

## Chapter III

# Music Executives and Organizations

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### Introduction

Any individual undertaking a leadership position in a school or department of music has many choices to make regarding relationships with organizations in music, education, and the arts. Since so much positive work in our society is accomplished by organizations, music executive participation is critically important. A fundamental principle is worth remembering: some things are best done by individuals and some by working with others in our own music department or school, our institution as a whole, or within our local community; however, still other things benefit from combining our aspirations and efforts with others at the state and national levels. The challenge is to make productive choices about working alone and with others at levels appropriate to the issue and task.

In almost every case, significantly more ideas and forces affect the work of a music program than the individuals in that program can deal with by themselves. The whole field of music is imbued with the necessity of working together in situations requiring tremendous dependence on others. The scale and scope of need is so broad that no one organization can address or accomplish everything. Many organizations work to some degree in areas affecting the philosophies, operations, and legislative or regulatory context for schools and departments of music, yet their specific purposes and priorities vary greatly. Thus, each executive has choices to make regarding levels and degrees of engagement with various organizations. The choices made by various individual leaders will be different. Necessity, personal inclination and ability, mission, goals, and objectives of the department or school drive these choices as well as responsibilities assumed by colleagues internal and external to the music program, mandates and agreements, and many other influences.

This chapter addresses the overall policy and operational landscapes that are the natural surroundings of organizations. It provides approaches for determining and assessing organizational purposes. It includes a briefing with analytical questions intended to help individual executives make the best decisions they can for themselves and their institutions in their particular time and situation. In many ways, questions concerning organizational engagement are like questions concerning musical interpretation. When one moves beyond the fundamentals and into sophisticated realms of artistic practice, there are many good choices and many positive ways to proceed. When answering engagement questions, one must make distinctions between individual interests and the necessities created by certain functions that organizations fulfill. Experienced executives recognize the critical importance of organizations they cannot support with their volunteer time. They know that confluence with their personal interest is not the sole criterion for considering the value of an organization.

## Basic Purpose

Most organizations are established to accomplish specific tasks. Typical purposes include developing and nurturing a body of content, supporting certain activities or professions, protecting various enterprises and interests, and advancing particular causes. Most organizations have statements of purpose, vision, or mission. It is not always easy to determine the detailed purposes of organizations by reviewing these public statements. Many large national organizations have complex sets of interlocking purposes. They work on many different projects at once, each with its own purpose. Therefore, a simple vision or mission statement may not say very much about the values guiding the organization's daily operations or the many issues that concern the organization. General statements of purpose usually do not show priorities or schedules of activity, nor do they demonstrate the relative weights given to various aspirations and efforts. Naturally, such statements are written in the positive; they do not normally describe matters that are of temporary or permanent concern.

To understand the purposes of an organization fully, the thoughtful executive looks beyond overview statements and studies values, efforts, and priorities.

## Basic Values

Assessments of basic values are extremely personal; however, such assessments can be critical in forming an individual framework through which the executive can deal effectively and efficiently with various types of organizations. It is critical to remember that not all organizations can or should share the same core values. Many different kinds of work must be done. One reason for understanding basic values is to develop informed expectations of what various organizations can and will do.

Some organizations in music are deeply centered in the doing or teaching of some specific musical task. These organizations usually concentrate on the content, substance, essence, habits of mind, history, continuation, and future development of the art itself. Organizations centered on the creation or presentation of music will approach this task somewhat differently than organizations centered on education. However, the goal of nurturing the art form and the abilities of people to work in it are prominent, shared core values.

Many other organizations with relationships to music and the other arts do vitally important work but are not centered on creation, presentation, or education. These organizations are in the support sector and range widely across the profit and not-for-profit spectrum. They include manufacturers and retailers, advocacy organizations, unions, governmental arts councils, general educational organizations and agencies, and groups of specialists in scholarship, policy, and technical services. All of these organizations provide invaluable services to music. Each provides an important forum for the development of specialized expertise and knowledge in a particular area. Each deals with certain content and responsibilities. Obviously, the number and variety of organizational values and missions provide a treasure trove of expertise for every music-associated field.

