

Ratification Group Conference Call

Monday, October 21, 2019

1:00-2:00 PM ET

In Attendance:

Toni Paz, Leader

Garrett Lefkowitz - Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Stanford Thompson - Volunteer

MINUTES

1. Welcome
2. Membership
 - a. Toni Paz - on the second page, I have shared a document as a starting point for discussion of values that might serve as criteria for membership, as well what the goals of membership are. The goals of membership are to:
 - i. Gather resources - human and financial
 - ii. It was suggested that the majority of board membership might come from core members these members. Stanford verified that this was a thought and will be determined by the by-laws committee.
 - iii. Link like-minded individuals
 - iv. To unify advocates
 - v. Link funders
3. Key Values
 - a. Toni asked Garret and Stan what might be added, removed, edit to the list of values.
 - b. Garret didn't see anything that looked or sounded like a bad idea and thought this was a great place to start.
 - c. Toni Paz - there are various potential layers/types of membership, and we will have to talk about the language, and we will need to establish not only the values we'd like our membership to share, but at which level the organizational commitment resides.
 - i. Is it a commitment to the mission and the values or a flagship program? Can it just be a program or project with a budget? For example, PlayOnPhilly! has social mission, but also has a program for conservatory-track musicians of color. The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra mission is focused on performing classical music but its Talent Development has been training Latinx and African American musicians for 25+ years. Do we want one or the other or both as the member?
 - ii. A Note - if there is a lot of organizational turnover, we have to keep track of who is coming and going, and that will be a process to track those memberships.
 - iii. Toni asked Stan for a point of clarity on phrasing, not wanting to mix up underserved community vs. under-represented ethnicities. He shared that language was created in part by the Mellon Foundation, who was helping to provide funding, in an effort to avoid legal issues. He gave the example of

looking at the ethnicity of major symphonies versus the population in the community they serve - they are often in an urban center, the vast majority of which are people of color. Native American, African American, South-east Asian, and Latinx people are under-represented in orchestras. Another example - there has never, in 96 years, been a student musician from Vietnam to get into an esteemed organization which with am closely affiliated.

- iv. Toni rephrased to ensure the understanding as a much broader idea than an underserved community. Under-represented musicians makes it broader because it's not necessarily the same as an underserved communities.
- v. In this context, Toni suggested that edits to the document emailed should include striking the phrases "underserved communities" and musicians of color.

4. Defining the Values bullets

- a. Toni - I liked the language of under-represented ethnicities in NIMAN's mission and the language about creating a level playing-field. It never says the word equity, but it's very clear that it's about diversity, inclusion, and equity. It was perhaps strategic not to include the word. Was that intentional?
- b. Stan - Yes, it was intentional. The industry has been working on this for years, and the league has been trying to tackle this for four decades, but I think it's time for a new set of strategies, definitions, and vocabulary. I think it could help us.
- c. Toni - Language from one of the planning documents was included in the bullets defining membership names "core" and "auxiliary" so that is what we are using for today's convrestaion and until those terms are defined. Hillary and I have a call scheduled later this week and I will see if I can connect with Quance. What was really important in the planning documents was the term that they use - cultural equity, which was defined by Americans for the Arts a number of years ago. It's a much, much broader term than what we're discussing here with NIMAN, but the reason it is included here and used in one of the bullet points for potential criteria for membership.
 - i. I would like to take a minute to explain some of the bullets here. We don't have to go one by one, but we should try to get some general thoughts about what you think here.
 - ii. The first two bullets are about levels of commitment.
 - 1. For training musicians (I'm going to suggest we take out musicians of color and put in under-represented ethnicities per our conversation), the question is whether it's in their mission, vision, and values or a flagship program. We need to make sure we're not being so restrictive that we can't include members, but not too loose with our definitions, either.
 - 2. Does it have to be a mission/vision/values organization? Can it be a program or department? Or if it doesn't have to be a program, but there are dedicated resources and teachers is that sufficient? There are places where that might be applicable.
 - 3. "A commitment to underserved communities that could include any number of ethnicities" - we might be able to strike that one, but we can leave that for discussion.
 - 4. "A focus on training students preparing for conservatory-level auditions" - If we're considering both individuals and organizations, this is the bullet that might allow an individual to become a core member. Part of my process was that if we want core members to include people

