

RICHMOND SYMPHONY

Strategic Planning Guiding Group

Meeting Notes

Location: Via Zoom

Date & Time: 01/26/22 @ 3PM

Attendees: Lacey Huszcza, Priscilla Burbank (Chair), John McCann, Elisabeth Wollan, Jennifer Arnold, Maura Scott, Valentina Peleggi, Walter Bitner, Elizabeth Cabell Jennings

Other Attendees: Geneva Knight

Objectives:

- I. To review and provide questions and feedback to the first draft of the strategic plan
- II. To discuss and refine the steps for sharing the plan draft (internally and externally)

Agenda Items:

- **Discussion of Goal Statement & Pillars**
 - The committee discussed the potential of this emerging statement as a new mission statement for the organization. This should have further discussion and consideration as we move forward.
 - GG members universally support the Plan's overall direction, with one person stating that it is a "great leap forward."
 - Maintain the focus on relevance, connectivity, sustainability
 - Need to be sure the financial elements are included in the plan, along with board support to secure those resources. We want to have something in this plan that roots our goals in reality/practicality/financial resources.
 - Suggested concept of a campaign in support of this new direction.
 - Consider identifying more specifically who, exactly, we're trying to reach in our community- the 46% of our community that is Black, with whom we are not currently engaging. The plan provides for initial outreach to certain Black neighborhoods, but overtime will outreach to other neighborhoods and communities.
 - We need to exercise constant awareness- where are we on this journey in terms of effectiveness?
 - We are still at a crossroads between advanced artistry and community work. Pillars #1 and #3 tend to separate the artistry from the community- **it's hard to build one without the other.**

- In Pillar #2, consider language about what we are doing to build an organization that is more reflective of our community, i.e. hiring practices.
- The growth of the orchestra *as a group* is extremely important.
- Each and every thing that we do should be advancing the initiative of making music a central part of the lives of those within our community.

- **Discussion of 3 Pillars/strategies**

- There is a lot of overlap amongst these items, and we need to strengthen the interconnectivity.
- We used words like “invest, commit” in #2 as opposed to softer language in the other pillars.
- Drop qualifiers/jargon like “dynamically” diverse.

-

- **Pillar #2**

- How does advancing artistry relate to the community? A lot of the industry is talking about diversifying orchestras, music, composers without saying why this is important. If we're trying to celebrate the vitality of the city, we need to define what artistic advancement/growth is and how it affects our community.
- We want our orchestra and staff to better reflect the communities that we are serving.
- It's about allocating resources: where we spend our dollars advancing artistry, community partnerships, etc.
- Diversifying composer representation is not enough, what else can we do? What else are we doing to maximize our efforts here?

-

- **Pillar #3**

- What we mean by community is important: Community Engagement can be seen as activities where the arts organization and the community members participate for mutual benefit. So what is community?
- We haven't established yet what we share in common with the Black community in Richmond, which is where we have a great opportunity for innovation due to Richmond's unique history and development. We are looking to be relevant to our community in order for this endeavor to be mutually beneficial.
- We also have the opportunity to expand our community in areas other than racial groups- one statistic that has been utilized by the industry claims that only 4% of the world population listens to “classical” music.
- We are purveyors of music- orchestral, choral, chamber. This clarity of what we provide is essential.

- **Wrap Up/What's Next**

- **Action:** Financial Health Committee to create a pro forma to go with this document and build in fiscal realities. Feb-Apr
- **Action:** Board Meeting Feb. 9th: Lacey/John/Priscilla to present the 3 Pillars/Strategies for Board.
- **Action:** Committee work Feb-Apr: Artistic, DEI, Executive, and other committees to refine board responsibilities and recruiting parameters. How do we achieve successful impact in these areas - what is the work of phase 1?
- Specific constituent meetings of Staff, Board, Musicians, and Foundation Trustees to start to socialize some of these elements and ask questions. Early April
- Musician meetings to discuss the role of the Musicians in this initiative
 - Discussing their possible roles in the School of Music to get their feedback
 -
- Working on another town hall in Mar-Apr to keep conversations going.
- Looking at who we can start conversations with to start to enact pillar #3:
 - Historic Jackson Ward Association, Jackson Ward Collective
 - VA Union University
 - VCU
 - Virginia State University
 - Peter Paul Development Center
 - Suggestions welcome