New Performing Arts

An Experiment in Rural Classical Music Programming in Kentucky

By

Stephen Wogaman

Submitted to the faculty of the School of Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Music
Indiana University, August, 2002

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Dedication

To Pinkney, Emily and Teddy

Nothing has taught me more about my own love of music than being your father.
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Acknowledgements

Long before the idea for this project first occurred to me in 1991, the list of people to thank for its completion had already begun to grow. To begin with, my father, Dr. John Philip Wogaman, inspired me to take an active role in influencing some aspect of my field, rather than merely observing it (his late-1950’s dissertation in Christian social ethics at Boston University proposed a strategy to integrate the Methodist church in the south). My early professional experiences were influenced tremendously by the late Patrick Hayes, founder of the Washington Performing Arts Society; Harlowe Dean, former President of Civic Concert Service; the late Beatrice Nightengale, with whom in partnership my earliest experiences in concert management were undertaken; and my original colleagues in the Whitney Trio: violinist Michi Sugiura and cellist Diana Fish.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the volunteers who have served as members of the New Performing Arts, Inc. Board of Directors over the past decade. The persons who held the title of Chairman warrant special mention. First and foremost is Robert E. Kulp, Jr., the longest-serving board chair, who generously and selflessly helped us through our periods of greatest adversity and seemingly insurmountable challenges. The organization’s success is as much his as it is mine. Other board chairs have included Everett E. Ballard, at whose dining room table the idea for the corporation was hatched; the late Hugh Finn, whose friendship and enthusiasm is deeply missed; Dr. Edward Tillett; and now Paul Shoemaker, whose dedication to the mission of youth arts has touched the lives of thousands of young people all over Kentucky.

Overlapping the list of volunteer board members is the list of contributors whose support made the project possible. Again, first and foremost among these are Robert Kulp and his wife Margaret, whose quiet generosity to so many of Louisville’s most important causes is applied with professional seriousness that is exceedingly rare. Likewise, this project would have never gotten off the ground without the generosity of the late Mary Caperton Bingham, who, through the Mary and Barry Bingham, Sr. Fund (John Richards, Executive Director), gave the initial challenge grant the created this project. Others whom I wish to thank here are Martha and Everett Ballard, Barry and Edith Bingham, Jane and Charles Boyer, Christina and Owsley Brown, the late Dorothy Norton Clay, Hamilton Duncan, Jr., Olga M. Gazda, Dr. Edward Tillett, Connie and Al Janos, Mrs. Condict Moore, Theodore and Jacqueline Rosky, Paul and Judy
Shoemaker, J. Phil Smith, T. Eugene and Nadine Spragens, J. Clifford Todd, Marianne and James Welch, and my parents, Phil and Carolyn Wogaman. Institutional contributors have included the Brown-Forman Corporation, J.J.B. Hilliard, W.L. Lyons, Inc., the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation (Frederick Bay, Chairman), the E.O. Robinson Mountain Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Kentucky Arts Council. The Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory and the New World Symphony have contributed travel funds in support of Kentucky residencies by their students/members.

Next is a list of key advisers, whose assistance with the project and/or with New Performing Arts contributed significantly to the findings of this study: Eva Jacob, retired staff member of the National Endowment for the Arts; Richard Bell, National Executive Director of Young Audiences; Jimmie Dee Kelley, Instructional Supervisor of the Hardin County Schools and former Arts and Humanities Consultant to the Kentucky Department of Education; Josephine Richardson, co-founder of Appalshop; Roberta Chumley, Chairperson of the Duncan Cultural Center in Greenville, Kentucky; Lois Slinker, Instructional Supervisor of the Muhlenberg County Public Schools; and James Suelflow and Ellen Schantz, who served consecutively as Directors of the Indiana University Arts Administration Program (I outlasted both of them in sixteen years of continuous registration at Indiana University). Menahem Pressler, Distinguished Professor of Piano at Indiana University, endured many years of my attention divided between the piano and this project, and yet somehow managed to turn me into a good pianist; studying with him has been the highest musical privilege of my life. Dr. Robert Freeman, Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, has influenced this work tremendously: most recently by serving as my research director at long distance, by generously supporting the effort during 1996 at the Eastman School of Music, and above all, by creating an atmosphere with such passion for music-making during my undergraduate years at Eastman (1978-1982). I will remain a musician for the rest of my life, thanks in large measure to Bob Freeman.

Bracketing my own playing as a subject for others to address, the key to the success of this project are the artists who participated in it. First and foremost is pianist Nada Loutfi, who as New Performing Arts’ Artist-in-Residence from 1993-1997 brought tremendous pleasure to so many listeners across Kentucky, often on the leading edge of new projects and the introduction to new contributors. The success of this project is her success, too. Hundreds of other artists have participated in New Performing Arts’ programs; I list here those that have spent two weeks
or more in residencies in Kentucky: the late and dearly missed pianist Andrew DeGrado, the Tower Saxophone Quartet, the Brass Company, dancer Rebecca Ratliff, violinist Isaac Ospovat, French cellist David Etheve, tubist John Dorn, the Florestan String Quartet, the Narnia String Quartet, the Madera Oboe Trio, Herriott String Quartet, saxophonist Michael Tracy, jazz pianist Renato de Vasconcellos, the Cerulean Wind Quintet, my current Whitney Trio colleagues Stephen Rose (violin) and Brant Taylor (cello), Appalachian storyteller Octavia Sexton, actor Phillip Cherry, the Caravaggio String Quartet, Verederos (percussionist/composer Payton McDonald and flutist Jessica Johnson), Marley’s Head (early music ensemble), and tenor Stanley Warren. In addition, the Indiana University Opera Theater, Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, and the New World Symphony have all sent ensembles to Kentucky. From Kentucky, the Louisville Bach Society, Kentucky Ballet Theatre, and the Louisville Youth Orchestra have all participated. Conrad Music of Louisville – Paul Conrad, Laurie Conrad Stephens and Ned Conrad – generously provided the use of keyboard instruments without which many of these artists (myself included) might not have been able to perform so often. Thank you to all of you, and to the many more not mentioned.

Finally, I wish to thank Michele Wogaman, New Performing Arts’ Executive Director since 1998 (and my wife since 1999). A native of the tiny town of Humbolt in far northern Minnesota, her passionate identification with the mission of New Performing Arts (not to mention her energy, intellect, creativity and extraordinary skills of persuasion) has been propelling New Performing Arts forward ever since she first joined the organization in 1995 as a part-time program coordinator. As the reader will certainly find, New Performing Arts thrives today largely because it has become her creation, too.
New Performing Arts

An Experiment in Rural Classical Music Programming in Kentucky
THE PROBLEM

The field of classical music has spent the better part of the past decade in a state of high anxiety and – many would argue – widespread institutional decline. As a result, many of the institutions that provide paid performing opportunities to musicians find themselves in serious trouble, relying increasingly upon marquee stars and/or low-risk programming to attract audiences, with deep budget cuts and/or drastic fund raising measures to balance their budgets.

This situation has been well documented, but is perhaps best summarized in the recently published study by the Rand Corporation, Performing Arts in a New Era. The Rand study, commissioned in 1999 and published on the World Wide Web in 2001 by the Pew Charitable Trusts, examines the current state of the performing arts in the United States – commercial and non-profit activity in opera, ballet, jazz, classical music, theater and musical theater - by examining data available about artists, audiences, arts organizations, and financing (or supply, demand, delivery and finance). Although the Rand study was undertaken a full decade after the present study commenced, it summarizes on a national scale many of the trends that the author perceived and sought to address when his project began. It is worthwhile to quote an extensive portion of the predictions in the Rand study’s opening summary here:

If trends observed in the past 20 years continue, a fundamental shift in the performing arts system will take place... Big organizations - both commercial and non-profit – will rely increasingly on massive advertising and marketing campaigns promoting celebrity artists to attract larger audiences ... both sets of organizations will seek to minimize their risks by choosing conservative programming and technology-intensive productions to appeal to the largest possible audience.

At the other end of the scale . . . the growing number of small organizations will have little in common with larger non-profits in terms of programming, audience demographics, and the professional stature of most of their artists. Small performing arts groups will focus on low-budget, low-tech live productions that rely heavily on volunteer labor.

The biggest change suggested by these trends relates to the middle tier of non-profit arts organizations, particularly those opera companies, symphony orchestras, ballet companies, and theater groups located outside of major metropolitan areas. Likely reductions in demand, rising costs, and static or even declining funding streams will force many of these institutions either to become larger and more prestigious – which many will lack the resources to do - or to
become smaller and more community-oriented, using local talent to keep costs down and adapting programming to local audiences. Still others will simply close their doors, unable to reconcile conflicts among their various stakeholders.¹

In spite of the bleak outlook for a large number of the nation’s professional performing arts institutions (particularly the mid-sized institutions that often are in the best position to offer full-time employment to young professional musicians just entering the field), the nation’s conservatories, music schools and departments continue graduating music performance majors in high numbers. According to the Music Data Summaries of the Higher Education Arts Data Services, in the 1999-2000 academic year, 370 institutions awarded 3,680 Bachelor of Music degrees, 221 institutions awarded 3,547 Master of Music degrees, and 62 institutions awarded 673 doctorates - not counting the thousands more music education majors and graduates with degrees with less than 50% music concentration.² For these graduates – talented young people cut loose to find careers in a field in crisis – the challenges are daunting. Traditional opportunities in symphony orchestras, for example, can accommodate only a fraction of the musicians that aspire to them. Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Gwendolyn Freed put it this way:

Scandinavian lemmings are cute, furry, little creatures that suffer from overpopulation. They migrate hundreds of miles in search of food, chewing up every shred of vegetation in their path until they reach the high cliffs overlooking the sea. With optimism that’s painful to watch, these animals hurl themselves en masse into the deep, swirling waters, where they drown.

It’s a scene right from commencement day at any of this country’s 574 accredited schools of music. At least half of the nearly 14,000 graduates each year aspire to jobs in symphony orchestras. But it’s rough down there below the cliffs. In a typical year there are between 250 and 350 vacancies in orchestras that pay base salaries above $25,000 ... having plunged in, most musicians, like most lemmings, don’t find out they can’t swim until it’s too late.³

The lucky few that do succeed in landing a symphony position must hope that the institution they work for can survive, a hope that was dashed over the past decade for musicians

² Higher Education Arts Data Services, Higher Education Arts Data Services Data Summaries 1999-2000, (Reston: Higher Education Arts Data Services, 2000).
in New Orleans, Birmingham, Savannah and San Diego. As this paper is being written, special
efforts are underway to ensure that the same fate does not befall the St. Louis Symphony –
considered one of the top orchestras in America. Likewise, opportunities for traditional music
teaching in higher education may ultimately decrease as well, as music conservatories, schools
and departments respond to a decline in the demand overall for traditional music graduates (there
are less than 9,000 full-time music faculty positions in higher education in the entire country to
begin with).⁴ Angela Myles Beeching, director of the Career Services Center at the New England
Conservatory, has written quite eloquently on the plight of young musicians seeking work.

The myth that fuels young musicians’ dreams goes something like this: with
talent, hard work, and either the right teacher or a degree from the right school,
they will be rewarded with a career. For a handful of superstar music students
who win international competitions, the dream has come true. For the rest, this is
wishful thinking.

The current system of study only reinforces myths about the quality and quantity
of jobs available in music. Conservatories and music schools still use the
nineteenth century model – students are apprenticed to master teachers in whose
hands they place their future, believing that if they do everything their teacher
says, they’ll have a career.⁵

As hard as it is for those seeking institutional employment, for young musicians inclined
to seek independent solo or chamber classical music performance careers the situation can be
even more precarious. The risky and potentially ruinous costs of building a career: travel costs of
the competition and audition circuit, a New York debut with critical attention, the establishment
of a management relationship, production of marketing materials and recordings; these things
now provide only fleeting chances at an incredibly small number of valued performance
opportunities. To illustrate just how saturated the classical music market has become, consider
that in its 1994 issue the Musical America: International Directory of the Performing Arts listed
725 pianists in the advertiser’s index⁶ who, presumably, would each be interested in performing
solo recitals and concertos in the United States. The “Survey of North American Cities” in the
same 1994 Musical America (the section that lists the specific artists engaged for the most

⁴ Higher Education Arts Data Services, Higher Education Arts Data Services Data Summaries 1998-1999 (Reston:
Higher Education Arts Data Services, 1999).
important recitals, concerts and concertos in cities across the United States) put the total number of prominent solo piano recital and piano concerto engagements in the United States during the 1993-94 season at 1,174.\(^7\) If these 1,174 important opportunities were distributed evenly among the 725 pianists already listed under management, each would play only two high profile concerts every three years, without accommodating the aspirations of a single newcomer! (Coincidentally, the 2000 *Musical America* annual also lists 725 pianists in the advertiser’s index, but the Survey of North American Cities was discontinued after 1998.)

Statistics like this have a real human face: every year countless numbers of our nation’s most gifted young musicians are forced to abandon their hopes and dreams, relegating their lifelong passion – not to mention their expensive training and career preparation – to a secondary role in their lives. And while one might be tempted to look at the evolving role of the arts in society, at the effect of national demographic trends, or at the saturation of the recording market for the root causes; a significant problem in the classical music field, particularly as it affects young musicians seeking independent performance careers, may be far more basic: the problem may lie in the structure of the classical music performance field itself.

In most fields (law, medicine, politics, business), the career ladder is rather like a pyramid, with a very few opportunities at a narrow top for the most successful, balanced by a large number of opportunities at the wide bottom for those just getting started, those whose careers are in decline, and those less gifted or less ambitious in general. In the field of American electoral politics, for example, the President of the United States occupies the top of the pyramid, with five ex-presidents alive at this writing. After the Vice President and the President’s Cabinet, there are 53 state and territorial governors, 100 United States Senators, 435 voting members of the House of Representatives (plus a small number of non-voting representatives), 7,693 members of the 50 state legislatures,\(^8\) and finally, tens of thousands of mayors, members of city and county councils, and school board members in communities all across the country. Yet in spite of the vast gulf of power and resources that exists between the offices of President of the United States and membership on a local school board, there is a single, accessible and (the 2000

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\(^7\) Clark et al, ed., 596-627.


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Florida presidential vote count notwithstanding) reliable electoral system that exists to connect *every* political position to its primary decision-making constituent: the voter.

Likewise in the classical music field, the top of the pyramid has a very limited number of marquee stars known to a large percentage of the general public: Luciano Pavarotti, Renee Fleming, Yo Yo Ma, Itzhac Perlman, etc. Beneath them on the career pyramid are a larger number of major-label recording artists and ensembles that are well known throughout the musical field, but perhaps not universally recognized outside the field by the general public: Emanuel Ax, the Emerson Quartet, Eliot Fisk, etc. Farther down the pyramid are even more artists who are highly respected and whose engagement calendars are kept quite full, but whose careers have not enjoyed the additional boost that recording for a major label provides. Beneath them is the large group of artists constituting the vast majority of those artists and ensembles appearing in the *Music America* index: represented by managers but not performing anything close to what might constitute full-time living. At the bottom, finally, are those countless musicians not represented by management at all, whose career diet consists of high-profile opportunities reserved for newcomers by non-profit organizations and competitions, a few lucky personal contacts in the mainstream, non-paying opportunities linked to teaching positions, or opportunities that pay so little that they are passed by entirely by artists and managers with appetites that are better fed.

A major difference between the classical music performance career pyramid and the electoral politics career pyramid is that in electoral politics the system that “distributes” politicians to voters (the ultimate decision-makers about which politician is selected for any given position) is funded entirely by tax dollars, with no appreciable difference to the individual voter between the transactions that select a president or a local school board member. The system that distributes touring musicians to audiences is not fueled by government tax dollars, but is brokered by presenting organizations (the primary decision-makers about which musicians are selected for any given engagement – often years before they are offered to the public) who in turn are serviced by independent artists’ managers (the primary decision-makers about which musicians will be offered to presenters in the first place). Here is the rub: the efforts of managers are funded primarily through commissions that are based upon a percentage of the artist’s performance fee (20% is typical). The economic reality for a manager who books an artist for 100 concerts a year is that 20% of a marquee star’s fees of $50,000 or more per engagement
builds to a seven-figure windfall, 20% of a major label recording artist’s fee of $20,000 makes a manager a good living, 20% of an established string quartet’s fee of $10,000 will get a manager by, 20% of a young pianist’s fee of $3,000 will barely keep a manager in business. While most successful managers attempt to distribute artists at a variety of fee levels, a work load too heavily occupied by the seeking and servicing of engagements that pay $1,000 or less can put a manager out of business very quickly. The financial reward of higher-priced artist distribution exerts a powerful incentive for managers to raise artistic fees as high and as fast as possible. Indeed, the Rand Corporation study finds that “the anecdotal wisdom on this point is unambiguous: the performing arts are experiencing a polarization in earnings in which a few artists earn huge rewards while most artists earn very little . . . marketing efforts to build star power have become ever more persuasive because the potential rewards of market success are so great.”

With this in mind, the problem for artists not represented by managers (and perhaps many of those who are) may seem simple, but its solution – better distribution at lower fee levels - is elusive. Indeed, many gifted classical musicians are ready and willing to perform for audiences that can only afford to pay fees that are just a fraction of the roughly $3,000 minimum asking price for artists under management. But managers – the businesses organized for the purpose of marketing and distributing the services of performers to presenters – simply cannot afford to seek or service (let alone develop) those low-paying engagements on a scale that even begins to approach the availability of artists, nor (one can hope or imagine) the full extent of potential audience demand for those lower-paid artists. As a result, what might be – and certainly ought to be – the broadest and most active segment of the classical music career pyramid is instead a loose underground economy of musical bottom-feeders, supported by family, friends, volunteers, college music departments and a few well-meaning non-profit organizations. What might be – and certainly ought to be – the broadest and most populous segment of the live classical music audience is woefully underserved, particularly in smaller, poorer and newer markets. As managers inevitably continue to focus their best efforts upon helping their artists scratch their way towards the upper reaches of the artist fee pyramid (there is no good reason for them not to), the financial gap that separates the loose underground classical music economy from the nation’s professional live music distribution infrastructure will become larger still.

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The paper that follows recounts the story of the author’s active response to this problem as manifested in his own life, confirming that his observation of the foregoing characteristics of his chosen professional field was, in fact, disturbingly accurate. Because it is a story in which the author is an active participant rather than a passive observer, it will be cumbersome for the author to refer to himself constantly in the third person. Therefore, with apologies to the arbiters of formal academic style, much of what follows will be told in the first person.
PROJECT BACKGROUND

The musical canon is not decided by majority opinion but by enthusiasm and passion ... music will live, as it always has, in the musicians, and they will somehow persevere until they find an audience for it. Those who loved music in the past were so stubborn and so foolishly obstinate that they found a way to continue to play against all odds. They will continue to do so.\textsuperscript{10}

Let it be said that Stravinsky, Schubert, Berlioz and Bach must be saved. Expendable is the system now in place for delivering them to the public: the network of schools, managers, concert halls, opera houses, orchestras, publicity people and journalists. We can’t waste much time finding replacements lest we be left only with ruins.\textsuperscript{11}

I.

In the early 1990’s, after completing two music performance degrees and the better part of a third, I was keenly interested in playing concerts for a living. I was a member of a fairly decent piano trio, with a number of favorable reviews, a growing repertoire, and a small regional manager. But like so many young classical musicians with similar ambitions, I lacked the substantial personal or family resources to spend on the travel, the promotional material development, the management retainers and, above all, the additional years of intense practicing with little or no income. With these looming burdens standing in stark contrast to the number of visible potential performance opportunities, I turned to the only other activity for which I thought my training qualified me: music teaching. This paid the bills, to be sure, but the prospect of spending an entire career doing this was troubling, particularly at the college level: introducing still more young musicians to an overcrowded field by recruiting and teaching still more music performance majors would seem only to compound the problem I faced myself.

And so, after spending two years (1989-1991) teaching music appreciation at Lees College, a tiny junior college in Jackson, Kentucky, I embarked upon an alternative approach to my career dilemma: an attempt to introduce a more satisfying level of professionalism to the distribution of my services as a musician to smaller markets in the underground classical music economy in which I found myself trapped.


Fortunately Jackson, a community of some 2,400 persons, had a small group of people interested enough in classical music to show up whenever I gave a performance, playing alone or together with visiting colleagues. These informal performances, and the positive response to the people who heard them, dispelled any preconception I might have had as a city-raised classical musician that the residents in a small community like this one would have a fundamental dislike for classical music. On the contrary, even in the heart of Bluegrass Music territory there was an audience for classical music: there was demand. So why were classical music performances not a regular part of the cultural life of Jackson? In part, surely, because an audience in Jackson could no sooner pay a fee of $3,000 for a single performance engagement than an audience in New York City (with 7.4 million residents) might pay a fee of $9 million – about $1.22 per city resident in either case! It was not until Lees College hired a music professor who happened also to be an active performer (with lots of active performer friends) that the small but enthusiastic classical music audience in Jackson could find live performing artists it could easily afford: it could find supply.

This eye-opening situation raised some important questions: could one improve the chances of connecting artists and audiences even when resources are limited, by finding another way to accomplish and pay for the artist manager’s role in the non-profit sector? Could one potentially reverse the fee-inflating effect of what appeared to be an industry-wide focus on the upper tiers of the career pyramid, particularly among managers whose compensation is directly linked to the size of the fee? Might one substantially lower the minimum fees required for artists and audiences to gain access to a delivery infrastructure reliably capable of bringing them together? If so, one might then be able to encourage regular, sustainable, live classical music activity in markets far smaller than the commercial management infrastructure can afford to reach, and on a scale far greater than what is accomplished by the limited “outreach” operations of large arts organizations – focused as they often seem to be upon attracting related grants and contributions in the short-term, rather than finding or creating new demand and distributing live music performances to meet it. Even the term “outreach” is troubling: the term is widely used in reference to music performances that reach audiences in educational and/or underserved settings; I was not doing “outreach” in Jackson. A performance by the Whitney Trio in Jackson, for example, was no more “outreach” than a performance by the Juilliard Quartet might be in

Louisville. In both cases musical ensembles are giving tour performances in places smaller than the cities in which they live. Nonetheless, the word “outreach” is widely used to describe performances for non-traditional and school-based audiences. While acknowledging that – at its worst – outreach can be an imperialist sort of “music for the great unwashed,” I will use the term frequently in this paper, even as attempts to replace it with terms like “community engagement” and “arts reach” are gaining favor. Likewise, I will make heavy use of “classical music,” a term widely used, but increasingly difficult for many to define. To be sure, the canon of enduring musical works is far larger now than it was even a generation ago, and it continues to grow as the musical values and traditions of other cultures become more widely understood by serious musicians. The modern notion of a musical canon itself is a relatively new creation, dating perhaps to the revival by Felix Mendelssohn of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach in the mid-nineteenth century. However, like Charles Rosen, I believe that musicians willing to make the enormous investments of time and energy necessary to master it provide the most meaningful definition of classical music. I spent forty percent of the credit hours of my undergraduate degree at the Eastman School of Music studying about fifteen major solo piano works. Given that I would be in a position to make most of the artistic choices for this project, I approached it using the only definition of classical music that really mattered to me: my own.

So it was, with help from a few very indulgent, patient and generous friends in Louisville, Kentucky, that “New Performing Arts” was incorporated as a flexible 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizational platform for what became my decade-long experiment in live classical music distribution to underserved audiences: in classical music outreach.

II.

Before recounting the details of the New Performing Arts experiment, three national programs need to be mentioned, with similar objectives in music outreach, arts education and/or audience development: Community Concerts/Civic Concert Service, Young Audiences, and Chamber Music Rural Residencies.

The “organized audiences” movement began in the early 1930’s when Community Concerts (a part of Columbia Artists Management until 1999, when it was sold to Trawick
Artists Management\textsuperscript{13}, and Civic Concert Service (its primary competitor, now no longer in business) developed concert series in hundreds of communities across the country. The principle of organized audiences was simple: a local group of volunteers would be organized by a traveling representative of Community Concerts or the Civic Concert Service into an “Association”, with the twin tasks of raising money for a concert series season and making artistic selections after the money was raised. Funds were generated solely through the sale of Association memberships, which in turn constituted the only means by which one could gain admission to the concerts (as opposed to tickets that might have been available to anyone at the door). The local leaders of the Association were permitted to make artistic choices from the Community Concerts or Civic Concerts roster only after the money was safely in the bank, thereby ensuring the ability of the local Association to pay its bills to the national for-profit company.

