today's interactions with music often bypass ensemble-constituent relationships altogether in favor of the personal manipulation of an individual's audio environment. Even when individuals do not exert this control, music often plays in the

background such that hearers are hardly the wiser. Is this not the antithesis of performance—of the collective musical experience? Collective experiences of performance require that all involved relinquish individual control over what they hear in favor of what others deem worthy of hearing. And live musical performance begs the full time and attention of its audience. Today such performance is in danger, though perhaps not directly from lack of funding or competition for individuals' leisure time. Instead, our societal reception of music may have altered to the point where corporate musical experience holds neither the attraction nor attention it once enjoyed. I would suggest that confronting this challenge rests in part on strengthening relationships between ensembles and constituents. To do so we must first develop a means of codifying those relationships and the actions that define them. It will then be possible to measure collective regard within the output of performing arts organizations and to utilize such analyses to enhance productivity in the performing arts.

Collectivity and Collective Regard

The livelihood of the performing arts rests on organizations' ability to garner paying audience, encourage financial patronage and volunteerism, and create enthusiastic constituencies. Ensembles must therefore find a way of continually building the collectives that surround them by establishing relationships with and among their constituents. Enumerating these relationships presents a metric for collectivity. Fostering collective regard, however, requires increasing constituents' engagement with an ensemble, its activities, and the artwork it presents. Recall that performing arts organizations work primarily within the presentational field. As a result, their constituents engage indirectly with music-making. They purchase tickets and attend performances, they offer financial support, and they volunteer to assist with administration and logistics. The frequency and consistency with which constituents so engage with ensembles can

be considered constituents' loyalty. Sally Harridge-March and Sarah Quentin describe loyalty and the traditional marketing tool used in its classification. "Loyalty includes both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions. A customer may display favourable attitudes towards a company or brand but this may not result in behaviour that reflects that positive attitude. The loyalty ladder . . . helps marketers categorise their customers according to their level of behavioural loyalty."¹¹⁰ For the purposes of defining collective regard as an aspect of the output of performing arts organizations, we are equally interested in behavioral loyalty. It is a representation of the actions that members of a collective might take to engage with an ensemble. By borrowing and modifying the loyalty ladder, we can develop a means of enumerating collectivity and measuring collective regard.

The Loyalty Ladder

The traditional ladder has six rungs of increasing behavioral loyalty: suspect, prospect, customer, client, supporter, and advocate.¹¹¹ *Suspects* are consumers who have not yet engaged with a brand even if they are aware of it. *Prospects* are customers are those who are familiar enough with a brand to consider a purchase, though they have yet to make one. *Customers* are then occasional purchasers; *clients* are consistent ones. *Supporters* are consumers who are loyal to the brand even if they are not current clients. Finally, *advocates* are those consumers who regularly purchase the brand's goods and actively recommend the brand to friends and family.

110. Sally Harridge-March and Sarah Quentin, "Virtual snakes and ladders: social networks and the relationship marketing loyalty ladder" *The Marketing Review* 9 (2009), 147. Accessed 14 March 2016, doi: 10.1362/146934709X442692

111. The "relationship marketing ladder of loyalty" was first described by Martin Chirstopher, Adrian Payne, and David Ballantyne in their book *Relationship Marketing*. In their description, the rungs of the ladder are prospect, purchaser, client, supporter, advocate, and partner. These represent an earlier vocabulary for the ladder, and as such this paper will use the terms reflected in Sally Harridge-March and Sarah Quentin's "Virtual Snakes and Ladders" because they represent new developments in the field of relationship marketing. The substance and functionality of the loyalty ladder do not change because of this vocabulary shift. See Martin Chirstopher, Adrian Payne, and David Ballantyne, *Relationship Marketing* (Oxford: Butterworth-Hinemann, 2002), 47–50.

As consumers ascend the ladder, their increasing actions of behavioral loyalty strengthen their relationship with the brand in question.

Clear parallels exist between brands' consumer relationships and those between ensembles and their constituencies. For example, the general public, as we have defined the term, is similar to *suspect* consumers. Both categories represent groups of people who have minimal or no dealings with respective ensembles or brands. Likewise, we can equate *client* consumers to regular audience members, or those constituents who reliably attend performances. Despite these similarities, ensemble-constituent relationships are more complex than brand-consumer relationships because constituents often relate to ensembles both as consumers and as donors. An ensemble depends on its constituents to purchase tickets and make financial donations. Because of this added complexity, ensembles wishing to use the traditional loyalty ladder may find it ineffective. Our current task is to categorize behavioral loyalty between constituents and ensembles such that it can be used to measure collective regard. The traditional ladder therefore requires modification based on an understanding of increasing loyalty between an ensemble and its constituents.

A Ladder of Ensemble-Constituent Relationships

Imagine a husband and wife who are members of the general public. They have no relationships to musical ensembles and therefore no loyalty. Should they decide to hear a performance, they might find a professional vocal ensemble whose repertoire they think they may enjoy and purchase tickets to a performance. The ensemble they hear is naturally interested in growing its constituency and so takes steps to encourage the couple to return as audience members. Because they enjoyed the first performance, and as a result of the ensemble's work to further the relationship, the couple leaves the performance certain that they will attend again. On

the traditional loyalty ladder, the couple has ascended from the suspect rung, past prospect, and to the level of customer. As time passes and the couple hears more performances, their loyalty to the ensemble ascends the traditional ladder to the client stage. Up to this point, the traditional loyalty ladder adequately describes the deepening relationship between the couple and the ensemble. However, here new stages of the relationship necessitate modification of the paradigm.

The ensemble already knows that the husband and wife are regular audience members, so the group encourages the couple to increase their engagement by making a donation. Because the couple has consistently had positive experiences, they decide to give. As performance seasons pass and the couple consistently attends performances and supports the ensemble financially, the husband decides he wishes to be more involved with the ensemble's activities. He decides he will volunteer in the box office for the organization's next performance. Through this experience he reaps certain benefits. He receives a free ticket to the performance, he makes a couple of new friends among other volunteers, and he is able to talk at length with some of the musicians in the group. He later recommends to his wife that she volunteer as well. As time goes by, the couple gets to know the ensemble's musicians and board of directors. The pair happily advocates the ensemble and its performances to friends and family. Finally, the ensemble asks the husband and wife if they would like to serve on the board. They now accept the responsibility of being custodians of the ensemble's finances and mission. In their new role, the husband and wife seek to deepen other constituents' relationships with the ensemble just as theirs has deepened. The couple's experience of increasing stages of loyalty progresses to donorship, volunteerism, advocacy, and board membership. If the lower portion of the loyalty ladder remains similar to

the traditional one, we can propose this ensemble-constituent relationship ladder: suspect, prospect, occasional attendee, regular attender, donor, volunteer, advocate, and board member.

Similar to the traditional ladder, *suspects* are members of the general public who have not engaged with the ensemble and perhaps are unaware of it. *Prospects* are members of the general public who have an awareness of the ensemble but who have yet to participate in any of its offerings. *Occasional attendees* are those constituents who have interacted with the ensemble in one of its fields of music making. Perhaps they have heard a performance, attended an NQPE, or purchased a recording. *Regular attenders* interact with the ensemble's activities with some consistency. *Donors* support the ensemble financially, and *volunteers* freely offer their time to assist with administration and logistics. *Advocates* publicly and privately recommend the ensemble and its offerings. *Board members* act as the ensemble's custodians. They accept responsibility for moving current constituents along the ladder and establishing relationships with new constituents. To speak of an ensemble fostering collective regard, therefore, is to describe the ways in which it actively works toward increasing the loyalty of constituents, moving them from one rung of the ladder to the next.

If fostering collective regard is to be successful, it must be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively, as were artworks above. For any given period of time, the quantitative measure of collective regard, which we will call the constituent score, can simply be considered the total number of constituents on the ladder. The qualitative measure is therefore based on the position on the ladder that those constituents hold. This relationship score can be determined by assigning loyalty values to each rung of the ladder, multiplying the number of constituents on a given rung by its respective loyalty value, and calculating the sum thereof. The result of dividing the

constituent score into the relationship score represents a numerical index for collective regard.

Answering the following questions will facilitate this process.

- 1) What is the constituency score (or the total number of constituents)?
- 2) How are the constituents distributed across the rungs of the ensemble-constituent relationship ladder?
- 3) Upon assigning values to each loyalty classification, what is the relationship score (calculated by multiplying the number of constituents in each loyalty classification by its respective loyalty value)?
- 4) Upon dividing the constituent score into the relationship score, what is the resulting collective regard index?

Collective regard should also be scored in conjunction with performance and nonperformance income by answering the following questions:

- 5) What is the sum of ticket sales, donations, and other income from a specific event or during a particular time period?
- 6) What is the result of dividing this total by the constituent score?

Answering the above questions reveals an index for collective regard and average income per constituent. It is hoped that these might prove useful to economists measuring the output of performing arts organizations. By measuring income per constituent, ensembles can begin to see their output in financial terms. Changes in the collective regard index over a given period of time will reveal the effectiveness with which ensembles have fostered collective regard.

Measuring collective regard can additionally expose weak points in ensemble-constituent loyalty and suggest appropriate targets for increased fundraising and ticket sales. For example, an ensemble might discover by using the relationship ladder that the majority of its audience

members are occasional attendees. This is common according to Joanne Scheff Bernstein. In her book *Arts Marketing Insights*, she contends that “people have become more spontaneous in choosing their entertainment options, and younger audiences in particular are less likely to commit months in advance to specific dates or to an entire series of performances. . . .

[However,] subscribers constitute not only the most loyal audience but also the most loyal group of contributors.”¹¹² Given the information it derives from collective regard analysis, an ensemble may choose to raise more money by increasing its number of regular attenders. Or, following Bernstein, the ensemble may choose to develop more occasional attendees because the ensemble believes that the flexibility inherent in that relationship will benefit its constituents. Regardless, collective regard analysis enables the ensemble to set goals for developing certain types of relationships. Over time, analysis will reveal the success of its chosen strategy by indicating whether the income per constituent and the number of occasional attendees have increased.

To use the ensemble-constituent relationship ladder in this way, ensembles must find ways of tracking their constituent relationships. Ensemble IV uses software to maintain an accurate database of their constituents’ personal details, which facilitates communication and building relationships. Progressing beyond this kind of information management toward a stratified and weighted system such as the ladder of ensemble constituent relationships is perhaps not as daunting a task as it sounds. The rapid development of social media in the early years of the twenty-first century has changed the way that businesses interact with customers, and technology continues to make tracking those interactions more and more feasible. Bernstein writes, “Arts organizations that have not yet capitalized on the power of the Internet and e-mail marketing to simplify and speed up information searches and ticket purchases are missing huge

112. Joanne Scheff Bernstein, *Arts Marketing Insights: The Dynamics of Building and Retaining Performing Arts Audiences*, (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 2007), 11.

opportunities for growth and for satisfying current audiences.”¹¹³ There are innumerable online tools for managing contacts and categorizing constituents. Email servers like MailChimp and Constant Contact allow for tailored communications based on constituents’ individual circumstances. Because many ticket purchases and donations are now made online, it is possible to track and analyze constituents’ financial transactions through services such as DonorPerfect or eTapestry. Online systems like PatronManager are beginning to integrate communications, ticket purchases, donations, and other aspects of constituent relationship management (CRM).¹¹⁴ While these systems cannot replace the personal connections that are necessary to fostering collective regard, they make enumerating ensemble-constituent relationships and measuring collective regard possible. The more advanced the system, the greater the cost of running it, and it must be noted that Ensemble I considers itself too small to spend their resources in this way. However, the new realities of twenty-first century professional choral performance may soon require that even ensembles of limited means employ CRM systems toward measuring collective regard.

Conclusion

The work of this chapter has been to define effective measurements of the duality of culture: artworks and those who regard them collectively. In order to establish parameters within which artworks and collective regard can be measured, we examined the activities of this study’s participating ensembles using Thomas Turino’s four fields of musical activity. In so doing we discovered that professional vocal ensembles tend to work most within the presentational and Hi-Fi recording fields. However, noting the need to break down Small’s impassible brick wall, we

113. *Ibid.*, 15.

114. NB: In business and marketing, CRM stands for customer relationship management. However, performing organizations and other nonprofits have constituents rather than customers. Because the concept of the acronym is the same in both circumstances, there is no reason not to use it.

proposed the existence of a hybrid participatory-presentational field wherein ensembles enable constituents to engage with artwork outside of performance. We suggested that artworks should be quantified in terms of the length of a performing season, accounting for the number of programs, performances, NQPEs, and artworks presented during that time. We further suggested that because commercial recordings can presumably be purchased at any time, we should account for the number sold during the time period in question and the number of artworks thereon. Utilizing aesthetic valuation, we looked beyond questions of compositional right and wrong. Instead, our qualitative measures of artwork are contextual, support an ensembles aesthetic trustworthiness, and allow for the opinions of knowledgeable critics and constituents.

Having proposed these measurements for artwork as an aspect of output in the performing arts, we discussed four perspectives of collective regard based on the work of Jacques Attali. His historical orders—ritual, representing, repeating, and composing—suggest shifting catalysts of collectivity surrounding the performance of music in the modern age. Under the order of ritual, collectives were established by nature of participation in sacred and secular ceremonies. Under representing, collectives formed around the performance of musical works. The order of repeating ultimately helped to usher in an era of individualistic music consumption, soundtracking of life, and background music. Collective regard is challenged by this individualism. Ensembles must therefore focus their attention on developing and growing relationships with constituents. As a means of quantifying and classifying these relationships, we proposed the ladder of ensemble-constituent relationships, which measures relationships in terms of behavioral loyalty. We suggested that collective regard be measured by tracking relationships as they fall on the ladder, and that to foster collective regard is to build new ensemble-constituent relationships while deepening existing ones.

Knowledge of the above metrics for artwork, aesthetic value, and collective regard must be applied to performance. Performance is production in the performing arts; it is the nexus of artwork and collective regard. And, it is the event at which all our previous analysis has been aimed. The next chapter, therefore, will examine how these metrics can be applied to presenting performances. We will discuss the experience of performance in terms of our inherited traditions and in terms of changes to these traditions, determining the ways in which the circumstances surrounding a performance affect the ensemble's ability to communicate musically. Offering communicative performances depends on every member of an organization, from the president of the board of directors and artistic director to volunteer ticket-takers and ushers. We will address the development of an ensemble's mission, and discuss structuring professional vocal ensembles by examining certain artistic and administrative roles. We will conclude by offering organizational strategies for fostering the collective regard of artworks through the presentation of performances.

Chapter 5: Performance Events and Structuring Ensembles

Introduction

The end of chapter 3 defines the output of the performing arts as culture, which is comprised of two parts. First, culture encompasses artwork. In chapter 4 we proposed metrics such that artworks might not only be quantified in terms of the number of performances, NQPEs, and pieces of music an ensemble presents but also qualified in terms of aesthetic value. In developing artwork-related measurements, we examined Thomas Turino's four fields of musical activity. Professional performing arts organizations tend most often to involve themselves in presentational music and Hi-Fi recording. However, we noted the importance of constituent participation even among professional performing ensembles. To accommodate such activities, which include non- and quasi-performance activities like masterclasses and performance-related talks or lectures, we proposed a fifth, hybrid participatory-presentational field.

Second, culture encompasses collective regard. Chapter 4 proposes measuring collective regard by quantifying the number of ensemble-constituent relationships and qualifying the degree of behavioral loyalty present in them. The chapter adapts the loyalty ladder to facilitate these measurements. In developing measures of collective regard, chapter 3 examines catalysts of collectivity within Jacques Attali's four historical orders: ritual, representing, repeating, and composing. We noted that catalysts for collectivity changed over time. Through this change, collective regard has grown increasingly less participatory and more individual. This growing individualism presents roadblocks to live performance and to collectivity. Because live performance is the event at which professional performing ensembles typically aim their efforts, ensembles must discover means of surmounting such obstacles. This chapter therefore investigates three specific challenges to live performance: the experience economy,

individualized entertainment technologies, and new listening practices. These challenges represent changes in general preferences surrounding the reception of live musical performance. From them we will examine audience experience in order to determine ways that ensembles might break with Romantic-era conventions so that designed experiences of performance best foster collective regard.