Core values are also expressed in terms of specific responsibilities and approaches to content. For example, organizations can be centered on such functions as intellectual analysis, techniques and sharing, legislation and lobbying, public information, professional development, standard setting, collection and interpretation of statistics, publishing, and meetings and seminars. Most organizations will fulfill several of these functions. However,

core values are revealed by the emphasis given each function and the ways in which the activities of the organization are pursued.

## Scope

In one sense, scope is geographic. For most executives, being engaged to some degree with local music and arts organizations is absolutely critical. Local organizations are usually connected in some way to state, regional, or national counterparts. Each organizational level is important because it is difficult for organizations working at one level to be effective on another. Each music executive is faced with choices concerning the specific returns on investment for work at each level. Normally, a music program in higher education will need to maintain connections with organizations at all levels. In this regard, executives are responsible for ensuring that these connections are well calibrated to serve the school or department. Usually, this means a careful delegation of responsibilities for organizational liaisons among faculty and administrators.

Scope can also be considered in terms of specialization. Some organizations are focused on one particular aspect of subject matter, performance, support, or commerce. Such organizations support virtually all music professions. Other organizations function more comprehensively, addressing multiple interests and specializations or all the elements of a particular complex function, such as the performance and preparation of chamber music, the operation of symphony orchestras, or the music products industry.

Scope can be considered in terms of function. Therefore, an organization may focus on one or two specific functions such as performing rights licenses, accreditation, performance, or scholarship and at the same time address a broad range of musical subjects. Some organizations have multiple functions.

## Purposes, Values, and Scope

Combining understandings about purposes, values, and scope leads to greater clarity regarding distinctions among organizations. Even the largest, most comprehensive organizations are distinct in their work plans and approaches to issues. Each has a unique operational style. These approaches and styles are driven in part by purposes, values, and scope, but they are also deeply influenced by organizational cultures and associated leadership styles.

The composite set of organizational characteristics is not always easy to discern by simply reading about the organization or even by attending a meeting or two. A certain amount of direct engagement is necessary to understand the dynamics of the organization and the various internal and external influences on the decisions it makes. As with music schools and departments, organizations face challenges. Elected and staff leaders cannot always do exactly what they would like to do. Large organizations, whatever their purposes, values, or scope, have multiple relationships and commitments. From time to time priorities must be set. Experienced administrators understand how much negotiation is involved in most critical decision-making. This understanding provides an important perspective on the decisions made by organizations. However, negotiating positions develop from purposes, values, and scope; therefore, experienced executives consider decisions by an organization specifically and in concert with a background understanding of mission (as published and exemplified), values (expressed in the way the organization works with music and associated support issues), and scope (in terms of geography, specialization, and function).

## Funding

Almost all organizations charge dues, but funds are often raised by other means. Funding patterns reveal information concerning independence. For example, organizations relying primarily on grants must orient their programs to matters of current interest to foundations, corporations, and government agencies. The goals of these funders may be perfectly consistent with those of the organization, or they may not. The importance of independence varies depending on the function of the organization. Experienced executives understand that the level of dues charged by an organization may correlate with the need for independence and stability.

Most organizations in music have a not-for-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service. There are various categories of not-for-profit organizations, and within these categories certain restrictions apply. For example, organizations classified 501(c)(3) can only spend a small percentage of their budgets on influencing legislation. Organizations usually accept the restrictions that come with a federal income tax exemption. An understanding of the funding pattern and the specific IRS status of an organization adds to the picture already provided by considering purposes, values, and scope.

## Priorities and Assessment Criteria

Most organizations do a number of similar things. For example, organizations typically perform some sort of an educational function; however, just to mention education as a purpose, core value, aspect of scope, or subject of funding does not provide a full picture of the educational work being done. Some organizations provide education primarily for their members only; these organizations do not focus on general or professional education in music. Some organizations are concerned with education as a means to another end. Thus, saying or writing the word “education” means little in and of itself. The same is true of many other words used in statements in outlining purposes and core values. In-depth analysis is important because many organizations have various levels of concern for particular musical functions and activities but no real engagement with the function or activity itself. Again, music executives need to discern the deeper meanings of asserted purposes and priorities in order to know what to expect, and especially how and in what ways to participate.