Harlowe F. Dean, a retired New York artist manager now living in Louisville, Kentucky, was the Vice President of the Civic Concert Service during its prime, and then briefly served as the Civic Concerts President before it went out of business in the early 1970’s. In an interview he gave me prior to the initiation of my project, Mr. Dean indicated that the Civic Concert Service, though smaller in terms of the number of communities served, was actually larger than Community Concerts in terms of revenues, because it served the larger and more prestigious cities. (Civic Concert Service went out of business faster, perhaps, for the same reason: larger communities were naturally better equipped to do without the services of a national facilitating agency that used the control of its local “Associations” to charge inflated prices for its own roster of touring attractions.) Mr. Dean shared with me several of the “tricks of the trade” of Civic Concert Services representatives.\textsuperscript{14}

In identifying volunteers in a new community, Mr. Dean told me that a favorite technique was to drive into town and look for the biggest, richest-looking church. The Pastor of the church would be then cajoled into identifying for the representative the ten most active people in the community at large. These people (including the pastor himself in many cases) would soon find themselves serving as the local leadership committee of the Civic Concert Service and selling Association memberships for a concert series. A related technique was to build the community’s


\textsuperscript{14}Harlowe F. Dean, personal interview, March 1987.
trust by keeping all funds raised in a local bank, in an account under the joint control of local volunteers and the Civic Concert Service itself.

Finally, Mr. Dean was adamant that never under any circumstances did Civic Concerts engage local artists for an organized audiences series. There were two reasons for this. First, Civic Concert Service was in the business of providing access to artistic quality, and any perception that local talent could provide an appropriate level of artistic quality (a perception frequently untrue in any case) would undermine the local monopoly that Civic Concerts enjoyed in providing that access. Second, Civic Concert Service earned its profits, not by taking a mere 20% commission on artist fees, but by organizing efficient tours for artists who were then paid far less than 80% of the fees that Civic Concerts received.

Mr. Dean was very generous in sharing with me what at one time was privileged inside information; and although there are major differences between New Performing Arts and the for-profit “organized audiences” model, several of these techniques have been useful tools in implementing my project.

Unlike the for-profit organized audiences movement, Young Audiences was begun in Baltimore in 1951 as a non-profit organization for the purpose of raising money to connect children with live music programs in their schools. Through the development of independently governed Young Audiences Chapters in several dozen U.S. cities – and a central office in New York City – the Young Audiences network has become the single largest delivery system for school-based visiting arts programs in America. Still supported at a substantial level by contributed income (45% average among 32 chapters in fiscal year 2000), Young Audiences receives payments from schools and compensates its performances at levels far more modest than the payment and compensation levels characterizing the classical music mainstream. In 1998, Young Audiences claimed to reach an audience equal to 12% of elementary school students in the United States, although this figure does not account for multiple exposures within the same school population (recipients of multi-day residency programs are counted each day they are reached; Young Audiences actually reached 1,476 fewer school buildings in 1998\textsuperscript{15} than it did in 1987\textsuperscript{16}).

In part due to the determination in 1992 by the American Federation of Musicians that Young Audiences would no longer be a direct recipient of A.F.M.’s “Music Performance Trust Funds” subsidy for free public events, by the 1980’s and 1990’s Young Audiences’ programming was evolving in a wide variety of other, less expensive art forms: storytelling, magic acts, ethnic music and dance, sock puppets, etc.; art forms that, curiously, are claimed by some Young Audiences personnel to be more responsive than music to school curricular objectives (particularly in the areas of English, math, social studies and science; the subjects that most states require assessment in). In spite of a recent effort by several prominent Young Audiences national board members to reverse this trend and return Young Audiences to its roots in classical music, this art form now represents a very small fraction of Young Audiences’ programming nationwide.17

The final national program that needs to be mentioned was created in 1991 as a “Leadership Initiative” pilot project at the National Endowment for the Arts, by NEA Policy and Planning Officer Eva Jacob (who, now retired from the NEA, serves as a volunteer member of the New Performing Arts board of directors). As originally designed, the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program places small chamber music ensembles in nine-month residencies in rural communities, paying each musician’s housing expenses plus a modest monthly stipend. In turn, the ensemble spends half of its forty-hour workweek in a variety of community service activities, the other half in practice and rehearsal. The program provides one-half to two-thirds of the stipend cost in the form of a grant to the host community; funding sources from within the host community provide for the housing expenses and the balance of the stipend. Administered by Chamber Music America (the national service organization for the chamber music field), the program effectively provides a small community with a very large number of performance and/or teaching services at a cost far beneath the level of compensation that might obtain on the

17 From 1998 to 2000, I served as a part-time consultant to Young Audiences, Inc. (the network’s national office in New York) for the purpose of advancing this effort, referred to in Young Audiences circles as the “Classical Initiative.” The initiative involved a $3.2 million endowment drive, with contributions solicited for the stated purpose of advancing the cause of classical music in the network, along with the parallel development of projects aimed at increasing classical programs as a percentage of overall programming. Unfortunately, the passion with which several national board members instituted the initiative was not matched by a commitment on the part of national executive staff to ensure that the intent of the initiative was carried out. On the contrary, by the time the endowment drive was nearing completion it was clear that the national staff intended to steer the proceeds of this endowment elsewhere, thus leaving no internal resources for my efforts to be a success and breaking promises made to chapters across the network. It has since taken the efforts and vigilance of several members of Young Audiences’ national program committee – along with my resignation – to wrest at least some of the endowment income loose for the purpose of funding classical music projects in Young Audiences chapters.
open market. Indeed, with local resources so generously matched by three-year national grants, most participating communities and host organizations (including New Performing Arts in 1995-96 and 1996-97) experience a significant reduction in the high programming volume after the term of the grant is over, although in many cases community activities begun during the residency remain after the ensemble moves away.

The relationship between the original aims and the final results of the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program were the subject of an informal survey in the spring of 2001 by the program’s creator, Eva Jacob. Jacob summarized her findings in a letter to the program committee of Chamber Music America. With her permission, the substance of the letter follows here:

The program was designed to address two different problems, which, we hoped at the NEA, would help to solve one another: 1) In many rural areas, distant from urban centers, there was virtually no access to classical music or jazz, as more and more schools discontinued their music programs. 2) The opportunities for young ensembles in major cities was very limited; also, most needed time to learn more repertoire and gain experience in presenting themselves. We had a clear understanding of the purpose of the program: 1) To bring serious music to the community and enhance its appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of music; and 2) to provide young ensembles with an opportunity to learn more repertoire and learn to present themselves in a variety of settings.

But, looking back I don't think that we ever really defined in terms of outcome just what would constitute success, beyond good experiences and much learning on the part of both community and ensemble. (We did hope, the outset, when we actually worked with three communities at a time in each local area, that the three communities would find ways to pool resources, after the program was over, in order to be able to share a residency among them; however, this did not prove possible.)

But what about results? Could we really expect all of the ensembles to stay together, given the many forces that tend to drive young groups apart, even without the challenge of isolation in a rural community? Was it reasonable to expect small communities to be able to foot the bill alone, for what is clearly an expensive program? And if not, what have we accomplished in these different communities? Is it true that once this costly program and its funding depart from a community "Nothing is left behind"?

I have been calling a number of the communities that have participated in the program, focusing on the question of community outcomes, on the assumption that CMA is in touch with the musicians and in a better position to explore the
necessary questions with them. In a nutshell: Except in those fortunate cases where the ensembles have actually chosen to settle permanently in their host community (S. Bristol, ME and very probably Mono Lakes, CA) the cost of maintaining a full-time residency has made it impossible to continue without subsidy. However, each community has taken this opportunity very seriously and many have found ways to continue and further develop work that the ensembles began while they were in residence. In Tifton, GA and Roseburg, OR, for example, string programs begun by their ensembles are continuing and expanding. The jazz bands begun in Decorah, IA and Garden City, KS are still playing. Adult amateur chamber music playing continues in Vernon, IA. The host orchestra in Roseburg, OR has developed a county Youth Orchestra. The superintendent of schools in King City, CA, impressed with the community response to the teaching work of the Rackham String Quartet, re-hired music specialists for area schools. And, in Kentucky, a statewide presenting organization working with rural communities [New Performing Arts, Inc.], has built on the Chamber Music Rural Residencies experience to bring pre-service ensembles from Eastman and Oberlin in short-term residencies to area schools.\textsuperscript{18}

In the final analysis the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program has proven itself to be a valuable laboratory for residency programming in rural areas, even if it has not created a large number of permanently sustainable chamber music residencies. Sadly, this may be indeed the “final” analysis: Eva Jacob relates that Chamber Music America, at its January 2002 conference, indicated that the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program is unlikely to be continued in the form in which it was originally conceived.

Again, these important national programs had limited influence in the original planning for my project: the organized audiences movement had outlived its usefulness to most communities, Young Audiences had long since ceased to be an important presenter of classical music, and Chamber Music Rural Residencies was just getting underway. However, New Performing Arts interacted extensively with the latter two, serving as the organizer of an eastern Kentucky host site for a Chamber Music Rural Residencies ensemble in 1995-96 and 1996-97, and exploring with Young Audiences the possibility of becoming a Kentucky Young Audiences Chapter between 1998 and 2000.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{19} In spite of the positive aspects of interacting with many dedicated individual staff members of Young Audiences chapters across the country (the closest thing New Performing Arts has ever had to a peer group), the New Performing Arts Board of Directors finally abandoned this latter possibility, as the lack of faith on the part of the Young Audiences national staff in the educational value of classical music, as compared to easier hands-on art
III.

While my project was not based primarily on any previous models, a pair of early, financially disappointing professional performance experiences led me to embrace in advance two business principles as theoretical underpinnings for the project, and without them the project might not have been successful.

The first important business principle is specific to finance in the non-profit arts sector, and its current wide acceptance throughout the non-profit performing arts field is the result of research on the financial viability of non-profit performing arts organizations by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen in the late 1960’s. In *Performing Arts-The Economic Dilemma*, Baumol and Bowen studied what they considered to be a predictable gap between the income earned by arts organizations through the sale of their services (ticket sales, tour receipts, broadcast and recording fees, program advertising, etc.) and the overall cost of delivering those services. They found that the “income gap” of performing arts organizations – most in the range of 35% to 45% of their overall expenditures – was so widespread and predictable as to be considered normal, indeed healthy. In fact, the Internal Revenue Service publication 557, relating to the establishment of non-profit organizations, specifically sets a minimum 33% income gap (closed by public contributions) as a test in determining whether an organization can be considered a publicly supported charity, or instead, if it is a private foundation with considerably more stringent reporting requirements.

The importance of the Baumol and Bowen “income gap” to this project was twofold. First, it provided the impetus for conducting this project through a non-profit corporation rather than some other sort of commercial entity: a project that would in all likelihood result in a gap between overall expenses and earned income could nonetheless be considered viable. Second, it provided an implicit benchmark – now widely accepted among performing arts administrators – for a healthy, sustainable ratio between earned income and income from contributions: roughly one-and-one-half dollars or two dollars of earned income for every dollar of grants and contributions.

forms, became apparent. In the words of Paul Shoemaker, President of the New Performing Arts Board of Directors, “We don’t DO sock puppets.”


My recollection of an earlier practical experience with the income gap reinforced my understanding of this principle. In the summer following the completion of my master’s degree at the University of Louisville School of Music in 1984, I created a concert series in the lovely, century-old, wooden auditorium of the Silver Bay Association YMCA Conference Center on Lake George, New York. The series of three events on Sunday evenings in August provided me with an opportunity to collaborate with some of Louisville’s leading musicians, including the concertmaster of the Louisville Orchestra and the city’s leading soprano, who was at the time a frequent guest artist with New York City Opera. While these people might not have made me their first choice pianist for a concert at home in Louisville, they were more than happy to perform with me for a fee in upstate New York. The series was organized under the umbrella of the “Louisville Concert Artists Association” (in spite of its non-profit-sounding name, it was my own sole proprietorship). The expected expenses for the concert series were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist fee for concert one</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist fee for concert two</td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist fee for concert three</td>
<td>900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist lodging/meals</td>
<td>600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>495.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano tuning</td>
<td>105.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert attire (a white dinner jacket)</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total budget:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,750.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As pianist in the first and second concerts, I was to receive performance fees totaling $750. In addition, because the series was organized as a for-profit venture, I would receive as profit any ticket proceeds in excess of $3,750. As a for-profit presenter, I would be solely, personally responsible to artists, vendors and other service providers for any shortfalls in ticket sales as well. But I was confident that a hall of 500+ seats and a captive audience of Silver Bay guests with little else to do on Sunday nights would result in a positive bottom line.

Was I ever wrong! Ticket sales for the first event were just under $1,200, the second event brought in about $900, and the last event – held during a more lightly attended late-August week at Silver Bay – just $300. If instead I had organized the series as a non-profit venture and supplemented through fund raising the $2,400 in income earned from ticket sales (at the normal

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22 Personal records of the author. Figures are rounded.
level implied by the Baumol and Bowen study), I might have generated another $1,600 in contributions, enough to pay all expenses with another $250 left over to compensate me for six months of hard work organizing the series. As it was (and in spite of many willing and able contributors at Silver Bay), I ended the project with no fee whatsoever for two performances and no compensation for my work as the organizing presenter. (I did get to keep the white dinner jacket.)

Although it is not particularly relevant to this study, it may be interesting to note that the 1966 study by Baumol and Bowen went beyond exploring the income gaps of individual arts organizations, estimating the total combined income gap for all arts organizations in the United Stated during the 1963-1964 season at about $19.7 million, and projecting its potential growth for the next century to about $76 billion - a 3,800-fold increase.23 One-third of that century now has passed, with an explosion in the number and diversity of arts organizations contributing to that overall income gap – and with many of those organizations now in serious financial difficulty. Inspired in part by a perceived need to revisit the same territory Baumol and Bowen first explored in the 1960’s, the 2000 Rand Corporation study raises anew important questions about the ability and willingness of American society to sustain indefinitely increases in the size of the overall performing arts income gap – while it certainly has not yet reached the $76 billion predicted by the study as a possibility for the year 2065, it is now certainly much, much higher than the $19.7 million of the 1963-1964 season. While in the final analysis, the macro-economic concerns expressed in the Baumol and Bowen study (like those in the more recent Rand Corporation study) may have little bearing upon the design of a localized performing arts project like mine, they do underscore the importance of designing projects and organization budgets that keep income sources in sustainable balance and costs as low as possible.

The second experience – leading to the second important business principle - was a performance engagement at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. by my piano trio, the Whitney Trio. The trio’s manager (in fact a partnership that grew out of my own Louisville Concert Artists Association, Inc.) was contacted in mid-December 1998 to engage the trio to replace an ensemble that was to have performed in the West Garden Court on January 29, 1989. On such short notice it was impossible to secure any additional engagements in the Washington area, and so the trio made plans to travel from Bloomington to Washington for a single

23 Baumol, 406.
engagement. The fee certainly seemed more than adequate: $2,000 was the most we had ever been offered for a single engagement, and in addition, the concert was going to be broadcast live on WGMS radio and reviewed by the Washington Post. With great excitement, we poured ourselves into an intensive month of preparation.

The trio quickly learned that single engagements, while sometimes prestigious, are no way to make a living. In order to capture fully the business principle embedded in the experience, one needs to understand and be able to calculate the break-even point (“break even volume”) in the design of performance tours and music residency engagements. Several years after the National Gallery of Art concert, an M.B.A. marketing management course at the Indiana University School of Business introduced me formally to the principle. The course made heavy use of Harvard case studies, and in case after case the calculation of the break-even point was a critical element in profiting from any business activity. In his introduction to the text used in my course, Marketing Management: Principles, Analysis and Applications,24 Harvard Business School Professor Benson P. Shapiro detailed the following steps in calculating the break-even point:

1. Establishing the “fixed cost” for creating a single unit of a good or service. This can be very high, including such things as the cost of purchasing a building or factory equipment, or in the case of the Whitney Trio, the cost of transporting three people and a cello on an airplane from Indianapolis to Washington D.C.

2. Determining the “variable cost,” or the increase in cost for each additional unit produced. This includes the cost of raw materials and employee time, or in the case of the Whitney Trio, meals and hotel for each tour day, each day of airport parking in Indianapolis, and the 20% commission to the trio’s manager.

3. Determining, as the volume of goods or services grows, if the “variable cost” increases at an increasing rate, or at a decreasing rate. This depends largely upon the availability of reduced rates for higher volumes of raw materials or employee time. In most cases the “rate of variable cost increase” decreases with added volume: in the case of a touring ensemble, a decreasing “rate of variable cost increase” could be achieved by an agreement among the ensemble members to accept a lower daily rate of compensation in exchange for a greater number of days and a larger overall
paycheck for the trip. (This would only work up to the point where an ensemble member might lose a full time job back home, in which case “rate of variable cost increase” to that one member becomes huge.)

4. Determining the “unit contribution,” which is the price charged for a good or service minus the variable cost. This is sometimes called the “gross profit,” before fixed costs are accounted for. In the case of the Whitney Trio’s tour, the unit contribution felt substantial enough: our fee minus the cost of hotel, meals, airport parking and management commission ($2,000 – $800 = $1,200 unit contribution).

5. Determining the “total contribution,” which is the unit contribution multiplied by the number of units sold (or expected to be sold). Because the Whitney Trio sold only one unit, our total contribution was also $1,200.

6. The break-even volume is reached when the total contribution is equal to the fixed costs (from step one). Any additional “contribution” is net profit. The Whitney Trio’s fixed costs – airfare – came to a total of $1,050. Our break-even point, therefore, was achieved when our “total contribution” reached $1,050. Additional production beyond the break-even volume results in net profit, in increasing or decreasing rates depending upon the “rate of variable cost increase” – found in step three.

7. Net profit is achieved to the extent that the total contribution (the sum of all unit contributions) exceeds the fixed cost. In the case of the Whitney Trio, this net profit was $150 – just $50 for each member - Ouch!

And so, just as it was important in the design of my project to keep income sources in balance and expenses as low as possible, it was equally important to take seriously the effect of fixed costs – including the cost of my own compensation – in calculating the total cost and the break even point of the project’s activities.

IV.

As significant as these business underpinnings have been, the choice of Kentucky as the site for the project at hand had perhaps the greatest impact upon the successful outcome of the

24 Benson Shapiro, Robert J. Dolan, and John A. Quelch, *Marketing Management: Principles, Analysis, and*
experiment. Although the choice was largely coincidental (Kentucky was the site of my previous graduate study and employment), the state’s political geography, its landmark educational reform legislation, and its relative proximity to key artistic centers made it the ideal site – perhaps even the only site – where such an experiment could succeed.

Kentucky’s political geography is unique: although it is ranked 36th among the states in landmass, it has more counties – 120 of them – than all other states except Georgia and Texas. Although the colorful history of the development of Kentucky’s counties is beyond the scope of this paper, the pride Kentuckians feel about their counties dates back since before Kentucky became a state in 1792. With the exception of a handful of urban counties in which one finds Kentucky’s major cities (the largest three comprise Louisville, Lexington and the southern suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio), the typical Kentucky county now has a population of about 25,000 with about 3,000 to 5,000 living in its county seat. Every county has its own countywide school district, and about thirty larger towns have independent schools or school districts as well. In every county, the leading political figures are the County Judge-Executive (effectively the county’s mayor) and the Superintendent of Schools (often the county’s largest employer). Many counties still have locally-owned banks (although this is changing rapidly in most counties), and some local merchants still compete effectively with the encroaching Wal-Marts and fast-food franchises. Kentuckians are proud and intensely protective of their own county’s reputation, particularly in such things as high school basketball. The earth stops rotating (and all visiting arts programs are cancelled) in many counties when a local high school or middle school team makes it to the state championship tournament.

With regard to its professional performing arts activity, Kentucky is listed by the 2000 issue of Musical America as home to twenty-three performing arts series, thirteen college music schools or departments, eight orchestras (ranging in size from the Louisville Orchestra down to the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra), and one opera company. These forty-five performing arts institutions are located in just twenty-two of Kentucky’s 120 counties. While many of the remaining counties have small arts councils and organizations of their own, it is extremely rare for classical musicians to appear for a professional fee outside of these primary venues. And

while the state arts council is active in encouraging the development of local activities in Kentucky’s more remote counties, their best efforts most often are focused upon issues of cultural tourism, local craft marketing, and broad-based, multi-disciplinary programming.27

In short, the vast majority of Kentucky counties are small but politically, educationally and economically independent markets, most of them unlikely to generate opportunities for classical musicians to earn artist fees that even approach the fee levels sought by professional artist management firms. In spite of this, Kentucky’s small counties – even those adjacent to counties with major performing arts institutions or facilities – have proven quite eager to develop performing arts traditions of their own. Kentucky’s political geography therefore provided a significant opportunity: programs developed in one county could be replicated and improved in any number of other counties with similar characteristics and needs; several important program coordination functions could be developed centrally to provide like services to multiple similar communities; and all of this could be accomplished while encountering a minimum of competition from the representatives of other artists.

If Kentucky’s political geography provided an accommodating environment for growing the seeds of this project, Kentucky’s 1990 landmark education reform legislation provided a rich fertilizer. The “Kentucky Education Reform Act” (or “KERA” as it is referred to in most education circles) was the result of a lawsuit brought against the Commonwealth of Kentucky by a group of rural school districts, seeking a statewide education funding formula that was more equitable with the state’s urban school districts. In 1989 the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled in their favor that Kentucky’s educational system was unconstitutional, in that the state constitution guarantees that each citizen must have equal access to public education, and the state legislature was ordered to redesign the state’s educational system from scratch. Few tears were shed over this: Kentucky “ranked at or near the bottom of the nation in virtually every measure of educational quality, and it had for generations.”28

This wholesale redesign of Kentucky’s educational system provided an opportunity, seized upon by Kentucky music educators and other concerned citizens, to ensure that the arts were represented in the mandated curriculum at the highest level. The result of their intense lobbying effort was the inclusion of five arts disciplines in standardized testing used by the

Kentucky Department of Education in assessing the performance of all of the state’s public schools and school districts. Simply put, the effect of this statewide arts testing upon my project was huge. It meant that every public school in the state – some 1,500 of them – was required to teach music at some level to every single student.

The statewide testing of an arts curriculum requirement in Kentucky is truly unique: as late as July 1999, a survey conducted by Frank Phillip of the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington D.C. revealed that Kentucky was the only state in the United States to require universal assessment (testing of every student in grades five, eight and eleven) in all major arts disciplines (music, visual art, theater, dance and literature) for high stakes (school and school district accountability). The demand for programming that resulted from this development transformed my project from its original design as a semester-long experiment into a permanent non-profit organization.

Finally, the choice of Kentucky was advantageous from the standpoint of its easy accessibility to performing artists from other areas. Two of the country’s most prominent music schools, the Indiana University School of Music and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, are less than two hours from Louisville by car; the Oberlin Conservatory is a five-hour drive away; and most cities on the eastern seaboard of the United States can be reached cheaply by traveling with discount air carriers. As a result of Kentucky’s relatively easy access to larger urban centers, therefore, there was a huge potential pool of artists available to participate in a Kentucky-based project without incurring significant travel costs. And my own professional music education experience – including the Eastman School of Music and Indiana University – provided me with a large network of personal and institutional contacts from which to access additional artists.

And so it was that, armed with solid business underpinnings, concurrent national programs and an extraordinarily fortunate choice of location, I dove headfirst into a decade-long experiment with a new model for classical music program distribution: a non-profit organization called, “New Performing Arts, Inc.”

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28 Helen Mountjoy, “A Word from the Chair of the Kentucky Board of Education,” *Results Matter: A Decade of Difference in Kentucky’s Public Schools* (Frankfort: Kentucky Department of Education, 2002) v.
NEW PERFORMING ARTS

The Corporation is organized for the purpose of presenting music and theatrical productions. The Corporation will consummate its purpose to provide live music of high quality in locations where such activity is undeveloped or underdeveloped, focusing initially on Kentucky and southern Indiana; to enlarge this performing arts market by working with new and developing performing arts presenting organizations to overcome organizational and logistical difficulties which otherwise would prevent them from presenting the performing arts successfully; and to identify and work in concert with non-traditional presenting organizations to create new, innovative presenting venues: churches, schools, parks, prisons, chambers of commerce, etc.30

As its charter and ambiguous name suggest, New Performing Arts was founded in 1991 as a platform for a broad range of classical music programming activities the precise nature of which was still to be determined at the time of incorporation. One can only imagine the amused bewilderment of the founding board chair, Everett E. Ballard of Louisville, as he sat at his dining room table listening to what must have been my nearly futile attempt to explain what I was up to. Ballard and several other generous souls in Louisville responded to the naïve enthusiasm they saw before them and supported the effort, some of them quite generously.