The previous two chapters have focused rather widely on the performing arts, drawing examples from the activities of this study's participating ensembles. Here, however, we return our attention to specific aspects of professional vocal ensembles in order to demonstrate how knowledge of the above metrics for artwork, aesthetic value, collectivity, and collective regard might facilitate successful structuring. Just as the output of the performing arts is comprised of artworks and their collective regard, we will discover that there are two corresponding halves of arts organizations. One half, the artistic structure, handles the programming, preparation, and performance of artwork. The other half, the administrative structure, manages constituent relationships, marketing, development, and finances. The current chapter will examine general structuring of organizations using the basic parts defined by Henry Mintzberg in *The Structuring of Organizations*: the operating core, the strategic apex, the middle line, and the support staff. Furthermore, we will place these basic parts within the organizational structures of three of the ensembles participating in this study. Mintzberg identifies a direct hierarchy of operators from strategizers through "middle-line" managers to lower-level workers. We will discover that performing arts organizations tend to structure themselves by having two simultaneous hierarchies, each comprised of its own distinct middle-lines and operating cores.

Conventional Performance

The various roles within the artistic and administrative structures converge in performance, which is the nexus of artwork and collective regard. It will be useful therefore to examine this convergence prior to detailing the various parts of professional vocal ensembles. Recall that we have thus far cited three threats to live performance. First, the experience economy borrows from the performing arts such that aesthetic experiences—once the sole purview of the arts—are now available in a variety of nonartistic contexts.¹¹⁵ Pine and Gilmore note,

Human beings have always sought out new and exciting experiences to learn and grow, develop and improve, mend and reform. But, as the world progresses further into the Experience Economy, much that was previously obtained through noneconomic activity will increasingly be found in the domain of commerce. That represents a significant change.¹¹⁶

This change is not only significant to the market economy. One of the consequences of businesses adopting experienced-based customer interactions is that the human need to seek out new and exciting experiences can be met in ever-changing ways and with greater frequency. Whereas prior to the experience economy people were barraged with products, the experience economy barrages people with experiences. People need not look very far for ways to learn and grow or to enjoy themselves. Such experiences were once relatively confined to education and the arts; Pine and Gilmore suggest that the for-profit sector seeks to incorporate these properties

¹¹⁵. See the above discussion of the experience economy and also B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Updated Edition* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011).

¹¹⁶. *Ibid.*, 242.

into their daily customer interactions. As businesses do so, the arts cannot help but yield some of their related ground.

The second threat to live performance is an outgrowth of technology. From sports to the live performing arts, many out-of-the-home, nondigital activities have seen waning participation in recent years.¹¹⁷ Technology has created desirable entertainments meant for the home that are slowly replacing those formerly enjoyed collectively and in public. In asking whether technology has hurt the arts in this way, Ellen Rosewall writes,

Yes...

The high quality of home entertainment options means it is no longer necessary to go to a concert hall to hear sound of excellent sound [*sic*]. Unlike the early days of radio, television, and recorded music, the live experience isn't necessarily better, and, because individuals at home now have the ability to carefully control and manipulate sound digitally, may be less satisfactory.¹¹⁸

Rosewall's depiction of how technology has negatively affected the arts focuses around an individual's preference for the at-home version of formerly live experiences. She even suggests that the at-home versions of these entertainments, which are made possible by technology, might be viewed as being of superior quality to their public counterparts. Why go hear something live when it is possible to listen to a better version at home?

117. See the above discussion of the experience economy and also Flanagan, Robert J. *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 59–60. Additionally, Tibor Scitovsky proposes that Americans, by contrast to the European bourgeoisie, do not value their leisure time. For Scitovsky, this may be so in part because of a comparatively puritanical value system that sets labor above enjoyment of life. Scitovsky's assessment is somewhat dated, but it is an early and insightful diagnosis of the current condition of American arts appreciation. See Tibor Scitovsky, "What's Wrong with the Arts Is What's Wrong with Society," *The American Economic Review* 62 (1972), 62–69.

118. Ellen Rosewall, *Arts Management* (London: Oxford University Press, 2014), 204.

The third threat to live performance is intertwined with the second. The collective environment of live performance is giving way to increasingly individual expressions in listening preference.¹¹⁹ As Rosewall notes, some listeners may believe recorded music is a superior musical experience than that of live performance. This was certainly the case for Glenn Gould, when he rather infamously prognosticated the end of public performance. “The public concert as we know it today [will] no longer exist a century hence . . . its functions [will] have been entirely taken over by recorded media.”¹²⁰ Gould goes on to tout the tailor-made listener experiences recording and playback technology make available. While his discussion of listener-operated tape splicing of Beethoven recordings by Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer smack of naiveté today, it is difficult not to read it as a kind of proto-Attalian analysis. Gould writes,

It would indeed be foolhardy to dismiss out of hand the idea that the listener can ultimately become his own composer. . . . The listener is able to indulge preferences and, through the electronic modifications with which he endows the listening experience, impose his own personality upon the [musical] work. As he does so, he transforms that work, and his relation to it, from an artistic to an environmental experience.¹²¹

While the details of how listeners will engage with recordings have not come to pass exactly as Gould predicted, we must recognize the ubiquity of recorded music and the possibility for digital modifications with which listeners can indulge their own preferences. Chapter 4 proposes that this condition might be the antithesis of live performance, and Gould would seem to agree.

119. See the discussion of collectivity and collective regard in chapter 4.

120. Glenn Gould, “The Prospects of Recording” in *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Tim Page (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 331.

121. *Ibid.*, 347.

Conventions of Concert Performance

Yet, despite Gould's predictions and the other dangers listed above, live performance lives on. Working knowledge of these threats—and the ability to recognize others as they arise—will assist professional vocal ensembles wishing to distinguish their performances from other perhaps nonmusical activities in which audience members might engage. What can ensembles do to offer their constituent's experiences not yet co-opted by the experience economy? What must the environment of performance events be if audience members are interested in forgoing the comforts of home for an evening? How can the performances central to those events exceed the nearly perfect musical presentation available on so many recordings? To begin answering these questions, we must examine the conventions surrounding the live performance of classical music. Investigated below are four interrelated conventions that are representative of performance today. These conventions are rooted in the Romantic-era ideal, which demands that performance be divorced from nonmusical context.¹²² The conventions of the Romantic-era ideal are most threatened by changing audience preferences.

Convention 1: A Quiet Listening Audience. Many of the conventions we recognize in the live performance of classical music derive from the musical work. Recall that in chapter 4 we discussed the work-concept as a commodity and as the catalyst of collectivity under the order of repeating. This is our tradition of classical music performance. In Richard Taruskin's words, "The reified *Werk*—the objectified musical work-thing to which fidelity is owed . . . the 'work-concept' . . . regulates not only our musical attitudes, but also our social practices."¹²³ The work-concept as a regulative idea, as an idea that governs most of classical music's thought and

122. For further description of the Romantic-era ideal, see "A Musical and Professional Shift" in chapter 2.

123. Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 10.

activity, established the parameters for interaction between performers and the members of the audience. The latter, as Goehr writes, “were asked to be literally and metaphorically silent, so that the truth or beauty of the work could be heard in itself.”¹²⁴ Silent listening remains social practice among audiences, with those in the know exercising practiced looks of disdain toward those who might applaud, speak, or sneeze at the wrong time.

Convention 2: A Purpose-Built Performance Space. As the work-concept was gaining its foothold as the regulator of musical thought and activity, new spaces were built specifically for public concert performance. New concert halls facilitated the public’s growing engagement with the musical work and altered the sonic and social dynamics of the concert experience.¹²⁵

According to Goehr, the silent listening audience

was possible only if music was performed in the appropriate physical setting. . . .

Performances had not only to become foreground affairs, but they also had to be cut off completely from all extra-musical activities. It was with these sorts of ideas in mind that concert halls started to be erected as monuments and establishments devoted to the performance of musical works.”¹²⁶

The work-concept’s regulative force was so strong that new buildings were built to accommodate it. These spaces improved the value of the musical commodity and heightened the experience of the musical work for the listener.

124. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 236.

125. For example, London’s Hanover Rooms were built in 1774, and in 1781 the first incarnation of the Gewandhaus concert hall was constructed in Leipzig. McVeigh notes that Oxford University’s Honeywell Music Room opened in 1748. See Simon McVeigh, “Performance in the ‘long eighteenth century,’” in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* eds. Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 495.

126. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 236.

Convention 3: The Experience of the Repertoire is the Experience of the Performance.

Silent and attentive listening audiences experience live music in purpose-built concert spaces. As Goehr notes, these spaces were meant to bring the musical work itself to the fore, thus curtailing extra-musical elements of performance. In other words, the conventional concert hall performance allows the listener to fully engage with the music without distraction. The experience of performance therefore can be viewed as whatever experience the repertoire creates. This condition conflates the musical work and the experience of hearing it performed.

Convention 4: Werktreue. If the concert hall promotes an experience of performance that is tantamount to the experience of the musical work itself, then it logically follows that the best concert experience—in other words, the best experience of a musical work—will be one in which the music is heard in its purest form. From a technical perspective, we might describe such a performance as unmarred by poor intonation, wrong entrances, or other distortions of the composer’s musical fabric. From an interpretive perspective, we might follow the great Felix Weingartner: “The interpreter—in our case the conductor—is *not* able to *increase* the worth of a work; he can merely diminish this occasionally, since the *best* he can give is simply a rendering on a par with the real value of the work. He has done the best that is possible if his performance expresses just what the composer meant; anything more there is not and cannot be.”¹²⁷

Weingartner defines the concept of *Werktreue*, fidelity in performance to the musical work. The composer has endowed the musical work with all of its meaning. The performer can do no more than represent that meaning in performance. Of course, in order to exhibit this fidelity there must first be an “objectified musical work-thing.” There must be something to which to remain true.

127. Felix Weingartner, “About Conducting,” in *The Conductor’s Art*, ed. Carl Bamberg (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 108. Emphasis original.

The above conventions of concert performance leave the impression that music is performed so that audiences might commune with it in an almost religious way. Audiences are led into a purpose-built space in order to listen quietly and attentively to a representation of a composer's work played as faithfully as possible. Christopher Small writes,

The conventional conception of a symphony concert is that it takes place in order to present works of symphonic music to a public. . . . Those works are thought to have been bequeathed to our time by great musicians of the past. . . . It is in order to play these works that musicians and audience come together in this great hall. The performance, in other words, is assumed to take place so that the audience may enjoy the works.¹²⁸

Small's description of conventional performance grates against one of the themes of this paper. Performance is to the performing arts what production is to economics. We have stated above that the result of production is output, and we have defined the output of the performing arts as comprising artworks and their collective regard. However, conventional performance is presumed to take place so that an audience may enjoy musical works. Conventional performance is in danger of failing to account for the relationships that performance can enable. Such a situation dismisses one half of performing arts output by not accounting for collective regard.

However, this was not always the case. The Romantic-era ideal, on which conventional performance is based, assumes Attali's order of representing. It assumes that audience preference is to experience music through conventional performance. And, it assumes the simple performance of musical work is catalyst enough for collectivity. I would argue, based on the threats to live performance listed above, that audience preference has been shifting away from conventional performance. In today's modern era, the general public's typical musical experience now comes from recorded media and not from conventional performance. Therefore,

128. Christopher Small, *Musicking* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 185.

I maintain that the simple act of performance, which was once enough to encompass the presentation of artworks and their collective regard, no longer adequately accounts for the latter.

Balancing Artworks and Collective Regard in Performance

The purpose in making the above argument is not to do away with conventional performance. Instead, its purpose is to show that adjusting our general understanding of conventional performance can allow for a balanced accounting of artworks and collective regard. Conventional performance presents musical works such that people might encounter them; alternatively, we might adopt Small's perspective: "It is not so much that the event takes place in order to present the works but rather that the works exist in order to make possible the performance that forms the center of the event."¹²⁹ To achieve a balance of presented artworks and their collective regard, we must conceptually separate the act of performing for an audience from the event of which that act is the centerpiece. The former is called the central performance, and the latter is called the performance event. The central performance is a purely musical experience; it approximates the Romantic-era ideal. The performance event, on the other hand, is built on combining nonmusical and musical elements. It includes the central performance but also accounts for the space and lighting, outside noise, programs, sightlines and seating, availability of food and drink, parking and access to the performance space, and other elements of nonmusical consideration.

Performance events at their most effective balance the presentation of artworks and collective regard. The act of presenting artworks is accomplished in the central performance. Fostering collective regard, which as we have seen relies on developing loyal relationships with constituents, can be accomplished before, throughout, and after the performance event.

129. *Ibid.*, 185.

Performance events are capable of creating virtuous cycles wherein nonmusical aspects that help to build constituent relationships channel those relationships into contact with artwork. Artwork then provides nourishment for deepening relationships. Relationships next develop through nonmusical ensemble-constituent interactions and are then reconnected to artwork. And the cycle continues. Accounting for nonmusical aspects of performance events therefore prepares the way for deepening loyalty relationships as people encounter the central performance. We might deem the accounting for nonmusical considerations *designing the experience of the performance event*.

We have thus far proposed three threats to conventional performance: the ubiquity of experiences once offered only by the performing arts, technology that has made out-of-the-home entertainment less enjoyable, and the individualist listening practices that technology has enabled. Discussion of four performance conventions—silent audiences, purpose-built performance spaces, the conflation of the experience of the repertoire and that of performance, and *Werktreue*—helped us understand this changing dynamic. The Romantic-era ideal, which seeks the performance of music free from nonmusical context, no longer accounts for collective regard as it once did. Therefore, ensembles must work to balance their presentation of artworks with collective regard without assuming that collectivity will catalyze simply because music is performed. Collective regard is based on loyalty relationships, which require nonmusical development channeled through musical performance. Ensemble II is expert in this practice. They are so intentional about meeting their audiences during intermissions and after performance events that many constituents and ensemble members know each other by name. Ensemble II's central performances are equally personal and often narrative. The result for audience members is that the personal experiences they have with the group during the performance event are further nurtured by the central performance itself. Only by intentionally accounting for the

nonmusical aspects of performance events can those aspects be used to develop relationships in the manner Ensemble II has found so successful. Such practices form the heart of designing the experience of the performance event.

Designing the Experience of Performance Events

From the perspective of professional performing organizations, to speak of performance should be to speak of performance events and not only the moment-to-moment details of playing a musical work. Alan S. Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin write, “The principles of experience design, when translated to the arts, suggest that audiences and visitors have a ‘total experience’ much larger than the arts program itself. Stronger bonds of customer loyalty will result when the totality of the experience is well managed, not just the artistic product.”¹³⁰ The experience of a performance event encompasses the musical considerations of the central performance and also nonmusical considerations, which must be equally prepared and managed. The preparation and presentation of the former come naturally to most trained musicians. Controlling the nonmusical aspects of performance events may not. However, the nonmusical aspects of performance events prepare the way for deepening loyalty relationships and thereby foster collective regard. Furthermore, controlling the nonmusical aspects of performance events allows ensembles to begin to address changing audience preferences like those described above. Many of these changing preferences are largely experiential—not musical. Therefore, strategies that suggest altering purely musical elements such as repertoire while failing to address the experience of performance events may prove ineffective. Addressing the experience of the performance event likely requires little alteration to the musical act of the central performance. If the experience of

130. Alan S. Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin, *Making Sense of Audience Engagement Volume I: A Critical Assessment of Efforts by Nonprofit Arts Organizations to Engage Audiences and Visitors in Deeper And More Impactful Arts Experiences* (San Francisco: The San Francisco Foundation, 2011), 13 accessed April 15, 2016 http://galachoruses.org/sites/default/files/Barun-Making_Sense_of_Audience_Engagement.pdf.

the performance event is designed appropriately, ensembles should be able to present almost any repertoire and effectively nurture relationships with it.

Guidelines for Designing the Experience of Performance Events

Before examining certain nonmusical considerations and demonstrating how they might lead to well-designed performance events, it will be useful to state three guidelines. First of all, the purpose of designing the performance event is to balance the presentation of artworks and the fostering of collective regard. Designing performance events relies in part on managing the nonmusical elements that surround the central performance. The fostering of collective regard is then implicit in this design. To maintain the balance between artworks and collective regard, the artworks should be the reference point for as many design decisions as possible. Second, the design of performance events should allow time and space for relationship building. Above we noted the capability of performance events to enable virtuous cycles in which artworks nourish loyal relationships. However, sufficient nonmusical time must surround the performance event in order for nourishment to occur. It does not have to be time enough for dinner-length conversation, but this time must be accounted for and spent with intentionality. Doing so will assist the third guideline of designing performance events: the design should account for audience needs and preferences as they are part of building loyal relationships. To effectively design the experience of the performance event, the ensemble must know those needs and preferences specific to its constituency.