The issue of priorities leads naturally to assessment criteria. How can the music executive best assess the nature and characteristics of an organization and thus the applicability of its work to various purposes and functions of the music school or department? This question is extremely important for each individual to consider. Making good personal assessments regarding the kind of work an organization does, or can be expected to do, is different from making an assessment regarding the value or effectiveness of that work. Experienced executives do not conflate these two kinds of assessments. There are important distinctions between what an organization is structured to accomplish in the terms we are discussing and the extent to which it is successful in carrying out its purposes and functions and addressing its priorities. One can easily make mistakes in judging performance without sufficient understanding of purposes, values, scope, funding and priorities, current conditions, and their multiple relationships.

## Networks and Coalitions

No organization can accomplish everything by itself. Various kinds of networks and coalitions enable organizations to engage in work that falls beyond their specific purposes and scope. Organizations may be in regular communication with each other, or they may be deeply connected through a common effort or project. Wise organizations watch for the interests of other organizations; they understand the multiple relationships and dependencies in the composite system of musical endeavor. Networks form naturally among organizations pursuing various aspects of the same type of work. For example, organizations representing various music performance genres form a natural network with certain common interests, even though in the marketplace one genre might compete with the others for attention and funding. In sophisticated organizations, competition does not preclude cooperation. Organizations that fundamentally disagree on one or many topics may find themselves needing to cooperate in the face of a specific or continuing common danger. This kind of flexibility occurs regularly among organizations that work on legislative and regulatory matters. Coalitions routinely form to advance or oppose a particular idea or proposal, only to disband when the issue has been resolved. Organizations work collectively for much the same reasons that individuals work together in organizations. At times, work can be accomplished faster and with more lasting effects than they could achieve by themselves.

Organizations determine their presence in networks and coalitions depending on the nature of what they do. For example, some organizations must maintain their independence because of functions they serve. They must not only *be* objective but also *appear to be* objective. Such organizations may be reluctant to join with others. Many organizations will not cooperate unless they have a final say in policy setting or other decision-making. In other words, they hesitate to lend their name to a group that may develop and advance positions that the organization itself does not endorse.

Networks and coalitions provide a valuable check and balance on decision-making in American society. Many organizations monitor results, ideas, proposals, and media coverage in their area of concern. When multiple organizations are in contact, it is unlikely that something of importance to the group will go unnoticed. It is not unusual for one organization to share information with another, expecting the second to take primary responsibility for the next steps. Most organizations try to concentrate on what they do best, combining their expertise with that of other organizations when necessary. This division of labor can be extremely efficient and effective. When assessing the performance of organizations, it is important to understand how they have contributed to positive results for which they have received no public credit. This is particularly true at the national level.

## Volunteering and Serving

The United States is unique in its reliance on voluntary organizations, and the field of music is no exception. Most organizational activity that supports music and musicians would be impossible without the volunteer service of thousands of professionals. In these circumstances, volunteering to serve in organizations is an act of musical citizenship that both enriches and advances the entire field. Most executives follow the activities of a significant number of organizations, participate in a few, and perhaps devote significant attention to one or two. As stated throughout this chapter, choices concerning organizations are important. After making a personal assessment of an organization based on purposes, values, scope, functions, methods, and performance, the next step is to determine the

relationship between what you can contribute to a particular organization and what that organization can offer in return. Following that, it is important to make judgments concerning the extent to which your expertise, personality, ways of working, approaches to problems, and personal preferences fit with one or more aspects of what the organization does and how it does it. For example, if the organization is dealing with complex matters, do you have the time and interest to study, analyze, and otherwise keep abreast of a developing situation, or to participate actively in formulating and following through on positions and tasks? Musicians often have an advantage in making such decisions because of their experience with the nature of ensemble playing. At times, one instrument predominates, but at other times it is secondary. Most large organizations need volunteers with a great deal of flexibility, including the willingness to work behind the scenes with minimal public credit, at least on occasion.