And the effort succeeded beyond the wildest imagination of anyone seated at the Ballard dining room table that day in 1991: over the past decade, approximately 650,000 persons in rural Kentucky have been served by New performing Arts’ programs, most of them children hearing live music in their schools.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would be tempting to attribute the success of New Performing Arts to the brilliance of its original design, but people have done hard time for telling lesser lies. Ten years of perspective reveals instead long periods of adaptation to evolving circumstances, trial and error, frequent confusion and frustration, and, most importantly, the slow development and refinement of operational capacities within the organization itself, capacities that have allowed New Performing Arts to respond to opportunities without dependence upon costly collaborations or affiliations with commercial artist managers, large arts institutions, or other cost-inflating partners.

30 Article III, Section 2, Articles of Incorporation of New Performing Arts, Inc., filed with Bremer Ehrler, Secretary of State, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Frankfort, Kentucky, on August 23, 1991.
Indeed, what has emerged as the most beneficial lesson of the entire experiment is the power of this cluster of capacities – five in all – to act in combination under a single non-profit umbrella, forming the links of a single, unbroken chain between artists and audiences in small Kentucky markets. The capacities are: 1) concert series presenting; 2) school-based arts-education presenting; 3) not-for-profit booking; 4) artist identification and training; and 5) financing: budgeting and fundraising.

Not one of these capacities is new or innovative. It is, after all, the regular collaboration of presenters, booking agents/artist managers, artist-training institutions, arts educators and fundraisers that makes the classical music world go around. But for reasons outlined earlier, it is financially unfeasible for most professionals in these roles to apply their efforts in new, smaller markets on a scale that even begins to address the full scope of the need. The New Performing Arts experiment demonstrated, however, that when these roles are combined under one administration, it becomes affordable to address the individual, yet similar, arts presenting needs in a large number of otherwise isolated locations.

In order to understand the way in which New Performing Arts’ operating capacities work together to achieve positive results in Kentucky communities, it will be instructive to begin by examining the way in which each of the capacities evolved: where they first developed, what challenges or opportunities they first addressed, and what lessons were learned in the process.

**NPA CAPACITY ONE: CONCERT SERIES PRESENTING**

Originally, the development of new public presenting activities in rural communities was the sole objective of the New Performing Arts experiment. Before the organization itself had been named or incorporated, an unsuccessful effort was made to fund the project through the Indiana University Office of Sponsored Research Services. Proposals were sent to foundations all over the country, seeking funds to produce “an effective, efficient and streamlined strategy for the initiation, development, and presentation of new performing arts series in rural communities.”31 Although these initial grant-writing efforts failed, project funding was finally secured for New Performing Arts itself through a grant from the Mary and Barry Bingham, Sr. Fund of Louisville.

31 Personal records of the author. This text is taken from a grant application template prepared by the author with assistance from the Indiana University Office of Sponsored Research Services.
The organization’s first programming season (1992-93) was spent trying to develop classical music concert series in three Appalachian Kentucky communities: Jackson, Salyersville and Whitesburg. In each of these communities, the size of the local economy prohibited, or at least inhibited, the development of traditional presenting institutions and collaborations. It was expected that an effective strategy to address this would involve applying the same procedures used by larger urban or regional presenters, but with tasks divided between volunteers in the communities and the staff of a central, non-profit administrative resource. (While this might seem similar to the work of Community Concerts or the Civic Concert Service, communities the size of Jackson, Salyersville and Whitesburg are far beneath the economic radar screens of any national management enterprise, and the “organized audiences” movement was organized to make money.) Armed with a fourteen-page packet detailing everything I thought a community should know about initiating a classical music series, I began to visit small communities in eastern Kentucky.

In Jackson, where I served for two years as the local college’s music professor, my contacts in the community were deep enough to make this a logical place to start a new concert series. Jackson is the county seat of Breathitt County, located in the Appalachian foothills and on the edge of the rich eastern Kentucky coal seam. Coal mining was the primary engine of the local economy until 1990, when Arch Minerals (a division of Hunt Industries) discontinued its operations in Breathitt County, due to the combination of a depressed price for coal and the fact that most of the easiest coal to mine was gone.32 Jackson is the location of Lees College, a two-year junior college founded nearly 100 years ago by a Methodist circuit rider that is now part of Kentucky’s community college system. Breathitt County is the epicenter of Appalachian Kentucky poverty: in a 1996 study conducted by the Louisville Courier-Journal, Breathitt County was identified as one of the eight poorest counties in Kentucky, surrounded by four of the other seven.33 Ironically, however, Jackson’s relative isolation from larger communities has made it an economic center of sorts - with the region’s only hospital, for example - for three neighboring counties. (The nearest larger town, Hazard, is a windy, hilly, thirty-mile drive to the south; and Lexington, the nearest city, is ninety miles to the northwest). The hosting entity for the Spring 1993 New Performing Arts concert series in Jackson was Lees College itself.

although the college was not in a financial position to enter into a formal contract for series expenses. The risk of failure in Jackson remained mine and mine alone.

Salyersville is the county seat of Magoffin County, also one of the ten poorest counties in Kentucky. In 2000, only 49.9% of Magoffin County adults over the age of 25 had completed high school, and only 6.3% had completed college. (In 1993, the Magoffin County School Superintendent resigned in the face of 19 counts of improper conduct, and the state Education Commissioner called for the ouster of the entire school board.) Though similar in size and population to Breathitt County, Magoffin County lacks the positive economic influence of a local college, and is close enough to the larger community of Prestonsburg (in Floyd County - fifteen miles away on a level road) that it had not developed a local economy as strong as Jackson. Nonetheless, the Salyersville National Bank – and its energetic and visionary president, Tim Weddington - embraced the concert series project as their own, not only supporting it for two years beyond the original series, but turning the president’s office into a box-office and public relations center as well.

Of the three communities that participated as project sites, only Whitesburg in Letcher County (sixty miles further south from Jackson) can lay claim to a prominent position on the national arts map. Whitesburg is the home of Appalshop, a collective dedicated to the documentation of Appalachian folk culture and its dissemination through the collective’s own filmmaking, live touring theater, audio recording, radio broadcast, festivals, art exhibitions, etc. Appalshop was the brainchild of two Yale University-graduate VISTA volunteers, Josephine D’Amato Richardson and her architect husband Bill Richardson, who – though no longer affiliated with Appalshop – continue decades later to make their home in Whitesburg. In addition to Appalshop, Letcher County is also home to a large medical clinic, a still-thriving coal industry, and a new branch of the Southeast Community College that was envisioned, funded and created out of a retired Coca-Cola bottling plant in an incredibly short six months. Whitesburg is a true renaissance town, and several of the community’s leaders accepted the challenge of bringing a classical music series to the community.

At the outset in all three towns, seven activities were identified as important elements in the process of community presenting: 1) artist selection and engagement, 2) graphics and

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34 “1998 Poverty Estimates.”
printing, 3) budget and contracting, 4) concert logistics, 5) ticket sales, 6) local fund raising (as distinct from the supplementary fund raising capacity of New Performing Arts itself, treated in a later section of this paper), and 7) audience development. I projected that participating communities would eventually play a role in all of these activities, and I hoped that no one community would wish to differ materially in its approach to any activity that could otherwise be accomplished more efficiently in combination with the other two communities. (At the outset, New Performing Arts exerted a non-negotiable leadership role in activities one through three, and an advisory role in activities four through seven.)

With a desire to make live performances of classical music more affordable through an economy of scale, the New Performing Arts concert series in each of the three original communities was identical: it comprised my own piano trio, a gifted Hungarian-Lebanese pianist (my wife at the time), and three of my friends who together made up a trio of tenor, baritone and piano. The weaknesses inherent in a “one-size-fits-all” approach to rural programming may be self-evident (a more comprehensive artist identification process was a later-developing capacity for New Performing Arts and will be treated in a later section), but the structure did mean that three concerts by each of the three artists could be organized in tight regional tours, with considerable savings in fees and expenses achieved for both artists and communities.

Huge savings were also achieved in providing access to a grand piano. The number of possible low-cost, high quality musical instrument configurations decreases significantly if one is unable to include a piano in the mix, and yet most small communities in Kentucky lack the availability of a concert quality instrument, defined in standard professional concert management contracts often as “a grand piano, at least six feet in length, tuned and in perfect working condition.” Anticipating this problem, New Performing Arts secured a grant from the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund to purchase a Yamaha model C-7 grand piano (seven and one-half feet long) and the moving equipment needed to get it on and off of a rented truck. While this may have seemed an extravagance, only Whitesburg had grand pianos in its available performance spaces; the others depended entirely upon the use of New Performing Arts’ piano for all three of their series events. The financial impact of this unusual musical resource proved to be quite significant: in 1990 Lees College rented a grand piano from a Lexington piano dealer 90 miles away, at a cost of $650 for the one concert; by contrast, twice in 1993 New Performing

Arts was able to provide a better piano to both Jackson and Salyersville for $400 combined, the cost of a round-trip truck rental from Louisville.

Finally, considerable savings were achievable through a unique approach to graphic design and printing. The project unfolded at a time when computer-based typesetting capability was still primarily in the hands of commercial printers, and a “one-size-fits-all” approach to the creation of printed marketing materials was developed, using a single design concept that could be adapted for each community’s specific concert dates and locations. Specifically, the design for a two-color, 11-by-14 inch concert series poster and an accompanying concert series mailer allowed for customized text printing in black ink over identical photograph and background printing in a contrasting ink color (blue for everyone). The savings realized through shared design and printing costs made possible the use of high-resolution text and photography, and very high quality, glossy paper stock, creating the impression within each community of a well established, well funded concert series.

With identical artists, piano and promotional materials costs, the budget for each of the three concert series was set at $3,800: $500 for the opening concert by pianist Nada Loutfi; $1,000 for the second concert by the Whitney Trio; $1,500 for the final concert by Price, King and Crutchfield; $600 for the shared cost of transporting a grand piano to each site three times; and $200 for the cost of adapting printed templates with local information. The fixed costs were covered by the grant from the Bingham Fund, such as my salary and travel expenses, and the shared printing costs. In each community, a local institution or group of people was asked to contract with New Performing Arts as the supplier of the artists and printing for the full series, and to take primary responsibility for the remaining tasks: concert logistics, ticket sales, local fund raising and audience development.

I learned quickly that concert logistics present issues that require a high level of sensitivity to local resources and customs: hospitality needs of artists, appropriate presenting spaces, and audience management (including box office). It would be easy to take for granted, particularly for a musician acquainted with the services provided by full-time professional presenters, the sheer amount of detail that goes into preparing for even the most basic presenting situation. In a community where such presenting activity is new and unfamiliar, one must consider the likelihood that some preparations may seem excessive, unnecessary or even

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Dean, March 1987.
offensive, and one must be able – gently - to make the case for them in a non-confrontational manner.

For example, with the exception of ministers who prepare sermons for delivery during Sunday morning church services or lawyers who prepare cases for trial, there are few professions represented in small communities that allow so much advance preparation for so short a period of apparent work. Indeed, if the musician is particularly good, it can seem that the work is nearly effortless. It is particularly important, therefore, to ensure that local community volunteers understand the particular needs of visiting artists on concert days, far enough in advance to provide for such needs without adding to the strain already present for the artists. This may include unusual sleep schedules, special meals at odd hours of the day, unfettered access to performance sites for practice, and the ability to change any special preparations for reasons that may or may not make immediate sense. Meals can be a particularly tough issue in small communities: many musicians prefer to eat lightly before a concert and more heavily afterward, long after most small town restaurants have closed. From the very start, New Performing Arts found it beneficial to include even the most mundane of potential artist hospitality issues in letters of agreement signed months before events take place, and to give polite reminders before a crisis developed.

With musical instrument quality concerns somewhat mitigated by the availability of a grand piano solution from New Performing Arts itself, the question of appropriate concert locations was less problematic than it might have been otherwise. However, it is the rare small community in Kentucky that has its own formal auditorium or theater; most can only offer a selection of churches and school gymnasiums as the best performance locations. Each of these options presents its own set of challenges. Churches, though often the best spaces acoustically, can be very difficult to configure for certain types of musical performances when communion rails, pews and chancel furniture cannot be moved (for reasons political as well as physical). In some cases, concerts in churches can be poorly attended by non-members, particularly if relations among different churches in a community are strained in any way. Finally, the issue of charging admission at the door of a church can create uneasiness and conflict, both in terms of theology and accessibility. Gymnasiums, the other commonly available option, are cavernous spaces, generally with terrible acoustics, bad lighting and – worst of all - loud heating and air
conditioning motors. Moreover, the widely accepted mode of behavior for spectators sitting in bleachers at athletic events is rather more raucous than one hopes for in a concert audience.

Recognizing that the best option musically may be untenable for other reasons, New Performing Arts quickly found that the best approach to concert site selection was to equip local volunteers with an understanding of the many issues involved and then to follow their lead. Among the first three concert series, performances were presented in a United Methodist Church in Salyersville, in a former furniture store owned by Lees College in Jackson, and in the three mainline Protestant churches in Whitesburg.

It was in the design of the local concert series budgets – particularly on the income side – that I made the most naïve assumptions in advance of the three concert series projects in Eastern Kentucky. Taking as a given the expense budget for each series as outlined above, and working solely from the average income gap percentage reported by Baumol and Bowen, I hoped to establish at the outset in each community a strong base of earned income through ticket sales ($2,700), balanced by a more modest amount of fund raising ($1,100). Unfortunately, the ticket sales projection was so high, and the ticket prices were so low ($7 maximum), that the earned income balance could only be achieved through an unusually large audience of about 130; in the case of Salyersville for example, equal to 6.5 percent of the local population. On the other hand, the potential for additional contributed funding was arguably higher. This potential was realized by a single volunteer in Whitesburg (Irene Roy) who wanted to have the entire series budget in the bank before the series began and went out to raise it personally, and in Salyersville the series was kept afloat by a generous bank president who kept his commitment to cover the entire series budget despite my projection that Salyersville’s ticket sales would be hundreds of dollars higher than they actually turned out to be (about $1,400). With an even greater shortfall in projected ticket proceeds and a lack of good local prospects for contributed income, the series in Jackson contributed the largest share of an overall project deficit of $3,000. My expectation that ticket sales could make up sixty percent of the budget of a small community concert series played itself out differently in each of the three first concert series communities, but together they provided a memorable lesson on how not to go about funding a concert series in a small Kentucky community.

Similarly, the audience development efforts in these three communities – and appropriate expectations for their success – provided important learning opportunities. Techniques
employed in all three communities included the mailing of a concert series brochure, liberal posting of an 11x14 concert series poster, feature stories in the local newspapers, and – where possible – public service announcements on local radio. New Performing Arts produced all of these materials. In addition, New Performing Arts created a 3-foot by 8-foot banner, reading “Concert Tonight” on one side and “Concert Today” on the other, that was displayed from the crack of dawn on concert days. In addition to the efforts directed by New Performing Arts, each community added its own effort. In Jackson, Lees College included the events in their published campus calendars. In Salyersville, the local sponsor (Salyersville National Bank) included notices in bank statements mailed to customers. In Whitesburg, the same person that raised the entire series budget in advance worked the telephones to ensure an audience. The only standard marketing technique not employed anywhere during the first season of the project was paid advertising in print or broadcast.

After nearly a decade of hindsight, the results of audience development efforts were extraordinary, and would have been perceived as such if I had not raised unreasonable expectations. In Jackson, audiences hovered around 40-50 persons, most of them from the college community (this was about 2% of the town’s population – analogous to an audience of several thousand in Louisville). In Salyersville – where the New Performing Arts concert series was really a first for the community – an audience of 36 was the average (also about 2% of the town), and in Whitesburg, the audience average was just under thirty, nearly all of them contributors beyond the basic subscription price. Although she had hoped for a larger audience, Irene Roy of Whitesburg explained that the only real classical music alternative for those who contributed and attended was an overnight trip to Lexington, Kentucky – 150 miles away. For many of her contributors, a $100 donation to the series represented an entertainment bargain.

The concert series in Jackson, Salyersville and Whitesburg provided an opportunity to experiment with cost saving techniques and presenting procedures that have proven effective throughout New Performing Arts’ ten year history: the booking of artists for multi-day tours or residencies, the multi-community sharing of graphics and printing costs, the preparation of and contracting for project expense budgets, and providing assistance in developing box office and hall management procedures, as well as otherwise insurmountable presenting obstacles – like the availability of grand pianos. But it was not until the combination of concert series with additional activities in local schools in Greenville, Kentucky (a project that receives detailed
treatment in a later section of this paper) that realistic audience development expectations and a healthy balance between earned and contributed income in a local project budget were finally achieved.

**NPA CAPACITY TWO: SCHOOL-BASED ARTS EDUCATION PRESENTING**

As the three original concert series in eastern Kentucky were just getting underway, Elaine Simms, the head of the Washington County Arts Council in the central Kentucky community of Springfield approached New Performing Arts, interested in developing a concert series there during the following season. New Performing Arts and the Washington County Arts Council together applied for a state arts council grant for this purpose. When the grant was awarded, however, it became clear that an otherwise mute and inactive majority of Washington County Arts Council board members were not at all interested in a concert series, but instead wanted to spend the grant money on programs that would reach children in county’s schools. Anxious not to lose access to a hard-won grant, Elaine and I quickly transformed the project into a weeklong residency by the Whitney trio, with visits to every school in the county and a concluding public concert in the Springfield Baptist Church.

The design of the Whitney Trio’s fall 1993 residency in Washington County was a simple one, with the objective of providing as close a connection as possible between the musicians and every student in Washington County. With five days of programming available, this translated into a half or full day at each school, depending upon the school’s population, as follows:

Monday: Mackville and Willisburg Elementary Schools (grades K-8)
Tuesday: Washington County High School (9-12)
Wednesday: Washington County Elementary School (K-8)
Thursday: Fredericktown Elementary & St. Domenic Catholic Schools (K-8)
Friday: Concert at Springfield Baptist Church

The Whitney Trio had never done any programs in schools before, and so we were making it up as we went. The trio members – violinist Michi Sugiura, cellist Diana Fish and myself – felt that a performance for an audience with ages potentially as many as eight years apart would go better if we could establish a degree of personal connection with the students in
advance. So, with the exception of the Washington County High School, where the trio spent the
day giving assembly programs for each of four grade levels in the gymnasium, the forty-five
minute school-wide assembly programs were preceded by twenty-minute visits to every
classroom by an individual trio member: Diana visited the Kindergarten, first and second grades;
Michi visited the third, fourth and fifth grades; and the six, seventh and eighth graded visited me
one class at a time in the gymnasium where we set up the New Performing Arts grand piano.
Although the field of arts education programming had already progressed beyond the basic
exposure programming approach in ways perhaps more innovative than our little classroom visits
(some educators refer to assembly programs as “drive-by shootings”), it felt to us that this
modest enhancement did seem to enhance the students’ experience of the assembly program, by
allowing each audience member to feel as though he or she had met one member of the group in
a small group setting ahead of time. In the tiny town of Willisburg, for example, the four
hundred students, Kindergarten through eighth grade, simply would not allow the assembly
program to end when the scheduled forty-five minutes were over. Having already heard all of
the more accessible works brought by the trio, they listened in rapt, nearly silent attention to a
complete performance of the third and fourth movements of the Shostakovich Second Piano
Trio.

Meanwhile, it was six months after the Whitney Trio’s Washington County residency, in
the spring of 1994, that the Kentucky Department of Education placed five Arts and Humanities
disciplines in state-standardized testing for the first time. With the arts accountability component
of KERA now firmly in place, local school officials began to take seriously their need to provide
arts experiences for their students, and the demand of school programs from New Performing
Arts began to grow significantly. It quickly became clear that, in order to take full advantage of
this historic programming opportunity, New Performing Arts would have to develop a second
operating capacity: becoming expert in the field of arts education, a minefield of often-
contradictory goals, philosophies and programming approaches.

Fortunately, the goals of arts education in Kentucky (or at least the goals that schools are
required to address) have been clearly defined by the Kentucky General Assembly and the
Kentucky Department of Education. Specifically, in KRS 158:654, the Kentucky General
Assembly established seven capacities that would serve as the educational basis of instructional
programs for all students in Kentucky public schools. The fifth of these seven capacities states
that students will have “sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage.”

KRS 158:6541 further established and mandated a curricular framework to provide direction to local schools and school districts as they develop curriculum. *Transformations: Kentucky’s Curriculum Framework* is similar to the national arts curriculum framework, *The National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts,* in that it provides a list of academic goals and expectations. But while the national framework is merely a recommendation, the six academic goals and fifty-seven corresponding academic expectations written into the Kentucky framework are required and tested, thereby ensuring that they will be taken seriously by educators across the state. The first two goals have particular relevance in the arts: goal number one states that students will learn to “use basic communication and mathematics skills for purposes and situations they will encounter throughout their lives,” and goal two states that students will “apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter throughout their lives.” The expectations that following these general goals are somewhat more specific; the following are most directly rated to the arts:

1.12 Students speak using appropriate forms, conventions and styles to communicate ideas and information to different audiences for different purposes. [1.12 refers to expectation number 12, under goal number 1]

1.13 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the visual arts.

1.14 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the music.

1.15 Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the movement.

2.22 Students create works of art and make presentations to convey a point of view.


40 John J. Mahlmann, Margaret A. Senko, Michael Blakeslee, Megan Prosser, and Bruce O. Boston, *The National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts* (Reston: Music Educators National Conference, 1994).

41 “Kentucky’s Learning Goals and Academic Expectations.”

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2.23 Students analyze their own and others’ artistic products and performances, using accepted standards.

2.24 Students have knowledge of major works of art, music, and literature and appreciate creativity and the contributions of the arts and humanities.

2.25 In the products they make and the performances they present, students show that they understand how time, place, and society influence the arts and humanities such as language, literature, and history.

2.26 Through the arts and humanities, students recognize that although people are different they share common experiences and attitudes.  

While this new arts curriculum mandate contributed to a significant increase in programming volume for New Performing Arts, the frustration felt by many of Kentucky’s rank and file educators, as they attempted to wrap their teaching around such broad directives, earned the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) a new nickname: Keeps Everyone Running Around. At first, it was enough for New Performing Arts simply to list by number the academic expectation that would be addressed by any particular program, in order generate significant interest in program bookings. This situation progressed dramatically with the publication by the Kentucky Department of Education of two more documents: the Program of Studies\(^43\) and the Core Content for Assessment,\(^44\) which spelled out precisely the elements of the Program of Studies content from which the standardized testing (the CATS test) would be drawn.

Needless to say, it is the Core Content for Assessment that gets the greatest amount of attention from educators: this is the material that students are actually tested on. Although the Academic Goals and Expectations speak in terms of students creating, performing and responding in the arts, it is only the responding portions of the Core Content that are tested. Unlike Academic Goals and Expectations, which require a certain amount of expertise in the field of education in order to implement, the Core Content for Assessment is specific to the arts fields themselves. This is good news for an arts organization designing programs for Kentucky schools. For example, the test taken each year by every fifth grader in Kentucky may include any or all of the following musical concepts:

\(^{42}\)“Kentucky’s Learning Goals and Academic Expectations.”


• Rhythm: meter (duple, triple), time (meter) signature (2/4, 3/4, 4/4), bar lines, rhythmic durations (whole, half, quarter and eighth notes and rests), fermata
• Tempo: slow, fast
• Melody: shape, direction (up, down, same, step, skip), treble clef sign, pitch notation (notes from middle C to F at top of staff), high vs. low notes (pitches)
• Harmony: unison, parts, intervals, tonality (major, resting “home” tone)
• Form: call and response, two-part (AB), three-part (ABA), round, verse/chorus, repeat signs
• Timbre: instrument families (brass, woodwind, string, percussion, folk), voice parts (high, low) sounds of voices and instruments
• Dynamics: soft (piano), medium soft (mezzo piano), medium loud (mezzo forte, loud (forte)

In addition, students may be asked to:

• Identify and discuss simple musical forms.
• Recognize and be able to distinguish families of instruments (brass, woodwind, percussion, string, folk) and/or vocal timbres.
• Identify similarities and differences in musical elements used in the music of Native American, American Folk, and West African cultures, including instruments unique to each culture.
• Identify and discuss various styles of music (blues, spirituals, popular, rock, rap, country, game songs, folks songs, work songs, lullabies, marches, patriotic, bluegrass).
• Identify composers (Bach, Handel, Vivaldi) and instruments (organ, harpsichord, orchestral families) unique to the Baroque period.45

Since the Core Content for Assessment was first introduced in 1996, the goals of the arts education efforts of New Performing Arts have been shaped by a keen awareness that our efforts would be most likely to succeed if each arts education program we delivered were able to address, first and foremost, at least some of the specific curricular content detailed within it. Indeed, in the years since the Core Content for Assessment (now in its third revision) first came out, New Performing Arts has delivered several thousand arts education programs to schools in over seventy-five counties, responding to a need widely perceived in many Kentucky schools for outside expertise and special assistance in teaching the specifics of music and other arts disciplines.