Finally, these three guidelines should be applied chronologically throughout the design of the experience of the performance event. Accounting for nonmusical considerations existing prior to, during, and after the central performance will add structure to the design of the performance event and facilitate the trajectory of Brown and Ratzkin's "total experience." The

authors have created the Arc of Engagement (figure 1) to manage this trajectory.¹³¹ The Arc is comprised of five sections: build-up, intense preparation, artistic exchange, post-processing, and impact echo. The first two sections of The Ark take place before the central performance and thus play the role of contextualizing its repertoire. The artistic exchange, which is the peak of The Arc, takes place during the central performance. The final two portions of The Arc allow for “meaning making” and help to create memories of the experience.

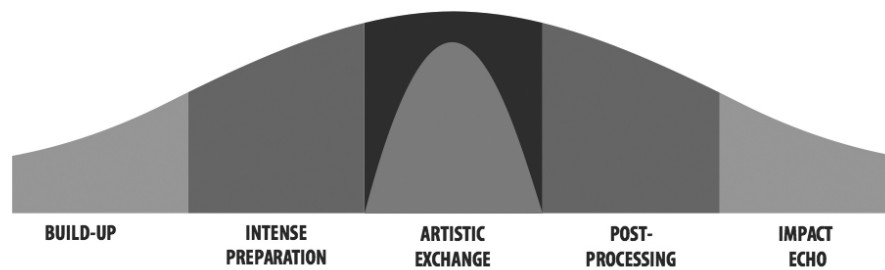


Figure 1. The Arc of Engagement. Reproduced with the permission of the authors.

Nonmusical Considerations of the Performance Event and the Arc of Engagement

The stages of experience described by The Arc of Engagement suggest that the experience of performance events is chronological. Designing performance events should account for this chronological progression with one exception. The artistic exchange should be designed first so that the remaining segments of The Arc can be designed around the music presented in the central performance. In this way the artwork can remain integral to ensemble-constituent relationships while the ensemble designs how audience members will move from segment to segment toward a total experience. An archetypical design of the performance event follows. This archetype begins with the artistic exchange and the central performance. It then proceeds to address the remaining segments of The Arc chronologically. While The Arc of

131. *Ibid.*, 15–21

Engagement is applicable to all events, its application must be flexible and recognize that the needs of every ensemble—even every performance event—are unique. The following discussion of nonmusical considerations, the guidelines for designing performance events, and utilizing The Arc of Engagement is explicitly general so that ensembles might design events to meet the needs of their own performance events and constituencies.

Artistic Exchange: Designing the Central Performance. This period forms the core of the performance event; it is the central performance. Brown and Raztkin write, “At the center of the Arc of Engagement is the artistic exchange itself—however short or long— when the audience member encounters the artistic work, and the artist encounters the audience.”¹³² Artwork is the essence of the central performance. Recall, however, that the music presented in the central performance should nourish constituent-ensemble relationships. In order to do so, the music must be played in an environment most conducive to its reception. While all of the ensembles participating in this study perform in many different venues, other ensembles may consistently perform in only one location. The latter arrangement has certain benefits: it creates a home base where constituents can be certain of where the ensemble will be for nearly every performance. Use of a single venue also simplifies logistics and the design of the performance event.

However, many professional vocal ensembles do not have a single performance home base. The following process assumes that the ensemble has some flexibility regarding the venues where it performs, and also that the music of the central performance has already been programmed.¹³³ The process is dependent on the ensemble being prepared to execute the music to its own standards of professionalism in performance, and that the central performance will

132. *Ibid.*, 17.

133. Further discussion of programming can be found in chapter 6 under the essential role of the artistic director.

maintain the ensemble's aesthetic trustworthiness. This process is one example of how the central performance can account for the needs of artwork and audience, and it should be adapted based on ensembles' individual needs.

- 7) Make a list of the repertoire's musical properties that the audience should hear if they are to engage with the music. Based on this list, what type of venue suits the music best? For example, choral music is often performed in a concert hall, but a more resonant venue like a large stone church might be more appropriate to some repertoire. Similarly, if the ensemble is presenting a concert of late-Renaissance Italian madrigals, a concert hall or church may feel too impersonal and may be unable to communicate the individual expressivity such music features.
- 8) Make a list of the technical needs of performance. For example, what kind of stage space lighting, amplification, and space for instrumentalists and their instruments are required for the music to be well performed?
- 9) Consider the kind of performance environment that best suits the repertoire. For example, a Lenten concert of English polyphony might require a somber and contemplative atmosphere whereas a concert of vocal jazz standards might be better suited to a bar or a cabaret.
- 10) Based on the musical, technical, and environmental requirements set out in steps 1, 2, and 3, make a list of desirable venues.
- 11) How do these venues allow for ensemble-constituent interaction? For example, is there a reception or gathering area where the ensemble can greet the audience?
- 12) Are these venues convenient, accessible, and comfortable enough that audience members will not question whether they can attend? For example, does the venue provide ample

parking, or is it accessible via public transport? Inside the venue, can accommodations be made for listeners who might be disabled or have difficulty getting around? Is the venue seating quiet and comfortable enough that the audience will not be distracted from listening?

- 13) Given knowledge of the repertoire and the audience's needs and preferences, choose a venue that best balances all factors.

Of course, there may be other factors that affect the choice of venue. The most obvious of these is cost, but it is equally possible that a venue is chosen for a specific reason that trumps all of the above steps for designing the central performance. For example, a professional vocal ensemble may partner with another local nonprofit to perform a benefit concert. In this case, the chosen performance venue may be the local nonprofit's own facility or a large ballroom where the benefit takes place. Neither of these venues is likely to meet the musical, technical, and environmental needs of artistic exchange. But, the ensemble might deem the performance important because of its altruistic purpose and because of the relationships that might develop out of it. Ensemble I, for example, often provides live music examples for courses on early music. The lecture halls in which these small performances are given are surely less appropriate to the group's repertoire than the large churches where their concerts are frequently given. However, by offering these live musical examples, Ensemble I serves the academic institutions that in return offer marketing assistance, rehearsal space, and appropriate concert venues. Despite any problems undesirable performance spaces might pose, the above process should be adapted to develop the best possible musical, technical, and environmental experience for the audience and to enable positive ensemble-audience interaction.

Regardless, once the repertoire and the venue have been chosen and the central performance designed, an ensemble can begin to design the remainder of the performance event based on The Arc of Engagement. Examples of other nonmusical considerations follow, tracing the Arc of Engagement. At each stage of The Arc, the guidelines for artwork, ensemble-constituent relationships, and audience needs and preferences will be addressed as answers to the following questions:

- 1) How does the given stage incorporate artwork?
- 2) How does the given stage account for the need to build and grow ensemble-constituent relationships?
- 3) How does the given stage account for the preferences of constituents?

As with the process for designing the artistic exchange, the questions and the examples that follow should be adapted to suit ensembles' individual needs.

Build-Up: The First Impression. The first impression of the performance event is likely made the moment a constituent decides to attend the event. Ensembles may incorporate artwork and other elements of experience into this early stage by building context. Brown and Ratzkin write, "Examples of contextualization efforts include pre-program lectures, open rehearsals, video interviews with artists and curators, [and] season 'preview CDs.'"¹³⁴ During the build-up stage, ensembles can grow and build relationships through effective communication. Social media and email are now the most typical means of communicating, but ensembles should seek to make such correspondence as personal as possible. Email servers that allow for individualized email communication are more effective for building relationships than sending generally addressed mass emails. Likewise, an ensemble's social media should be managed by an

134. Alan S. Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin, *Making Sense of Audience Engagement Volume I*, 16.

authorized voice of the ensemble. That way, ensembles and their constituents can trust the personal connections that are made online. Depending on the size of the ensemble and its constituency, an ensemble may even choose to make phone calls to first-time audience members to thank them for their interest in the ensemble and its performances. Such calls are an excellent opportunity to discover new audience members' needs and preferences. In this way, ensembles can also establish personal connections that can be carried through to the next stage of The Arc.

Intense Preparation: Before the Central Performance. The period immediately before the central performance marks the beginning of *intense preparation*. This length of time varies per constituent and may emerge directly out of the build-up without clear delineation between the two periods. Brown and Ratzinger write, "In reality, the first two stages of the arc blend together. Concertgoers and opera patrons may listen to recordings well in advance, while others will attend an open rehearsal earlier on the day of the performance, or watch an online video about the work just prior to attending."¹³⁵ Therefore, the incorporation of artwork may be exactly the same in the first two periods of The Arc. However, ensembles must recognize that constituents will prepare for performance events for varying amounts of time. As such, it is necessary to offer increasing opportunities for contextualization throughout the first two periods. Accounting for building and deepening relationships may also utilize similar techniques between build-up and intense preparation. Maintaining communication and discovering and addressing constituent's needs and preferences will require effective personal communication. If the ensemble elects to make personal calls to audience members, those callers can also act as greeters at performance events. The ensemble can then welcome new attenders, continue to learn about them and their preferences, and continue to address their needs before ushering them into the central performance.

135. *Ibid.*, 17

Post-Processing: After the Central Performance. Following the central performance is a period of *post-processing* during which audience members reflect on what they heard. Some audience members may discuss the performance with other audience members or with members of the ensemble. Brown and Ratzkin refer to post-processing as “a time for making sense of what happened and forming a critical reaction.”¹³⁶ During this period, the ensemble may offer a post-performance talk and should take the opportunity to receive the audience, solidify new connections, and attempt to uncover something of audience members’ reactions to the central performance. Some ensembles may elect to do this through surveys or other formal means. However, the ensembles participating in this study all prefer an informal reception and greeting time in order to nourish audience relationships and gauge reaction to the central performance. The latter method will probably feel more natural to audience members and will encourage personal relationships between them and the ensemble. On the other hand, utilizing formal tools often yields some proof of audience reaction. Such proof is useful should an ensemble need to demonstrate the effects of its performances externally to other organizations or internally for board reporting and analysis. Regardless of the method, ensembles should utilize the post-processing period to meet constituents, have informal conversations about the central performance, and nurture loyal relationships. Doing so expresses to constituents that the ensemble values them and will assist in creating positive long-term memories of the performance event.

Impact Echo: The Final Impression. The final period of The Arc of Engagement is the impact echo. This is the period during which the experience of the performance event lives in the memories of the people who heard it. Brown and Ratzkin write, “Some arts experiences remain

136. *Ibid.*, 19

vividly in our minds for decades, while others fade into distant memory as soon as we walk out the door. The impact echo can last for a few days, a few weeks, or a lifetime.”¹³⁷ Regardless of its length, the impact echo presents an opportunity for an ensemble to remind its audience members about their encounter with the music of the central performance and the total experience of the performance event. The impact echo also resounds in critical reviews and enables word-of-mouth advertising. Ensembles and their constituents may post pictures and video of the event to social media. The ensemble may even provide an event summary via email. If an ensemble was able to make pre-performance phone calls, those same volunteers should make similar calls as part of the impact echo. In this way, the ensemble can continue addressing the needs and preferences of its constituents. These connections that were once tenuous might, through the performance event, grow into loyal relationships between ensembles and constituents.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Performance Events

After briefly examining experience design as it relates to performance events, we can see the detail of how artworks and collective regard find their nexus in performance. Performance events create a cycle where ensemble-constituent relationships deepen through the presentation and experience of artworks. We have described this cycle chronologically through The Arc of Engagement. For each stage of The Arc, we have suggested ways of incorporating the music of the central performance, nurturing ensemble-audience relationships, and accounting for the needs and preferences of the audience. These stages are dependent on a well-designed artistic exchange where an appropriate performance venue enables the best possible reception of the musical, technical, and environmental aspects of the central performance. These criteria make possible an

137. *Ibid.*, 20

assessment of performance similar to those proposed for artworks and collective regard in chapter 4.

- 1) Did the design adequately account for the musical, technical, and environmental demands of the repertoire of the central performance?
- 2) Did the execution of the central performance meet the ensemble's own standards for performance, professionalism, and aesthetic trustworthiness?
- 3) Did the chosen venue allow for the best hearing of the musical, technical, and environmental demands of the repertoire, or did extenuating circumstances supersede this requirement?
- 4) Did the chosen venue allow for ensemble-audience interaction?
- 5) Did the chosen venue address audience needs and preferences while offering adequate access, convenience, and comfortability?
- 6) Did the design of the central performance enable artwork and audience to influence the design of the outer stages of The Arc of Engagement?
- 7) Did the beginning stages of The Arc of Engagement adequately contextualize the presented artwork and allow for the nurturing of relationships?
- 8) Did the final stages of The Arc of Engagement allow for gauging audience reaction to the central performance and make possible the deepening of ensemble-audience relationships?

Similar to the assessments presented in chapter 4, this metric is framed in terms of yes/no questions such that the assessment can be scored out of 8.

This paper has now presented output-related metrics for quantity of artworks and performances, aesthetic value, collectivity, collective regard, and the effectiveness of

performance events. I would argue that this system presents a more complete picture of the output of performing arts organizations than those currently used in cultural economics. Furthermore, these metrics are presented to be readily usable by ensembles in assessing operations. The metrics break each topic into parts such that specific goals can be set to improve ensembles' productivity. The system is designed to balance the presentation of artworks with ensembles' need for active and energetic constituencies. The final task of this chapter then is to introduce organizational structures that enable professional vocal ensembles to function efficiently, to present artworks of high aesthetic value, and to foster collective regard by building loyal relationships with constituents.

The Structure of Professional Vocal Ensembles

Experience design in the performing arts requires that ensembles create a total experience from the various musical and nonmusical concerns of performance events. Musical concerns derive from the repertoire of the central performance and should inform all aspects of the experience of the performance event. Nonmusical concerns arise from the need for the total experience to account for and enable an ensemble to develop and nurture loyal relationships with constituents before, during, and after the central performance. An ensemble that occupies itself with musical concerns alone will likely struggle to develop the constituent relationships required for success and sustainability. Neither will an ensemble that addresses only nonmusical concerns experience long-term constituent growth without presenting substantive art capable of nurturing relationships. We can then recognize in the ensemble a structural duality organized to meet the needs of the ensemble's production and output. The ensemble produces artwork and collective regard by nature of its operations. Therefore, the structure of the organization should enable this production.

Organizational structure receives little treatment in published guides for nonprofit organizations. The reasons for this are likely manifold. First of all, many guides address nonprofits generally, dealing with many types of organizations. For example, Peter F. Drucker's *Managing the Nonprofit Organization* draws examples from the Boy Scouts, the American Cancer Society, and community colleges among other nonprofits.¹³⁸ These organizations serve very different purposes, which would make discussion of their structures cumbersome and irrelevant to Drucker's discussion of the qualities of leaders in nonprofit organizations. Thomas Wolf's *Managing a Nonprofit Organization* addresses structure, but it does so from the perspective of a community center.¹³⁹ While Wolf's example is instructive, it is not drawn from an arts organization. It is conceptually useful but does not offer much in the way of practical guidance to performing organizations. Ellen Rosewall's *Arts Management: Uniting Arts and Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* treats structure but does so categorically. It shows the differences between categories of nonprofit, for-profit, and governmental organizations but does not address structuring specifically.¹⁴⁰ Instead, Rosewall includes a passing reference to the need for developing an organizational chart but offers little guidance as to how decisions and tasks should flow through an organization.¹⁴¹

Chorus America's *The Chorus Leadership Guide* written by Matthew Sigman is a useful tool specific to choirs. Sigman discusses organization and leadership as an outgrowth of the evolution of the ensemble. He writes, "At its most evolved state, the three leadership spheres,

138. Peter F. Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principle and Practices*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).

139. Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization: Updated Twenty-First-Century Edition*, (New York: Free Press, 2012), 103-105.

140. Ellen Rosewall, *Arts Management*, 27-45.

141. *Ibid.*, 86-88.