- of color, they might be included as members if they're teaching or playing.
5. If we want to align ourselves with other trade organizations or non-profits that work in the same space that we do, then the "Trade or other organizations that support underrepresented ethnicities in their pursuit of equitable practices, treatment, etc." would apply to them.
 6. "Having diversity & inclusion or equity in the field of classical music in their mission/vision/values" - when we convene, we could discuss who does this include and exclude, and go from there.
- d. Stan - two thoughts that have occurred to me. I do believe that having organizations articulated is important, but I want to go back to the fourth bullet point.
 - i. A commitment to underserved communities - maybe there's a way to say a commitment to removing barriers of access might work. I'm trying to say that not all people of color are poor.
 - ii. Barriers to access might be a softer way to say it, but information is also important. Weston Sprot, who plays in the Met now, had never had a private lesson before he went to IU, however, his family is pretty well off. He had only been taking lessons for 5 years and thought it was good enough, but then after two years of college training, he transferred to Curtis. I just want to make sure with the language that we're not saying, "Oh, Weston is underserved and comes from an underserved community?" His barrier was information. What if he had the information and had started taking lessons sooner? He might have won that job a lot earlier. **ASK WESTON IF IT IS OK TO USE HIS STORY HERE. His story has been published it is a courtesy to ask.**
 - e. Toni - What were your thoughts about the trade information bullet?
 - f. Stan - Trade is a term for an "association". I think of things like the League of American Orchestras. They advocate for people in a particular field. It might be the national guild, music education, other large scale organizations - El Sistema - each state has their own Music Educators Association - so those would be a trade or guild.
 - g. Toni Paz - Is that even an issue?
 - h. Garrett - We need to find the line - those organizations obviously have value, but I'm concerned about opening up another door for the membership pool to get oversaturated. We might be making it over-inclusive. I'm trying to find that balance.
 - i. Toni Paz - I'm a fundraiser, so I think like one. I put that in because I thought it would give more leeway for more partnerships.
 - i. The league is a really good example. When you look at the back of the league program, it has so many numbers - it has all the small and the giant orchestras. I've always worked for the giant orchestras, but I've always wondered how you can serve them all equally. If we're looking to find some place to serve, we want to be mindful that we aren't trying to serve a group of 100,000 and we're not a group of 100. A group of 100 is not large enough for the type of advocacy work we're trying to do. If it's too large, it could be hard to govern and accomplish our goals at this time.
 - ii. Garrett - Maybe that leaves room, because we talk about group membership vs individual or organization vs individual, and maybe that could help define the difference for what an individual membership could look like. What your call to action may be different, and maybe that could help open up the avenue for

- those in smaller organizations to contribute. They may not be able to contribute what someone like the LA Phil might be able to contribute.
- iii. Toni - I like a core-individual and core-organizational aspect - if we're assuming there's a hierarchy of people committed, I would imagine those with skin in the game be those who would be on the board. I would imagine those with auxiliary membership to be Friends. I would like this to be a part of the bigger discussion. We want the people who are living and breathing this [mission] to be the core-leadership. That's why I'm thinking through this core group first.
 - iv. Garrett - I think that's fine because to lay out the foundation and get this up and running, you're going to need that passion behind it.
 - v. Stanford Thompson - On the individual side, we could have funders who want to be involved - a lot of time it's a funder or a board member who is pushing them to be more inclusive. If they're pushing that belonging, I would like to capture that aspect.
 - vi. Toni - I think the trade bullet could capture that aspect without adding a conflict.
- j. Toni - The last couple of bullets: I will go back and change the language for the "musicians of color" to "access barriers". This is where I had the question about being a non-profit vs an individual and whether or not to have separate criteria.
 - k. Toni - Having no ethical is a no brainer?
 - l. Stan - That one is a little tough.
 - m. Toni - No current history? No legal issues?
 - n. Stan - I'm sure that many have some sort of history of racial problems, and we may not want to include that bullet point because most organizations have a history of some sort.
 - o. Toni - Meaning this is what we're trying to fix. I'm going to strike that one and see what we can do. What else have we not thought through with these values? I'm not on the teaching side. Garrett, what do you think? What else have you noticed that has been a barrier?
 - p. Garrett - Financial, general information, capacity building, pipeline clogs - which Stan mentioned.
 - i. With YOSA, we had a program specifically targeting Native American, Latinx, and african american junior high musicians, and were prepping them for conservatory type auditions. We identified them on a zipcode basis to identify and offer that information. Scholarships to be involved, scholarships for lessons, concert attire, sheetmusic.
 - ii. Toni - all of these bullets speak to a commitment that they previously had. So do we need a bullet or two that speaks to a commitment moving forward as members of NIMAN?
 - iii. Stan - I like the idea of membership means you are signing up for a commitment to do all of these bullet points. I feel like the DSO (Garrett) could be committed to this. Are there things that they could do better? Yes, but could NIMAN help those musicians and the organization continue to grow. This is how each organization can have a commitment to grow in all of these areas. Each year to talk about them internally and working on them. NIMAN can help them get there and provide some resources, but they have to get there.