One must also consider the impact of volunteering and serving on campus responsibilities. Other administrators and faculty members may be jealous of a music executive's time spent on an outside engagement, especially when others do not understand the reasons for the engagement. Any executive undertaking major commitments to an organization must be sure that all appropriate constituencies are fully briefed. Usually it is a good idea to keep communication flowing with regard to the work of the organization and its importance to the music school or department. Organizational service must not be allowed to adversely affect the executive's performance at home.

As volunteer service continues, an organization may ask a music executive to provide leadership. Most organizations will ask individuals to take responsibility for something on a small scale before offering larger opportunities. For some organizations, certain operational aspects carry significant risks. The higher the risk, the more the organization will do everything possible to make sure only qualified individuals are assigned to that specific task. Often one only gains such qualifications through significant experience with that task. During one's early years of being a music executive, organizations can provide significant opportunities to meet and learn from others and to gain experience and wisdom in the ways of the profession. Such experience can also produce a deeper understanding of the reasons for current values, positions, and conditions. This understanding provides a foundation for thoughtful judgments concerning stasis and change.

All organizations seek individuals who can provide information, analysis, and expertise and who are willing to serve others. For this reason, substantive presentations at organizational meetings are among the best ways to gain stature in the field as a new executive. Presentations or papers should be developed with the understanding that the audience members have significant experience not only in music but also in the management of academic and professional organizations. Therefore, content and thoughtful analyses are far more important than mere presence on a program. When invited to present or otherwise participate in a special role, prepare thoroughly. Show by your action that you are interested in content and substance.

## National Educational Organizations in Music

There are many national organizations with musical or music-related purposes. The largest national associations with a direct relationship to higher education are, in alphabetical order, the College Music Society (CMS), MENC: The National Association for Music Education, The Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), and the National Association of the Schools of Music (NASM). CMS and NASM primarily focus their priorities and operations

on higher education. MENC and MTNA concentrate on music education of children and youth, as do the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts and the International NETWORK of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education. To be extremely brief, CMS is an organization of music faculty undertaking a comprehensive effort on behalf of multiple specializations and agendas for music in higher education. NASM is an organization of institutions primarily known for the accreditation of post-secondary liberal arts and professional institutions and music programs. MENC focuses primarily on music teaching and learning in the public schools and MTNA on private studio teaching in all settings. The National Guild serves institutions and programs that provide education in music and performing arts in an after-school setting for children, youth, and adults. The NETWORK concentrates mainly on special elementary and secondary education, boarding and day schools engaged in preprofessional education in some way, and training in one or more arts disciplines within the context of a regular school setting. All of these organizations are comprehensive in the sense that they encompass a broad spectrum of musical activity, repertory, and professional action. The organizations are not coordinated in a formal way, but they work in parallel to advance the cause of music teaching and learning at all levels. Many professional reciprocities exist among the organizations and their members. It is not unusual for a music executive to interact with a number of these organizations at the same time. Further information about each organization may be found on their web sites, which are listed in the Resources section of this chapter.

### NASM and Accreditation: A Brief Orientation

More than six hundred postsecondary institutions with significant goals and objectives for music are accredited institutional members of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The association was founded in 1924 and is engaged in four primary activities: accreditation, institutional research, professional development of music executives, and policy analysis. Each institutional member of NASM designates an individual to be its official representative. Often this representative is the music executive. Over the years NASM has developed a set of standards and a process that it uses to conduct periodic reviews of its institutional members. Music executives and other musicians may become individual members of NASM by simply filling out an application form and paying an annual fee.

A music executive needs to understand the multiple functions of accreditation. American higher education relies on accreditation for self-regulation; accreditation keeps standards setting and reviews of institutions and programs under the aegis of higher education and the professions. Although accreditation results may be used to serve certain government purposes, accreditation is nongovernmental. A primary function of accreditation is to keep matters of academic content and evaluation free from government control.

Accreditation also provides an efficient way to exchange expertise and to work thoughtfully for institutional and programmatic improvement. Accreditation is conducted primarily by volunteers. The staff members of accrediting organizations function somewhat like umpires in a game; they ensure that the rules and procedures are followed. In the case of NASM, all of the standards for accreditation are approved by a majority vote of the representatives of NASM member institutions. The standards are not externally imposed but rather are internally developed in deep consultation with many other individuals and organizations concerned with the future of music and music study.