[artistic, management, and governance,] become fully formed interdependent entities. It is through the separation of powers that the viability of a chorus as a sustainable organization is firmly established.”¹⁴² However, Sigman does not give an indication of how his three leadership spheres might work together, nor does he suggest an ensemble hierarchy. It is certainly possible that Sigman avoids being prescriptive in the hope that *The Chorus Leadership Guide* will have the widest possible usability. But, I would argue that *The Chorus Leadership Guide* does not, nor do the other nonprofit guides discussed above, present adequate theoretical context to enable nonprofit performing organizations to develop efficient structures. Ensembles secure in their hierarchies and structures have clear chains of command by which to solve problems. Structures outline responsibilities in the face of change. They can assist ensembles in maintaining efficiency of operation while maximizing operating budgets. It will be useful therefore to review the theoretical aspects of organizational structure most applicable to professional vocal ensembles. To do so, we turn to *The Structuring of Organizations* by Henry Mintzberg.

The Structuring of Organizations and Professional Vocal Ensembles

Every organization, from a small professional vocal ensemble to a Fortune 500 company, must make decisions about how to carry out tasks. The structure of an organization in the most abstract sense is the system established for managing the flow of decision-making toward coordinating task completion. Henry Mintzberg writes, “The structure of an organization can be defined simply as the sum total of the ways in which it divides labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them.”¹⁴³ In *The Structuring of Organizations*, Mintzberg defines mechanisms by which organizations can accomplish this coordination, two of which are most

142. Matthew Sigman, *The Chorus Leadership Guide*, (Washington D.C.: Chorus America, 2009), 2.

143. Henry Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1979), 2.

pertinent to the structure of performing arts organizations.¹⁴⁴ First, new organizations tend to use informal means of coordinating tasks. Employees might receive simple feedback about what to do next, or may collaboratively divide tasks amongst themselves without much hierarchy of decision-making. Mintzberg terms this process *mutual adjustment*. As an organization grows, so does its hierarchy. It soon requires managers to oversee the completion of tasks through a mechanism called *direct supervision*. Mintzberg writes that these two mechanisms “should be considered the most basic elements of structure, the glue that holds organizations together.”¹⁴⁵

At its incorporation, an independent performing arts organization is prone to have a relatively loose structure whereby members and managers of the organization work together collaboratively to assign tasks and see to their completion. However, we have stated above the necessity of incorporating the board of directors prior to beginning public musical performance.¹⁴⁶ Ensembles that follow this suggestion will be implicitly hierarchical from the beginning. The role of the board of directors is governance. The board oversees all ensemble operations. It may not involve itself in the minutia of task management, but it will appoint those who are so involved. The board is a decision-making body that assigns managers to oversee the completion of tasks. It is recommended that typical nonprofit performing organizations utilize, even from their infancy, Mintzberg’s mechanism of direct supervision. In the nonprofit performing arts, however, there remains an exception to this rule. Most ensembles, including three of those participating in this study, have boards of directors composed of constituents.

144. Mintzberg’s five mechanisms are mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of work processes, standardization of work outputs, and standardization of worker skills. The latter three mechanisms apply to very large organizations with divisions of labor so stratified that one worker has little contact with the tasks of another. Performing arts organizations tend to work more collaboratively, and so will typically use mutual adjustment and direct supervision.

145. Henry Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 3.

146. See the discussion of the Twenty Tenets in chapter 2.

However, Ensembles I and III comprise their own boards, meaning that the ensembles' respective performers are among the members of their boards of directors. This type of ensemble structure blurs the hierarchy implicit in direct supervision and more closely follows Mintzberg's mechanism of mutual adjustment. We will see below in our discussion of governance that this organizational structure will work for small organizations, but it is not advisable as ensembles grow. The following discussion will be confined to the mechanism of direct supervision because it allows for greater financial growth and stability and also smaller organizations operating under mutual adjustment can equally learn from the principles of direct supervision.

In addition to describing mechanisms for decision-making and task completion, Mintzberg identifies and defines the basic structural parts of any organization. The four most important to professional vocal organizations are the operating core, the strategic apex, the middle line, and the support staff (figure 2).¹⁴⁷ The *operating core* are the members of an organization who are responsible for the labor behind production. From the traditional perspective of professional vocal ensembles, the performers are perhaps the most obvious example. The *strategic apex*, according to Mintzberg, "is charged with ensuring that the organization serve [*sic*] its mission in an effective way."¹⁴⁸ This is the act of governance. Therefore the board of directors comprises the strategic apex of professional vocal ensembles. The *middle line* connects the strategic apex to the operating core. It consists of managers who report to the strategic apex. These managers are also responsible for assigning tasks to the operating core and overseeing task completion. In a professional vocal ensemble, the traditional

147. Mintzberg also identifies and describes a fifth basic part called the technostructure. Members of the technostructure concern themselves with analyzing labor processes and streamlining production. Only very large organizations with highly standardized production will benefit from the technostructure. The vast majority of performing arts organizations, regardless of their size, will not fall into this category. See Henry Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 29.

148. *Ibid.*, 3.

middle line may include the artistic director, music director, or conductor, depending on the roles the ensemble has created for itself. The *support staff* assists operations through ancillary tasks such as human relations, marketing, or payroll. In the traditional view of professional vocal ensembles, the support staff might be considered those who are responsible for managing the nonartistic aspects of the ensemble. Within this category might fall the executive director, director of development, or head of marketing.

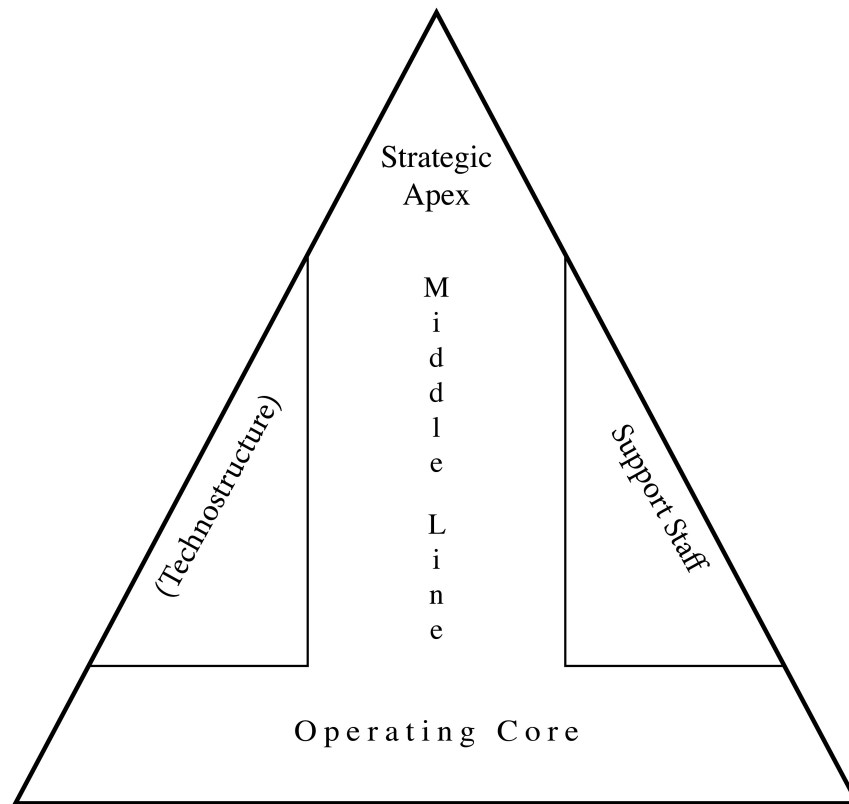


Figure 2. Mintzberg's basic structure.

However, this view of support staff does not align with production in the performing arts as we have thus far defined it. Our definition of production in the performing arts relies on a balance between presenting artworks and developing loyal constituent relationships. In this

respect, the members of a performing arts organization who work toward fostering collective regard are directly involved in production. By Mintzberg's own definition these cannot be considered support staff. He writes that support staff "provide[s] support to the organization *outside the operating work flow [sic]*."¹⁴⁹ By the definition of production herein proposed in chapter 3 and further developed in chapter 4, ensemble members who work in development and marketing are engaged within the operating workflow—and not outside it—through their efforts toward fostering collective regard. Mintzberg's base model for organizational structure imagines the flow of tasks and decisions as proceeding from the strategic apex through a single middle line of managers down to the operating core. I would argue that performing arts organizations must fundamentally structure themselves to have two interconnected middle lines that channel

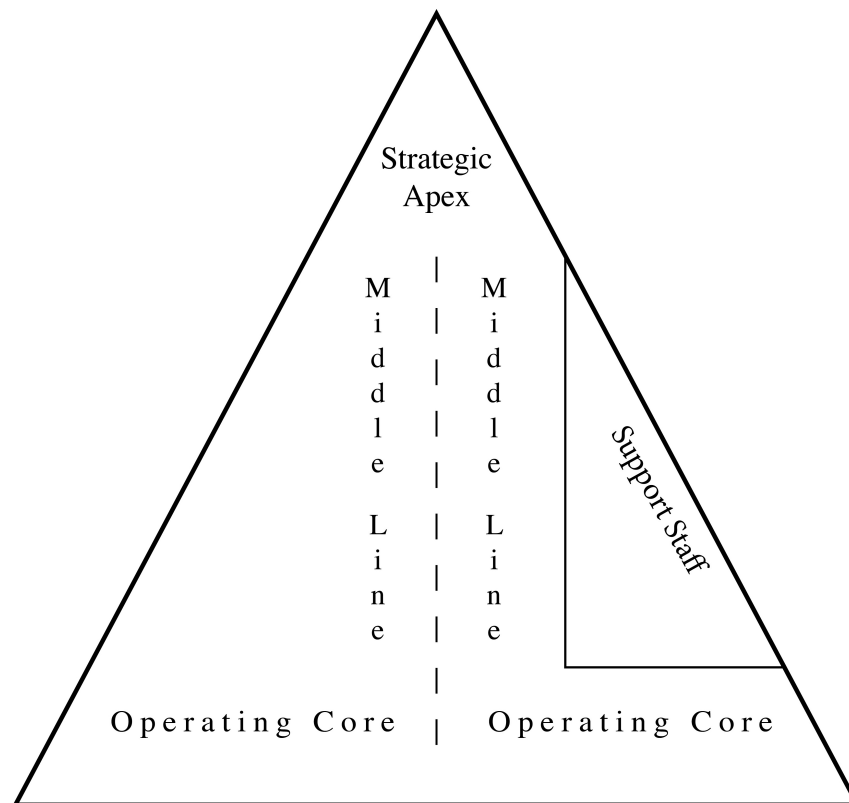


Figure 3. The structure of performing arts organizations with the dual middle line.

¹⁴⁹. *Ibid.*, 31. My emphasis.

decisions and tasks down to a dual operating core (figure 3). The board of directors oversees the two middle lines, one headed by the artistic director and one by the executive director. The former leads musical production, the latter leads the development of loyal relationships. This structure corresponds to the dual nature of performing arts output.

For a better understanding of the functionality of these basic parts, we examine in increasing order of size the hierarchical structures of Ensemble III, IV, and II. Ensembles I and V have structures sufficiently similar to Ensembles III and IV respectively that examining them in detail would prove redundant. For each organization, we will detail the flow of decisions and tasks. We will address roles specific to these organizations, and conclude by proposing a structure ideal for working within the definition of output in the performing arts described in this paper.

The Structure of Ensemble III

Recall from chapter 1 that Ensemble III is a small organization of four singers. The singers themselves comprise the board of directors with one additional board member who does not sing in the ensemble. The singers also fill the roles of executive director, director of development and marketing, programming director and treasurer, and grant writer. Members of Ensemble III note that they serve as each other's musical coaches, and collaborate fully on the ensemble's decision-making and task completion. In Mintzberg's terms, the streamlined structure of Ensemble III integrates the strategic apex, middle line, and operating core into one entity. The singers in the group must therefore do all of the work of artistic production and relationship building themselves (figure 4).

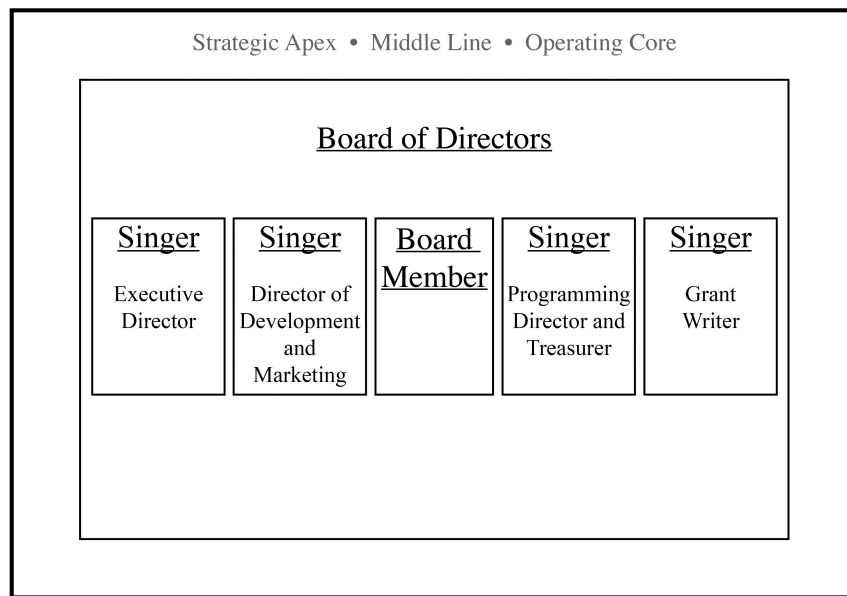


Figure 4. Organizational chart of Ensemble III.

The structure of Ensemble III has certain benefits. For example, it enables the ensemble to work collaboratively, which is something the group values tremendously. Because the group is so small, integrating artistic and administrative decisions is a relatively simple task, and members are easily matched with responsibilities that are best suited to their abilities. However, this arrangement has its detriments. The current artist-as-board-member structure is apt to maintain the ensemble's size and level of activity. Should the ensemble wish to perform with greater frequency, they will probably require additional staff. As the ensemble's donor base grows, it may become impractical for the musicians to continue playing the role of financial stewards. The structure of Ensemble III currently limits such growth. However, the group's simple organization is collaborative and malleable. The ways in which the structure reflects the group's values will aid Ensemble III when it comes time to incorporate additional members.

The Structure of Ensemble IV

The organizational structure of Ensemble IV is comprised of the board of directors, the music director, an assistant conductor, an administration director, a PR/marketing coordinator, and the group's various musicians. Ensemble IV also has an extensive volunteer base who assist the ensemble in a variety of performance and nonperformance capacities. This structure is hierarchical. Its functionality depends on managers reporting to the board of directors and clearly outlining tasks for musicians and volunteers. In Mintzberg's terms, Ensemble IV connects its strategic apex to its operating core of musicians and constituent volunteers through a middle line where the artistic director and assistant conductor manage musicians, and the administration director coordinates volunteers. The PR/marketing coordinator acts as support staff (figure 5).

Ensemble IV's established hierarchy has enabled rapid growth in recent years. One of the keys to the ensemble's success is the way that volunteers have been incorporated into the organizational structure. They form an essential part of the operating core and therefore play an important role in the ensemble's output. They work as ushers at concerts and are facilitators of new constituent-ensemble relationships. Ensemble IV utilizes nonlocal musicians, and it is mostly volunteers who house and transport musicians visiting the area to perform with the ensemble. Mobilizing volunteers can present certain challenges. Thomas Wolf writes, "The process of recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers is not always easy, and their interaction with paid staff must be carefully orchestrated."¹⁵⁰ I would argue that Ensemble IV's organizational successes stem partly from the systems it has put in place to manage its volunteers.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization: Updated Twenty-First Century Edition*, (New York: Free Press, 2000), 80.

