Fostering a Culture of Philanthropy

David Chambers, Dan Coleman, Kathleen Kane, and Zak Vassar
Culture of Philanthropy: Goals for this Session

1. Understand what is a Culture of Philanthropy
2. Learn why advocating and building one for your Orchestra matters
3. Explore successes and failures in fostering a Culture of Philanthropy
4. Pick the brains of this panel of experienced development leaders
5. Leave with a one-pager of ideas to actively foster a Culture of Philanthropy at your Orchestra
Framework for Understanding a Culture of Philanthropy
What is Culture?
It is the attitudes, beliefs, customs, practices and social behaviors that characterize your Orchestra.

What is Philanthropy?
The belief in and act of giving of one’s time, talent and/or treasure to make a difference.

What is a Culture of Philanthropy?
When those within your Orchestra’s culture embrace giving as vital to the successful pursuit of the organization’s mission.
Who are some of the prime influencers of a Culture of Philanthropy?

- CEO/Executive Director
- Music Director/Conductor
- Board of Directors
- Development Committee
- Senior Staff and Department Leaders
- Development Team
- Volunteer Leadership
- Musicians
- All members of your staff (yes, every one plays a role!)
What are the Pillars of a Culture of Philanthropy?

1. Everyone in your Orchestra (staff, orchestra, board, volunteers) act as ambassadors and engage in relationship-building

2. Everyone promotes philanthropy and can articulate a case for giving

3. Fund development is viewed and valued as a mission-aligned program of the Orchestra

4. Organizational systems, processes, and staffing support donors

5. The executive director and board are committed and personally involved in fundraising
Case Study: LA Phil Centennial

Kathleen L. Kane
Chief Advancement Officer

Quick Facts:

Budget: $142M

Board: 58

Musicians: 106

Staff: 399 (FT)
OPPORTUNITY:
How to use the Centennial celebration to build a Culture of Philanthropy.
CHALLENGE:

How to turn a $200M endowment goal into a campaign that would engage and involve all of Advancement.
CHALLENGE:
How to move from a siloed, top-down organization to a place where Advancement is seen as the responsibility of all in the organization.
CHALLENGE:
How to not lose momentum when your CEO leaves mid-campaign.
CHALLENGE:
How to turn musicians into active participants who understand the work of Advancement.
CHALLENGE: How to encourage an already generous board to full participation in stretch giving.
Case Study: Houston Symphony – *Wozzeck* in Concert

David Chambers  
Chief Revenue & Advancement Officer  
San Francisco Symphony

Quick Facts:

- **Budget:** $81M
- **Board:** 93
- **Musicians:** 108
- **Staff:** 128 F  25 P
Houston Symphony—*Wozzeck* in Concert

• *Wozzeck* was planned as part of Hans Graf’s final season as the Houston Symphony’s music director.

• The company had just entered into a five-year financial plan.

• While it was an artistically important project for Hans and the Orchestra, there was little support from the Board, Finance Committee, and other constituency groups.

• The budget (fixed and variable costs) was ~$530K; earned revenue was projected at ~$30k.
• My belief is that the role of a Development team is to support the artistic ambition of the organization and not to determine that ambition, i.e. the attitude should be, “How can we make this work?”

• The approach to supporting the project:

  • Collaborating with select members of Board leadership, the Executive Director/CEO, Hans Graf, and the Artistic team, we came up with the plan to build institutional support.
  • This led to the creation of a “project-based funding model,” with the goal to fully fund all fixed and variable costs associated with Wozzeck.
Activities included:

• Salon events with Hans, at private homes (hosted by Board members), at Hans’s favorite restaurant (about 5 to 6 in total).

• A patron’s trip to Santa Fe Opera to see *Wozzeck*.

• The hiring of the Houston Symphony’s first Community Engagement position.

• Invitations to a private dress rehearsal, including a post-performance discussion about the work.

• High-touch donor benefits, including invitations to a post-performance opening night party.
The Challenges

• Multiple discussions at Finance Committee meetings—prior to that season’s operating budget being approved—where the Committee challenged the appropriateness of the project.

• A Marketing team that was only moderately supportive of the project.

• Increased activities at the hall and requests of artist involvement added to the workload of colleagues in operational and artistic roles.

• A lack of confidence across multiple parts of the organization in its possible success.
The Opportunity

• The opportunity to reset the organization’s artistic ambition.

• A large, audacious project of which the musicians could feel proud, further supporting the above point.

• A project that allowed us to engage donors to the Houston Grand Opera as donors of the Houston Symphony.

• The opportunity to reset how artistic projects were funded at the Houston Symphony.
The Results

• Two successful performances of a semi-staged work in March 2013 that accomplished what we set to do artistically.

• A strengthening of the relationship between Hans Graf and the organization of which he was the artistic leader for 12 years.

• A renewed energy and trust of the organization’s development activities and Development team.

• New donors to the Symphony, some of whom are still major gift donors and are in Board leadership positions.
Success

• We exceeded our fundraising goal of $500K and raised $550K (more than 20 donors with gifts ranging from $2,000 to $150,000+).

• We strengthened connections to donors by providing a tangible project to which they could feel a strong connection.

• An added-on recording project five years later (with a moderate fundraising goal of $50k supported by 10 donors) that led to the release of *Wozzeck* on the Naxos label.
• The CD won two major recording awards:

  • The 2017 ECHO Klassik Award for Best Opera Recording (20th-/21st-Century Opera).
  • The 2018 Grammy for Best Opera Recording, the first nomination and win in the orchestra’s (then-)104-year history.
Case Study: Tutti Campaign

Zak Vassar
President & CEO
Toledo Symphony
Toledo Alliance for the Performing Arts

Quick Facts:
Budget: $7M
Board: 58
Musicians: 60
Staff: 33
Challenge: Demonstrate to the community, donors, and foundations that we are aligned in our desire to see the organization succeed.
Approach: Promote orchestra buy-in
Approach: Prioritize participation over amount
Approach: Build a Culture of Gratitude
Y1 Results
Board Giving Rate: 95%
FT Staff: 85%
FT Musician: 45%
Case Study: Building a Culture of Philanthropy at 97

Quick Facts:
- Budget: $20M
- Board: 47
- Faculty: 106
- Staff: 68

Dan Coleman
Senior Development Advisor
Opportunity: With the Centennial approaching in 2020, CIM looked to its revenue model. The new goal to reduce tuition and increase scholarship by increasing contributed revenue and the endowment.

Approach: Build a Culture of Philanthropy at 97
Challenge: CIM’s Trustees were almost exclusively engaged with CIM only through governance.
Approach: Engage Trustees with CIM Faculty and Students through Day in the Life experiences and beyond!
Challenge: Staff and Faculty did not understand the importance of philanthropy and were not as engaged in efforts.
Approach: Staff and Faculty understand the importance of philanthropy and see themselves as integral to the success.
Questions?

Thank you for attending!

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