

TITLE: Executive Luncheon (private, by invitation only)

DATE: Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018 | 12:30-2pm ET

LOCATION: SphinxConnect Conference: (Marriott Detroit; 400 Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI 48243)

TOPIC: Diversity + inclusion and undergraduate admissions to music schools/conservatories

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ATTENDEES:

Larry Bomback, Curtis Institute of Music

Aaron Dworkin, Sphinx Organization

Afa Dworkin, Sphinx Organization

Andre Dowell, Sphinx Organization

Joyce Griggs, Cleveland Institute of Music

Paul Hogle, Cleveland Institute of Music

Andrea Kalyn, Oberlin Conservatory

Peter Kjome, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

Margaret Lioi, Chamber Music America

Thomas Novak, New England Conservatory

Anne Parsons, Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Melody Racine, University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre, & Dance

Jamal Rossi, Eastman School of Music

Gail Samuel, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra

Alexander Scheirle, Orpheus

Alan Valentine, Nashville Symphony Orchestra

Paul Bryan, Curtis Institute of Music

Cassidy Fitzpatrick, New World Symphony

Jesse Rosen, League of American Orchestras

Bruce McClung, University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music

Ahmad Mayes, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

Karen Zorn, Longy School of Music

Marshall Marcus, Sistema Europe

Thomas Mesa, Cellist, Sphinx Artist/Alumnus

Francisco Villa, Cellist, Sphinx Artist/Alumnus

Jacqueline Jove, Violinist, Sphinx Organization

Johnnia Stigall, Sphinx Organization

Stephanee Strasburg, Sphinx Organization

SESSION GOALS: By end of luncheon, identify best practices surrounding undergraduate admissions, and ideas of how Sphinx/SphinxConnect can help moving forward

SESSION INTRODUCTION: Participants shared who they are, their affiliations, and respective roles, as well as why they chose to participate in this executive session focused on DEI within music education institutions/artist development pipeline. The

participants included representatives from music schools and orchestras across the country as well as Sphinx alumni artists and staff that spoke to their experiences going through music school/conservatory track and the challenges/successes they have had along the way.

Common themes as to why this session with its attendees/representatives is important:

- Why wouldn't I be here—we as educators need to seize the moment—and gather/talk collectively
- SphinxConnect...never missed a year/come every year---get new ideas; SphinxConnect has informed equity work
- Keen to learn and better partner
- Want to be a supportive partner; 2) Want to be a better educator; 3) Want to be able to recruit more diverse/representative students
- SphinxConnect conference is energizing
- Lack of DEI...is an urgent problem and existential challenge---want to be at the forefront of finding a solution—gathering of great minds---informal conference
- Looking to create spaces for conversations on all levels—starting to see some progress—brought 9 conservatory students to SphinxConnect and their minds have been blown—they are in dialogue with people.
- As institutions/leaders committed to DEI...looking to bring both success and failures to the conversation in order to learn and advance DEI in our respective institutions
- From music educator perspective/coming from experience/training---the issue of access to quality education—how do we build that into the pipeline/resources for the conservatory track
- Orchestras are at the table of this conversation (related to DEI in music schools) because no major change happens in bubbles or silos---it is important to learn from different institutions in the field---share ideas—need to work together---this is an opportunity to bring ideas to empower schools

INSTITUTION PRACTICES/CHALLENGES/SUCCESSSES:

- Focus energy with faculty that are committed to advancing diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI)/Institutional goals. Start small and grow support among faculty---getting faculty to “buy-in” to this work/initiative—also it's a part of the hiring/selection process
- As leaders/decision makers (especially those that are the head of organizations that have the power to “set the agenda”) we have the power of the bully pulpit within our organizations. Find allies among staff/board/leadership to inform/change policy—It's not about changing standards—It's about using likeminded faculty/allies to recruit, mentor, and encourage/create an environment/culture that is conducive to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and where DEI is valued and can thrive.
- Be intentional with DEI/policy etc... but also be open to and look for opportunities to support DEI when it arises within institutions. I.e. Sphinx and Cleveland Institute of Music partnership: Sphinx Performance Academy (SPA) a summer

program for Black and Latinx classical string musicians ages 12-17 is held at CIM→Parents of SPA students attend final recital→provide information/orientation about CIM and the auditions process→parents going to CIM for their child's auditions...look for and be intentional about opportunities to create/support pipeline.