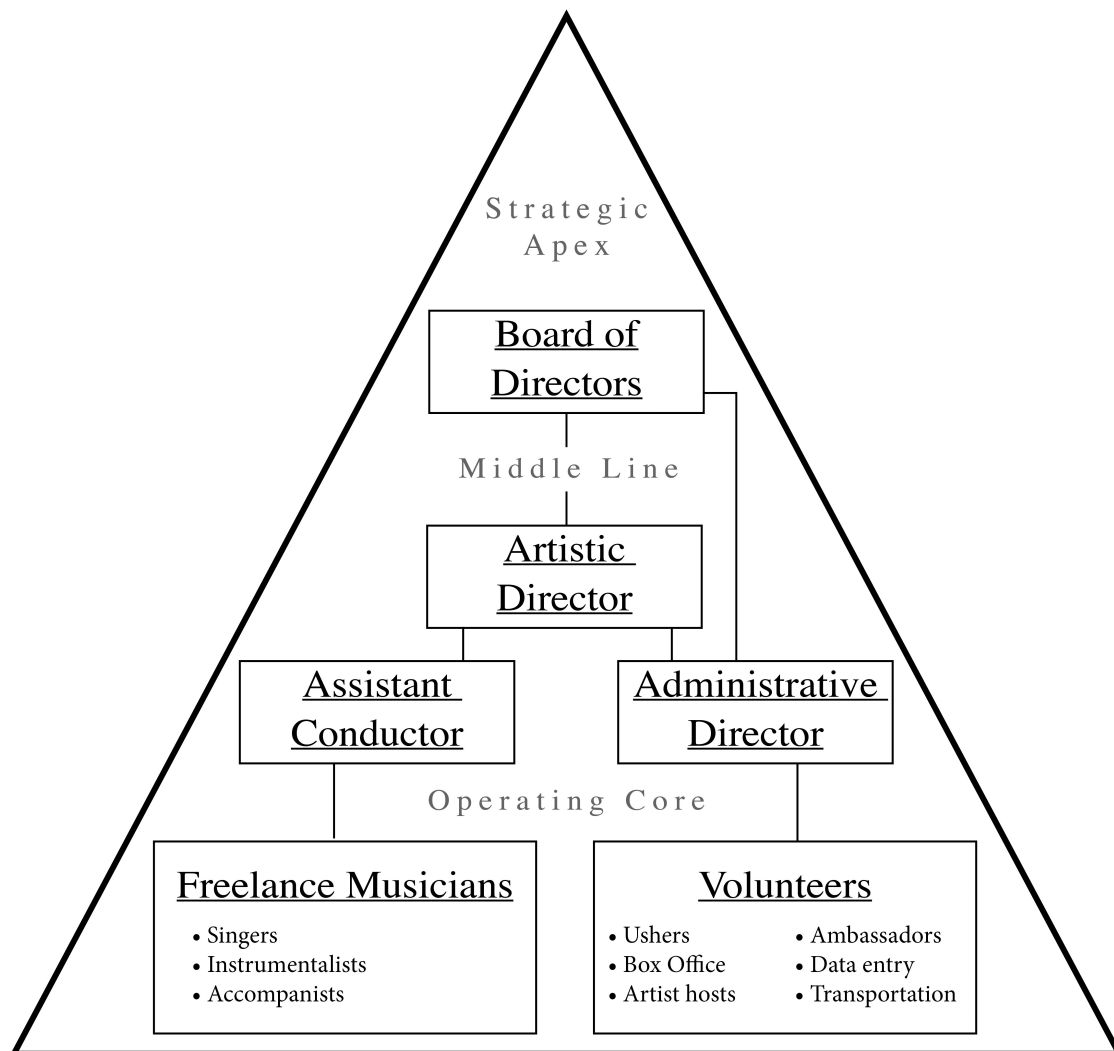


Figure 5. Organizational chart of Ensemble IV.

The Structure of Ensemble II

Ensemble II values collaboration in its operations. As a result, the group has done away with the traditional role of artistic director and instead has an artistic council that gives some direction to programming and other artistic aspects of operations. Recall from chapter 1 that music direction is shared among the ensemble’s musicians as well. The artistic council assigns each singer a piece or two to “produce.” After this process, the group interprets the music

democratically. Ensemble II includes an executive director and additionally consists of a director of marketing and finance, an audience development assistant, and an operations administrator. The ensemble's output, therefore, is produced by the singers and the administration equally.

Though the group operates collaboratively and democratically, they still have a structured hierarchy. The board of directors acts as stewards of the ensemble, the artistic council makes

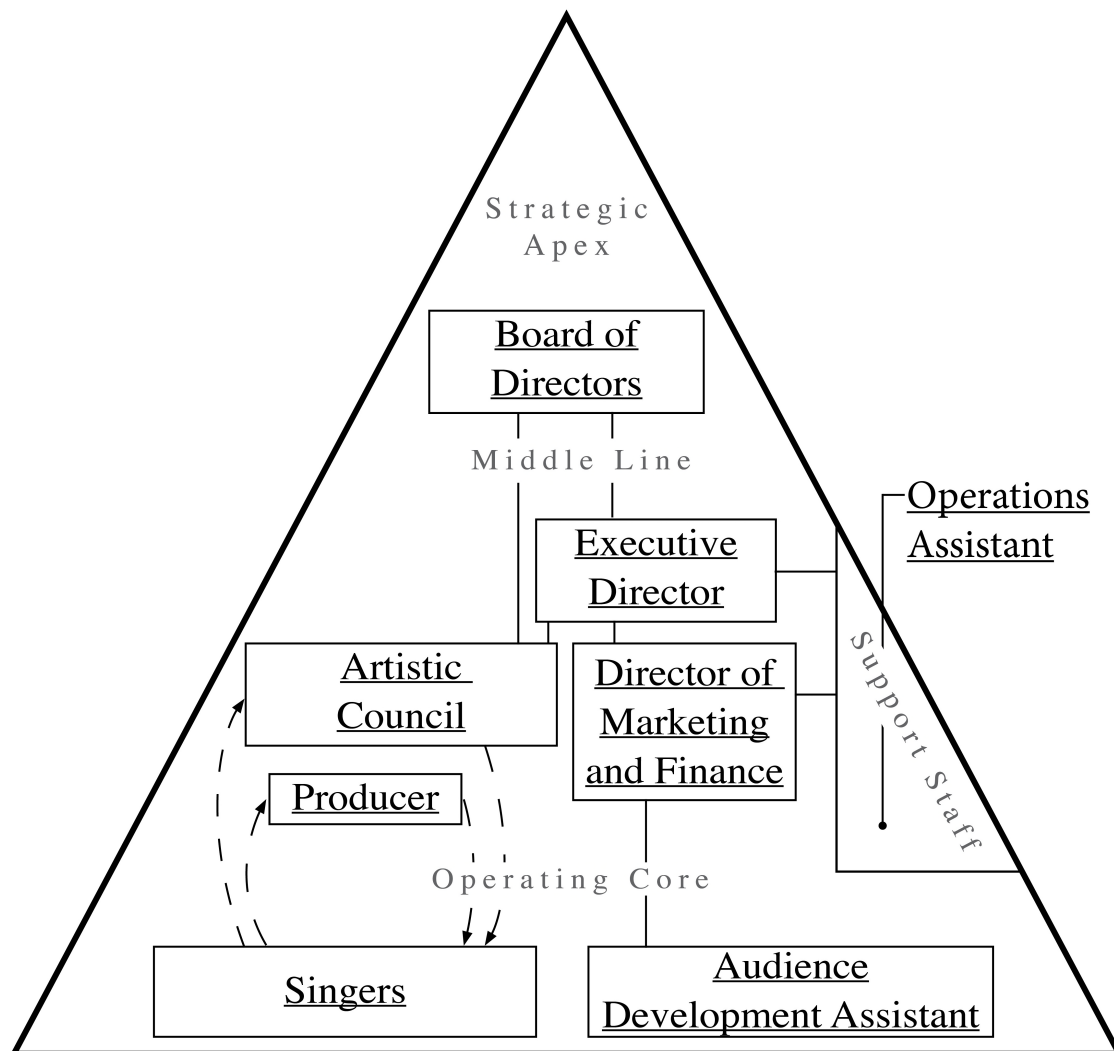


Figure 6. Organizational chart of Ensemble II.

programming decisions and assigns producers, and the members of administrative staff answer to the executive director. The difference here, in Mintzberg's terms, is members of the operating core ascend and descend to other positions within the structure regularly. Singers act as producers, and singers comprise the artistic council. The structure Ensemble II has established allows the group to work within its values of collaboration and democratic music-making (figure 6).

Strategies of Structuring Professional Vocal Ensembles

The example structures above demonstrate two important strategies of ensemble construction. First, the structure of an organization should enable growth. Ensemble III's small, insular structure sets a limit on how far the group can exceed its current level of musical activity. Ensemble IV, however, has incorporated high levels of volunteer responsibility into its hierarchy. This strategy allows the ensemble to take on new levels of activity without the need for drastic restructuring. Second, we noted that both Ensembles II and III have structured themselves around their values. Both groups have devised structures that allow them to work collaboratively. While collaboration may not be a high priority for every ensemble, it is incumbent upon any ensemble to utilize its values in developing a structure. We will see this strategy vivified in the discussion of developing an ensemble's mission, vision, and guiding principles in the concluding chapter.

Finally, ensembles must account for output within their structures. We have seen that in Ensemble III, the singers themselves do the work of presenting artworks and fostering collective regard. In Ensemble IV, this work is shared among musicians, the ensemble's small staff, and the vast network of volunteers associated with the group. Ensemble II is structured such that the musical work of production is accomplished by the singers, and the administrative work of

production is done by the executive director and staff. However, because of the collaborative nature of Ensemble II, the work of presenting artworks and fostering collective regard is shared among the organization. We can now identify the following basic strategies of structuring professional vocal ensembles:

- 1) The structure of the ensemble should reflect the flow of decision-making and tasks through the organization.
- 2) The structure should enable the ensemble to grow.
- 3) The structure should reflect the organization's values and channel them into action.
- 4) The structure should reflect the needs of the ensemble's mode of production and therefore account for the ensemble's output.

Conclusion

This chapter encompasses the design of performance events and presents concepts of organizational structure. At first glance these topics may not seem to be interrelated. However, the primary work of every performing ensemble is the preparation and presentation of performances. We have called this act production in the performing arts. The above section on structuring concludes by stating that an ensemble's structure should reflect the ensemble's mode of production and account for its output. An organization's structure is a roadmap for efficiently producing output, which takes the form of the well-designed experiences of performance events and the successful execution of that design. This chapter has addressed conventions of concert performance and concluded that the challenges to it are experiential rather than musical. Whereas conventional performance equates the experience of hearing the music to the total experience of the performance event, this chapter has suggested that utilizing the arc of engagement allows ensembles to separate the act of performance from the nonmusical experiences that surround it.

Doing so allows ensembles to balance their presentation of artworks with their fostering of collective regard. It allows ensembles to contextualize the music to be heard in the central performance, to establish personal connections with their constituents, to nurture those connections through the music, and to create lasting impact through the performance event.

A successful event requires many people accomplishing varied tasks while effectively working together toward a single goal. A clear organizational structure provides a means to this end. Through the work of Henry Mintzberg, this chapter has introduced component parts of organizational mechanisms for making decisions and accomplishing tasks. The chapter has applied Mintzberg's mechanisms and component parts of organizations to the performing arts and has presented example structures drawn from three of this study's participating ensembles. In so doing, we have concluded that decisions and tasks must clearly flow through the structure and that the structure should enable the ensemble to grow. The structure should reflect organizational values. Finally, the presentation of artworks and the fostering of collective regard—the dual aspects of performing arts output—must be accounted for through the ensemble's structure. Given these structural requirements, the next and final chapter will return to the Twenty Tenets laid out in chapter 2 in order to address incorporating and developing an organization; devising mission, vision, and guiding principles; and filling essential roles within the organization. Chapter 6 will outline sound ensemble operation through relationship building and fundraising; it will offer tools for assessment and strategic management. This study will conclude by suggesting avenues of future research in the hope that, as professional choral performance continues to grow in the twenty-first century, professional vocal ensembles might surround themselves with enthusiastic and involved constituents and advance to ever higher standards of professionalism and artistry.

Chapter 6: Theory in Practice

Summary

Before applying the theoretical proposals of chapters 3, 4, and 5 to the practicalities of incorporating, organizing, and strategically managing professional vocal ensembles, it will be useful to retrace some of the ground covered in the preceding discussion. Chapter 2 examines the amateur history of choral education and performance. As music made its way into the historical order of representing in the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century, a specialized and professional caliber of composition and performance arose in instrumental music. Vocal music, on the other hand, became an area of broad musical participation. Choral societies grew, and the professional-amateur distinction between solo-operatic singers and choral singers was born. This distinction has left current professional vocal ensembles at somewhat of a disadvantage when compared to other performing arts organizations. In addition to confronting problems of funding and changing audience preferences, professional vocal ensembles must also confront the perception, however subconscious it may be, that choral music is performed by amateurs. Why is it necessary to hire singers when a volunteer chorus can give an acceptable performance?

There are likely as many answers to this question as there are professional vocal ensembles. However, the demonstration of those answers through ensemble activity and relationship building utilizes common elements. Chapter 2 presents these commonalities in the form of twenty tenets to which we will return in this concluding chapter. As we have seen, Chorus America has sought to distinguish professional choirs through its guidelines for professional membership, which require an ensemble to pay its singers an hourly rate of at least twice the minimum wage for at least two three-program seasons. Although Chorus America sets

no specific artistic standard, we have argued that the organization's requirements for professional-level membership imply one. It is simply not possible for a professional vocal ensemble to meet Chorus America's requirements without presenting artwork of high aesthetic value while achieving high levels of artistry in performance. The generality of Chorus America's guidelines surely suit the organization because they allow many professional choirs to become members of Chorus America. The guidelines do not, however, resolve the debate over what qualifies as professional in choral music (about which even choral professionals disagree). Nor do the guidelines offer much in the way of advice for ensembles wishing to measure the success of their professional pursuits. This paper has sought to develop such advice in various ways and in so doing to codify ensemble activity through measurements of output.

Chapter 3 begins a theoretical exploration of the many conceptual areas that affect the professional performing arts. It introduces certain basic principles of market economics and delves into cultural economics. The chapter explicates problems of cost disease, structural deficits, and the experience economy that affect ensembles' performances by challenging funding and competing for constituents' out-of-the-home, nondigital leisure time. Following David Throsby, chapter 3 suggests that new measures of economic output in the performing arts might assist economists in better understanding the performing arts and equally aid ensembles in discovering means of more efficient production. Both these avenues have the potential to abate the difficulties for the professional performing arts that are present in cost disease, structural deficits, and the experience economy. However, in order to do so, economists and performing artists must utilize more comprehensive metrics for output than currently exist. Chapter 3 suggests that understanding output as culture offers such a comprehensive point of view. We sought a broad understanding of culture modeled after the definition found in the *Oxford English*

Dictionary. The chapter concludes by defining culture in terms of two halves: artworks and those who regard them collectively.

The two aspects of culture create parameters for the continued theoretical discussion in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 develops the concepts of artwork and collective regard and proposes means of measuring them as the two main portions of the output of the performing arts. Through Thomas Turino's four fields of musical activity, chapter 4 identifies presentational music and Hi-Fi recording as the most common fields used by professional performing organizations. However, there is a need even in the professional performing arts to enable constituent participation. To this end, chapter 4 proposes that many performing arts ensembles utilize a hybrid, quasi-participatory field into which fall activities such as masterclasses and lectures. Chapter 4 then presents means of quantifying artworks within the output of the performing arts. To similarly qualify artworks, chapter 4 favors the use of aesthetic valuation over formalist quality determination. The latter seeks to understand the compositional right and wrong of a piece of music. The former seeks contextual value based on the needs of the performance and the constituency.

Having examined the presentation of artwork in terms of performing arts output, chapter 4 turns its attention to elucidating collective regard. The chapter accomplishes this task historically through interpreting Jacques Attali's four historical orders from *Noise: A Political Economy of Music*. Chapter 4 suggests that, in the orders of ritual and representing, collective regard was truly collective. However, collective regard under the orders of repeating and composing—the latter still in its becoming—grows increasingly individualist. This move away from the collective and towards the individual is detrimental to the nonprofit performing arts, which require collectivity in the form of both audience and constituency in order to thrive

artistically and operationally. An ensemble's awareness of its efficacy in continually building the collective that surrounds it represents one step toward staunching the increasing flow of individualist musical reception. To facilitate this awareness, chapter 4 suggests that collective regard might be measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms, as can artwork. To do so, the chapter adapts the loyalty ladder for use in the performing arts. Through the ladder, an organization is capable of stratifying its constituency in terms of behavioral loyalty, thereby quantifying its constituent relationships and qualifying the nature of them.