The evolution in Kentucky of a required curriculum in the arts might well have generated far more significant levels of fear, frustration and political resistance on the part of teachers and administrators, had it not been for the efforts of the Kentucky Department of Education staff. Arguably the single most influential person in the development of a broad understanding of the “Arts and Humanities” component of Kentucky’s education reform - and through it the articulation of a philosophy of arts education itself - has been Jimmie Dee Kelley, Arts and Humanities Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education from 1997-1998 through 1999-2001. Kelley, who began her career as a music teacher in the Hardin County Schools (and returned there in 2001 to serve as one of two district-wide Instructional Supervisors), tirelessly traveled the four corners of Kentucky for the Kentucky Department of Education, leading in-service training workshops in the Arts and Humanities and reaching hundreds of Kentucky’s teachers.

Kelley has articulated a philosophy of arts education that divides the field into three broad categories: education in the arts (the learning of an arts discipline), education about the arts (learning about an arts disciple – its techniques, cultural context and historical development), and education through the arts (the teaching of other academic subjects using an arts discipline as a tool for learning). With Kentucky’s arts curriculum mandate eliminating the need constantly to assert the importance of the arts as an important part of a basic education, Kelley was further able to articulate a model for collaborations between classroom teachers/generalists and arts teachers/specialists (and by extension, visiting arts resources). For true collaboration to occur, Kelley asserts, all three categories of arts education must be shared. Teaching in the arts, led by arts specialists who plan and deliver instruction, can be enhanced by classroom generalists who reinforce and assist with curricular planning; it is classroom teachers, after all, who spend the majority of regularly scheduled contact time with students. Conversely, teaching through the arts, led by classroom generalists who plan and deliver instruction in a wide variety of subjects, can be enhanced by arts specialists who find innovative ways to reinforce and assist with curricular planning. Finally, teaching about the arts – with historical and cultural intersections across a wide range of curricular areas – is where classroom generalists and arts specialists can collaborate as equals, sharing the tasks of planning and delivering instruction.46

46 “Core Content for Arts and Humanities Assessment,” 5.
Kelley’s philosophy of arts education, together with her model for arts education collaboration, imply limits on what an arts specialist – and by extension a visiting artist – can and should be called upon to do. A visiting artist should not, for example, be left alone in a room full of students to use his or her art form solely to teach another subject like math or science; an artist is not a mathematician or a scientist! And while an artist’s approach to other subjects may be innovative, it may also run counter to the best methods used by the teachers that teach the subject every day. Likewise, a visiting artist cannot be expected, in the span of a forty-five minute program, to teach an entirely new artistic concept to the point of complete student understanding, if the new concept is never reinforced by classroom teachers after the artist has left. And a visiting artists cannot be expected, without any prior contact with a classroom teacher, to know which areas of their own art form may intersect with other subjects currently being taught by that teacher. New Performing Arts has experienced its greatest success when its role has been limited to the design and distribution of programs by artists and ensembles who – first and foremost - can demonstrate and explain clearly a high professional level of performance expertise in the their own arts discipline, and when those programs are designed to parallel and complement – not to supplant - the day-to-day efforts of classroom teachers and arts specialists in the schools themselves.

Guided by this philosophy, the programming approach adopted by New Performing Arts in Washington County in 1993 continues a decade later: providing arts education programs through multi-day, multi-school residencies by visiting ensembles. The Whitney Trio’s residency, thrown together quickly in order not to lose access to a Kentucky Arts Council grant, in fact provided the seeds of New Performing Arts’ approach to the development and distribution of arts education programming in many more counties. Indeed, the approach that grew out of the initial Washington County experience has resulted in a large number of similarly long lasting community relationships: providing schools with arts education programs that have improved over time, both quantitatively (more programs per year and more time spent by students with artists), and qualitatively (paralleling local school implementation of the arts curriculum mandated by the Kentucky Department of Education).

New Performing Arts’ programming approach is also derived from the simple reality, encountered in county after county, that arts education projects may not be politically supportable at the school district level unless they are distributed equitably. Unfortunately, the
national trend in arts education programming is precisely the opposite: a limited number of extremely high cost programming initiatives undertaken by a limited number of extremely high profile arts organizations (with the corporate and foundation connections to raise extremely high levels of grant funds) has led the arts education field at large to embrace the idea that extremely in-depth programming, focusing upon teaching through the arts, should be the primary aim of arts education.\textsuperscript{47} New Performing Arts’ approach, on the other hand, has been to initiate new arts education projects at whatever programming level a particular school district is able to commit to financially, building incremental improvements to programming – for everyone – with each succeeding year. The best example of the results of this approach – in Greenville, Kentucky – will be discussed more extensively later in this paper. But the four-year development of New Performing Arts’ program partnership with the Marion County can serve as a good illustration here.

New Performing Arts’ partnership with the Marion County Schools began in 1996-97, when New Performing Arts’ program director, Michele Wiggins (now Michele Wogaman, married to the author in 1999), met the president of Farmers National Bank in Marion County, Kentucky, T. Eugene Spragens, and his wife Nadine. Encouraged and inspired by the Spragens’ passionate concern for supporting the growth of arts programming in their community, Michele sent the Tower Saxophone Quartet to Marion County for a three-day residency in the schools and a public concert supported by the bank. The Tower Saxophone Quartet, graduates of the Eastman School of Music whose excellent educational assembly program had been developed with assistance from the Young Audiences chapter in Rochester, New York, made enough of an impression that the school district and the bank were interested in more.

In 1997-98, two different musical ensembles were sent into the Marion County Schools: the T’Ang String Quartet, a group from Singapore studying in the United States with Paul Katz (formerly of the Cleveland Quartet) at Rice University; and the Brass Company, the second of two ensembles New Performing Arts hosted in year-long residencies in eastern Kentucky through the Chamber Music Rural Residencies program. The T’Ang Quartet focused the design of their program on the historical and cultural aspects of the Core Content for Assessment, while the Brass Company focused upon the elements of music theory.

\textsuperscript{47} An example of this type of programming, the Cleveland Orchestra’s \textit{Learning Through Music} program, is discussed in a later section of this paper.
A similar set of programs was designed for the 1998-1999 academic year, with the Madera Oboe Trio taking on the “elements of music” role, and the cello-piano duo of Brant Taylor and Steve Wogaman taking the “history and culture” approach. (Taylor, since 1998 a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, first came to perform for New Performing Arts in 1994 while still a student at Indiana University.) A third event was added to the schedule for Marion County students, when an Indiana University Chamber Opera production of Kurt Weill’s *Down in the Valley* was presented in both Lebanon and Greenville, using the combined choirs of both county’s high schools as the opera chorus.

A different sort of program enhancement was added to the two-residency design the following year: a required two-day arts-education professional development workshop during the summer of 1999 for every teacher in the Marion County schools. Presented by Michele Wogaman (who by this point had become one of Kentucky’s leading arts education authorities, as well as New Performing Arts’ Executive Director), the workshop reviewed the elements of the music portions of the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment, along with helpful information about the programs scheduled for the following year: Marley’s Head, an early music ensemble from Baltimore; and Verederos, a gifted husband and wife contemporary music duo coming from the Eastman School of Music, comprising flutist Jessica Johnson and percussionist/composer Payton McDonald.

By the 2000-2001 academic year it was becoming clear that, in order to maintain consistent long-term programming relationships with its larger arts education project sites, New Performing Arts would need to have the ability to provide arts opportunities in other art forms that are represented in the Core Content for Assessment. Indeed, in 2000-2001 the Marion County Schools decided to expand the schedule to three experiences per year, and to expand into two other art forms. So New Performing Arts offered residencies with the Cerulean Wind Quintet from Eastman, the Kentucky Ballet Theater from Lexington, Kentucky, and Octavia Sexton, a talented Appalachian storyteller from Rockcastle County, Kentucky, along with teacher in-service training opportunities presented by the artists themselves.

Financially speaking, the commitment of the Marion County Schools increased each year along with the programming: $900 in 1996-97, $2,300 in 1997-98, $2,475 in 1998-99, $5,800 in 1999-2000, $10,800 in 2000-2001. From the very start in Marion County, the school funds have been supplemented by a very generous business community, led by Gene and Nadine Spragens.
at Farmers National Bank (Citizens National Bank, the only other locally-owned bank and the Spragens’ friendly competitor across Main Street in Lebanon, also deserves mention and thanks here). In addition to subsidizing a portion of the cost of school programs, this extraordinary generosity has enabled the community of Lebanon to enjoy a number of additional public programs each year, from a recital by the concertmaster of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio France to a full-orchestra performance of the Mozart Requiem by the Louisville Bach Society.

But it was during the summer prior to the 2001-2002 season that we knew we had established something special in Marion County. Diane Evans, the dedicated Instructional Supervisor of the Marion County Schools, called to ask us to meet with her about the next year’s programs. She had $12,000 to spend on arts programs for the 2001-2002 academic year, and wanted us to come to Lebanon quickly so the funds would not be spent on anything else. (A series of theater workshops by the actor Phillip Cherry, assembly programs by the Renato Vasconcellos jazz trio from Brazil, and performances by a small ensemble from the Indiana University Opera Theater were sent to all the Marion County schools this year). While there is perhaps no way one could have predicted how arts programming would develop in the Marion County schools six years ago, it is unlikely that the current district-wide commitment to arts programming would have grown to the level now experienced if, back in 1997-98, the process had begun with the grant-based insertion of the 2001-2002 level of programming in just one of Marion County’s seven schools. In New Performing Arts’ experience, programs that begin at scale can grow in depth and complexity over time, whereas programs that start with a high level of depth and complexity are far more difficult to duplicate elsewhere.

_NPA CAPACITY THREE: NOT-FOR-PROFIT BOOKING_

Fueled both by demand related to the standardized Arts and Humanities testing of the Kentucky Education Reform Act and by the near absence of competing artists or groups able or willing to make themselves so easily accessible to schools and communities in rural areas, the demand for New Performing Arts programs began to grow quickly by the 1995-96 season. 1995-96 was also the first of two seasons during which New Performing Arts served as coordinating host to ensembles living in Paintsville, Kentucky as part of the National Endowment for the Arts/Chamber Music America Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program. The combination of these factors resulted in the capacity of New Performing Arts to function as
During the summer of 1995, the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program was about to lose one of its host sites when the scheduled participation of a community in Arkansas was terminated due to the cancellation of the local school system’s support by its new superintendent. New Performing Arts was invited by Chamber Music America and the National Endowment for the Arts to locate a community in Kentucky willing to participate in the program on very short notice (two weeks), with the informal understanding that the residency itself would be awarded to the Tower Saxophone Quartet, the group originally scheduled to reside in Arkansas.

I had met the Tower Saxophone Quartet in the spring of 1994 when they approached me following a career development workshop I conducted at the Eastman School of Music. The quartet was already active on the roster of Young Audiences in Rochester, and was eagerly pursuing playing opportunities wherever it could find them. Remarkable among young chamber ensembles, the quartet was both musically advanced and extraordinarily well organized, with each member taking responsibility for some aspect of the group’s activities (booking, rehearsal scheduling, communications, repertoire, etc.). In 1994-1995, while the group was in the first year of its stint with Chamber Music Rural Residencies, in Tifton, Georgia, they made a trip to Kentucky for a week of programs with New Performing Arts in eastern Kentucky. The ensemble was extremely well received, and so the prospect of hosting them for a full year, with the heavy subsidy that Chamber Music Rural Residencies provides, was an exciting one.

So it was, in 1995-1996, that New Performing Arts became the host institution for a nine-month Chamber Music Rural Residency by the Tower Saxophone Quartet, selecting the Big Sandy region, encompassing Floyd County (Prestonsburg), Johnson County (Paintsville) and Magoffin County (Salyersville), as the primary residency service area. The ensemble would be housed in Paintsville, and the residency’s programs – twenty hours per week for nine months - would be shared between the four school systems in the three counties (three county-wide systems plus a small independent district in Paintsville) and the Eastern Kentucky Concert Series at Prestonsburg’s Community College. (In a move that we bitterly regretted later, the original New Performing Arts concert series in Salyersville was simply folded into this larger regional project, whereupon it died.)
With a wide disparity among the sizes of the area schools and with each school receiving a total of three program visits per grade level, a complex formula was developed for schools to participate financially: 50% based on the school population and 50% based on the number of contact hours needed to reach that population. Combined with local fund raising to be led by the board of the Eastern Kentucky Concert Series in Prestonsburg, this school participation would cover the full cost of the required ensemble stipend match, and their local housing as well.

The residency might have proceeded according to plan but for two things. First, the community of Prestonsburg was in the process of building – and raising funds for - the Mountain Arts Center, a performing arts center with enough seats to accommodate over 40% of Prestonsburg’s population at one time (ambitious, to say the least). Second, the Floyd County Schools, long under fire from the Kentucky Department of Education, was in the process of hiring a new superintendent for eighth time in twenty years.48 To make matters worse, the primary intended local user of the Mountain Arts Center, two affiliated amateur musical groups calling themselves the “Kentucky Opry” and “Kentucky Opry Junior Pros,” had a long-standing program contract with the Floyd County Schools amounting to tens of thousands of dollars per year, and the chairman of the arts center project – serving also in the board of the Eastern Kentucky Concert Series – did his level best to steer the Chamber Music Rural Residencies project (and our more modest $17,000 funding request) as far away from any effective contact with the Floyd County Schools as possible.

In the context of difficult fund raising in the largest community in the residency service area, and the non-participation by the largest school system in the residency service area, New Performing Arts’ capacity to function as a regional booking agent was developed by sheer necessity: we simply had to book the excess program capacity of the Tower Saxophone Quartet in as many additional counties as possible in order to avoid the financial collapse of the project.

Fortunately, the Tower Saxophone Quartet was an easy sell. They were well organized for touring, their standard educational program was appealing on paper, and the cost of engaging them was heavily subsidized by the Chamber Music Rural Residencies grant from Chamber Music America. Furthermore, although the residency was centered in Floyd, Johnson and Magoffin Counties, the entire eastern Kentucky region and much of western Kentucky were areas where the availability of such programs at such a cost was a unique occurrence.

First, extra programs were offered on a pro-rated basis to the counties in the three-county service area, resulting in a few days of extra work with the small independent school system in Paintsville. After that, the first engagements to be booked outside the Tower Saxophone Quartet’s three-county service area – a full three weeks worth - were in Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties in western Kentucky. Muhlenberg County was the site of a New Performing Arts concert series entering its second season (a project discussed at great length later in this paper). Hopkins County was the site of an entirely new concert series project at the Madisonville Community College Fine Arts Center. In both cases, a single concert performance was combined with multiple days of school-based educational programs, and in both cases the school engagements were offered directly to the central school board offices with the help of the single concert performance presenter. This still left a large amount of the Tower Saxophone Quartet’s programming capacity unused, and the budget not yet in balance. And so, with the Kentucky statewide school directory in hand, we started contacting school districts all across eastern Kentucky.

The first thing we learned was that school district central offices tend to relinquish control of funds gradually to individual school buildings as the year progresses. Consequently, while it was easy to line up multiple engagements early in September simply by visiting the central school board offices in Muhlenberg and Hopkins Counties, it was another thing entirely to speak with central offices in eastern Kentucky in February and March. By then, it was necessary to make contact with each school individually, a far more labor-intensive process. The second thing we learned was that selling engagements to schools, at least in rural Kentucky, did not require the costly marketing materials I had become accustomed to seeing in the professional performing arts field. In fact, any sort of written or printed communication was generally ineffective without establishing personal contact first, again a more labor-intensive process. Finally, we found that our single most powerful selling point – communicated by a quick telephone call and followed up by a limited amount of material sent by fax (the quartet’s program outline was of particular interest) – was the combination of the Tower Saxophone Quartet’s high artistic qualifications and the low cost of their programs.

The experience of marketing the Tower Saxophone Quartet’s excess programming capacity in 1995-1996 formed the basis of the school program marketing practices New
Performing Arts still employs today. First, artistic programs are acquired by New Performing Arts in quantities high enough to keep costs low (a two-week residency is typical for a visiting artist or ensemble). These programs are offered in multi-school residency clusters (3-4 days reaching 6-8 schools is typical) to the decision-makers at the central office level (at a time of the year when central offices still have authority over their budgets). Throughout the year, New Performing Arts staff members cultivate personal working relationships with these decision makers, using mass communication methods (mail and Internet – never high-cost printed materials) only to troll for new contacts when a limited artistic capacity remains after long-term contacts have made their selections. Having seen the exclusive round-table meetings that occur at national booking conferences (like the annual meeting of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in New York) where the biggest managers and presenters negotiate multi-engagement tours for the biggest stars, I believe that the highly personalized marketing methods employed by New Performing Arts at the base of the pyramid may be little different than those employed by the most highly-compensated managers at the top. The only real difference is the size of the fees, and the income gap that results when that level of service and attention is provided at the lower end of the pyramid.

NPA CAPACITY FOUR:
ARTIST IDENTIFICATION AND TRAINING

The identification and orientation of artists as a formal operating capacity did not become necessary for New Performing Arts right away. In its first three seasons, New Performing Arts’ roster of participating artists was limited to the personal friends and contacts of its founder. In addition to the artists who appeared on the first concert series in eastern Kentucky, New Performing Arts engaged the Heritage Brass Quintet from Cleveland, harpsichordist Marc Bellassai, another brass quintet from the Louisville Orchestra, the Tower Saxophone Quartet, the Everest String Quartet from Midland-Odessa, Louisville jazz pianist Ray Johnson, French cellist David Etheve, and Greater Louisville Voices (a Louisville-based gospel choir). This relatively small group of artists was sufficient to meet the demand experienced through the 1994-95 season. In 1995-96, the rapidly growing demand for school programs was balanced by previously discussed development in New Performing Arts’ Chamber Music Rural Residencies site: several weeks worth of programming capacity by the Tower Saxophone Quartet was
available to meet any increases in demand for more programs. In the 1996-97 season, however, New Performing Arts experienced a real artistic supply crisis, in the context of a new project developed through a Leadership Initiative grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Eva Jacob, the staff member of the National Endowment for the Arts who created the original concept for the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program, was a regular attendee at the annual conferences of Chamber Music America, held in New York each January. I met Eva while I was attending the 1996 Chamber Music America Conference as the site coordinator of the eastern Kentucky Chamber Music Rural Residencies site. I shared with her my observation, based upon the high demand NPA was experiencing for programs by the Tower Saxophone Quartet, that a market-rate sale to Kentucky schools of all of the programming capacity that could possibly be scheduled within a full nine-month residency would generate about $100,000 in earned income alone: considerably more than what was needed to cover the full budget for the nine-month residency. If true, this would mean that the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program could be implemented without any outside assistance from Chamber Music America or the National Endowment for the Arts, and in many more communities than the ten or so the program was able to fund each year. Jacob was interested enough in this observation to encourage me to submit a proposal for a Leadership Initiative, to fund a portion of the administrative cost of developing a nine-month rural residency for a string quartet, with the quartet’s programming capacity to be shared among three rural Kentucky regions, each region anchored by a branch of the Kentucky Community College System. Other than $30,000 in administrative support (half from the NEA and half from the Chancellor of Kentucky’s community college system), the project would be funded entirely in the local communities and schools: the full ensemble stipend, all housing costs, and the costs associated with moving the quartet among the three communities.

The Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts approved the Leadership Initiative Grant in February 1996, and the match from the Kentucky community college system was approved in March. During April, New Performing Arts successfully contacted school districts in and around three communities: Somerset (in southeastern Kentucky), Madisonville (western Kentucky) and Pleasure Ridge Park (the southernmost rural suburb of Louisville in Jefferson County). The project proceeded smoothly, with school district after school district signing up to participate, until by the end of May 1996, New Performing Arts was able confidently to project
enough local community support to fund the entire cost of the shared, three-site residency – nearly $50,000. Only then, with sufficient resources committed, did New Performing Arts begin its search for a string quartet to take the residency on as their project. Unfortunately, by mid-May most gifted string players had long since made other educational or employment commitments for 1996-1997.

The office of New Performing Arts became the command center for a nationwide sweep in search of an interested, qualified, available string quartet. In a process that lasted the entire summer of 1996, every major music school, every well-known chamber music coach, every summer festival and quartet program in America and Canada was contacted in an exhaustive survey that resulted in our thorough knowledge of the world of emerging string quartets – but no quartet for the project. Finally, in an act of desperation, New Performing Arts was forced to alter the project to allow three different quartets from the Eastman School of Music to fulfill the programming commitments designed for a single full-time quartet, assigning a different quartet to each participating community. Fortunately, Eastman’s Director at the time, Robert Freeman, was willing to commit Eastman School funds towards the resulting increase in travel expenses, and the project was completed successfully.

While alteration of the Leadership Initiative project meant that its stated objectives were only partially met, the solution found for the string quartet problem resulted in partnerships that continue to this day between New Performing Arts and several of the country’s major professional music training institutions. What New Performing Arts has come to refer to as the “Conservatory Project” includes significant long-distance program development assistance to student ensembles followed by intensive one or two-week program residency experiences in rural Kentucky communities.

After Dr. Freeman’s departure from Eastman in December 1996, this project received significant national attention in an article in the November 1997 issue of Symphony Magazine, written for the American Symphony Orchestra League by Heidi Waleson, the music and opera reporter for the Wall Street Journal.49 The article described new developments in the training provided to young musicians at professional schools of music, beginning with the detailed description of a visit by a string quartet from the Eastman School to a high school in Pulaski.

County, Kentucky. Catherine Denmead, cellist in the quartet who later worked on the program staff of Chamber Music America, was quoted extensively at the beginning of the article:

We were playing in one-room schoolhouses, talking about how a quartet works as a team, about problem-solving, about how music is an expression of angry or joyful feelings. We played everything from local fiddle tunes to Bartók. In each case, we had to think about what we wanted the children to take away from the experience. You are responsible for so much – you have to perform at a high level, and have a reason to perform. You also have a chance to be responsible, to make an impact on someone’s life.50

Although it was a marvelous affirmation of the growing significance of our work in Kentucky for the music field at large, the article provided New Performing Arts with a hard lesson in the perils of asymmetrical partnerships: in spite of our having been the organization that independently conceived of, implemented, and secured funding for every detail of the residency engagement described in the article, New Performing Arts itself was never mentioned, and credit for the program went entirely to Eastman.51

The Conservatory Project has since become New Performing Arts’ primary source of additional artists: advanced student ensembles as well as former student ensemble members who return independently after graduating. One such Conservatory Project alumnus, Chicago Symphony Orchestra cellist Brant Taylor, now serves on the New Performing Arts board of directors. In addition to Eastman, New Performing Arts’ Conservatory Project partnerships now include the Oberlin Conservatory, Indiana University Opera Theater, New World Symphony, and for the first time in 2002-2003, the New England Conservatory. Each of these institutional relationships has been established through personal contact: my own study at Eastman and Indiana, an Eastman classmate on the administrative staff of Oberlin, a colleague and friend on the staff of New England Conservatory, and a friend of a friend who until recently served as Outreach Director of the New World Symphony.

50 Heidi Waleson, “Learning to Teach,” 17.
51 The real danger for Eastman, not to mention a noted journalist like Heidi Waleson, is in publishing an inaccuracy. Not only did the article fail to mention New Performing Arts or the National Endowment for the Arts as the project’s creators, it also deeply offended educators in the quartet’s three-county service area. The fact is that no “one-room schoolhouses” are still in use in Kentucky; the smallest school visited by the quartet, Eagle Elementary School in McCreary County, educates about 130 students in a building with nine classrooms that was constructed in the 1960’s. Rural schools deserve more respectful treatment from visiting artists and media alike, particularly in a state where education reform in the arts is so advanced.
Not every student at a major professional school of music has the artistic security, personal maturity and communication skills necessary to succeed in an intensive residency in Kentucky’s public schools. New Performing Arts has used both formal and informal mechanisms for identifying which ensembles to invite. In 1997-1998, a single cello professor at Eastman (coach of two of the three groups that had participated in our Leadership Initiative project the year before) selected all of the groups. This proved to be a mistake: prospective participants were limited to her own students, causing other faculty to become less than supportive of the project as a whole. The following year, therefore, I traveled to Rochester to conduct auditions at Eastman myself. Then, in 1999-2000, the members of the Ying Quartet were asked to identify and prepare groups for us; as chamber music coaches to the school at large, the Yings were less susceptible to the politics of competing faculty studios. Since 1999-2000, New Performing Arts has depended upon a single (non-studio-teaching) contact at each partner institution to identify groups to come to Kentucky: the Associate Deans at Eastman and Oberlin, the Outreach Director at New World Symphony, the Career Office Director at New England Conservatory, and the Opera Theater Director at Indiana University.