- DEI support at the policy level is also needed to help make DEI within institutions sustainable; Managing individuals without policy---beyond the individuals who advance DEI/make DEI a priority is not sustainable long-term—especially if leadership changes/changes value placed on DEI. Or it is a matter of continually developing allies/individuals who support DEI and continually building/supporting that environment and grooming advocates/allies/leaders of DEI working within the institutions.
- Don't want to institutionalize policy—rather want to institutionalize practice---b/c it is not one size fits all with DEI policy
- The word “policy” when it comes to DEI scares people/institutions; maybe there is a different way of going about it but still achieve results---involve stakeholders-- -what does success look like---what steps need to be taken---and get consensus with adoption and practice---not policy rather have DEI be more outcomes based
- Policy can be a problem in hiring---be careful on policies of hiring---Focus---on process vs. policy---to achieve goal
- Get financial resources earmarked for DEI focused scholarships; go to individual music school donors and say—we need more scholarships in order to provide more opportunities to diverse/underrepresented music students—create undergrad scholarships for those that want to see and are invested in DEI
- We have to keep meritocracy—and standards of excellence—but we should also challenge the prohibitive tradition of “excellence”...i.e. what it means to be excellent/have excellence....Excellence doesn't just mean or include musicians that are great technical/skillful musicians...it also can mean and should include musicians who can engage audiences...etc. There are musicians who are technically great/excellent musicians (by that definition of excellence) who come up the traditional way/route through the conservatory path and they are great but don't engage audiences---we need to find which kind of players are engaging audiences and bring/include that kind of excellence
- How can leadership bring this to audition committees?---If a dean or leader of a school dictated to audition committee—it would most likely not go over well---or should audition criteria change? Some of it's a numbers game---but it's really culture the issue at hand---if policy reflects culture or vice versa---that hurdle is removed; have committees---think about what they value/what their personal criteria/values are as it relates to DEI
- Also need to look at...Who is the student?---what are their gifts?---how do they want to develop their voice?---not just where do they stack up--- looking at students with fresh different perspective---start with small group of faculty committed and then build from there—at one institution they give those DEI committed faculty more scholarship \$\$ to direct
- Also a significant problem or hurdle....Most/a lot of the underrepresented/diverse students we look to recruit... don't know there are opportunities---to attend great

schools like CIM etc---With high school students how are we recruiting and developing them/assist and preparing? With Cassidy Fitzpatrick at New World...most of these students that are in her community limit their thinking to university Miami—in terms of music schools/options---opportunities are greater than that...but they are unaware/don't know the paths and existing programs/resources open to them.

ARTIST PERSPECTIVES/SUGGESTIONS:

For students studying music in elementary/middle/high school that are talented, committed, and potentially look to pursue music/conservatory track but live in underresourced communities and/or live in areas (rural, etc.) far away from top music schools/conservatories/cultural institutions—they are often unaware of the summer programs, conservatory track programs, resources/teachers, etc. that lead to study at conservatories and/or careers in the classical music field.

There is a significant gap with information/marketing and recruitment... where conservatories/music schools are not reaching the diverse populations they want to reach and be a part of their institution.

This is backed up by the experiences of:

- Thomas Mesa (Cellist, Sphinx Alumni Artist): Thomas Mesa grew up in Miami—he didn't hear about schools until he went to Walnut Hill---"when you are around people who have known all along---or have built in community---being not from musical family---I felt it was necessary to be a part/become a part of this community—peer group at walnut hill." And Thomas only learned about Walnut Hill "as a fluke" his teacher handed him a flyer that came in the mail.
- Francisco Villa (Cellist, Sphinx Alumni Artist): Francisco also started in Miami---he taught himself—and didn't have a studio/teacher until first of college---he watched videos and imitating sounds. His only formal/structured instrumental training was via public school music program. He ended up being recruited by teacher at Stetson University and spent 2 years there, developed technical skills, and then decided he needed to be around peers /excellence---and needed to be pushed/challenged and have access to better teachers, He heard Yo-yo Ma at Tanglewood and toured Boston---and determined he wanted to study at Boston/NEC---but if he hadn't gone to the Yo-yo Ma concert he is not sure he would have ended up on the conservatory track and ended up with a performance career.
- Jacqueline Jove (Concert Violinist, Sphinx Director of Education): Jacqueline also believes that schools/conservatories that want diversity within their institutions need to be recruiting/marketing and supporting/developing diverse talent way earlier within the pipeline. Jacqueline randomly received a flyer to Interlochen—this changed her course and put her on the conservatory track. Conservatories do not have to lower standards....these students (as evidenced by Jove, Villa, Mesa, etc.) can succeed....the issue is not lowering "standards", the issue is removing barriers....and intentional efforts to increase access.

- Ahmad Mayes, Cincinnati Symphony: The values/priorities are different in urban music programs---standards are still high---but he didn't hear about top schools until he was in youth orchestra TDP.
- All four artists' experience have common thing—their study/participation at the conservatory level didn't result from intentional recruitment or set path/resources...rather it was often one or a series of random happenstances that informed them of the possibilities of what is out there.