Performance is the venue in which an ensemble's constituent relationships encounter artwork. Chapter 5 examines the design of performance events, noting that, when they are most effective, performance events are capable of creating a virtuous cycle where constituent-ensemble relationships deepen through exposure to music. However, the Romantic-era ideal has passed. The societal conditions have changed that once enabled the experience of hearing repertoire performed to be the very experience of the performance event, and audience preferences have slowly shifted away from traditional concert performance. To account for these changing preferences and to enable the cycle of deepening constituent relationships encountering artwork, ensembles must design performances that are conducive both to the presentation of repertoire and to the comfortability of the audience. Through the arc of engagement, chapter 5 develops means of designing such performances. The arc assists further in developing performance events that contextualize the repertoire of the central performance and foster the audience's continued engagement even after the central performance has ended.

A successful experience design and its implementation in the performance event rest on the shoulders of every member of a performing organization. In order to ensure all are able to play their roles in the performance event, either by presenting artworks or by building loyal

relationships, an ensemble must have a structure capable of efficiently channeling decisions and workflow. Chapter 5 seeks to understand organizational formations through Mintzberg's work on structuring organizations. The board of directors plays the role of Mintzberg's strategic apex; it governs the organization financially and sees that the organization accomplishes its mission in all its operations. Just as there are two aspects of performing arts output, there are twin middle lines of performing arts production to be accounted for within an ensemble's structure. One of the middle lines is run by the artistic director and is primarily responsible for presenting artworks. The other middle line is run by the executive director and is primarily responsible for fostering collective regard. The operating core of a professional performing ensemble is similarly divided: those responsible for the presentation of artworks comprise one half, and those responsible for developing audience relationships comprise the other. Chapter 5 concludes by examining the structures of Ensembles, III, IV, and II. Models for Ensembles III and II especially showed the importance of collaboration to organizational functionality. Ensemble IV's model demonstrated the effectiveness of a strong volunteer base and how volunteers can be incorporated into the operating core.

Utilizing Theory toward Practical Ends: Readdressing the Twenty Tenets

This concluding chapter utilizes the theoretical aspects of the performing arts thus far examined in order to buttress the discussion of some of the practicalities of incorporating, structuring, and strategically managing professional vocal ensembles. To facilitate this process, we will return to the twenty tenets presented in chapter 2. Rather than being treated simply as a list, however, throughout this discussion the tenets will appear within the text. To clarify when a tenet is under discussion, each is displayed in bold typeface and with its original number from chapter 2. Whereas in chapter 2 the tenets were organized into categories corresponding to the

theoretical discussions in chapters 3, 4, and 5, here the tenets will appear as required by the topic under discussion. The reason for this change is a practical one. While it is conducive to theoretical discussion to examine a single topic at a time, such is not necessarily the case in the running of a professional performing arts organization. Instead, economic, art- and audience-related, and organizational theories must interweave through ensemble operations. For example, it is not possible to develop and articulate an ensemble's mission by only considering the audience. What music will the audience hear? Nor is it possible to operate an ensemble only with art in mind. A structure is necessary in order to bring that art to life.

What follows is a synthesis of theories presented in the preceding chapters. The goal of this concluding discussion is to demonstrate the ensemble potential of the output-based systems we have thus far discussed. The discussion begins at an ensemble's incorporation; examines developing its mission by articulating the ensemble's mission statement, statement of guiding principles, and vision statement; and continues by discussing essential roles within the group's structure. The chapter offers means of periodic assessment rooted in previous discussions of output. This process, known as strategic management, will constantly repeat over the life of an organization. Through systematic strategic management, an ensemble will assess its vision and organization, direct them into action, and assess the efficiency of those operations. Based on these assessments, the organization will develop a plan for the future, and the cycle of strategic management begins again.

Founding the Ensemble

Chapter 2 suggests that the board of directors should be established prior to an ensemble beginning regular public performance. This suggestion is based on an assumption, like much of the professional performing arts, that is partly artistic and partly economic: performing

ensembles wish to continually present artwork of high aesthetic value, and they have the desire to constantly improve their performance and operations. These are marks of professionalism. Cost disease and structural deficits threaten continued growth and improvement and therefore require ever-increasing performance and nonperformance income. We stated in chapter 4 that this condition requires the increasing loyal involvement of an ever-growing number of constituents. Consider also this brief scenario.

A group of musicians, prior to incorporation, pools its money and nonmonetary resources in order to find rehearsal and performance space, to advertise, to rehearse, and to perform. They plan to sell tickets to offset personal costs but agree to work for little or no pay. (Of course, this opposes most any definition of professional.) What happens to the ticket revenue? Perhaps it is distributed in cash to performers and the venue. Or, it may for safekeeping go into the bank account of one of the ensemble members. Distributing cash in this way may work for a single performance but does not enable further performances. The latter is fiscally irresponsible, saddling a member of the group with the undue burden of possessing and managing the ensemble's funds. Neither circumstance indicates much thought about the future of the ensemble. Incorporation, on the other hand, enables an ensemble to secure a bank account, and the board of directors enables sound accounting practices. The presence of strong organization allows for the flow of tasks and decisions to the personnel who program, plan, and perform concerts. Such structure appeals to donors. The more people involved with the organization at its beginnings, the more avenues the ensemble has for developing a devoted constituency of listeners.

By incorporating the board of directors prior to performing publically, the founders of an organization indicate a commitment to the ensemble's future growth and sustainability. Equally, the process of establishing the board of directors requires that an ensemble account for the

artistic and administrative activities essential to production. This initial process is an exception to the relationship development described by the loyalty ladder. At an organization's inception, that development is necessarily accelerated. A person may move immediately from prospect to board member. However, most boards of directors maintain limits on the length of time anyone can serve on the board (three years is a common term limit). As a result, the process built into the loyalty ladder must begin immediately and continue throughout the life of the organization. Immediately incorporating the board of directors and developing new constituent relationships **demonstrate professionalism through financial and organizational trustworthiness** (Tenets 1 and 13).

Failure to assemble financing and a board of directors prior to beginning public performance is attributable in part to convenience—it is certainly easier in the short term for an ensemble to start singing together than it is for musicians who may lack training in arts administration to assemble the people and documents requisite to establishing an effective board. However, we might also attribute premature public performance to the scarcity of literature on organizing professional vocal ensembles. Matthew Sigman's *The Chorus Leadership Guide* is perhaps the only resource that deals specifically with choirs: the guide briefly addresses the typical organization of nonprofit choral ensembles, and parts of this guide represent a valuable overview for new and beginning organizations. For example, many online forms and templates accompany the guide. Sample bylaws and articles of incorporation, a strategic planning template, board member agreements, job descriptions, and timelines for commissioning and hiring are free to use upon purchase of the guide.

Despite these helpful resources, there is some danger for ensembles in following what Sigman calls the evolution of chorus leadership. He writes,

In the beginning there are signers with a passion for music who seek out a visionary leader. Or there is a leader with a passion for music who gathers ardent disciples. . . . Whether selected or self-appointed, it is the conductor who breathes life into the ensemble, chooses repertoire, establishes musical standards, selects singers and leads performances. *As the chorus evolves*, two other legs emerge: a board of directors, which provides governance and establishes policy, and management, which implements the board's and artistic director's visions.¹⁵¹

Sigman's evolution is an all-too-common way of beginning a vocal ensemble, as three of the ensembles participating in this study attest. Ensembles II, III, and IV grew out of academic-based projects that required no formal structure. Each group had to work to remake itself as a professional performing arts organization.

Imposing a structure on an otherwise free-form organization is a difficult process that requires changing minds and behavior. We might, however, contrast this scenario with the success Ensemble V has seen in a comparatively short period of time. The board of directors and initial funding were in place before Ensemble V employed any singers. The presence of early funding and organization enabled the group to immediately afford the musicians it required for its vision, thereby presenting an artistic product of an immediately high standard. The ensemble's critical success and awards garnered over a relatively short period of time were made possible in part by funding and board organization that enabled artistry rather than distracted from it.

151. Matthew Sigman, *The Chorus Leadership Guide*, (Washington: Chorus America, 2009), 1. My emphasis.

Nonprofit Incorporation

Board organization is not only helpful to an ensemble's internal operations; it is one of the IRS requirements of 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. **Nonprofit status can be used to create multiple streams of performance and nonperformance revenue** (Tenet 3). First of all, nonprofit status incentivizes patronage by allowing donors to deduct contributions from their federal income tax. Second, nonprofit status is required by many granting organizations and so should be obtained to facilitate grant-based income. Third, nonperformance income from donations and grants enables performance income. We saw in chapter 3 that virtually no ensemble survives on ticket sales alone, and nonperformance income can be used to offset the cost of performance such that overly high ticket prices do not exclude current or potential constituents. The designation requires a good deal of record keeping and may require a complex tax return. However, these are aspects of demonstrating financial and organizational trustworthiness and professionalism, and they are necessities of ensemble operations.

The 501(c)(3) application process requires that an ensemble declare its charitable purpose in the form of articles of incorporation and that an ensemble demonstrate its organizational potential in the form of bylaws.¹⁵² Instead of approaching the nonprofit application process with dread, ensembles should utilize the IRS requirements to establish the strongest possible structures. Likewise, the cost associated with the application for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status should be viewed by the ensemble as an early indication of the board's fundraising potential.

152. Sample language for articles of incorporation is available in the appendix to IRS publication 557, *Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization*. See Internal Revenue Service, *Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization*, (Washington DC: Department of the Treasury), 70–73. Accessed April 1, 2016 <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf>. Many organizations offer sample bylaws, but chorus-specific bylaws are available from Chorus America through the online resources associated with *The Chorus Leadership Guide*. The website has login instructions that are freely accessible. See Chorus America, "The Chorus Leadership Guide Online Resources." Accessed April 20, 2016, www.chorusamerica.org/leadershipguide.

These costs pale in comparison to the budget an organization will need for its operations.¹⁵³ If the cost of preparing and submitting the 501(c)(3) application represents an insurmountable obstacle, perhaps the organization is not ready for sustained professional activity. On the other hand, an organization with the proper perspective might use the application to develop initial constituent relationships. As part of the process of meeting the IRS-imposed requirements for nonprofit organizations, an ensemble and its board should seize the opportunity to clearly articulate the ensemble's mission, to discover their mutual values, and to envision the ensemble's future.

Mission Development

Rather than viewing the nonprofit application process as a barrier to operational status, an ensemble should view it as an opportunity to develop a strong organization, to establish its identity, and to codify its beliefs and philosophies. This process should start with the development of the ensemble's mission.¹⁵⁴ Recall that chapter 4 distinguishes between purpose and mission.¹⁵⁵ Purpose is defined as the reason an organization or firm exists. Mission is defined as the beliefs, actions, and activities that govern the way in which an organization carries out its purpose. Therefore, mission development can begin with a few mission development questions.

153. The application fee for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status varies based on projected donations. Those groups whose annual receipts do not exceed \$50,000 (and whose assets are valued at less than \$250,000) pay a \$400 application fee. See Internal Revenue Service, "New 1023-EZ Form Makes Applying for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status Easier; Most Charities Qualify." Last updated July 1, 2014, <https://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/New-1023-EZ-Form-Makes-Applying-for-501c3Tax-Exempt-Status-Easier-Most-Charities-Qualify>. Additionally, many organizations seek legal advice while preparing their 501(c)(3) application. This advice is often available *pro bono* from organizations established to help emerging nonprofits, and some boards of directors include an attorney capable of preparing the application with the assistance of the other board members. In these instances, there would likely be no cost incurred besides the application fee. If, however, an organization does not have access to such resources, there may be additional fees associated with legal assistance.

154. NB: A mission statement is required for the 501(c)(3) application process, but guiding principles and vision are not. I recommend developing all three at once because the three concepts depend so highly on one another.

155. See the discussion of output in the preforming arts in chapter 4.

- 1) Who are we, and what do we believe about vocal ensemble performance?
- 2) Whom will we serve?
- 3) Based on what we believe, what do we want to do, and how do we wish to do it?
- 4) What tasks must be accomplished in order to successfully act on what we believe?

The ensemble leadership and board of directors should answer these questions collaboratively.

Doing so will help to ensure everyone's voice is heard and will allow the ensemble initial insight into operational dynamics. Furthermore, these questions are intended as examples of ways to help articulate a group's identity and beliefs. But, every group should exercise its own individual needs through this process.

The mission development process is couched here in terms of emerging organizations. However, experienced leaders and boards return to this process frequently in order to help to ensure that their organizations' operations are rooted in organizational beliefs and ideals even as they evolve. This is a foundational element of strategic management, which will be addressed below. Once the mission development questions have been answered to the satisfaction of the ensemble leadership and board of directors, the ensemble may craft statements of mission and guiding principles.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a succinct definition of an ensemble's operations. Michael Kaiser, in his *"Leading Roles: 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask,"* defines mission statements in terms of four Cs: Clear, Concise, Complete, and Coherent.

Clear: If the mission statement is not clear, it will not be pursued unilaterally by the organization. The wording must be direct and easy to understand . . . if one wants broad appreciation of the mission among lay people.

Concise: A mission statement must be short enough that people can remember it. . . .

Complete: A strong mission statement describes the boundaries of all that the organization wants to accomplish. If a project falls outside the mission, it should not be pursued, or the mission must be changed. . . .

Coherent: A strong mission statement must make sense.¹⁵⁶

For Kaiser, a mission statement should be clear enough for a layperson to understand, and it should be short enough to be memorable. A mission statement should indicate the scope of an ensemble's activities and be internally logical. Kaiser's four Cs implicitly revolve around a fifth: the constituency. A mission statement must be clear or risk hampering relationships with constituents who likely have a fruitful connection to the ensemble but do not have the background to engage with insider jargon. Brevity in a mission statement will, as Kaiser notes, assist ensemble members in remembering it, and it will do the same for constituents. Likewise, a logical mission statement will be more communicative to constituents. For example, a mission statement focused on the exploration of historical performance that also includes a clause about commissioning new works from living composers seems to contradict itself. This contradiction has the potential to cause problems if it raises questions in the constituents' minds about the knowledgeability or aesthetic trustworthiness of the ensemble.

A mission statement that is specific about an ensemble's activities and artistry meets Kaiser's requirement for completeness and can create aesthetic and artistic expectations for constituents. Such specificity likely provides a better point of connection with constituents than a general statement that seems to allow for the organization to do anything it pleases. We should

156. Michael Kaiser, *Leading Roles: 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask*, (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 10. Emphasis original.

also note, however, that Thomas Wolf advocates a more general mission statement, as it will allow board members greater latitude in effectively executing the mission. He writes,

The challenge of developing a good mission statement includes creating a text that is sufficiently broad to encompass the many possible activities that the organization may wish to engage in. This is crucial inasmuch as the law obligates the trustees of the organization to limit their activities to those covered by the mission statement as articulated in the organizing charter. However . . . a mission statement is only valuable if it gives some specific guidance on the direction the organization should take in regard to programs, services, and activities.¹⁵⁷

Wolf's recommendation that a mission statement be sufficiently general is mediated by the value he finds in a mission statement specific enough to guide the organization. These need not be contradictory. Instead, what Kaiser calls "complete" Wolf might call a balance between the mission statement's need to dictate ensemble operations and also to allow the ensemble a certain flexibility and creativity in its activities.

In writing their mission statements, professional vocal ensembles can benefit from the advice of both authors. The board of directors, as Wolf writes, has a legal obligation to govern its organization based on the mission declared in the group's organizing documents. Equally, the completeness desired by Kaiser can benefit ensemble-constituent relationships by creating artistic and aesthetic expectations. Consider the mission statement of the Atlanta Master Chorale. "To inspire and enrich the lives of our community through the performance of inspirational choral music, to sing at the highest level of choral artistry, and to be a standard of excellence

157. Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization: Updated Twenty-First-Century Edition* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 10.

among performing arts organizations.”¹⁵⁸ This mission statement addresses Kaiser’s four Cs and the group’s constituency. It uses *clear* language that is accessible to constituents regardless of their backgrounds. The mission statement is *concise*—it is only one sentence long—and it is *coherent*. It does not contradict itself. The mission statement addresses the Atlanta Master Chorale’s constituency, which it describes as “our community.” The mission statement balances Kaiser’s recommendation that a mission statement be *complete* with Wolf’s reminder that the mission statement be general enough to allow the board of directors to fulfill its legal responsibilities. To these ends, the mission statement identifies the group’s main activity as performance, with which it wishes to inspire and enrich the lives of its constituents. It creates aesthetic and artistic expectations by performing inspirational choral music to the highest level of choral artistry. The mission additionally creates an organizational expectation by describing the Atlanta Master Chorale as achieving a standard of excellence among performing arts organizations. Finally, the mission statement defines categories that can be used in strategic management and assessment. We will return to this aspect of the mission statement below.