The existence of such consensus-based standards and the commitment of so many institutions to abide by them create a powerful force in education policy. The standards are published in NASM's *Handbook*, which is accessible online. NASM's standards serve as a reference for more than just its own membership; they are widely regarded as the authoritative statement concerning degrees and programs in music and the operational requirements needed to support them. The standards are designed to be a framework that will allow for significant variation in method at all levels. They are written in terms of what is needed and what results are expected rather than in terms of ways and means. These characteristics make the standards effective as protectors of the basic necessities of music studies for various liberal arts and professional purposes within the context of American higher education. They provide a strong foundation and a rich resource for the work of music executives.

Accreditation reviews are intended to accomplish two fundamental purposes: (1) to assure that the institution and its music programs either meet or continue to meet the NASM standards that apply to the programs being offered, and (2) to conduct an analytical review for the purpose of improving the quality, depth, and impact of a particular music school or department. This second objective can be fulfilled with maximum effectiveness when a school or department uses NASM Self-Study procedures to create an individualized approach to assessing current levels of achievement and planning for its future. Effective accreditation procedures result in improvements, most of which have been identified through the self-evaluations made over the course of the reviews. At times, accreditation can provide needed support for resource enhancements; however, this task can only be accomplished if the resources are truly critical to achieving fundamental educational functions or expressed goals of the institution.

The NASM accreditation system has many checks and balances within a structure that resembles the doctrine of separation of powers evident in our federal system of government. This means that no individual or group has complete control of any aspect of the work of the association. It also means that the Commission on Accreditation must conduct reviews based on the published standards approved by the membership.

In fulfilling its other functions, NASM requires a statistics-based annual report from each accredited institution. Nonaccredited institutions may also participate by paying a fee. These annual statistics are compiled into tables that provide valuable current information about various operational aspects of music schools and departments. Most music executives find these statistics invaluable in making comparisons with other institutions and in making the case for particular resource allocations, goals, or solutions. Like most organizations, NASM holds an annual meeting. This event operates primarily as a three-day professional development session for music executives. Significant numbers of papers from past meetings are combined in the *Proceedings* of the association.

NASM is also engaged in policy analysis. This means taking particular issues in music or (more generally) the arts, education, or related topics and subjecting them to in-depth scrutiny and projection. These policy analyses are intended more to help individuals think about issues for themselves than to tell them what to do. Normally they are not advocacy documents in the sense of promoting or positioning a certain philosophy, approach, or method.

NASM maintains a "New Executives" section on its web site. As is the case with most large organizations, the NASM web site is full of information about various aspects of the work of the association.

## Getting Along in the Profession

Music executives have a broad range of responsibilities. These include the usual issues of academic management, but they also include performances, management of facilities and equipment, safety, library collections, and many other complex duties such as evaluation across a range of content, specializations, and activities. Music executives also work within their communities. This includes relationships with artistic, educational, and political issues and groups, as well as with the general public. As previously noted, some executives become engaged with national and international organizations in these categories. Increasingly music executives are responsible for fund-raising. Through their decisions, executives exert a significant influence on the artistic and intellectual climate of their school or department.

For this reason, individual executives need the ability to develop and maintain a variety of perspectives. Often this means being able to step back and view the whole system and its parts from a distance. This long view is particularly important because of the many parts to behold and the many different kinds of responsibilities and areas of engagement. In multipurpose colleges and universities, the music executive must relate to upper administration. Turnover in provosts and presidents can be quite rapid. Music administrators have a responsibility to ensure a continuity of understanding about the purposes, goals, and achievements of their programs among members of the entire college or university community. It is often too late to build understanding when a personnel change or crisis occurs. Wise executives constantly infuse their work with explanations of the importance of their projects. Such explanations are not always directly verbal; they may involve simple things like developing a record of faithfulness, work of the highest quality, obvious commitment to the institution as a whole, efforts to maintain reciprocity with other programs in the institution on multiple levels, and so on.