How Do Institutions Need to Respond?:

Moderator: Aaron Dworkin: One question: most people here are in leadership positions and/or decision making roles----diversity and inclusion is not what/where we want it to be—many people in the room have power to make decisions and change---what are the obstacles/where are the challenges in advancing DEI in conservatories/music schools?

Chamber Music America: Music schools/education is not their area/field but at CMA they have faced similar problems with diversifying their grantee pool---one challenge is-- - having a diverse pool of potential grantees know about the CMA grant opportunities--- CMA is asking the question how are we marketing and to whom are we marketing?--- and how to be precise/specific in sending the right info to right person/target constituent. If you want to reach a certain population---have to do research and have better/more-tailored marketing/communication efforts and follow-up...this is needed but it is also labor intensive.

Music School/Conservatory Representative Feedback:

- Money is a big issue---many of the diverse students that we want to reach do not have the money and resources to study/prepare and be on the conservatory track, let alone have the money and resources for tuition/expenses.
- Better, more, targeted/intentional, marketing and recruitment is needed—going where the diverse targeted students are---recruitment, mobile/visiting auditions
- Earmarked money by both funders and institutions for scholarships targeting diverse/underrepresented students is needed

What is Urgent/What is Needed?:

- How do we as institutions get together to fix the issue of lack of exposure and ineffective means/pipeline for recruitment and getting information/resources to targeted under-resourced/under-represented pre-conservatory students)
 - “Inclusive excellence”---built in mentoring problem---how do we create the pipeline
 - Stakeholders and communication—who do we need to be in touch with to build relationships?---how are we going to communicate with students without access? How do we build support for these efforts within our institutions/board members (teach/train board members on critical importance of DEI)
 - Utilize young people's knowledge, energy, and ability---if you can show what success looks like...and what the path looks like...young people will do the work. With examples from UK/Chineke and Sistema Europe---there

is already the new/next generations going to top schools—from their experience/exposure to their mentors/the generation before.

- We need to get to them younger---but also opposite side---not just getting them but giving them a path to success within the institution--infrastructure in higher ed (support services/networks/mentors)
- Recruitment; Marketing; Pipeline programs—all need to be intentional and culturally competent with diverse students and any barriers they face in mind.
- Besides getting to students....we need to get to parents/families....they are key/critical decisions makers. Support for parents on how to manage/navigate the conservatory track/pipeline...what resources/support are available for them and their child. We need to give parents guidance.

BEST PRACTICES & IDEAS FOR SPHINX AND THE FIELD:

What Can We Do To Lead/Start?

- Earlier more targeted marketing/recruitment of students
- Support and information for parents navigating/exploring the pipeline/conservatory track
- Financial support: earmarking money for scholarships; targeted marketing/recruitment; mobile auditions; etc.
- Establish unified guidelines or standardized audition process/timeline for music schools; Have preliminary auditions at SphinxConnect for Sphinx student alumni/attendees and conservatory/music school partners/participants
- Establish pre-auditions (a year in advance of actual auditions for conservatories/music schools)—to get them into the system/network/pipeline
- Sphinx can universally share what it takes to succeed and win; create the roadmap/path to success;
- Sphinx Artists can do target outreach to serve as mentors/ambassadors/examples of the path to success---i.e. do outreach and serve as ambassadors/liasons between young aspiring student musicians and conservatories as part of the Sphinx Virtuosi tour; Sphinx artist residencies; etc.
- Mobile auditions in target communities---schools and conservatories go to target communities for (pre-auditions; auditions; etc.)
- Develop relationships/partnerships with public school districts—what can we do there? Can Sphinx play a role? Conservatories to partner/develop local collaborations/relationships with public school systems
- Create online product/resource to expand reach---use technology
- Create a parent tool kit; with roadmap and network of resources
- Create a unified place online—passport—all conservatories deadlines and requirements---an accessible database
- Need to include the following/missing people in the conversation: students/faculty---everyone in the room—How can we share events/opportunities? How can we create an open and ongoing dialogue? Continue the conversation---and bring faculty and staff.

THEMES:

- In order to get diverse students in music school/conservatories—conservatory recruitment, support, prep programming, etc must be happening way earlier with diverse target communities
- Targeted/intentional recruitment and information sharing is needed to reach diverse target student groups
- Resources (financial, network, information) need to be targeted and more actively/intentionally shared with diverse students AND their parents---to get them on the path/pipeline towards conservatory and to make them aware of the resources available to them
- Also prepare for/ensure success for the non-traditional/underrepresented/diverse students within conservatories once they get there....not just a matter of getting into conservatory also a matter of ensuring success/good experiences once in conservatory