- iv. Toni - In reference to financial resources, capacity building, information sharing, identifying geographical regions, pipeline clogs - are juniors early enough? To Garrett?
- v. Garrett - Yes, identifying candidates early enough. They were about to go through the program in high school, so identifying candidates early enough.
- vi. Toni - I will work on the language, but I may invite some individuals to talk about about this because the group is so small. I will talk to the others in another conversation.
- vii. Toni - I like the idea of committing to those ideas going forward - any other ideas to any other things? Did anything about this come up in any of your other conversations, Stan? The conversations you were having were really structured in the education pipeline. Where the education where the pipeline gets clogged?
 - 1. Stan - We talked about a bridge plan. You have just started your instrument to getting in your first program - a youth ensemble, a prep school - your first decent orchestra. The hurdles of getting your instrument, crossing the hurdle into getting into a top program/conservatory. There are a lot of good programs out there, but what you do in high school matters, and all of that keeps going on and on until you get to the pre-professional levels. A pre-professional program to the hurdle of actually winning a job, and then to getting tenure at a job.
- viii. Toni - The bullets don't really touch talent identification and some of the logistical, and I think we have to stay out of some of that, but could we ask what some organizations are doing to identify talent? Or ask if they're open to look at mentoring?
 - 1. Stan - Sharing best practices; most programs are by nature competitive, and then want students to go through their programs. I think this is one of the biggest sticking points - can we look at the advancement of any POC musician and celebrate what place they end up next? Will they still try to help future people, even if they don't end up or stay in their program?
 - 2. Garrett - we just restarted our program with Interlochen, and we lost two of our top students to the academy. Overall you're just happy that the kids are excelling, but you have to also look at it from a business aspect.
 - 3. Toni - and that's why we look at the bullets - this is NIMAN's priority.
 - 4. Stan - I have lost kids, too, to the PYO, but you can look at it proudly that you now have two open seats to nurture two more kids. It doesn't erase that they're gone, and they're star players.
 - 5. Garrett - you just have to get to the place where no matter how many kids are moving on, you still have a wide base that you're serving. Sometimes it's just hard because you're strapped for basses.
 - 6. Stanford - I hope that NIMAN can give you recognition of what organization can lose the most kids to the next step. "How many people has this organization moved on" becomes something special.
 - 7. Toni - maybe we can add that value to an organization. If NIMAN could add value to the organizations that are feeding into it, if that's one thing

that is challenging, maybe this is a way we can add prestige (as the trade-off) for that loss.

- q. Toni - what other issues or concerns, struggles, instruments, have you heard?
 - i. Garrett - Instruments do pop up, transportation, those are usually the bigger ones.
 - ii. Toni - Nothing addresses support for families. They don't usually have families that understand the rigor and discipline/rules, for musicians.
 - iii. Stan - I don't think including it would hurt. I think each organization, collegiate level on down, it is important.
 - 1. Also, how do you build a culture within underrepresented communities - the Misty Copland effect - where families value going through the process of becoming a professional musician.
 - 2. TDP now has it where students have to be taking lessons for a year or two - parents have to invest up front. That did not exist 20 years ago.
- r. Toni - I'll put some language together and run it by Stan, and then we can fine-tune and add thoughts. We can talk about whether have this go through committee chairs or just through some other people.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2019 from 1:00-2:30 PM ET

Toni and Hilary had nearly an hour long conversation on Friday, October 25th. Toni shared the flow of Monday's conversation, issued some of the questions left open from Monday's conversation and what some of the questions that we still have are.

Hilary agrees it would be ideal for NIMAN members to share one or more of the values outlined. The larger question looming - where does that value need to be in the organizational list of priorities.

Hilary agreed that incentivizing certain programs/activities with memberships benefits could help drive energy and participation. She suggested the Posse Foundation might be a good resource for ideas and forwarded a sample of the dues structure from Chamber Music America.

We explored thoughts about potential membership dues structures - minimums, maximums, and what budget sliding scales might be based on for organizations like Sewanee that are a small part (and budget) of a much larger institution.