Getting along in the profession usually means taking great care in considering the ramifications of particular courses of action, including facing the potential negatives that can accrue from a decision or a project for which there is great enthusiasm. It is never a bad idea to ask yourself and others what can go wrong. Fortunately, there are many resources available to anyone who wishes to study any aspect of management. Despite its many technical dimensions and standard procedures, management is truly an art in the sense that rarely can standardized solutions be transferred from one situation to another without alteration. Management requires at least as much sensibility as technique. While it is important to find out what others may be doing, it is equally important to remember that your situation is not replicated anywhere else. For this reason, constant attention to realistic analyses of your situation is critically important. Appropriate mixtures of creation and imitation seem to work best.

Getting along in the profession also means realizing how your success depends on the success of others. This means understanding and balancing the nature of healthy competition and the necessity of mutual cooperation. No matter how strong a music department or program appears to be, it is always vulnerable in some way. As we know in music itself, greatness can never be taken for granted but requires constant effort. Again, we turn to the ensemble analogy. Musicians have a natural understanding of interdependency and cooperation. In management, both are particularly critical in terms of relationships with other executives and institutions. The work of each institution and each executive is inextricably connected to the work of all the others. Many forms of competition between institutions do not harm the basis for cooperation and common effort. Every music school or department depends on all sorts of artistic and educational activity associated with music.

Individual teachers, community music schools, public schools, magnet schools, and institutions of higher education with a broad range of goals for music are all essential in developing future musicians and audiences, and thus in keeping the profession growing and developing in a productive and vigorous way. Getting along in the profession is enhanced by showing participation and eventually leadership in a sector of this grand effort for music. The most respected music executives are those who exhibit and act in relation to artistic, educational, and cultural visions beyond their own immediate concerns. They see their work and that of their institution as part of a larger whole. They learn to communicate this vision and the meaning of this vision to others within their institution and beyond. Their leadership comes from something that transcends a simple desire for position or compensation.

Effective music executives fulfill their responsibilities in different ways. Respect comes from a combination of personal integrity, personal style, a sense of vision and mission, and demonstrated competence. Today significant resources exist to help individuals grow as executive leaders. Many institutions support professional development through specific offerings and opportunities. Various organizations in music and beyond provide resources that are important for academic managers. Simply working with other music executives and learning from experience are two of the best ways to gain competence and fluency in administration and leadership. Experienced executives are willing to help. They recognize the importance of continuing to build leadership potential and expertise. Even veteran executives find that getting along in the profession means asking for advice and considering the thoughts of other respected and experienced individuals, as well as learning constantly with dedication to both specific and broad purposes. By pursuing learning in this way, music executives are able to forge decisions, projects, systems, and ultimately careers that fuse technical skills and musical purpose consistent with the artistic nature of their field.

To get along in the profession, music executives need the kind of perspective that produces an evolving understanding of contextual conditions—in other words, how to work with “why” questions as well as “what” and “how” questions. Organizations can help executives gain perspectives and competence through professional development and information programs. Organizations provide efficient ways to gain access to overviews of what is happening in a particular music specialization or with a particular music function such as performing, composing, or teaching. To be successful, the academic music administrator needs personal knowledge, drive and dedication, clear and accurate assessments of local conditions and prospects, and a comprehensive understanding of larger contextual issues and policies. Leaders of the profession work constantly at all four of these attributes, using as many individual, institutional, and organizational resources as they can find. They find satisfaction in thinking and working on a broad scale and in applying strategic thinking to problems and to efforts to reach goals. They never lose music as their center, which gives them the ability to lead efforts that combine with others to advance the art and the people who make it and serve it.

## Resources

### NASM Publications

*NASM Handbook 2005–2006*

*NASM Proceedings*

*Work of Arts Executives in Higher Education*

*Sourcebook for Futures Planning*

Web Sites

College Music Society (CMS), [www.music.org](http://www.music.org)

MENC: The National Association for Music Education, [www.menc.org](http://www.menc.org)

Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), [www.mtnacertification.org](http://www.mtnacertification.org)

National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), <http://nasm.arts-accredit.org>

National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, [www.nationalguild.org](http://www.nationalguild.org)

International NETWORK of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education,  
[www.artsschoolsnetwork.org](http://www.artsschoolsnetwork.org)