In addition to providing a resource for the identification of many of the artists themselves, the New Performing Arts Conservatory Project has also become a laboratory of sorts for the training of young musicians in the development of programs for Kentucky schools. The importance of our taking an active role in training and program development became clear when a near disaster occurred to a talented violin and guitar/composer duo from Eastman, during a 1997-1998 season residency in Casey County. Following the first day of the duo’s programs, New Performing Arts’ program director Michele Wogaman received a late-night phone call from the Casey County Instructional Supervisor, who in turn had been receiving irate phone calls all evening from principals indicating that the programs had been less than successful. Michele immediately cancelled the second day of programs, and I hopped in the car the next morning to see what was going on. I discovered, in speaking with the shell-shocked duo, that they had organized their program in strict chronological order, beginning with an uncut transcription of John Dowland’s song, “Flow My Tears,” ending with an original composition for amplified violin and electric guitar, with a lot of explanatory narration in between complex enough to require a significant background in music history and theory to understand it. When a gymnasium full of high school students was forced, at 9:00 a.m. on a Monday morning, to listen
to a slow renaissance melody while gazing at the open case of a glittery electric guitar, it is little
wonder that their program was doomed from the start. Over the course of two hours, the duo and
I reshuffled their prepared material, cut and revised their commentary about it, and finally
created a program better suited to a rural public school audience.

The Eastman duo’s approach should not have been a surprise to anyone. Students at
major professional schools of music learn to categorize music from a historical perspective, they
learn music theory – at least in part – in the context of the gradually increasing complexity of
those musical styles, and they perform complete works of music for (and only rarely speak to)
audiences that sit in apparently quiet understanding of the same things. A rural public school
audience could not be more different! In redesigning the duo’s program, I asked them to stop
thinking of historical progression as an effective means of organizing the sequence of music
works in their program: their audience was made up of kids who likely had no background
whatever in music history. Instead, I asked them to think of the surface characteristics of the
pieces – the tempo, the textural density, the harmonic rhythm, the prominence of melody – and
to come up with a sequence of works that provided for maximum variety from one piece to the
next (starting with something a little more perky than “Flow My Tears”). After this, I asked
them no longer to think of their program as a series of pieces linked by intervening narrative
(“play some, talk some, play some more”), but as a series of roughly ten-minute educational
units, each unit employing music to illustrate an educational point. A total of four or five of
these educational segments then could be connected by an easy-to-remember overall theme.
Once this was accomplished, I reviewed with the duo some of the basic do’s and don’ts of
making educational presentations: do start your program with energy and enthusiasm,
establishing a rapport with the audience as a person first and a musician second; don’t give in to,
or if possible even acknowledge, requests for music other than what you have prepared; when
asked a question by a student, repeat it so that everyone can hear what you are talking about, etc.

Following the program redesign session, I convinced the Casey County Instructional
Supervisor to allow a single program to take place on Wednesday, at a school where she felt the
principal would be the toughest critic. She and the principal of the selected school could then
evaluate the revised program and decide together whether or not the final two days of the
residency would take place. Thankfully, the program on Wednesday was a success, and the rest
of the residency was completed as scheduled. (The duo from Eastman never knew that their one program on Wednesday was an audition for the rest of their trip.)

Organizations like New Performing Art may be better suited than professional schools of music to train young musicians to program and perform effectively for public school settings. Such training is only partly subject to generalizations: age appropriateness, pacing, audience control skills, participation elements, etc. Much of it is relative to the educational requirements prevailing in the state or locality in which the program takes place, and it is always a question of matching the strengths and interests of an artist or ensemble with the needs and interests of teachers and their students. Thus, although there are many faculty members at professional schools of music who have extensive past experience in performing for school audiences (like the Ying Quartet at Eastman, for example, with their Chamber Music Rural Residencies experience in Jesup, Iowa), music faculty may have had little or no direct experience with multiple types of audiences and the specific requirements of multiple states. Indeed, the Kentucky Education Reform Act makes programming for schools in Kentucky an exercise quite unlike that in most other states: as mentioned earlier, musical content is valued by teachers because it is in the Core Content for Assessment. Consequently, groups from Eastman have frequently arrived in Kentucky with programs perhaps well-suited for school audiences in Rochester, New York (or Jesup, Iowa) that have had to be re-designed on-site in order to accommodate the particular program content expectations of our local educators.

Finally, as indicated in the preceding description of the arts education programming capacity, New Performing Arts has found it necessary to develop artistic capacity in other disciplines found in the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment. The first area explored outside of music was dance, an area of the Core Content for Assessment almost completely absent from the training and experience of the ranks of teachers in most Kentucky schools. In 1999, Michele Wogaman developed a ballet assembly program together with Rebecca Ratliff, a dancer in the company of Kentucky Ballet Theater, who not only danced with the company, but also functioned as the small company’s public relations officer and education director. By 2002, that program, with Rebecca as narrator and two company dancers as demonstrators, has been presented hundreds of times in dozens of counties. In 2000 (at the urging of Young Audiences), New Performing Arts made its first foray into art forms even more distant from classical music than ballet, by offering programs by the noted Kentucky storyteller, Octavia Sexton. These
programs were well received, and, after a couple of false starts with other actors and theater organizations, New Performing Arts added the gifted Louisville-based actor Phillip Cherry to the roster. His assembly and workshop programs teach the basic elements of theater found in the Core Content for Assessment, and introduce students to his real passion: the poetry of Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Langston Hughes.

One might ask, where does New Performing Arts draw the line in developing artistic programs that are outside its classical music mission? Two guiding principles have obtained. First is the reality that without programs in other disciplines the school districts we work with might well seek the services of competing organizations, such that we might not be in a position to offer that district our high quality music programs at another time in the future. Second, we are careful to offer programs that reflect a high degree of artistic preparation, whatever the discipline. Recalling the philosophy of arts education articulated by Jimmie Dee Kelley, New Performing Arts does not offer as a visiting arts program any activity that can just as easily be accomplished by a gifted classroom teacher. Michele Wogaman often refers to the “Miss Pam Test,” named for Pam Potts, the extraordinarily creative and dedicated pre-school teacher of our three-year-old daughter. As we watch the products of creative arts and crafts projects come home nearly every day, we are reminded that much of the best arts teaching is implemented in classrooms by the teachers themselves. If Miss Pam can teach her students to make sock puppets, then New Performing Arts should not send a high-priced visiting artist to do the same thing.

A continually evolving roster has successfully maintained the continuity of New Performing Arts’ programming with many repeating communities and school districts. As these words are being written (in May 2002), Michele Wogaman is writing to several hundred Kentucky schools announcing the New Performing Arts roster for the 2002-2003 season, a list of programs of which 60% are in classical music:

- Oberlin Conservatory ensembles
- Eastman School of Music ensembles
- A Guitar Quartet from the New England Conservatory
- A quartet from Indiana University Chamber Opera
- New World Symphony String Quartet
- Cleveland Orchestra violinist Steve Rose
- The Whitney Trio
- Marley’s Head early music ensemble
Classical pianist Steve Wogaman  
Brazilian jazz pianist Renato Vasconcellos  
Ballet dancer Rebecca Ratliff  
Modern dancer Rebecca Culpepper Hoffman  
Oberlin College’s Dance Diaspora  
Storyteller Octavia Sexton  
Actor Phillip Cherry

**NPA CAPACITY FIVE: FINANCING - BUDGETING AND FUND RAISING**

Perhaps the single greatest challenge in the New Performing Arts project has been the issue of its ongoing financing. The original objective of this study was to demonstrate a method for initiating new classical music concert series in three small communities, without any provision for sustaining them over time. Similarly, the original funding came in the form of a one-time challenge grant from the Mary and Barry Bingham, Sr. Fund, with no provision for the permanent funding of the New Performing Arts, Inc. organization itself. An effective method for keeping the organization afloat – and with it all of the projects it undertakes – has taken all of ten years finally to figure out.

At first, financial attention was paid only to the budgets of the three original community projects: efficiency in expenses and a healthy balance between locally earned and locally contributed income. Except for the grant funds that covered the author’s costs during the first year, no thought whatever was given to the long-term financing of New Performing Arts itself, in spite of the fact that New Performing Arts was promising to become a valued resource for ongoing technical support in a growing number of communities and school districts across Kentucky. When the first season finished with New Performing Arts showing a 10% deficit (financed on my personal credit cards), there was little choice but to address this problem, at least in the short term. (Ironically, it was precisely this deficit spending in the early years of New Performing Arts that impelled the project forward, allowing for the development and multi-year observation of the other operating capacities.) Indeed, the issue of New Performing Arts’ long-term financial stability is central to the successful outcome of the entire study, to the extent that the participating communities and school districts would maintain any level of dependency on the technical support that an organization like New Performing Arts provides. And to the extent that New Performing Arts may be a new type of non-profit arts organization, focusing on the delivery of technical support in multiple arts program development capacities, then the nature of its long-term funding is crucial. In New Performing Arts’ experience, the funding
components of fund raising, budgeting, and cash-flow management have each required special attention.

Because of the inevitable performing arts “income gap,” income from grants and contributions is the lifeblood of any non-profit performing arts endeavor. Much has been written, and much will be written, about fund raising in a non-profit arts environment, and so this study will avoid covering the same territory in detail. However, several aspects of the approach to fund raising employed by New Performing Arts over the years may prove interesting, particularly to those who might wish to create a similar initiative elsewhere.

New Performing Arts initial funding started close to home ($28,000 was the original project budget). The Bingham Fund, a Louisville-based family foundation now no longer in existence, had funded several of my projects in the past. After a personal meeting with the Bingham Fund’s Executive Director, John Richards, and the submission of a detailed proposal, the foundation took a chance on my experiment and provided a challenge grant of $13,500. In order to receive this money, I first had to raise an additional $14,500 before a deadline about four months later. About $6,500 of this was raised in increments of $500 to $1,500 from other major Louisville arts patrons. But within two weeks of the deadline I was still $8,000 short.

Like so many others faced with large short-term fund raising tasks, I was searching for sources that could provide most, if not all, of the goal. One of those potential sources was a New Performing Arts board member from Bloomington, Indiana, Leonard J. Newman, a successful retired jeweler and a highly effective fundraiser for a variety of Bloomington area arts and civic causes. Instead of making a large contribution toward my effort, Mr. Newman taught me an important lesson about short-term fund raising for arts projects. In his home office one afternoon, he had me begin to compile a list of 80 persons that I knew personally and who might be willing to commit $100 immediately to my project. By the time I left, I had a list of about 25 people (including several prominent Indiana University School of Music faculty and administrators) along with Mr. Newman’s check for $100. Why $100? Because in telephone calls and visits to the prospects on the list, a decision about $100 was likely to be a quick one – yes or no – and time would not be wasted providing people with the more detailed information they naturally might want for a higher request. With the help of friends in Louisville and my parents in Washington D.C. the list grew to nearly 100, and in two weeks I had received commitments for the full $8,000.
The Bingham Fund challenge grant and the brief grassroots fund raising campaign that got New Performing Arts started were successful primarily because of the strength of my own personal contact with the contribution decision makers. In fact, with the exception of routine applications to the Kentucky Arts Council, every grant and contribution received by New Performing Arts since it was founded in 1991 – nearly $1 million worth - has been linked in some way to personal contact.

After the first round of fund raising, a vital element in sustaining this fund raising approach has been the development of activities to attract and cultivate new donor relationships. New Performing Arts has made heavy use of two types of donor-attraction activities: direct mail and special events. Direct mail is most effective when the list of prospects is large and the letter can be highly personalized. (Never start a letter with, “Dear Friend,” for example, if mail merge software is available!) Before New Performing Arts developed a list of its own, many days were spent transcribing into a computer database the names of hundreds of donors found listed in the programs of other classical music organizations in Louisville, looking up addresses in the phone book and zip codes at the post office.) The solicitation letters themselves were designed to be easy on the eye and the mind: clear, succinct, and above all, short. The most productive fund raising letters I have written have appealed to the prospect’s concern for the future of live music, described the transforming power of music programs for children, quoted some impressive program statistics, and clearly asked for money, directing the prospect to an enclosed reply envelope with a range of contribution size options, and ending with a “P.S.” that summarizes the entire letter in a single sentence.

Recognizing that most of the letters are simply thrown away, the proceeds from such a campaign are typically not large. If even five percent of new prospects respond at all it is a huge success; one to three percent is more typical. However, one to three percent response from a list of two thousand prospects translates to twenty to sixty new donors – some of whom may become larger donors in the future.

Special events, on the other hand, can provide a more effective way to attract and cultivate donors, particularly for an arts organization like New Performing Arts that already focuses its program efforts upon the delivery of high quality programs in small packages. The special events of New Performing Arts – some advertised publicly and some hosted in private
homes – have provided an opportunity to showcase for donors the very artists and ensembles that provide programs in outreach settings.

Publicly advertised special events are most successful when they can rely upon a high degree of social cache, a relatively high admission price, and techniques like silent auctions to achieve a large charitable margin over often-high event costs. Large organizations – symphony orchestras, opera companies, large performing arts centers – can make very effective use of such events, folding the complex event preparation tasks into already complex operations. For smaller organizations, publicly advertised events can become a significant drain on financial resources and staff time that otherwise would be devoted to programming. New Performing Arts’ attempts at publicly advertised special events (a high profile piano recital series in particular) proved to be extremely costly diversions from its central mission, causing some major donors and board members to confuse the few fund raising programs with the many community- and school-based programs that actually carried out the organization’s mission.

For this reason, New Performing Arts increasingly has focused its donor attraction and cultivation efforts on events in private settings. In fact, three of the organization’s largest individual contributors – collectively responsible for nearly ten percent of all contributed income since New Performing Arts was founded – were first introduced to the organization at performances in a private home. Privately hosted events - typically presented without any admission charge - have included musical programs short enough to allow for brief inspiring remarks about the mission of the organization and inviting guests to “join in the effort.” (Such remarks are most effective if they occur in the middle or end of a program, immediately following the thrilling finish of a great musical work.)

Without an admission price, generating contributions from private events depends upon following up with attendees after the event is over. This is best accomplished in person or by telephone, but it can be accomplished by letter, provided the letter is extremely prompt and speaks specifically to any interest the prospect may have voiced at the event itself. If high quality recording equipment is available (it seems to get cheaper every year), a very effective follow-up technique can be to send each attendee a computer-generated compact disc recording of the event they attended, along with the request for a contribution.

But whatever the method of request, the question of which expenses a requested contribution will pay for is every bit as important as how and in what setting a contribution is
requested. This brings us into the area of budgeting. For some years now, New Performing Arts’ annual budget has been based upon the commonly accepted formula for the balance between earned and contributed income (widely attributed to, but more accurately, observed by, Baumol and Bowen in their 1966 study). This formula calls for earned income to exceed contributed income by fifty to one hundred percent, for a ratio of roughly 2:1 or 3:2. In advance of its 2001-2002 season, for example, New Performing Arts projected $135,000 in earned income and $95,000 in contributed income (the actual year end income total for 2001-2002 may be somewhat higher). On the expense side, $195,000 was projected in program personnel and expenses, and $35,000 in administrative and fund raising personnel and expenses. Although the actual size of the New Performing Arts budget has varied from $48,700 during its first season to a high of $310,000 in 1996-1997, the 2001-2002 budget is typical of the balances between income sources and expense categories the organization has targeted over the past decade.

Whether for individual donors or for institutional grant makers, contribution requests are most credible if they are tied directly to the budget. For many years, New Performing Arts made the mistake of including only compensation to artists in communicating the cost per program, making other costs – upon which programs utterly depend - extremely difficult to justify to donors. If New Performing Arts, on its projected budget of $230,000 for the 2001-2002 season, produces five hundred programs, the average total cost per program is $460. Similarly, the average earned income for each of those five hundred programs is $270. This results in an income gap of $190 per program. A request for a $95 contribution, therefore, underwrites the gap between the earned income and the total costs associated with roughly half of the children attending a school program with an audience of 200 students. Likewise, a $3,800 grant underwrites the gap between the earned income and the cost of twenty similar programs – enough to underwrite a weeklong residency reaching every child in a typical rural Kentucky school district. Once this fundraising/budgeting technique is mastered, it becomes possible to calculate the impact upon programs of contributions and grants of nearly any size, thereby helping donors and grant makers to understand exactly how their contributions are being used.

If an organization’s budget represents its health, an organization’s cash flow represents its pulse: even healthy people die when their hearts stop beating. The most important lesson in the management of New Performing Art’s cash flow was finally learned in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, when the organization (like so many
others) found it necessary to suspend its own fund raising activities while the entire nation focused its philanthropic energy upon the needs of the victims of that horrible tragedy. With little else to do during the resulting period of inactivity in fund raising, New Performing Arts took the opportunity to look for patterns and problems in the way the organization itself was financed.

In examining five years of income and expense statements (the age of the data available in the *Quickbooks* computerized accounting system New Performing Arts currently uses), the portion of income earned from program fees was relatively steady for three years ($84,700 in 1996-97, $87,700 in 1997-98, $81,100 in 1998-99), and then grew significantly for the next three years ($114,500 in 1999-2000 and $141,800 in 2000-01). By contrast, the income received in grants and contributions was wildly irregular: $209,385 in 1996-97 (including $52,500 in one-time program grants), $93,800 in 1997-98, $43,100 in 1998-99, $134,400 in 1999-2000, and $115,800 in 2000-01. Further examination of the same five years on a monthly basis revealed a high frequency of fund raising “valleys” that corresponded with sudden increases in budgeted program expenditures, followed by “peaks” of unusually fast fund raising during months with little or no program expenditures.

Simply put, New Performing Arts was allowing exciting opportunities that generated new program income to determine its overall budget aspirations – without regard for the inevitable income gap that would result as the new programs were implemented. Furthermore, fund raising was being ignored as those program opportunities were underway, so that special fund raising campaigns had to be initiated to bring the daily cash-on-hand up to the level that the new program opportunities demanded. One can imagine the effect of this kind of financing upheaval upon the ability of the organization to plan its budget and pay its staff. To be sure, the only way that New Performing Arts was able to survive some of its leanest fund raising years was the willingness of its two senior staff members (my wife and myself) to go for months on end without receiving salaries. In the months following its post-September 11 budget analysis, New Performing Arts has begun to address this problem successfully by strictly limiting its program budget to the amount of subsidizing contributions available.

In order to keep the income gap (again, defined as the difference between earned income and the sum of all expenses) from pushing beyond the amount of contributed income available, New Performing Arts is now adopting a policy of raising each season’s contributions in advance
of programming. In order to implement this new policy – with the help of some extraordinarily generous donors in Louisville, including one couple that have provided the largest personal challenge we have ever received – New Performing Arts currently is raising the subsidy needed for two seasons simultaneously during a single season, 2001-2002. In this way the precise amount of subsidy available for 2002-2003 will be known at the season’s start, and funds raised during 2002-2003 will then be reserved to subsidize programs during the 2003-2004 season, and so on for future seasons.

Together with careful budgeting and creative fund raising techniques, it is hoped that this method of controlling the cycle of New Performing Arts’ finances – its cash flow – will produce a stable platform for the continued growth of the organization. Indeed, these methods of budgeting, fund raising and financial control may be important aspects of any attempt to create organizations similar to New Performing Arts elsewhere; a topic taken up at the conclusion of this paper.
During the ten years that New Performing Arts developed and implemented projects in a large number of Kentucky communities, one community – Greenville in Muhlenberg County – stands out as the best example of how the five operating capacities of New Performing Arts can work together to achieve a positive, long-term, sustainable result. New Performing Arts’ work in Greenville began with a small project grant from the Kentucky Arts Council, for the purpose of establishing new concert series activity in two or three smaller counties in the western Kentucky region, to be identified and contacted by the Pennyroyal Arts Council in Hopkinsville, New Performing Arts’ co-applicant for the grant. The Pennyroyal Arts Council’s efforts resulted in only one county interested in implementing the project, and so the grant funds were used during the 1993-94 season to present a concert in Greenville, with local coordinating assistance from Roberta Chumley, Chairperson of the recently formed Duncan Cultural Center.

Greenville is the county seat of Muhlenberg County, which was organized in 1798 as Kentucky’s thirty-fourth county, following Kentucky’s admission into the United States in 1792. Named after John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, one of George Washington’s brigadier-generals, the county was first inhabited by settlers from Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as by representatives of General Muhlenberg’s army who drifted west after the Revolutionary War. The Green River, now the county’s northeastern border, served as an artery for the lumber and coal that flowed in liberal amounts out of the area towards the Ohio River near Evansville, Indiana, and from there to all points beyond. In 1872, Biederman DuPont from Delaware (from the family that created the chemical giant, DuPont Corporation) established the Central Coal and Iron Company in what would become Central City, the only other town in Muhlenberg County that rivals Greenville in population and in the size of its economy. In an ironic twist of fate that is still recounted in Muhlenberg County, Biederman DuPont’s son, Thomas Coleman DuPont, ran for mayor of Central City and, after losing to a local candidate, abruptly left Muhlenberg County in a huff. Ultimately returning to the family home in Delaware, he headed his family’s business (selling his interest in 1915 for $20 million), served as a United States Senator and donated the entire Delaware Turnpike system to his home state. His

only major contribution in Kentucky was the $250,000 needed to purchase what is now the
Cumberland Falls State Park, over 200 miles away from Muhlenberg County.

Muhlenberg County’s largest coal company, the W. G. Duncan Coal Company, opened
its first mine in the county in 1900. By 1911, the company was responsible for nearly 25% of
the roughly 2.25 million tons of coal produced annually in the county in those days.\(^{53}\) Like most
mine owners, the Duncan family chose to live several miles from the dust of their mines in the
well-kept city of Greenville. In 1912, Mr. W. G. Duncan built his home, “Thistle Cottage,” on
Cherry Street in Greenville, alongside no fewer than five other coal mine owners in a town with
at least seven millionaires. Roberta Chumley recalls that Greenville was a culturally active
community throughout much of her childhood and early adult life, with one of the Kentucky’s
most active chapter of the American Federation of Music Clubs (the Aeolian Music Club), and
an opera house (the second floor of a building on the courthouse square that has long since been
converted into an apartment).

By 1986, when most of the coal mining activity in Muhlenberg County had subsided (the
remaining western Kentucky coal has tended to be higher in sulfur than more recent emission
standards will allow) and most of the millionaires had moved away, W. G. Duncan’s grandson,
Hamilton Duncan, donated his grandfather’s house, “Thistle Cottage,” to the City of Greenville.
That same year, Roberta Chumley, a former teacher and retired jeweler, donated four large
diamond rings to the city, with the proceeds to be used to establish a cultural center. An advisory
board was formed to prepare the house for use as an art gallery and museum, and on July 23,
1989, the Duncan Cultural Center marked its official opening. Roberta Chumley became its
chairperson a year later.

The first three years of the Duncan Cultural Center were focused primarily upon the
development of its new role as the repository for Muhlenberg County history. Longtime county
residents donated historical records and artifacts, everything from cemetery records to a railway
handcar, World War II memorabilia, and the guitar that country music star and Muhlenberg
County native Merle Travis used to make his last recording. The Duncan Center Gallery
(formerly the Duncan master bedroom) began to be used for rotating exhibits featuring
Muhlenberg County artists, temporary historical displays, and the work produced in art classes
held in the Duncan Center’s basement. Finally, the Duncan Cultural Center began to publish a

\(^{53}\) Rothert, 397.
The Duncan Cultural Center yearbook, with profiles of historical figures from Muhlenberg County, reminiscences of current Muhlenberg County residents, photographs of historic buildings, etc. Also in the yearbook, important events taking place in Muhlenberg County were documented, starting with the dedication of the Duncan home itself.

Looking a bit out of place on page 54 of the 1993 issue of the Duncan Cultural Center yearbook is a Christian Steiner photograph of the Whitney Trio, with a simple caption that reads:

The Whitney Trio gave a concert on Thursday, October 21, 1993 at 7:30 P.M. It was held in the Commons Area of Muhlenberg South Middle School on Paxton Avenue in Greenville. They performed classic and romantic music for violin, cello and piano.\(^{54}\)

This concert, plus a second one by pianist Nada Loutfi in the spring of 1994, initiated a programming relationship between New Performing Arts and the Duncan Cultural Center that has lasted nearly a decade. Indeed, the project in Muhlenberg County quickly became the yardstick by which all other New Performing Arts projects were measured, where the most successful programming designs were first tried, and where New Performing Arts’ own operating capacities were refined and blended into a coherent whole. New Performing Arts itself was created in Muhlenberg County, as much as anywhere, responding to the enthusiasm and commitment of people in this remarkable place – Roberta Chumley in particular. A year-by-year account of the development of this project will be the best illustration possible of the results of the entire New Performing Arts project.