Thus far we have briefly described mission development and discussed aspects of an effective mission statement. Namely, an effective mission statement will 1) meet Kaiser’s four Cs, 2) provide the board of directors guidance in executing their duties of governance, 3) address the ensemble’s constituency, 4) set up artistic and organizational expectations, and as such 5) be useable for strategic management and assessment. The mission statement therefore sets out activities the ensemble will undertake and indicates something of the result that can be expected from them. It does not, however, describe the interpersonal values that might reveal themselves

158. Atlanta Master Chorale, “Our Mission.” Accessed April 28, 2016
<http://www.atlantamasterchorale.org>.

through interactions among ensemble members. Some ensembles may choose to let such values arise organically; others may elect to detail them in a statement of guiding principles.

Statement of Guiding Principles

A mission statement is succinct and written as part of legal governance benefit ensemble operations and to communicate essential aspects of the ensemble's activities to constituents. Guiding principles, on the other hand can be as long or as short as befits the ensemble's needs. They are not legally required and need not be made public. Instead, guiding principles are statements of an ensemble's values: musical, ethical, or otherwise. Guiding principles may describe modes of interacting between constituents and ensemble members or among the ensemble members themselves. The answer to the first mission development question (Who are we, and what do we believe about vocal ensemble performance?) is an excellent starting point for articulating guiding principles. For example, Ensemble V is a small vocal ensemble. Among their beliefs about professional vocal music is the value of collaboration. The guiding principle that has grown out of their identity and beliefs is that they approach each other in all activities with kindness, respect, and fairness. These values are nonmusical. Yet they greatly impact Ensemble V's interpersonal dynamic in rehearsal and performance, which in turn affects their creativity in rehearsal and communication on stage. In this way, guiding principles permeate an organization. They are foundational values that surface in the presentation of artwork, in the development of constituent relationships, and in the fostering of collective regard. While the impact of guiding principles is not as easily measured as other aspects of performing arts output, articulating guiding principles and assessing the ways in which ensembles live up to them will benefit operations and interactions.

Vision Statement

The mission statement and statement of guiding principles are declarations of an ensemble's current activity and values and those of the immediate future. They indicate something of what constituents and members can expect of the ensemble presently. However, if an ensemble is to constantly increase its performance and nonperformance income in order to overcome structural deficits and cost disease, the ensemble must develop a vision for what its future holds. A vision statement is a means of articulating an ensemble's view of its own future. The vision statement should set goals for a fixed and future period, but an ensemble's own organizational goals are not the full extent of the vision statement. A vision statement should be aspirational and project the effects an ensemble might have on its community and constituency. Ellen Rosewall depicts the vision statement thusly. "A vision statement . . . expresses the organization's aspirations and hopes . . . [and] outlines a picture of the organization's desired future. If a mission statement answers the question of what we do and for whom, the vision statement answers the question 'How will the world be different because we exist?'"¹⁵⁹ The vision statement necessarily takes mission and guiding principles into account and projects them into the future of an organization. As for the statements of mission and guiding principles, we will see that the vision statement is an essential tool of strategic management. By aspiring to certain levels of activity, production, and effectiveness, an ensemble sets for itself an expectation of activity that can be used to gauge future success.

Developing mission, guiding principles, and vision is an act of self-discovery. Through it ensembles clarify for their members and constituents who the ensemble is, what the ensemble believes, and what the ensemble does. Through the process, the ensemble expresses its values

159. Ellen Rosewall, *Arts Management: Uniting Arts and Audiences in the 21st Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 52

and what it hopes for the future. Michael Kaiser offers an excellent solution for the final determination of what these three statements should express. He writes,

There is a simple but crucial test each of the proposed elements must pass . . . would the organization be satisfied if it accomplished everything on the list *except* this element? If the answer is ‘yes,’ then the element does *not* belong. . . . If the answer is ‘no,’—the organization could not be satisfied without accomplishing this element—it *does* belong.¹⁶⁰

Kaiser’s crucial test can be seen as the final arbiter of identity development. The end result of this process is twofold. First, ensemble members will have a guide for their activities and a mode of interacting with constituents and with each other. Second, statements of mission, guiding principles, and vision provide a clear and compelling means of describing the ensemble to current and future constituents.

Naming the Ensemble

With its mission, guiding principles, and vision established, an ensemble should name itself in a way that reflects who the ensemble is and what it does. The name of an ensemble is entirely open-ended and individual. But, ensemble leaders should bear in mind that the ensemble’s name will very likely be synonymous with its musical offerings in the minds of its constituents and may even become a marker of quality. It is popular to ally the ensemble with a composer or style of music. This does not restrict the music an ensemble can perform, but it does create an expectation. There will, for example, be those members of the general public who wonder why The Monteverdi Choir sings anything besides Monteverdi. Similarly, many ensembles eponymous with their conductors may not continue performing when the conductor

160. Michael Kaiser, *Leading Roles*, 12. Emphasis original.

chooses to retire or to take another position that precludes working with the ensemble.¹⁶¹ As with the structuring of the organization, the name should enable—or at least not restrict—an ensemble’s growth through the presentation of artwork and the development of constituent relationships.

Essential Roles

Regardless of how an ensemble names itself, the development of its mission, guiding principles, and vision will indicate something of the tasks necessary to its success. Of course, every professional vocal ensemble will set about different tasks in order to accomplish its mission. Along the way, ensembles should **discover and utilize the strengths of all members—volunteers, musicians, and administrators** (Tenet 19). The following discussion of essential roles is broad and discusses the ensemble’s tasks conceptually rather than specifically. We will return to Mintzberg’s basic structure to address essential roles into which tasks might fall. Recall from chapter 5 that governance occurs at the level of the strategic apex and is the responsibility of the board of directors. The middle line is often divided. Artistic leadership is often provided by a conductor, a music director, or an artistic director. An executive or administrative director likely oversees administration. The operating core is similarly divided between musicians who are responsible for the presentation of artwork and other administrative members of the ensemble, whether paid or volunteer. Throughout this structure, **ensembles should expect the best from every member and outline in writing expectations of musicianship, preparedness, timeliness, and organization.** Written agreements invite open communication and are a first

161. The trend of naming choirs after their conductors (such as The Robert Shaw or Roger Wagner Chorale) has waned. The last one of note was perhaps the Dale Warland Singers, which gave its last concert in 2004 and released its last recording in 2007. See Dale Warland, “The Dale Warland Singers” *Dale Warland: Composer/Conductor* accessed April 20, 2016 <http://dalewarland.com/the-dale-warland-singers/>.

step in **fostering personal and professional relationships based on respect, understanding, and dignity** (Tenet 16).

Strategic Apex: The Board of Directors

An ensemble's board of directors works with artistic and administrative leaders to ensure successful implementation of the mission. All of the organization's activities fall under the board's umbrella of oversight. The board enables the artistic and administrative leadership of the organization to carry out their tasks and to manage other musical and administrative staff. The board is ultimately responsible for creating contracts and agreements and ensuring that musical and administrative employees adhere to them. The board of directors works with the musical and administrative leadership to enable the effective design of performance events within the financial means of the ensemble. Members of the board are charged with such governance of the organization, and they are equally its standard-bearers. They must be the best examples of the group's loyal constituents in order to successfully foster collective regard through developing constituent relationships. Matthew Sigman's outlook on the overarching responsibilities of the board of directors is particularly noteworthy: "Boards have the responsibility to nurture the organization, to nurture the audience, and to nurture themselves. Leadership should develop and encourage opportunities for education and assessment."¹⁶² In other words, an ensemble should **establish a board of directors who are developers of and advocates for the organization** (Tenet 17). To facilitate this essential role, an ensemble may wish to elect board members who are well connected to the community. The more people the board members know, the more ensemble-constituent relationships those members will be able to cultivate. Furthermore, board members' involvement in the community will facilitate collaboration with other local organizations. We will see the importance of these relationships below.

162. Matthew Sigman, *The Chorus Leadership Guide*, 24.

Governance. Though board members are important relationship builders and advocates, the board's primary function is to ensure the organization's health through oversight. They manage the organization's budget, see to its staffing, and take ultimate responsibility for mission implementation and strategic management. The sum of the board's responsibilities then is governance. According to Sigman,

Governance means vision. It is establishing an artistic identity consistent with the abilities and aspirations of the singers and the community they represent. . . . Governance is sustained internal dialogue among board, artistic, and managerial leadership.

Rehearsals and performances are intermittent events, but the responsibility for governing a chorus is a continuous function. . . . Governance is sustained external communication with the community. . . . Governance is fiscal responsibility. . . . Governance means proudly and unabashedly looking someone in the eye and asking them to write a check because you are passionate about the chorus and the music it performs and not because it is a tax-deductible gift to a worthy charity. . . . Good governance is the bridge between being involved and being committed.¹⁶³

In order to successfully fulfill its duties of governance, the board of directors must be comprised of people who are deeply invested in the mission of the organization and who have the desire to share the mission with others. Furthermore, members of the board of directors must have some level of competence in music, finance, leadership, and communications.

Setting the Example of Behavioral Loyalty. Members of the board of directors often represent the initial funders of an organization and are typically expected to continue to donate to the organization. Ensemble IV, for example, has a very active board, all of whom are required to donate to the organization and all of whom are required to purchase a multi-concert pass for each

163. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

performing season. Such requirements are common among boards of performing organizations and are essential beyond simple financial necessity. Members of the board of directors are constituents *par excellence*. They must be examples for other constituents of dedication to the ensemble. Board members who are unwilling to donate or to regularly attend performances will have a difficult time encouraging relationships based on behavioral loyalty because such members do not demonstrate behavioral loyalty themselves. This is not to say that every board member needs to give thousands of dollars per year. The board of Ensemble IV, for example, does not have a minimum required financial gift. Instead, board members are required to give what they are able and are required to purchase a season subscription. By encouraging its board members to donate within their own means, Ensemble IV enables broader participation with the ensemble. Any such requirements should be clearly stated in a board member agreement.

Middle Line: Artistic Leadership

Sigman insists that the board plays its governing role consistently and not only surrounding performance events. The same can be said of the entire organization to some degree, but those responsible for artistic leadership focus their attention on performance. Whether conductor, music director, or artistic director, these leaders must ensure that the ensemble **demonstrates professionalism through artistic leadership and by setting high standards for performance** (Tenet 6). This is accomplished in three basic ways. First, the artistic leadership is responsible for programming. Second, the artistic leadership is responsible for preparing the music of the central performance. Third, the artistic leadership must work collaboratively with other ensemble members to design experiences of performance events that are rooted in repertoire.

Programming. This paper envisions programming and constituent relationships as reciprocal. Recall that chapter 5 describes that the music of the central performance nurtures constituent-ensemble relationships. Additionally, the artistic leadership should take into account the ways that this paper has dealt with measuring artworks as an aspect of output. Programming must help the ensemble to **be aesthetically trustworthy and present works of high aesthetic value** (Tenet 7). Virtually any music could fit this requirement as long as the design of the experience of the performance event supports it. Paul Salamunovich notes, “My most important criterion [of programming] is that I must first love the piece, so that I may honestly teach my singers to love it.”¹⁶⁴ For the purposes of professional vocal ensembles, we might add constituents to Salamunovich’s “singers.” As the artistic leadership shares its passion for the selected repertoire with musicians and other ensemble members, so can it also bring enthusiasm for the repertoire to personal relationships with constituents.

Musical Preparation. Preparation for the central performance involves the rehearsal process and equally prepares the ensemble to nurture constituent relationships through the repertoire. Most conductors are well prepared for the former. Their training has enabled them to study, interpret, and rehearse a work so that the work can be given a musically representative performance. However, the definition of a musically representative performance cannot be limited to *Werktreue*.¹⁶⁵ Instead, the artistic leadership must demonstrate throughout preparation for the performance event its knowledge that **repertoire and audience experience cannot be conflated. The rehearsal process must assist the ensemble in creating experiences of performance events through context** (Tenet 8).

164. Paul Salamunovich, “Repertoire” in *In Quest of Answers: Interviews with American Choral Conductors* ed. Carole Glenn (Chapel Hill: Hinshaw, 1991), 87.

165. See the discussion of conventions of concert performance in chapter 5.

Designing Experience of Performance Events. The repertoire is the centerpiece of the performance event, and the artistic leadership will likely know the repertoire more deeply than any other member of the ensemble. Therefore, the artistic leadership is in the best position to **ensure that every member of the organization—and not only the musicians—contributes to the audience experience of performance events** (Tenet 9). The artistic leadership must collaborate with all members of the organization to reveal those musical properties that can best contextualize the central performance. These properties act as elements of the design of the experience of the performance event.

Middle Line: Administrative Leadership

The primary responsibility of the administrative leadership is to enable the ensemble to **maintain personal relationships with constituents that help to ascertain and foster constituents' regard of the art the ensemble presents** (Tenet 12). Long-established groups with bigger budgets and busier schedules often utilize career administrators, whereas in smaller ensembles musicians themselves tend to take on administrative roles. Regardless of the group's size or budget, the goal of administration is to present the nonmusical side of the ensemble such that loyal relationships can be nurtured during performance. The administrative leadership assists with fundraising and marketing, they ensure the nonmusical success of performance events, and they take responsibility for enumerating and qualifying constituent relationships.

Fundraising and Marketing. The administrative leadership oversees the processes of fundraising and marketing. These are essential to the financial stability of an organization. **The administrative leadership must recognize the importance of personal relationships in effective fundraising and marketing and seek to develop and maintain those relationships** (Tenet 4). Between performances, fundraising and marketing are likely to be the most common

interactions that an ensemble has with its constituents. Fundraising and marketing must therefore be aspects of fostering collective regard and not just activities that raise enough money and audience for the next performance.

Performance Events. A great many details must be attended to before, during, and after performance events. The administrative leadership is responsible for nonmusical logistics. They ensure the smooth running of the event and enable the artistic leadership and musicians to focus on their musical presentation in the central performance. However, the role that the administrative leadership plays in performance events does not solely take place behind the scenes. **They must understand the role that loyal relationships play in the presentation of artworks and seek to develop those relationships** (Tenet 11). This understanding will assist the administrative leadership in collaborating with the artistic leadership to effectively design the experience of performance events. Just as the artistic leadership presents musical properties useful to nurturing constituent relationships, so should the administrative leadership offer information about those relationships that might be useful to programming as it has here been discussed.

Enumerating and Qualifying Constituent Relationships. Loyal constituent relationships are at the heart of the administrative leadership's work both during and between performance events. Administrative leaders then are in the best place to **understand constituents' loyalty and use that understanding to develop new and richer relationships** (Tenet 18). The administrative leadership oversees the half of ensemble output concerned with collective regard. Therefore it is the administrative leadership who is best equipped to manage the ensemble's use of the loyalty ladder and to interpret and implement the knowledge of constituent relationships the ladder provides.

The Operating Core: Singers and Volunteers

Singers. Professional ensembles should **engage singers with flexible vocal technique and attend to their vocal needs** (Tenet 10). Equally, a professional vocal ensemble with a variable roster of performers should employ singers who are excellent musicians capable of performing music to an exceptionally high standard over the course of a very short rehearsal period. Many of these singers make their living as chapter 2 notes: they perform both solo and ensemble works and expect to modify their vocal technique to suit the different styles of music they perform from week to week. Such vocal work can be taxing, and so it is imperative for the vocal health of their singers that professional vocal ensembles be sensitive to singers' vocal needs, allowing them time to rest and to pace themselves in rehearsal. Chapter 1 notes that Ensemble V works very hard to provide its singers with time off between performances and even adjusts their performance sets to suit the vocal needs of the performers. Similarly, Ensemble II provides all its singers with written standards of vocal health and technique. This document facilitates vocal-technical consensus among ensemble members and enables their sustained vocal health throughout Ensemble II's countless hours of rehearsal and performance each year.