1994-1995

Following the Greenville second concert in the spring of 1994, I met with Roberta Chumley in her kitchen to discuss the possibility of initiating a concert series in Greenville in the 1994-1995 season. I carried with me the awareness, gained in Washington County the year before, that school programming might need to be a more important part of concert series planning than I had originally thought back in 1993, as well as the awareness that ticket sales alone were unlikely to generate a significant amount of earned income. I also carried with me a major revision of the long document I had created to orient communities to the original concert

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\(^{54}\) Roberta Chumley, ed., *Duncan Cultural Center Yearbook* (Greenville: Duncan Cultural Center, 1993) 54.
series project: the fourteen pages had been artfully whittled down to a single legal size page, with a long three-columns timeline listing the tasks the community would be expected to perform, the tasks New Performing Arts would perform, and the tasks we would perform together. In a moment I will remember as long as I live, Roberta Chumley took one look at my beautiful desktop-publishing creation and said in her deep, gorgeous Kentucky drawl, “That’s fine, Steve, but what do you want me to DO?” After she introduced me to the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid), Roberta Chumley and I then designed a concert series project that would serve as New Performing Arts’ model, not just in Muhlenberg County, but in all of New Performing Arts’ larger project sites.

The design was fairly simple: a four-event concert series would be combined with school-based educational programs that would reach every student in the Muhlenberg County Public Schools with one assembly program. Roberta knew from her previous fund raising experiences (there had been many of them prior to this one) that raising funds for a concert series project would be an easier task with the educational mission attached, and I knew that the audiences for public concerts might not reach a level that would be satisfying to business contributors. We agreed upon the following schedule for the year:

- October 3-6, 1994: Four educational program days with visits (grand piano in tow) to each of the eight county elementary schools, plus a public concert, by the Whitney Trio
- December 1, 1994: Public concert by the Pennyloafers Gospel Quartet
- March 7-9, 1995: Three educational program days with visits to the two county middle schools and two county high schools, plus a public concert, by the Heritage Brass Quintet
- May 11, 1995: Public concert by the Ray Johnson Jazz Quintet

We also agreed upon the following budget of expenses for the series:

- $10,000 for Artist fees for four public concerts and seven educational days
- $1,500 for piano moving and tuning, and printed materials
The arrangement was spelled out in a contract between New Performing Arts, Inc. as the supplier and the Duncan Cultural Center as the purchaser. The contract also covered a number of tasks that would be required to make the program a success. The Duncan Cultural Center agreed to make sure there was a performance space available for the entire day of each public performance, to provide piano moving help, to arrange overnight accommodations and breakfast for the artists, to ensure that a meal was available after each public concert, and to provide information needed for printed materials. In addition to providing the artists, New Performing Arts agreed to be available as consulting resource for fund raising, ticket/subscription sales and publicity, and to provide a supply of 11” by 17” and 8-1/2” by 11” posters, printed tickets and programs, pre-written press releases and publicity photos.

The project was supported in Greenville by a broad range of contributors. Although I tagged along for several of the event-underwriter solicitation calls, Roberta Chumley raised nearly all of this money herself: $3,000 from the Muhlenberg County school board, $3,000 from the underwriters of each of the four concerts (at $750 each), and the balance from individuals and businesses who gave at the suggested giving levels of $250, $120, $70 and $50. The basic adult ticket price was $7 ($4 for students), and a basic adult subscription was $25 for the four events. Although the precise ratio of earned income to contributed income is difficult to capture (all contributors were given complimentary tickets and event night box office receipts did not distinguish between ticket sales and new contributors), it is safe to say that the majority of funding for the 1994-1995 project in Muhlenberg County came from contributed income.

As had been the experience in the 1993 series in Whitesburg, the heavy dependence upon contributions seemed to be fine with everyone (so long as the contributions were, in fact, forthcoming), particularly with educational programs constituting such an important part of the project’s design. In the 1994 Duncan Cultural Center Yearbook (written after the Whitney Trio’s residency but before the end of the season), Roberta Chumley described the project:

**A First for Muhlenberg County and Greenville**

A first for our Greenville community and all of Muhlenberg County is the Greenville Community Concert Series begun October 6, 1994 with the first concert, The Whitney Trio, at the Greenville Elementary School Auditorium. In addition to the series and in the same week, the Center sponsored a residency program in all the elementary schools of the county.
By 7:30 on the morning of October 6, a U-Haul truck backed up to the gymnasium of Lake Malone Elementary and with the help of the principal, Joe Wells, George Austin, who had come to photograph the event, and the school janitor unloaded the carefully-wrapped, 850-pound concert grand piano. They rolled it onto the gym floor, unwrapped it, reattached the legs and the pedals, and were ready for the awe-struck children as they filed in and took their seats.

After the first unloading, the county maintenance men took over the loading and became most proficient.

The trio, composed of Steve Wogaman, pianist, Chul-In Park, violinist, and Brant Taylor, cellist, introduced the students to Haydn, Mendelssohn and Shostakovich. To use the words of Noelle Phillips [reporter with the local paper], “they liked what they heard.”

The children were amazed that so much sound could be produced with only three instruments and with no amplification.

This same procedure was repeated for two more schools, Hughes-Kirk and Drakesboro, on that Monday. It was a busy day! In fact, it was a busy week, as the group performed at all the elementary schools, a Rotary luncheon, a church supper, and a dinner at the Center.

Though most of the students had never attended a classical concert or even seen a concert grand piano, they warmed to the music and to the young, extremely talented musicians who presented it.

The high schools and the middle schools will have their residency program in March, when the Heritage Brass Quintet from Cleveland, Ohio, will have their mini-concerts and work with the band students, followed by the Thursday concert.

In addition to the Whitney Trio and the Brass Quintet, other performances will be December 1, The Pennyloafers, an a-cappella gospel quartet from Berea; and on May 11, the Ray Johnson Jazz Quintet from Louisville.

We are happy to have this “first” to provide great cultural programs for our citizens. It was through the generosity of the community – its school board, its banks, its businesses, its citizens and its volunteers that we were able to accomplish this. 55

If the aim of an organization like New Performing Arts is to create and nurture new performing arts venues and activities, then the greatest measure of success is the continuity and growth of its projects. So it was quite exciting to see the 1994-1995 Greenville series, our largest project ever, continue and grow beyond its starting point.

Like the 1994-1995 season, 1995-1996 began with a three-day educational residency and public concert by a chamber ensemble, this time the Tower Saxophone Quartet (by now ensconced in their Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program host community of Paintsville, Kentucky, on the other side of the state). Again, this was followed by a single concert event, but this year the event was a huge one. Jim Walker, former principal flutist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and founder of the jazz-fusion band “Free Flight,” is a Muhlenberg County native. He returned for a concert in November to a full house and for his full fee, something the Duncan Cultural Center was quite proud to pay. The spring educational residency and public concert featured the Everest String Quartet, quartet-in-residence of the Midland-Odessa Symphony and runner-up in the Banff String Quartet Competition. The downside to an otherwise spectacular season was the final concert, performed by a Louisville gospel choir that arrived half an hour after curtain time with only half of their members (the other half having been dropped off to perform a conflicting engagement on the way).

The expense budget for the 1995-1996 series was $14,500 (the total paid to New Performing Arts, Inc.), a $3,000 increase over 1994-1995 caused primarily by James Walker’s higher concert fee. The project actually posted a $2,760 surplus for the Duncan Cultural Center on the income side: 43% earned income from ticket sales ($3,870) and school board fees ($3,500), balanced by 57% contributed income from event underwriters ($4,500) and individual contributors ($5,390).

1996-1997

Two important factors contributed to an increase in program volume and budget size during 1996-1997: the availability of an especially low-cost ensemble to cushion the financial blow of adding a second experience for every student and, more importantly, the manner in which the educational portion of the project was planned.

As described earlier in this paper, New Performing Arts was the recipient in 1996-1997 of a Leadership Initiative Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that allowed us to provide extended residencies modeled after the Chamber Music Rural Residencies program to
three locations in Kentucky. Madisonville Community College, in Hopkins County, was one of the three sites for this project, just to the north of Muhlenberg County. In an effort to reach out to one of its natural regional constituencies, the Community College’s Fine Arts Center agreed to pro-rate two of the eight weeks of its residency and make them available to Muhlenberg County. This translated into a cost of just $500 per programming day, whereas the average price for a program day of the other artists on New Performing Arts’ roster for the year was $1,200. Indeed, the facilitation of the sharing of artists’ programming capacity between multiple counties had, by this point, become an important marketing tool for New Performing Arts.

During the summer preceding the season, New Performing Arts staff met with several of the county’s music teachers to evaluate the programs of the previous two seasons and to plan for the next – the first time we had ever done something like this. We went into the meeting prepared to make a strong recommendation that the Madisonville-resident string quartet be a part of the mix, but otherwise we threw open the floor to suggestions. Several requests were made, among them requests for a percussion experience, for a Latin-American music experience, and for at least some of the students to have a “hands-on” opportunity. After some research into additional artistic possibilities, the following project schedule was proposed:

- Three educational residency days by tenor Stanley Warren, providing workshops with the middle and high school choirs, which joined Mr. Warren in his concluding public concert
- Two educational residency days by recorder player Aldo Abreu (a Concert Artist Guild winner), and a public concert with harpsichordist Jack Ashworth (director of early music at the University of Louisville)
- Nine educational residency days and a public concert by New Performing Arts’ resident string quartet at Madisonville Community College
- Four educational residency days by composer/percussionist Andrew Lazaro, head of the Indiana University Latin American Music Center, and a public concert with his Latin music ensemble

The project was approved by the Muhlenberg County Board of Education, with an increased appropriation of $8,250. The budget for the entire series was $18,450; $4,500 for each artist residency and $450 for piano moving and tuning. (By 1996 New Performing Arts was
providing printed materials for free.) When the school board funds were combined with ticket and subscription sales of approximately $2,500 (again no differentiation between subscriptions and contributions in the box office records), the project’s earned income exceeded contributed income for the first time: 58% to 42%. Event sponsors of $3,000 and a first time ever grant of $2,000 from the Kentucky Arts Council rounded out (and balanced) the Greenville project budget. Baumol and Bowen would have been proud.

On a sad note, one additional concert was added to the 1996-1997 schedule, to honor the memory of Sarah Scott Hansen, the daughter of Muhlenberg County’s choral director, Alan Hansen, who was killed earlier that year. Tenor Stanley Warren, who had spent three days with Mr. Hansen’s choirs in September, returned in May for a memorable tribute that was paid for by a sympathetic donor in Louisville, raising money for the establishment of a scholarship fund in Sarah’s memory. The tradition of a Sarah Scott Hansen Scholarship Concert as the final event on each year’s season continues to this day.

1997-1998

1997-1998 was a difficult year for New Performing Arts, Inc. for reasons unrelated to the Greenville project: significant board upheaval in early 1998 was followed by a nearly terminal fund raising shortfall throughout the rest of that year and much of the next. Nonetheless, the Greenville project continued as though nothing had happened. Indeed, if not for the stability of the Greenville project and the firm commitment of its local leadership – Roberta Chumley at the Duncan Cultural Center and Lois Slinker at the Muhlenberg County Schools – 1998 might have been the end of the New Performing Arts project altogether.

As in the previous year, planning for the 1997-1998 season began with a meeting held with teachers at the Muhlenberg County Board of Education offices. Still reeling from the death of Sarah Hansen (whose father was an active participant in the meeting), the group followed most of the recommendations made by the New Performing Arts staff, starting with the recommendation that the final concert feature the Louisville Youth Orchestra in Sarah’s memory, and that it be presented free of charge.

In addition to the youth orchestra, other activities on the season schedule included six days of educational residency programming and a public concert by the Mike Tracy Jazz Quartet, ten educational residency days by the Madera Oboe Trio (including extra time for some
intensive work with middle school students), and a single educational program and public concert by violinist Guy Comenthal, concertmaster of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio France in Paris, with pianist Nada Loutfi. While the number of educational program days decreased slightly from the preceding year (from 17 days in 1996-1997 to 16 in 1997-1998), it represented a continued commitment on the part of the Muhlenberg County Schools to provide two professional arts experiences for every student. And because the cost of the educational program days was not influenced by the availability of a low-cost ensemble in the county next-door (these artists came from Louisville, Kentucky; Champaign-Urbana, Illinois; and Paris, France), the budget and the financial commitment on the part of the Board of Education actually increased.

The concert by Guy Comenthal warrants special mention. Comenthal came to the United States solely for the purpose of giving performances for New Performing Arts. In addition to the concert in Greenville, he and Nada Loutfi performed in Lebanon, Columbia and Louisville, Kentucky, and in Fairmont, West Virginia. By 1997-1998, New Performing Arts’ booking capacity had reached the point that the organization found itself able to make multi-venue commitments to artists with extremely high travel costs, thus providing small communities like Greenville with access to a caliber of artist that otherwise would be prohibitively expensive. European artists, in particular, have been keenly interested in performing in the United States – even in small towns in Kentucky - and the cost of bringing them here under this sort of arrangement has proved to be surprisingly affordable.

Another factor contributing to the increased commitment on the part of the school system was the development of professional development workshops for teachers in advance of the season. In a stroke of good fortune, New Performing Arts was able to engage Jimmie Dee Kelley to conduct the workshops. Mrs. Kelley, whose widely recognized expertise in arts education has been described earlier in this paper, became the Kentucky Department of Education’s Arts and Humanities consultant in July 1997, but in June was still able to receive a free-lance fee for conducting these workshops without a conflict of interest. New Performing Arts asked her to design the workshops so that they were specific to grade levels: primary (grades K-3), intermediate (4-5), middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12); and covered in a general way the material from the Core Content for Assessment that would be contained within
the arts programs scheduled for the coming year. With Kelley’s permission, the workshops were videotaped, and a copy provided to every school in the county.

In the eyes of Muhlenberg County educators, Jimmie Dee Kelley’s workshops added significant educational value to the programs for 1997-1998. This allowed for a significant increase in the artistic expense budget (the portion of the budget paid to New Performing Arts) to $21,000. For its part, the Muhlenberg County Board of Education approved a formal funding proposal for $10,000 (written by New Performing Arts’ staff), and so with ticket and subscription sales of $3,550, the earned portion of income now reached 57%. With combined event sponsorships and contributions of $8,250, and a Kentucky Arts Council grant of $2,000, the Duncan Cultural Center had $2,800 left over to spend on housing and other miscellaneous local expenses.

The final concert of the 1997-1998 season by the Louisville Youth Orchestra was a “happening” in the truest sense of the word. Because there is no teaching of string instruments in the Muhlenberg County Schools (or, as far as we know, anywhere else in the county), there was great interest in a concert that included so many young people playing string instruments. Upon arrival, the orchestra was treated to dinner along with many members of the Muhlenberg County bands and choruses, who stayed with their families for a very well attended concert. Having been told in advance about the background of the memorial dedication on the concert program, the Louisville Youth Orchestra played their hearts out. And in an unforgettably touching tribute, the Louisville Youth Orchestra members joined the community in filing past the scholarship donation jar to make their own gifts to the Sarah Scott Hansen Scholarship Fund.

1998-1999

Whereas the 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 seasons provided the students of Muhlenberg County with roughly the same number of live arts experiences (two per student in most cases), 1998-1999 saw that number increase to three experiences for all of them, and four for some. This is not a small thing: not only did it represent an increased financial commitment, it also represented a commitment of instructional time – increasingly precious as the pressure of CATS test scores began to be felt.

The programs arranged for the 1998-1999 academic year were as follows:
• Ten educational residency days and a public performance by the Brass Company (a brass quintet that had followed the Tower Saxophone Quartet in New Performing Arts’ eastern Kentucky site of the Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program, settling in Louisville thereafter)

• Six educational residency days and a public performance by pianist Steve Wogaman (concluding with a performance of Gabriel Fauré’s C Minor Piano Quartet with three gifted string players from the Louisville Youth Orchestra)

• Five educational residency days and a public performance by the Madera Oboe Trio

• A public performance of Kurt Weill’s short opera, Down in the Valley, by the Indiana University Opera Theater, with the combined Muhlenberg County High School Choirs serving as the opera chorus (the Sarah Scott Hansen concert for 1998-1999).

The 1998-1999 budget for artistic expenses increased again over the preceding year, to $24,000. The Muhlenberg County Board of Education approved an increase in its financial participation, from $10,000 to $12,400, and Roberta Chumley raised the balance in event sponsorships, individual and business contributions, and, unfortunately, a decreasing amount of ticket sales. With the $3,000 increase in the overall project budget covered almost entirely by the school board, the decrease in ticket sales was not considered a significant problem. Indeed, as increases in the quantity and quality of educational programming became a steadily stronger rationale for the Duncan Cultural Center’s fund raising efforts, income from the sale of tickets became less important to the project’s overall financing.

Professional development opportunities for teachers continued to be a part of the educational program plan for 1998-1999, but instead of offering a day of workshops by an outside resource (and with Jimmie Dee Kelley no longer available to provide a workshop exclusively for Muhlenberg County teachers), the artists themselves each gave brief professional development talks to teachers preceding their public performances. This was well received, but poorly attended, and thus was not continued in future seasons.
The return of the Madera Oboe Trio for the second year in a row was somewhat unprecedented – immediate return engagements are rare on concert series. But because their residency in 1997-1998 had been very well received, there was considerable interest on the part of teachers in bringing them back. In addition, the Brass Company was engaged for intensive middle school work, while my U-Haul truck-borne piano and I were engaged for what had become a fairly standard six-day residency reaching every school. The Madera Oboe Trio was only available in Muhlenberg County for a single week and was not, therefore, engaged to do any intensive work. On the contrary, their extremely compact five-day schedule – the minimum necessary to reach every Muhlenberg County student – was the result of a flurry of communication between Michele Wogaman at New Performing Arts and Lois Slinker at the Muhlenberg County Schools. As an illustration of the efficient use of ensemble time in a New Performing Arts residency, it is worth outlining here:

February 23:
9:00 – 9:40  Grades K-2 at Longest Elementary School
10:00 – 10:40 Grades 3-4 at Longest Elementary School
11:00 – 11:40 Grades 5-6 at Longest Elementary School
12:45 – 1:25  Grades 7-8 at Muhlenberg North Middle School

February 24:
9:00 – 9:40  Grades K-3 at Graham Elementary School
10:00 – 10:40 Grades 4-6 at Graham Elementary School
12:30 – 1:10  Grades K-3 at Greenville Elementary School
1:30 – 2:10  Grades 4-6 at Greenville Elementary School

February 25:
9:00 – 9:40  Grades K-2 at Central City Elementary School
10:00 – 10:40 Grades 3-4 at Central City Elementary School
11:00 – 11:40 Grades 5-6 at Central City Elementary School
12:30 – 1:10  Grades K-3 at Drakesboro Elementary School
1:30 – 2:10  Grades 4-6 at Drakesboro Elementary School

February 26:
9:00 – 9:40  Grades 10 – 11 at Muhlenberg North H.S.
10:30 – 11:10 Grades 10 – 11 at Muhlenberg South H.S.
12:30 – 1:10  Grades K-3 at Bremen Elementary School
1:30 – 2:10  Grades 4-6 at Bremen Elementary School

February 27:
9:00 – 9:40  Grades K-6 at Lake Malone Elementary School
The Madera Oboe Trio’s second Muhlenberg County residency became an object lesson in how important it is for a facilitating organization like New Performing Arts to maintain a degree of separation between its relationships with artists and its relationships with presenters. The Madera Oboe Trio, fondly remembering their extended schedule from the year before, was unhappy spending less time with the students, in spite of having been informed well in advance of their arrival that the intensive programming they had done the year before would be done in 1998-1999 by the Brass Company instead, and that any residency – even a five day residency – would have to reach every school if it was to happen at all. Two of the three ensemble members were extremely vocal in their dissatisfaction: to school officials and their host family. (The third member, an Indiana University graduate student, was angelic. Years later, she and her husband still stay in touch with Roberta Chumley). The trio put New Performing Arts in an extremely difficult position: while performing a residency in the organization’s largest and most important project site, an ensemble we engaged was bypassing New Performing Arts and ignoring arrangements we had made with the Muhlenberg County Board of Education office, communicating directly with principals in individual school buildings in an attempt to alter program schedules that had been agreed to months in advance. Things might have been worse in a newer program site; fortunately, the central office of the Muhlenberg County Schools acted quickly to reconfirm the original schedule with principals. Needless to say, the trio will not be invited back by New Performing Arts.

If an uncomfortable experience with the Madera Oboe Trio was a low point in the 1998-1999 season, the Indiana University Opera Theater performance and the rehearsal that preceded it were the high point. The short folk-song opera *Down in the Valley* by Kurt Weill was composed for radio in 1945, and received its stage premier in 1949, during the first season ever of the Indiana University Opera Theater. Indiana University marked the fiftieth anniversary of this premier with a performance in Bloomington on January 15 and 16, 1989 in the Creative Arts Auditorium, the same hall where the premier took place. A Greenville performance of *Down in the Valley* was scheduled by New Performing Arts as one of two Kentucky stops on a subsequent tour of this production, using Indiana University soloists and the choirs of Muhlenberg North
High School and Muhlenberg South High School along with the Marion County High School Choir as the opera chorus.

In preparation for this performance, the Muhlenberg County Board of Education funded a rehearsal trip to the Musical Arts Center on the Indiana University Campus in Bloomington, to be conducted by I.U. Opera Theater Director Dr. Mark Clark himself. After hearing from Muhlenberg County Choral Director, Alan Hansen, that his choirs were having some difficulty with the dense chorus parts, I became terrified that this rehearsal trip would result in an embarrassing situation for all of us. Mr. Hansen is a dedicated and talented county choral director, but the prevailing standard of music making at the Musical Arts Center is at a higher professional level than even the finest high school choirs in the country, and a number of the Muhlenberg County students did not even read music. So with considerable apprehension, I drove from Louisville to Bloomington in order to meet the bus from Muhlenberg County and escort the choir up to the large rehearsal room to meet Dr. Clark. To my astonishment, Mark Clark was able to engage them in a professional, ninety-minute rehearsal, cutting no corners and producing, at the end, a very fine result indeed. After the final performance three days later in Greenville had just finished (during which Alan Hansen and I both discreetly joined the bass section), a young high school student who had memorized his entire part by rote introduced me to his proud parents and exclaimed to everyone who could hear, “I can sing Opera!”

1999-2000

The Indiana University Opera Theater program that concluded the 1998-1999 season was fresh on the minds of Muhlenberg County teachers and New Performing Arts staff when they met for their evaluation and planning session in the late spring of 1999. By this point, the same group of teachers, central office administrators and New Performing Arts staff members had been meeting annually to evaluate the season and plan future programs for three years. In addition, every school building in Muhlenberg County was by this point accustomed to having artists visit their campuses, and many teachers were making use of educational materials sent by New Performing Arts in advance of those programs. There was now a high degree of mutual trust, respect and confidence; and with it the capacity to think “outside the box” about more complex programming projects. It was this climate that made possible the design of a season for
1999-2000 that included what is perhaps the most ambitious educational project New Performing Arts has ever created.