Volunteers. Volunteers comprise two important facets of professional vocal ensembles. First, they fill roles for which the organization does not have paid staff. Often these include simple jobs such as ushering or working in the box office, but ensembles must bear in mind that their boards of directors volunteer as well. Second, a volunteer is high on the loyalty ladder, which means that the relationship between a volunteer and the ensemble is one of great importance by nature of its behavioral loyalty. Furthermore, volunteers are just one rung away from being advocates, and so continuing to develop volunteer relationships has the potential to lead to growing numbers of constituent relationships. Whether or not volunteers are utilized

during performance events, ensembles should seek volunteer relationships as a means of growing their constituencies.

Essential Roles and Organizational Structure

As an ensemble uncovers the individual needs of its particular mission, the tasks necessary to fulfilling the mission will become apparent. In the early stages of an ensemble's existence, the group may find, as we saw with Ensemble III in the previous chapter, that certain members play multiple essential roles. Constructing organizational charts like those found in chapter 5 can be of vital assistance, especially under these circumstances. To ensure the proper functioning of the organization, every member of the board, the artistic leadership, and the administrative leadership must have a thorough knowledge of the flow of tasks and decisions. Every position in the organizational hierarchy should have a clear job description in writing so that responsibilities are equitably shared and problems can be addressed professionally. With its mission established, its structure in place, and job descriptions written, the ensemble is well prepared for its work presenting artwork and fostering collective regard. The group now must **work toward sustainable growth through strategic management** (Tenet 14).

Operations and Strategic Management

Thus far we have addressed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; mission development with statements of mission, guiding principles, and vision; and roles essential to professional vocal ensemble production. Production is possible because of the two broad activities of output: the presentation of artwork and the fostering of collective regard. From an operational perspective, the basis for both of these is programming. The chosen music determines the content of the central performance and is the material around which the experience of the performance event is designed. In his book *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations*,

Michael Kaiser argues that if an organization begins with excellent programming, the organization has a backdrop against which to engage in fundraising, development, strategic management, and marketing.¹⁶⁶ As these activities yield revenue, that revenue is channeled back into great programming, and Kaiser's cycle starts again. Kaiser's mantra through this process is "*Good art, well marketed.*"¹⁶⁷ As Kaiser's cycle is repeated performance after performance and season after season, ensembles can use this paper's measurements of output in the performing arts as means of assessing the effectiveness of production. Utilizing these assessments allows an ensemble to continue to shape its mission. As this occurs year to year, the ensemble can **create a virtuous cycle of vision, organization, action, and assessment in all operations, endeavoring always to improve** (Tenet 15). This is the process of strategic management.

Strategic management should be the overriding system of ensemble operation and should be overseen by the board of directors and other ensemble leaders. The assessments described below should be undertaken periodically as suits the ensemble's needs. For example, some ensembles may wish to undertake assessment related to strategic management after every performance event. Others may chose to so evaluate themselves once per year. Whether at its incorporation or after many years of performing, an ensemble should begin this process by envisioning its future based on its past experience. That vision will yield prioritized tasks that shape the structure of the ensemble. Kaiser's cycle is the centerpiece of an ensemble's actions in production, and assessment enables the success of those actions to be measured. Based on these assessments, an ensemble can project a future vision and take steps toward measured growth and

166. Michael Kaiser, *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2013).

167. Michael Kaiser, *The Art of the Turnaround* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 4. Emphasis original.

improvement. Lydia Varbanova writes that the “strategic management process helps the organization adjust to a changed environment and move toward well-defined and agreed long-term objectives.”¹⁶⁸ This study concludes with a brief examination of vision, organization, action, and assessment as they pertain to strategic management.¹⁶⁹

Vision

In order for strategic management to have its desired effects, it is necessary for the ensemble to attempt to forecast certain aspects of its operations. At incorporation, when an ensemble has no past performance to rely on, this process is purely speculative. However, the more work an ensemble does, the more of its own experience can be relied upon to set future goals. Regardless of where in an ensemble’s life this process begins, the first step to strategic management is envisioning future success and setting realistic goals to help achieve it. This process is very similar to that of mission development discussed above, and so it will be useful to restate aspects of it here. Mission development is a process that helps to determine who an ensemble is, what it believes, what it does, and whom it serves. The process of mission development encompasses the writing of a mission statement, a statement of guiding principles, and a vision statement. Finally, the mission development process will suggest to ensembles the tasks they must complete in order to carry out their mission. Mission development applies most to emerging ensembles; however, existing ensembles can follow a similar process by examining their past mission development and critically assessing the degree to which it is still applicable.

168. Lidia Varbanova. *Strategic Management in the Arts*. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 28.

169. There is room here only to discuss strategic planning in the briefest terms such that ensembles and managers might get an idea of its necessity. There are many useful templates available for strategic planning should an ensemble like further assistance with the process. See Chorus America, “The Chorus Leadership Guide Online Resources.” www.chorusamerica.org/leadershipguide, appendix 1 in Lidia Varbanova, *Strategic Management in the Arts*, 313–324, and Michael Kaiser, *Strategic Planning for the Arts: A Practical Guide* (Washington: DeVos Institute of Arts Management). Accessed April 20, 2016 <http://devoscroatia.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Strategic-Planning-Guide.pdf>.

Wherever an ensemble begins, mission development and assessment are internal forces of the vision stage of strategic management.

Envisioning an ensemble's future must include external forces as well. To do so, an ensemble must **seek to understand the economic context into which it performs and create advantages from that understanding** (Tenet 2). For example, we have dwelt in this paper on the competition to arts organizations present in the experience economy. To understand its external economic context, an ensemble might undertake to find those nonartistic organizations who offer experiences that compete for constituents' leisure time. By understanding the economic context that surrounds its operations, an ensemble can come to **understand the economic role it plays in its own community** (Tenet 5). If the ensemble discovers an organization with which it competes for constituents, the two groups might find a way of working together toward their mutual benefit. In this way an ensemble can endeavor to **serve the community through collaboration and volunteerism** (Tenet 5). Such a scenario will yield new constituent connections and new possibilities for developing loyal relationships. After the organization has taken into account the internal and external forces of the vision stage of strategic management, the group must use this vision to assess its organizational strengths and weaknesses.

Organization

In developing essential roles for the ensemble and placing them within the organizational structure, the ensemble addresses tasks necessary to its success and creates written job descriptions. Through the process of strategic management, the ensemble's essential roles, their place within the organizational structure, and the written job descriptions must be reassessed to ensure that they align with any changes of mission and vision. Additionally, the process of

strategic management allows an ensemble to modify its roles and job descriptions to ensure that its members are utilizing their strengths and growing through their work. Finally, the organization stage of strategic management allows the ensemble to ensure that the workload is equitably shared.

Action

As vision yields organization, so must organization empower action. The ensemble's well-written mission statement will include specific areas of activity that account for the ensemble's production. Recall the example mission statement cited above from the Atlanta Master Chorale: "To inspire and enrich the lives of our community through the performance of inspirational choral music, to sing at the highest level of choral artistry, and to be a standard of excellence among performing arts organizations." As the Atlanta Master Chorale moves through the action stage of strategic management, it will do so in three main areas of activity. First the Atlanta Master Chorale inspires and enriches through performance. Second, its members sing. Third, the ensemble sets an organizational standard of excellence. The ways that the ensemble prioritizes and works through these areas of activity will determine its day-to-day operations. The specific demands of an ensemble's mission statement then are supported by budgeting, fundraising, and marketing.

Budgeting and Fundraising. Budgeting and fundraising are two sides of the same coin. The activities an ensemble undertakes will both project a budget and be restricted by it. As part of governance, the board of directors will establish a budgeting process and work with the artistic and administrative leadership to ensure that budgets meet the ensemble's needs. The established budget will in turn require a certain amount of fundraising.

Fundraising. Successful fundraising relies on ensembles' ability to develop relationships with donors and can only occur if ensembles are unafraid to ask for money. This study's participating ensembles and most every arts management source cited herein state plainly that seeking donations can be awkward. However, the process can be eased through nurturing loyal relationships and through clear communication of the ensemble's beliefs, activities, and financial need. To this end, ensembles can consider different types of fundraising, which will interest different types of donors. For example, an ensemble will require funds for its operating budget. While it may not be glamorous, certain donors may prefer to know they are helping to set the ensemble on solid financial ground. Ensembles may also wish to have a separate budget for developing special projects. Some donors are interested in helping to bring about new work.¹⁷⁰ Ultimately, the fundraising tactics an ensemble uses will be up to the board of directors and will be executed as part of governance.

Marketing. Ensembles must equally market their activities and their organizations. The former, called programmatic marketing, is simple and even expected. But, how is the ensemble to keep its constituency aware of its activities between events? This is the essence of what Kaiser calls institutional marketing, and it is essential to an organization's ability to develop loyal relationships with its constituents. Kaiser writes, "Successful arts organizations make interesting art that they market aggressively to potential customers. But, at the same time, they must create allegiance to the organization; this is what motivates subscribers, contributors, board members, and volunteers to participate."¹⁷¹ Participation on the part of subscribers, contributors, board members, and volunteers—and the nonperformance revenue they generate—must accelerate with

170. Special projects fundraising is important; however, ensembles must be careful not to allow donors to push them away from their mission. Kaiser calls this "mission drift," and he notes that it is often the result of an ensemble's need for funding regardless of the stipulations that come with it. See Michael Kaiser, *Leading Roles*, 10.

171. *Ibid.*, 1.

the growth of the ensemble. Therefore this dual marketing strategy is essential to the action stage of strategic management.

Assessing Past Performance

The final stage of strategic management can be seen as an overall assessment of the previous three. Assessing past performance should utilize the metrics discussed throughout this paper. An assessment of past performance will report on the culture created through an ensemble's output. Past performance assessment will examine quantities of artworks and performances and consider aesthetic valuation. The final stage of strategic management assessment will detail ensemble-constituent relationships as represented by the loyalty ladder's constituent scores, relationship scores, and index of collective regard. This assessment will also reveal an ensemble's performance and nonperformance income per rung of the ladder, which will enable an accounting of the ensemble's budget projections and fundraising success. As part of the final stage, ensembles should assess the success of their performance events using the arc of engagement and the other criteria presented in chapter 5. When the final stage of assessment is complete, the ensemble will have a strong body of information upon which to build on continued success and with which to address operational shortcomings.

Here ends one cycle of vision, organization, action, and assessment; here begins another. As cycles build on themselves, ensembles will have increasing amounts of data on which to base their vision. Through this data and based on their past experience, ensembles should develop strategies for medium and long-term goals. Some ensembles will benefit from programming repertoire, planning performance events, budgeting, and fundraising up to five years in advance. Those who do will find that communication with donors about the ensemble's needs gets easier, if only slightly. An ensemble's vision lends members direction and motivation. A plan for the

future gives current constituents experiences to get excited about and look forward to. Furthermore, it gives the ensemble's advocates an avenue for sharing their excitement with potential constituents. Most important of all, the cycle of strategic management reveals and promotes an ensemble's success in presenting artworks and fostering collective regard.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to synthesize theories from many, sometimes disparate, areas that pertain to the professional performing arts and to the work of professional vocal ensembles. It represents only the beginning of such work specific to vocal ensemble performance and will therefore benefit from continued and future research. First of all, very little economic work exists that studies professional choirs. There is no choral study corresponding to Flannigan's *The Perilous Life of Symphony Orchestras*, and professional choral performance in America may still be too small an arena to warrant one. However, the recent awards given to choral recordings and compositions are hopeful signs that, despite the struggles of the performing arts as a sector, choral music is on the rise. As such, new empirical studies aimed at more effective definitions of output, such as those proposed here in chapters 3 and 4, are needed.

Second, chapter 2 suggests a slight shift in voice teachers' perspectives on choral singing, and more professional singers accept and even seek out ensemble work. As this trend continues, it may become necessary to alter higher education curricula to incorporate a new vocal professionalism based on technical flexibility rather than relying only on solo-operatic techniques. Regardless, great teachers want the best for their students, and there remains ample room for building consensus between applied voice faculty and choral conductors. Similarly, conductor training would benefit from the inclusion of ensemble leadership rooted in basic economics. The numbers of freelance musicians are growing, and universities and conservatories

do a disservice to their graduates by not preparing them for the business of professional music making.

A Final Thought

If I could choose one trend to highlight that exists across this study's participating ensembles and resources, it would be that the performing arts must **value collaboration and work cooperatively with people and other organizations** (Tenet 20). An openness to others is the most basic building block of any relationship, whether a lifelong friendship or a first encounter between a constituent and an ensemble. Collaboration is necessary across disciplines to undertake the future study called for above. Finally, the performing arts exist for all. The success of one organization benefits others by raising cultural awareness among constituents. When organizations work together, they magnify the importance of the performing arts to their communities. Through collaboration, people come together, share their passions and creativity, and learn to respect and love one another. Here is the fertile ground of the performing arts.

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Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

What is the group's history? How did it come to be?

What are the group's defining principles? What is its mission statement?

Is the group a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization? What are the benefits and detriments of such an arrangement?

How often does the group perform (at home or on tour), and what role does commercial recording play in the life of the group?

How does the group choose its repertoire, and how do these decisions affect the activities of the group?

How does the group find its singers? What are the audition requirements?

What are the vocal technical policies for the group? Does the audience experience play a role in vocal technical choices?

Is there an educational component to the group? What are its goals and whom does it reach? How does the group measure its effectiveness?

What does the group believe about vocal ensemble performance in the 21st century?

What is the group's relationship with its audience? How does the group communicate with them?

How did the group go about finding an audience in the first place?

What are the group's goals for audience experience? Are there tools you use to determine if they are being met?

Is there a participatory aspect to your activities or to the ensemble-audience relationship? What does it look like?

Does the administration affect the audience's experience of the music? If so, how; if not, why?

How is commercial recording part of the ensemble-audience relationship? How are composers part of that relationship?

What, for this group, are the connections between score study/analysis and the audience experience in the performance?

What are the aspects of the group's general administration? How are they handled and structured?

What are the goals and guiding principles of the group's administration?

How does the group market itself?

What types of funding does the group receive, and how are the funds managed and budgeted?

How are the financial and artistic sides of the group balanced?

What are some of the ways the administrative aspects of the group meet the group's artistic needs?

Does the administration affect the audience's experience of the music? If so, how; if not, why?

Appendix B: University of Washington Internal Review Board Approval of Exempt Status



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

HUMAN SUBJECTS DIVISION

Date: October 31, 2014

PI: Mr. Jeremiah Cawley
Graduate Student; Music

RE: HSD study #48500
"The Organization and Artistry of Professional Vocal Ensembles"

Dear Mr. Cawley:

The University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) has determined that your research qualifies for exempt status in accordance with the federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101/ 21 CFR 56.104. Details of this determination are as follows:

Exempt category determination: **2**

Determination period: **October 31, 2014 to October 30, 2019**

If the research becomes federally funded, supported, or regulated, the researcher must immediately cease research activities until IRB approval is obtained. This will require submission of a new application.

Although research that qualifies for exempt status is not governed by federal requirements for research involving human subjects, investigators still have a responsibility to protect the rights and welfare of their subjects, and are expected to conduct their research in accordance with the ethical principles of *Justice*, *Beneficence* and *Respect for Persons*, as described in the Belmont Report, as well as with state and local institutional policy.

Determination Period: An exempt determination is valid for five years from the date of the determination, as long as the nature of the research activity remains the same. If there is any substantive change to the activity that has determined to be exempt, one that alters the overall design, procedures, or risk/benefit ratio to subjects, the exempt determination will no longer be valid. Exempt determinations expire automatically at the end of the five-year period. If you complete your project before the end of the determination period, it is not necessary to make a formal request that your study be closed. Should you need to continue your research activity beyond the five-year determination period, you will need to submit a new *Exempt Status Request* form for review and determination *prior to implementation*.

Revisions: Only modifications that are deemed "minor" are allowable, in other words, modifications that do not change the nature of the research and therefore do not affect the validity of the exempt determination. **Please refer to the SOP on Exempt Determinations for more information about what are considered minor changes.** If changes that are considered to be "substantive" occur to the research, that is, changes that alter the nature of the research and therefore affect the validity of the exempt determination, a new *Exempt Status Request* must be submitted to HSD for review and determination *prior to implementation*.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify HSD promptly. Any complaints from subjects pertaining to the risk and benefits of the research must be reported to HSD.

Please use the HSD study number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this research, or on any correspondence with the HSD office.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (206) 543-0098 or via email at hsdinfo@uw.edu.

Sincerely,

Marcia Engstrom
Review Coordinator | IRB Subcommittee EG
(206) 685-8341
mabe@uw.edu

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