Using the same five-day schedule created the previous season, the season began with two residencies reaching every school: the “Quartetto Incognito” (string quartet from Eastman that had trouble thinking of a name for themselves), and an ensemble of three dancers from the newly formed Kentucky Ballet Theatre in Lexington. Public performances by both the quartet (which I joined for a performance of the Brahms F Minor Piano Quintet) and the ballet ensemble constituted the first two events on the public concert series; the third was a return engagement by Louisville jazz pianist Ray Johnson, a participant in the 1994-1995 season as well. The lean schedules and relatively low cost of these first three events ($16,000 for all three, out of an available artistic expense budget of $25,500) cleared the way for the ambitious final project of the year, designed by Michele Wogaman in response from Muhlenberg County teachers for a project that gave students a greater opportunity to actually participate in the program. After having numerous conversations with Lois Slinker of the Muhlenberg County Schools and Dr. Mark Clark of Indiana University, Michele presented the project in the form of parallel proposals to the Muhlenberg County Schools and the Indiana University opera department during the summer of 1999. With her permission, Michele Wogaman’s proposal is duplicated here in its entirety (copyright New Performing Arts, Inc.):

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**NPA Arts Education Residency**  
**Muhlenberg County Schools and IU Chamber Opera**  
**A Proposal for Spring 2000**

New Performing Arts will work cooperatively with Muhlenberg County Public Schools and the Chamber Opera of Indiana University in creating and implementing a weeklong arts residency by members of the Chamber Opera in all Muhlenberg Schools, K-12. The residency will culminate in a public performance. The focus of this project will be:

- **an introduction to opera** as a unique and powerful art form, inclusive of many arts disciplines
- **the creation of broad student/community participatory structures** within the residency that are compatible with the art form
- **educational relevance** in the areas of music, drama, literature, and visual art as well as in production values
• **artistic excellence**, and the experience of that excellence by students/community
• **artist development** and growth opportunities for all participants in potential career augmentation/development
• **outcomes/benefits:**
  - Muhlenberg County teachers and students - reaching KERA/CATS goals
  - I.U. student artists - performance experience/new professional skills
  - New Performing Arts - development of sustainable, replicable project model

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**Background**

This project will be located in the Muhlenberg County Public Schools, where NPA has a six-year relationship with both the school system and the community as a whole. The district has made an extraordinary commitment to music education, with multiple experiences for every student each year in all areas of chamber music during that time. Muhlenberg has a great deal of sophistication in the area of education reform, and has done well in translating the reform mandates into concrete educational goals. The expectations of the district with regard to arts education are quite high, and matched by both initiative and a perceived need to take their arts programming to a level beyond the assembly/short workshop format. The Duncan Cultural Center also supports a four-concert series in Greenville, KY, using artistic talent appearing in area schools.

**Project Objectives**

• **Incorporate as many arts disciplines as possible.**
  Opera is an excellent vehicle for such an effort, incorporating theatre, music, literature, visual art, and possibly movement/dance, dependent upon the specific work chosen. This choice will need to be made carefully, taking all program objectives into account. Shape of the educational programs will also need to conform to the KY Core Content. NPA will collaborate with IU Chamber Opera in translating core content into program design. Collateral materials for schools will be created by NPA and a teacher focus group, with technical guidance from IU Chamber Opera.

• **Involve as many students as possible.**
  Many of the participatory elements will take place prior to the actual residency itself. NPA and the schools will administer and facilitate such student participation with input and technical advice from IU Chamber Opera. Student artists from IU Chamber Opera will coordinate audience participation during the actual performance. The residency should provide opportunities for:
  **Performance.** There should be some large-scale participation moments (audience as opera chorus) as well as walk-on kinds of roles for selected students, K-12. This would cover areas of music and theatre. See Technical Requirements.
  **Production.** There should be opportunities for students, K-12, to be involved in the staging and production of the residency, addressing areas of visual art, industrial art, costuming, literature and writing. See Technical Requirements.
• **Opportunities for artist development.**
Most important will be to create a project that provides a satisfying professional experience while also addressing educational issues. Artists involved should take an active role in developing the educational approaches to opera, as well as expect to interact with teachers and educational professionals on-site. Plans for educational materials will require input from artists, particularly in devising post-residency follow-up ideas for teacher. Participatory elements in both educational and public performances will require flexibility and improvisational skill.

• **Culminate in a participatory community event.**
The public performance will be an opportunity for the community to experience some of the desired outcomes of the project. Repertory for this performance might include other works or portions thereof, but should include a public performance version of the residency work, using participation from selected students (which could be identified either prior to the residency, or during it) and incorporating the participatory elements listed above. Performance space will be Muhlenberg County Community Theatre’s Palace Theater, where the Chamber Opera performed in April 1999.

**Technical Requirements:**

Artists needed: Six singers, two pianists, made available to schools as quartets

Project duration: 1 week: Monday-Friday school performances, Saturday public performance

Date(s): Spring, 2000: late February-mid March

Educational programs: 4 forty-minute programs/day or equivalent contact time, 20 educational programs total

Public performance: 1 public performance

**Participatory Elements**

Areas in which participation should be stressed include: music, drama, visual art, industrial arts, costuming, and literature/writing. All students will have opportunities to participate, with children identified as Gifted and Talented at the intermediate level, and students participating in the Arts and Humanities class at the high school level, targeted for intensive participation.

Participation may be divided into two main areas: **performance** and **production**. In the performance area, IU Chamber Opera will implement performance opportunities that have been prepared in advance, with IUCO suggestion and direction, by music and classroom teachers. In the production area, IUCO will
provide directions and specifications in advance of the residency that will then be implemented by teachers and students to create set/stage properties for both the educational and public performances.

Grades 9-12:
**Performance:**
large-scale audience participation
walk-on, non-speaking or simple parts

**Production:**
*Industrial Arts:* building of wooden set frames for school/public performances; either one to be transported school to school, or one for each school
*Theatre Arts:* assistance in lighting/stage mgmt for public perf.
*Visual Arts:* creation of art for sets for public performance and creation of props for public performance
*Costuming:* creation of simple costuming for student walk-ons, to be useable by K-12 if possible
*Literature/writing/journalism/photography:* responsibility for publicity/program production, public performance

Grades 6-8:
**Performance:** lg.-scale audience participation; walk-on, non-speaking pts.
**Production:** creation of art for wooden set frames at their own schools and creation of props for their own school performances

Grades K-5:
**Performance:** large-scale audience participation; walk-on, non-speaking parts; identification of “gifted and talented” students for participation in public performance

**Production:** creation of art for wooden set frames at their own schools; creation of props for their own school performances

**Timeline:** A project of this complexity will require advance planning and sufficient time for artists, classroom teachers and specialists to prepare. The following timeline is a rough guide:

**June-August:**
Identification of repertory (IU, NPA, MCPS)
Design of educational program (IU, NPA, MCPS)
Design of technical specifications (IU)
Begin work on pre- and post-residency educational materials (MCPS, NPA)

**September:**
All teachers, K-12, receive materials outlining the scope of the project, repertory choice, and project objectives.
Schools receive specifications for art for sets
Schools receive specifications for props/costumes
Schools receive details of audience/musical participation
HS shop classes receive specifications for building wooden set frames
HS Theater classes receive lighting/staging specifications for public performance

November:
HS: Check on status of project components
MS: Receive educational materials for pre-residency preparation
K-5: Receive educational materials for pre-residency preparation

January:
HS: Final attention to project components
Focus on publicity and promotion
MS: Receive specifications for art for sets
Receive specifications for props
Receive any music/audience participation prep material
K-5: Receive specifications for art for sets
Receive specifications for props
Receive any music/audience participation prep material

March:
K-12 Residency
Public performance
K-12 Post-residency follow-up activities

Michele’s proposal was greeted with enthusiasm in both Greenville and Bloomington. In the mean time, Dr. Clark was already in contact with Bloomington-resident composer Edwin Penhorwood, who agreed to write a new opera specifically for the project. The opera would to be based upon “Polly Patchwork,” a story by the renowned children’s author, Rachel Field. Miki Lynn Thompson, a Paducah, Kentucky native teaching at the Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, would convert the story into a libretto. Michele spent the better part of the summer and fall facilitating the dialogue among Thompson, Penhorwood, Clark, and Lois Slinker, the arts coordinator for the Muhlenberg County Schools who would oversee the process of preparation in all of the county’s schools. The final product was a delightful short opera, telling the story of a young woman whose grandmother makes her a dress out of patchwork quilt, each patch representing some aspect of her ancestry (and liberally sprinkled by Miki Thompson with facts and figures about Muhlenberg County’s history – 1999 was Muhlenberg County’s bicentennial). When Polly Patchwork goes to school, her friends make fun of her until her
newfound knowledge of Muhlenberg County history makes her the grand prizewinner of a school’s trivia contest.

In the weeks leading up to the project, the Muhlenberg County schools became “opera central.” All over the county, students read and compared the Rachel Field story and the Miki Lynn Thompson libretto, learning about the differences between a narrative and a dramatic text. They went of school-wide scavenger hunts to find the required props, and each school designed and painted its own backdrop for the traveling wooden set frames. Using pre-recorded accompaniment tapes provided by New Performing Arts, the students were taught two choruses to sing at appropriate points in the opera. Lois Slinker at the school board office was the tireless implementer of these preparation activities, and because the activities cut across so many familiar educational disciplines, most classroom teachers were willing and able to lead their own students through their paces. In March, when the eight young musicians from the Indiana University Opera Theater finally arrived in Muhlenberg County, every student in the county knew what was coming and was excited about it.

The schedule during the residency week itself was constructed so that two teams of artists from Indiana University, made up of three singers and one pianist, would each travel to half of the county schools, reaching every school in the equivalent of ten residency days. At the elementary school level, every grade level would receive a twenty-minute program in the morning, where some of the elements of opera were introduced and the Polly Patchwork choruses were reviewed. The opera would then be performed at the same school in the afternoon (two performances, each for about half of the school at a time), with a few students and teachers in small speaking parts onstage and the entire audience as the chorus. The schedule was the same at the middle and high school level, without the small audiences for the short introductory program, and with the high school choruses only serving as the opera chorus.

With so much preparation riding on such a small amount of actual artist contact time in each school, it was important that the very first programs on Monday morning be splendid. Therefore, Michele and I were anxious to consult with the Indiana University student performers upon their arrival in Greenville on Sunday night. Unfortunately, having experienced last-minute difficulty in lining up singers (and failing to line up a second pianist altogether), Dr. Clark was able to spend very little time with these gifted performers in the preparation of their narrative for the short introductory programs. So, on Sunday night in the lobby of the Convention Center Inn
in Greenville, Michele worked with the I.U. students to design their short program narratives while I took my first look at the piano part for the opera (we found a different pianist for days two through five) and kept our one-year old baby occupied.

Early Monday morning, two vans from Indiana University set out in opposite directions from the Convention Center Inn, each bearing three singers, one pianist, one wooden set frame, and one electronic keyboard generously provided by Conrad Music in Louisville. When we arrived at the first school, the van was unloaded, the keyboard set up, the frame set assembled and the school’s backdrop attached. Four short programs commenced, each program introducing a different small group of children to the Indiana University artists who would play the characters the children had already spent weeks reading about. The level of preparation became apparent to the Indiana University performers when it came time to review the two Polly Patchwork choruses: the room literally shook as the children sang! The afternoon performances of Polly Patchwork had the atmosphere of a school field day, with rapt attention from every student; and when the story approached the moment for their choruses to be sung, the children seemed to rise up from their seats as one in anticipation.

At the end of the week, the Indiana University students had to draw straws to see who would get to play the Polly Patchwork characters in the final public performance. During the first half of the performance all six of the singers brought out the most dazzling aria in their repertoire, and during second half, Polly Patchwork received its final Muhlenberg County performance. A dinner and reception at the Duncan Cultural Center afterward introduced the community to the performers, and gave them an opportunity to view all of the student-painted set backdrops on display in the center’s gallery.

While a positive reception at the elementary schools might have been anticipated – it was a children’s story, and its simple choruses written with grade-school students in mind - the big surprise was the positive reception Polly Patchwork received at the high schools. In her attempt to squeeze every last drop of educational value out of the experience for Muhlenberg County’s students, Michele Wogaman designed a writing project for the high schools, asking each student to write program notes and then act as a critic when they viewed the opera. Three of these writing assignments were selected to be printed in the program for the public performance, and one of these – written by Muhlenberg County North High School chorus student Naomi Allen, printed in its entirety in the local newspaper, is worth re-printing here:
Have you ever thought about going to an opera? If you are like most people, that thought has probably never crossed your mind. Why would anyone want to torture themselves in such a way? But wait just a minute, and listen to what has to be said. This may even change your ideas about opera completely.

The opera I am talking about is “Polly Patchwork.” You may have read this story in literature. This is a story by Rachel Field, and it is found in many literature books. It is about a young girl named Polly who lives with her grandmother. They are very poor and cannot afford to buy Polly a new dress for winter. There is a spelling bee coming up and Polly’s grandmother is determined to get Polly a dress by the Friday of the spelling bee. Polly got her dress alright; it was made from an old patchwork quilt. This quilt had a lot of history behind it, and because of that Polly won the spelling bee.

That was a brief summary of the original story. Some people from Indiana University have taken this story and made an opera from it. As some of you may know, this story was written many years ago. A person known as a librettist rewrote this into an opera with modern-day words and situations. By doing this, it is now closely related to school-age persons in Muhlenberg County. The librettist did this by working in local landmarks, songs, and situations.

There is another very important person called the composer. This person actually arranges the music and directs it. When a composer does an opera, he or she must start it out with an overture. I believe the composer takes parts of all the music and blends it to make a very strong impact on the crowd, kind of like a writer does in his or her introductory paragraph. It has to be something that really stands out and causes interest.

So sit back and enjoy the show. By seeing this you will realize that Polly is no different than kids are today. You will see that material things meant a lot then as they do now. Polly was made fun of because of her dress, but because of it she won the spelling bee, or as in the opera, she won the game show. After she won, all the kids who had made fun of her were now chanting her name. I believe Polly became very proud of her dress, and by winning she realized her one true friend is her family from the past.

This opera was made for grade school students. They may not have had the same experiences as Polly, but they could relate to what she went through. Nobody’s perfect and this opera showed that people can be very judgmental.

I believe if this opera had a chance to be performed in Muhlenberg County again, everyone would open their arms and welcome Polly Patchwork back. This is an experience I wish everyone could have an opportunity to enjoy.
Many people, including myself, look at opera as window-breaking, boring performances. After seeing this, my whole view changed and I think many others would, too, if they gave opera a chance.\textsuperscript{56}

By any arts-education measure, the \textit{Polly Patchwork} project was an extraordinary success: an entire county school system was engaged in an arts project for several weeks, with multiple educational outcomes in multiple disciplines and large numbers of students had a great opportunity to feel that they were active participants, not just audience. But perhaps the most significant lesson in this project was that it was implemented and funded, not by a large arts organization with high-profile outside funding, but by the teachers and administrators of a small western Kentucky community and school system who had developed progressively, over six years of partnership with New Performing Arts, the capacity to field more and more complex school and community arts projects.

With an overall season artistic expense budget of $25,500, the year’s activities were funded by a modest increase of school board funding, from $12,400 to $14,500; and an even more modest increase in community funding from $10,400 to $11,000. What likely would have been an expensive and difficult undertaking for a first-time partnership between any arts organization and any school system anywhere was simply the next logical step for the partnership between New Performing Arts and Muhlenberg County.

One final note on the 1999-2000 season: in June 2000, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the Kentucky Center for the Arts convened a meeting of K-12 educators in Owensboro, with the objective of exploring arts-education “best practices” as they currently existed in schools across Kentucky. The invitation-only event brought together the arts coordinators from many individual schools with exemplary programs. But with its countywide Arts and Humanities test scores improving at a rapid pace, the Muhlenberg County Public Schools was the only \textit{entire school system} to receive an invitation to the conference.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56} Naomi Allen, “Polly Patchwork,” \textit{Leader News}, 8 March 2000, 4. It is unfortunate that Naomi, like so many of her peers, was never exposed to the extraordinary television programs through which Leonard Bernstein introduced so many very young Americans – myself included – to classical music. Bernstein’s often-overlooked teaching legacy is the subject of an essay by Joseph Horowitz in \textit{The Post Classical Predicament: Essays on Music and Society} (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995).

\textsuperscript{57} Lois Slinker, personal interview, 5 May 2002.
Following the 1999-2000 season the Muhlenberg County project settled into a continuing pattern. Having experienced such a positive result from the interactive components of the opera project the year before, teachers were anxious to include more hands-on work for their students. In addition, teachers were anxious to explore different arts disciplines and the arts traditions of multiple cultures. This presented a real challenge for New Performing Arts: founded as a classical music organization, nonetheless we now found it necessary to provide high quality experiences in other performing arts disciplines, or risk losing the extremely close working relationship we enjoyed with the Muhlenberg County Schools. As a result, the interactive component selected for 2000-2001 was a twenty-five day string of workshops with Appalachian storyteller Octavia Sexton (where student work was incorporated into each school’s closing assembly program), and in 2001-2002, actor Phillip Cherry did a similar string of workshops for seventeen days. Each season also included two free-standing classical music events: in 2000-2001 performances by a string quartet from the New World Symphony of Miami, Florida, and pianist Stephen Wogaman (previewing my final doctoral recital), and in 2001-2002 a performance by the Western Kentucky University Chamber Singers and a return concert by Muhlenberg County native flutist Jim Walker. Finally, both seasons included two five-to-seven-day residencies reaching every school with assembly programs: Marley’s Head (an early music ensemble) and Walden Theater (a Louisville-based theater education group) in 2000-2001, and in 2001-2002, jazz pianist Renato Vasconcellos (who traveled to Greenville from Brazil) and the Express Dance Company (a modern dance group located through the Young Audiences chapter in St. Louis).

The budget for the Muhlenberg County project increased only slightly in each of these years: to $26,500 in 2000-2001, and to $27,500 in 2001-2002. In both of these years, the increase was absorbed entirely by the Muhlenberg County Public Schools: $16,500 in 2000-2001, and $17,500 in 2001-2002; the Duncan Cultural Center contributed $10,000 to the project each year.

Looking toward the future, one of the important issues to be addressed by the Duncan Cultural Center and New Performing Arts is the fate of the public events series itself. While attended by a small (and in recent years decreasing) fraction of the community, the series nonetheless has been the focal point of contributions from individuals and businesses in the
Greenville community towards the overall project. It is a fundamental component of an important residency funding model that has emerged over the years: in a typical residency in Muhlenberg County, about ninety percent of the activity occurs in the schools, about ten percent in the community. About sixty percent of the funding comes from the schools, about forty percent from the community. Therefore: from the schools’ perspective, they are paying just two-thirds of the cost of the programming they receive; from the community perspective, three-fourths of the money they contribute goes directly to leverage multiple activities that benefit the community’s children, and only one-fourth is spent (some might even say wasted) on a poorly attended public event. Thus both the school system and the community presenter (in this case the Duncan Cultural Center) have a vested interest in the continued participation of the other: the school system might have to cut back on or even eliminate programming without the subsidy it receives from the community presenter, and patrons might not be inclined to contribute to the presenter solely for the purpose of sponsoring public concerts attended by such a small number of people. Looking at the growth of the budget for this project historically, one can also see that a relatively consistent level of contributions from the community have leveraged gradually increasing levels of financial commitment from the school system; and the concert series was, and continues to be, the framework for those contributions.

Therein lies the limit of New Performing Arts’ ability to sustain this work. At a distance of 130 miles, an organization like New Performing Arts simply cannot afford to sell tickets door to door in Muhlenberg County. Just as an ambitious program like the 1999-2000 opera project would have been impossible to implement without the tireless efforts of Lois Slinker at the Muhlenberg County Public Schools, a successful series – and the fund raising attached to it – would have been utterly impossible without the Herculean efforts over the years of Roberta Chumley. In many ways, the role of New Performing Arts in the development of the arts in Muhlenberg County can be summed up as the conceptualization and facilitation of a dynamic partnership between these two extraordinary women and the community institutions they represent. Without a Roberta Chumley and a Lois Slinker, a project such as this one simply may not be possible. Muhlenberg County, to its infinite credit, has both a Roberta Chumley and a Lois Slinker, and perhaps others, too, who can carry this marvelous project forward into the future.
By the spring of 2001, the sum of the budgets for the nine years of arts activity taking place in the name of the Duncan Cultural Center (including the approximate value of the technical support provided by New Performing Arts) exceeded the 1986 appraised value of the home that Hamilton Duncan, Jr. gave to the City of Greenville that year. I had an opportunity in early 1991 to share this information with Mr. Duncan during a recent visit to his home in Florida. In anticipation of Roberta Chumley’s retirement as Chairperson and chief fundraiser of the Duncan Cultural Center, Mr. Duncan contributed a generous percentage of a new endowment to support a portion of the Duncan Cultural Center’s annual arts program in perpetuity. That same spring, the City Council of Greenville authorized the renaming of the series to, “The Chumley Fine Arts Series of the Duncan Cultural Center.”

As I write these words, Roberta Chumley, still vital and energetic in her early eighties, is making preparations to move to a retirement community in Nashville, Tennessee. Already talking about importing New Performing Arts to her new state, she is still actively engaged in the planning of the Greenville project for the 2002-2003 season. Although the project started out solely as a public concert series, she knows – as do we all - that the greatest impact of this project has been upon the students themselves. Consider that nearly every Muhlenberg County eighth-grade student who sat down to take the Kentucky Department of Education CATS test in the spring of 2002 had experienced eighteen live, professional arts programs since they entered school:

- Whitney Trio (first grade)
- Tower Saxophone Quartet (second grade)
- Aldo Abreu, recorder (third grade)
- Madisonville-resident string quartet (third grade)
- Mike Tracy Jazz Quartet (fourth grade)
- Madera Oboe Trio (fourth grade)
- Brass Company (fifth grade)
- Steve Wogaman, pianist (fifth grade)
- Madera Oboe Trio, again (fifth grade)
- Quartetto Incognito String Quartet (sixth grade)
- Ballet Theater of Lexington (sixth grade)
- Indiana University Opera Theater (the opera project - sixth grade)
- Octavia Sexton (seventh grade)
- Marley’s Head (seventh grade)
- Walden Theater (seventh grade)
- Actor Phillip Cherry (eighth grade)
- Brazilian jazz pianist Renato Vasconcellos (eighth grade)
- Express Dance Company (eighth grade)
PROJECT RESULTS

FACTS AND FIGURES

Over the ten seasons since New Performing Arts, Inc. began programming in rural Kentucky communities, far more has been accomplished than anyone involved in the project ever thought possible.

- New Performing Arts, Inc. began its programming in three eastern Kentucky Counties (2.5% of the counties in the state). By the end of the 2001-2002 season, New Performing Arts will have reached 65% of Kentucky’s counties: seventy-eight in all. (New Performing Arts now places programs in about half that number each year.)

- With arts education projects designed in most cases to reach every school in a school district in most cases, New Performing Arts has placed programs in well over 500 separate schools since the first educational programs in Washington County during the fall of 1993 (although with the large volume of shared programming, and with school expansion and consolidation in many counties, a completely accurate count is not possible).

- In addition to educational programs, New Performing Arts has placed public concert performances in twenty-seven communities, establishing concert series in nine of them.


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58 Data for this section is taken directly from the New Performing Arts, Inc. accounting system.

- Half of the $1.8 million in revenues generated by New Performing Arts over the past ten years has been raised in grants and contributions, the other half earned through program fees paid by the recipients themselves. The ratio of earned to contributed income has improved over time: during the first five years, earned income made up 37% of total combined revenues ($145,500 out of $397,110). By contrast, during the six years since the start of the 1996-1997 season earned income has constituted 51% of total combined revenues ($720,880 out of $1,407,790), improving each year to the current 57% in the 2001-2002 season ($148,680 out of $259,520).

- Although most of the contributed income received over the past decade by New Performing Arts has come from generous individual donors, the organization has been able to attract several high profile grants from competitive sources. These include the National Endowment for the Arts (twice), the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation of New York, Chamber Music America and Meet the Composer.

- Having set out originally just to develop performance venues for myself and a few of my friends, perhaps the proudest accomplishment of the New Performing Arts project has been the opportunity to hire a large number of musicians for entirely new performance opportunities: New Performing Arts, Inc. has paid out over $500,000 to visiting artists and ensembles since the first concert series began in the spring of 1993. In addition, a similar amount has been paid to administrative and program staff members since fellow pianist Robert Siemers joined me as an assistant for the 1993-1994 program year.

**SEIZED OPPORTUNITIES**

Recounting the story of the Greenville project and citing the overall results of the New Performing Arts project tell only part of the story. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this project has been the very large number of exciting projects and professional opportunities that have come to the organization, and to me personally. These projects could not have been
completed, not these opportunities seized, without access to the extraordinary operational flexibility inherent in the five operational capacities developed at New Performing Arts. Here are a few of them:

- Following the success of the first full concert series season in Greenville (presented by the partnership between New Performing Arts and the Duncan Cultural Center in 1994-1995), I was contacted by the director of the well-established, 1,500-seat Fine Arts Center at Madisonville Community College, north of Greenville in Hopkins County. Having seen reports in the Madisonville and Owensboro newspapers about the Greenville series, the center was interested in developing a similar series of its own. As a result, in 1995-1996 New Performing Arts developed a series for the Fine Arts Center that mirrored the Greenville Series, with performances and educational programs by the Tower Saxophone Quartet, the Everest String Quartet, the Whitney Trio, and pianist Nada Loutfi. In order to set attainable measures of success and to create a greater sense of intimacy, the performers and the audience – limited to 150 - were both seated on the stage. Described as a “win, win, win partnership” by the college’s president, the series quickly evolved into one of the three sites for New Performing Arts’ 1996-1997 National Endowment for the Arts Leadership Initiative project.

- Another site for the Leadership Initiative project was the new Center for Rural Development, built on the grounds of the Somerset Community College in Pulaski County, Kentucky. The Center for Rural Development is a large facility housing several complementary economic development functions: a 760-seat theater, a large convention/exhibition facility, a sophisticated technology center including the hub of a forty-county distance learning network, and the offices of several federal and state economic development bureaus. New Performing Arts began its work with the Center for Rural Development in the context of the 1996-1997 Leadership Initiative project, establishing a classical music series that every year features artists from New Performing Arts that are involved in education/outreach work throughout the southeast Kentucky region. With a service area that extends far beyond
Pulaski County, the Center for Rural Development has provided New Performing Arts with $2,000 to $3,000 in annual artist housing subsidy as well.

- By virtue of the ability to build extended residencies through multi-county booking, New Performing Arts has been able to create opportunities for international cultural exchanges. The first of these was with French violinist Virginie Robilliard, who in the spring of 1994 performed in three eastern Kentucky towns with pianist Nada Loutfi. French cellist David Etheve, a classmate of mine at Indiana University who later became the principal cellist of the Orquesta Sinfonica de Galecia in La Coruña, Spain has traveled to Kentucky twice for residency activities – in 1995 and 1999. (David returned the favor in 1995, when I was invited by his orchestra to play a recital with him in Spain.) In 1997, we hosted a week-long tour by the concertmaster of Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Paris, Guy Comenthal, with pianist Nada Loutfi. And most recently, the Brazilian jazz pianist Renato Vasconcellos spent a solid month with his trio performing in several of our major project sites.

- The opportunities resulting from the New Performing Arts experience have not been limited to Kentucky. In the context of partnership developed with several of the country’s leading professional schools of music, I have been invited to give career-development talks at the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, the Oberlin Conservatory, and the New World Symphony. (Although it proved to be a mixed blessing, the Young Audiences consultancy I was engaged in for nearly four years was also a direct result of the work in Kentucky.)

- By virtue of its booking capacity, New Performing Arts has been in a unique position to facilitate the growth of the statewide profiles of other Kentucky arts organizations, such as the Louisville Bach Society (Louisville’s leading civic chorus), Kentucky Ballet Theater (Lexington’s only resident dance company), and the Louisville Youth Orchestra. These are all organizations with limited capacity to organize their own away-from-home performances,
and New Performing Arts has assisted all of them in developing and implementing statewide tours.

- By virtue of its arts education programming capacity (Michele Wogaman’s expertise, in particular), New Performing Arts has been tapped as an arts education resource for the statewide conferences of educational organizations, including the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts and the statewide office of Family Resource Centers and Youth Service Centers (a social-services component of the Kentucky Education Reform Act serving schools with high at-risk populations). In 1999, New Performing Arts was invited to conduct a needs assessment for the Jefferson County Public Schools Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, which resulted in the release of $60,000 in federal flow-through funds to arts programs in nineteen Louisville area schools.

- With its non-profit status and strong programming track record, New Performing Arts has sought and received several grants for the purpose of specialized equipment, including a grand piano and digital recording and editing equipment (both audio and video). A number of interesting projects employing this equipment are on the horizon, including the creation of a multimedia site on the World Wide Web.

Most importantly, after ten years of development and the gradual evolution of capacities in community presenting, arts education programming, non-profit booking, artist identification and training, and supplementary fund raising, the New Performing Arts experiment has become my career. At a comfortable salary (comparable to that of the average Associate Professor teaching at a Kentucky college or university), I am involved on a daily basis in the process of reaching rural Kentucky audiences with live, professional classical music – of my own making and that of my chosen colleagues. The stresses of demo tapes and auditions, the cost of management fees and retainers, and the precariousness of competition in a saturated market; all of these are distant memories. With New Performing Arts, I spend my days thinking about how to make the audience for classical music bigger, rather than about how to compete for the attention of an audience that is shrinking. I am free to perform (with reasonable frequency) for
audiences that know and appreciate my work, and I help to make selections of collaborating artists that will help to shape the tastes and preferences of those audiences for generations to come.
PROJECT IMPLICATIONS

FOR MUSICIANS

As the Rand Corporation study has suggested, the market conditions that inspired this project, if anything, are more pronounced now in 2001-2002 than they were in 1991-1992 when New Performing Arts was founded. As one watches the institutional performance and employment opportunities traditionally aspired to by young musicians become more scarce than ever, one is increasingly convinced that a bright future for classical music in the United States may be realized not by established arts institutions but rather by gifted individual musicians who have learned how not to depend entirely upon others to master the economics of their field for them. While the live music performance opportunities listed in the Musical America annual may be fully saturated with performers, audiences in many places across the country – perhaps even most places – are never exposed to affordable and accessible live music performances. The apparent inability or unwillingness of the music industry to deliver live music at more modest fee levels represents a tremendous opportunity to musicians themselves: to make at least part of their living by working in a sort of musical “private practice.”

The models for private practice are not easily found among the organizations listed in the pages of the Musical America, although some examples exist (particularly among the many small music festivals). But they can be found readily among the small businesses in every community in America: doctor’s offices, legal firms, real estate agents, auto dealerships, caterers and consulting firms. While the “product” of a classical musician may be sublime or spiritual, the process of connecting that product to audiences is as down-to-earth as it gets. And while not every young musician, upon completion of a professional music education, will want to, or be able to, dive full-time into creating a non-profit organization like New Performing Arts, Inc., it is difficult to imagine a doctor or a lawyer who does not, at some time during his or her formation, learn something about how a successful private practice in their field is run. Even if a doctor or lawyer does not market his or her services, make his or her own appointments, or bill his or her own patients or clients personally, he or she has to know how such vital business processes are conducted and how much they cost. Similarly, an independent musical private practice – of any size - starts with an understanding of the process by which live music is delivered to audiences.
The operating capacities developed and combined in this project may provide some useful approaches and tools for young musicians who may wish create their own professional opportunities on a part-time or temporary basis, while they are looking for a permanent institutional position or to supplement the income and/or performance opportunities of a less-than-satisfying institutional position they already occupy. Indeed, the professionally trained classical musicians now playing in smaller orchestras, teaching at small colleges or community music schools, working in arts administration middle management, or working outside the field of music entirely, may find that this project suggests a new approach to thinking about their musical careers.

Beyond the nuts and bolts of the five operating capacities described earlier, several additional guiding principles may be useful to address to musicians in private practice:

- Even at its highest levels, live classical music presenting in America (as distinct from recording) is almost always a non-profit activity. Like the business activities conducted by the country’s largest non-profit arts organizations, small-scale performing arts activities are likely to have an income gap that must be made up in contributions. The creation of a new non-profit corporation, while providing the greatest flexibility in the development of non-profit projects, can be a complex and costly process. Smaller projects can also gain non-profit status through collaboration with an existing non-profit organization, provided the project is a good match with the existing organization’s overall mission.

- Non-profit does not mean organizations or the people who run them must lose money. While the activities of non-profit organizations must fall within the criteria established by Congress in the Internal Revenue Service code, non-profit organizations are not prohibited from posting financial surpluses from charitable activities. Instead, such surpluses form the basis of cash reserve funds and endowments, helping organizations to weather unforeseen financial storms. Similarly, non-profit does not mean individuals cannot be paid for non-profit activity. Many, many non-profit performing arts organizations pay staff members for services performed. They are strictly prohibited from paying dividends to board members or officers, however, and so the accurate tracking of time spent on administrative or
other non-musical tasks is vital. (I have always found it safer to remain a staff member of New Performing Arts, Inc. and not a member of its board of directors.)

- The best potential new markets for performances may be the ones closest at hand. While there may be potential demand for live classical music everywhere, the reality of the income gap suggests that the best new markets will open through access not only to new sources of earned income (school fees, ticket sales, etc.), but also to sources of contributions. New Performing Arts would never have gotten started without the close personal links I had with people in Kentucky willing to help – and without my overcoming my initial fears about asking it.

- Providing musical services to the public education field may be an important key to financial success of classical music activities in new markets, because that is where so much of the potential community presenting money is. When I was organizing the budget for New Performing Arts’ Chamber Music Rural Residencies site in eastern Kentucky, it was a revelation to learn that the 1995-1996 annual budget of the Floyd County Schools (about $45 million)\(^{59}\) was larger than that of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (about $39 million).\(^{60}\)

- The role that is played by a musician in the development of a new project or the opening of a new market must be that of knowledgeable supplier, not just talented performer, particularly in forming relationships with the key individuals that make a new project work locally over time: the Roberta Chumleys and Lois Slinkers. That means willingly sharing newly created opportunities with other musicians – even other art forms – to ensure that the newly created market does not become weary of a single musician or ensemble. Without a willingness to share some of the results of my own market development efforts with other artists, the folks in Greenville might have tired of me long ago!

**FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES**

Just as musicians can benefit from accepting a greater degree of responsibility for the creation of their own performance opportunities by thinking and acting as private practitioners, so too the communities potentially on the receiving end of arts programs can gain much by

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\(^{59}\) Matt Wireman (Floyd County Schools), personal interview, 5 June 2002.
increasing their knowledge of the concerns and needs of the musicians who might come to them, thinking and acting more like presenters and managers.

Just as there can be a fairly standard recipe for the planning and implementing of a successful small community festival, church revival or high school band trip, there is a recipe for planning and implementing a successful concert series project. Aside from the artists themselves, the ingredients – performance spaces, target audiences, earned and contributed income, communications – are not rocket science (although finding appropriate keyboard instruments sometimes can be). But for many small and remote communities, finding and paying for high quality artists and ensembles can be a real challenge, particularly given the high cost of artists under management.

New Performing Arts has found that the answer comes more easily when several communities and/or community institutions work together, building the critical mass of paying performance opportunities needed for an artist or ensemble to amortize the cost of travel and preparation. In the planning of tours and residencies, most artists experience a decreasing rate of “variable cost increase” the longer the residency or tour lasts: it gets cheaper each time they play and the longer they stay in one place. Just as New Performing Arts has been able to give small Kentucky communities access to very high quality artists by putting together one- or two-week residencies that span several counties, communities themselves can also put together clusters of activity that involve a mixture of public performances, school-based educational programs, informal community events, master classes or clinics, and the sharing of artist program capacity with neighboring communities or school districts.

Unfortunately, as New Performing Arts learned during its 1996-1997 National Endowment for the Arts Leadership Initiative project, putting together an attractive cluster of residency activities does not by itself guarantee finding an affordable artist or ensemble to perform them. If a community is unable to find satisfying, affordable artists through established management firms (the only organized marketers of artistic talent), then establishing links with individual musicians may be the only solution. For example, by virtue of the many years I have spent studying in professional music schools, I now have colleagues – and students of colleagues – who are available to perform in the projects I organize in Kentucky. Few of these colleagues are under management; instead, most are the second or third or sixth prize winners of major

60 Sam Pincich (Chicago Symphony Orchestra), personal interview, 5 June 2002.
competitions, section players in the country’s great orchestras, faculty members or administrators at major and minor music schools, etc. As any musician knows who has played a fruitful round of “do you know” with a new colleague, a wide network of colleagues is not unique among classical musicians. Any community wishing to establish a high-quality classical music project can save a fortune in artist costs by engaging an executive/artistic director – formally or informally – who has a network of gifted contacts that are not represented on management rosters. If such a person cannot be found in the extended family of some community resident, a call to the alumni office of one of the country’s major professional music schools should be able to yield a good regional prospect.

Finally, once a community decides to embark upon a classical music project on its own, it is important that it adopt measures for success that are reasonable for a community of its size. Although the Prater Memorial United Methodist Church in Salyersville, Kentucky has 130 seats in it, it was simply not realistic for me to raise the prospect, in 1993, that an audience of 130 people could be attracted, generating 60% of the concert series’ income through ticket sales alone. As we learned in the Greenville project, large numbers of audience in small communities are found most easily in the public schools. The public concerts, on the other hand, become an opportunity for the community’s few classical music lovers and the project’s private supporters to listen to visiting artists really stretch their musical legs.

**FOR THE PROFESSIONAL MUSIC CURRICULUM**

Beyond its immediate utility for young musicians and smaller communities, this study may have implications for several segments of the classical music field at large. First and foremost, the five operational capacities employed in the creation of performance opportunities by New Performing Arts, Inc. suggest some areas of knowledge and experience that may be useful to rank and file musicians as they prepare for their professional careers, areas that generally are not currently taught as a part of the core professional music school curriculum. Professional music schools, concerned with their own institutional well being, may be slow to adopt curricular changes useful to the average graduate, if they are perceived to detract from the focused, intensive music performance training required to produce the handful of prominent graduate ‘success stories’ that, in turn, enable a school and its faculty to attract additional students and resources.
Wilfred C. Bain, as Dean of the Indiana University School of Music from 1947 to 1973, built one of the premier professional music schools in the world by applying the doctrine that “he and his associates should do everything in their power to attract more students.” In 1949, he went so far as to take out a full-page advertisement in *Musical America*, paid for by assessing 2.5% of each faculty member’s salary: “Bain was fond of characterizing the School as a business – in his case, a manufacturing concern that processed raw materials into a salable product.” The practice of sorting out quality after a sufficient quantity was recruited is widespread: successful schools needed to have “enough of the cream (for the sake of which, according to Bain, one had to have all that milk).”

But thirty years after Bain’s tenure ended, even the Indiana University cream is having trouble succeeding in establishing careers after graduation. Menahem Pressler, Distinguished Professor of Piano at Indiana University, lamented to me in 2001 that now even his best students are having great difficulty finding performance opportunities, and that the opportunities resulting from an important competition prize, for example, seem to evaporate after a single season or two. Notwithstanding Dean Bain’s formula for a successful music school, it is an open question just how long entering freshmen and their parents will embrace the preparation for a professional music performance career as a reasonable option for the dollars and years spent in higher education. Given the saturation of the music performance market, how long can the faculty and administrators of professional schools of music seriously recruit students for what they know to be nearly impossible dreams for most of them? Knowing full well that large and growing number of music performance graduates will only continue in music performance to the extent that they become the creators of their own opportunities, are professional schools of music doing enough to teach the skills needed to do so alongside the traditional music performance curriculum?

A position taken with increasing frequency by music faculty in higher education was recently articulated by Barbara English Maris in the Millennium Edition of the College Music Symposium, asserting, “it is not our job to prepare students for specific positions in the music

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62 Logan, 178.
63 Logan, 296.
profession.” On the contrary, her vision of a major in music performance becomes a kind of four year journey of discovery during which the music major determines whether or not the field is right for them. Faculty should “compile and share information so that students can understand in what ways and to what levels of accomplishment they need to grow in order to be prepared to be considered for various professional opportunities and to accomplish specific professional tasks.” To come clean with music students about the real demands of a professional field only after they have chosen it by enrolling as a music major seems grossly unfair, and perhaps fraudulent.

On the other hand, several prominent educators and institutions have begun to think seriously about including music career issues in the content of the music curriculum. Writing in the March 2001 College Music Society Newsletter, Robert Weirich, piano professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, proposes doing away with specialized music majors and teaching musicians all of whom “1) can make music, 2) know something about music, and 3) can teach others about music.” He further suggests four general areas of study:

- Courses that foster one’s ability to make music: performance studies, large and small ensembles, conducting, sight-singing, ear-training, improvisation, composition and dance
- Courses that increase one’s knowledge about music: theory, history, bibliography, comparative arts
- Courses that foster one’s ability to teach music: psychology, learning theory, human development
- Courses that increase one’s knowledge of the world in which we live: liberal arts, but not the whole cafeteria: does a musician really need a hard science class? Include here such things as recording arts, business of music

The creative space allowed by such an open-ended curriculum is an exciting prospect, and one can imagine a generation of well-rounded music makers emerging from any school that might adopt it. But the vast universe of skills needed to navigate the existing music performance field – let alone expand it – are relegated to little more than an afterthought. Surely, the business mechanics of the field of live music deserves its own bullet, such as:

Courses that increase one’s facility in the processes needed to connect music performers to live audiences: program design for traditional and non-traditional audiences, performing arts presenting and booking, education-based outreach, project budgeting and fund raising.

Recent developments at the Eastman School of Music seem to be another partial step in the right direction. Unveiled in the fall of 2001, Eastman’s new Institute for Music Leadership is drawing significant attention to music outreach activities, and significant dollars to support them at Eastman. On an attractively designed web site trumpeting the Institute for Music Leadership as “the first center of its kind in the country . . . a vital hub for creating, sharing and implementing cutting edge ideas and programs that will ensure the vitality and relevance of music in the 21st century,” Eastman has bundled a number of its programs into this appealing package: “Music for All” (a student outreach program already begun in 1995), the “William Warfield Partnership” (a portion of “Music for All” that targets the Rochester City School District and provides scholarships to Eastman’s preparatory department), the “Shouse Arts Leadership Program” (a class designed to “inspire students with a personal vision,” taught at Eastman, also since 1996), an orchestral fellowship partnership with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (similar to one that has been in place since the 1970’s), and a new sacred music diploma. Also listed as Eastman Institute for Music Leadership activities are the Mellon Orchestra Forum (a group of fourteen orchestras – plus Eastman – receiving Mellon Foundation funds to explore ways to strengthen American orchestras), and “Insights into Outreach,” a joint Eastman School – Chamber Music America conference to be held at Eastman in September 2002 (to be organized not by Eastman but by Chamber Music America’s education director and the Education Committee of Chamber Music America’s board).

Given that most of these programs have been in existence for some time, it is simply too early to tell whether Eastman’s Institute for Music Leadership will result in enough of an expansion of the music performance major curriculum to enable graduates to make a living while continuing the kind of outreach activities they learn to engage in at Eastman (for free, and without gaining any understanding of the mechanics of developing outreach projects where compensation is possible, if New Performing Arts’ experience with Eastman students is any indication). So far, the Eastman School of Music’s Institute for Music Leadership appears to be

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merely a re-packaging of existing faculty and academic programs: all Eastman faculty are considered “associates” in the institute.

The foundation for most of these programs dates from the Eastman Commission on Teaching Music, a task force assembled there in the early 1990’s by Robert Freeman, Eastman Director during the period 1972-1996, which turned into the Eastman Initiatives, an artistic leadership program developed by Douglas Dempster, now Dr. Freeman’s Senior Associate Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin.67 During his brief tenure as President of the New England Conservatory (after leaving Eastman in 1996 and before becoming Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin in 1999), Dr. Freeman encouraged the faculty to address the imbalance between supply and demand in the music performance field, developing what might have been a highly effective revision of the traditional conservatory curriculum:

The principal outlines of the plan involved what I called a three-track curriculum, as the result of which young players and singers would work hard during the freshman and sophomore years as though they would all pursue careers as leading professional soloists, in the fashion of Juilliard and Curtis. New in my thinking, however, was the idea of a sophomore review, accomplished with the help of two or three carefully selected advisors, who would spend at least an hour with each of the Conservatory’s second semester sophomores, drawing out both students and faculty on the wisdom of a continuing pursuit towards the kind of curricular objectives on which Curtis Institute and Juilliard have always excelled. I had imagined that, perhaps, a third of the NEC undergraduates would continue during their junior and senior years with a performance focus, while the other two-thirds of the students would be split, more or less evenly, between tracks focusing upon the development of music teachers of high musical aspiration on the one hand, and on entrepreneurial leadership for the future development of musical demand on the other.68

Sadly, Dr. Freeman’s vision for the curriculum at the New England Conservatory was never realized, due in large measure to reluctance on the part of applied music faculty, most of whom receive compensation based upon the number of students they teach, to discourage any student from continuing their intensive applied music study.69

If the five operational capacities employed in the creation and nurture of performance opportunities by New Performing Arts, Inc. can lead to a better understanding of the skills

69 Robert Freeman, personal interview, 3 June 2002.
necessary for “entrepreneurial leadership for the future development of musical demand” by the graduates of America’s professional schools of music, then professional schools of music have a responsibility to include the acquisition of those such skills in the music performance curriculum: not merely as a magnet for grants and contributions to the music schools themselves, but as a standard academic requirement for the benefit of graduates. This may be harder for music schools than it seems: there is at least some potential for graduates to begin competing successfully for the support of their own outreach activities against the very schools that trained them, once schools share enough information that students become effective presenters, project-planners and fund raisers themselves.

OTHER LARGE ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Professional music schools are not alone in using the “feel good” nature of music outreach and arts education activities as a means to attract support for their operations. Indeed, the full range of large classical music institutions use their music outreach and arts education initiatives as means to attract grants and contributions. Among the other more bloated examples in recent years was the LinkUP! Program, designed by the Education Department of Carnegie Hall and introduced to the attendees (including myself) of a national arts education conference held New York in March 1997. In the 1996-1997 school year, LinkUP! provided 21,300 students from 137 schools with an opportunity to experience a children’s concert by the American Composers Orchestra (a New York pick-up orchestra) in Carnegie Hall. Of these 21,300 students, 11,300 from 66 schools also attended a concert in their own New York Borough by a chamber orchestra configuration of the American Composers Orchestra. Finally, 4,600 students from 20 of these schools also experienced a concert in their own school by an instrumental ensemble of professional musicians, preceded by a series of seven classroom workshops. Students were also provided with a large (11 by 14 folded), glossy four-color publication with background information and lots of pictures.

Participants in the Carnegie Hall Education Conference were invited to attend one of the Carnegie Hall concerts by the full American Composers Orchestra, followed by an orientation and question-answer session with the designers of the project. The concert itself was preceded by a storyteller warm-up act (bearing little relation to the concert’s educational content, but
introducing an otherwise absent multicultural element), and included an appearance by the Peanuts comic strip creator Charles M. Schultz and “Snoopy” himself. Many of the conference participants expressed concern that, while the LinkUP! project was very attractive in its presentation (as Carnegie Hall productions tend to be), the actual educational content delivered at the concert and in the glossy student material was superficial at best. When conference participants (many of them Education Directors of large symphony orchestras and presenting organizations) asked what the entire project cost that year, the answer provided by the Carnegie Hall Education Director, to gasps from all over the room, was $600,000.

Perhaps in response to these criticisms, in 1999, Carnegie Hall’s education department followed up with conference attendees by mailing to all of them a glossy, four-color publication (also with lots of color pictures and graphics), A Call to Accountability, presenting the results of an evaluation of three years of the LinkUP! project.71 While short on hard data, the report is effusive in concluding that the project was of value to students. Little wonder: spending an average of nearly $30 per participating student should accomplish a great deal! Predictably, A Call to Accountability includes no financial information, although it would be very interesting to examine how much of that $600,000 was actually spent on the costs of programs witnessed by students, and how much paid the Carnegie Hall Education Department simply to be. In April 2002, perhaps not to be outdone by Carnegie Hall, the education department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. (the only arts facility in America that has its own line-item in the federal budget) mailed to arts education professionals across the country a very slick arts-education newsletter, containing just four articles about its own large and expensive projects (with lots of color pictures and graphics), and an extensive donor acknowledgement list.72

The very largest arts institutions like Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center have the education staff and resources to design - and attract funding to - their own education programs, but in the next tier of organizations, many of the costlier and more prominent arts education programs of the nation’s significant arts organizations can be traced to a single source: Artsvision, a consulting firm founded fifteen years ago by Mitchell Korn.

71 Boston.
Described by the Wall Street Journal as “a one-man arts education industry,” Korn has become an expert at designing arts education projects and securing multi-year funding for such clients as the Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, Charleston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic, Houston Grand Opera, Indianapolis Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, New York Chamber Symphony, New York City Ballet, New York Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and many others. Artsvision’s record in arts education fund raising is summarized on the company’s own Web Site:

For the past fifteen years, Artsvision has developed the education initiatives that have gained the most attention, won the highest praise and been awarded the most significant funds.  

The Cleveland Orchestra’s Learning Through Music program is a good example of a Mitchel Korn project. It is a well-funded, five-year partnership between the orchestra and Cleveland-area elementary schools, “designed to support general learning through the use of music and musical concepts and to make music a part of students’ everyday lives.” The project includes “curriculum and professional development for teachers, music resources and lesson plans for classrooms, individual artist training for orchestra members, classroom musician visits, concerts at the Cleveland Orchestra’s Severance Hall, and neighborhood concerts for each participating community.”

Learning Through Music is a marvelous project, except for one thing: it only reaches a total of four schools at a cost of nearly $100 per year - per child! Simply put, Artsvisions showed the Cleveland Orchestra how to design a project that would leverage the orchestra’s considerable political clout in the Cleveland community to raise a whopping sum of money for a project with very attractive results for a tiny fraction of the overall student body of the Cleveland

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76 Amy McClellan [Manager, School and Community Partnerships, Cleveland Orchestra], Personal Interview, 16 May 2002. Ms. McClellan said that in 2001-2002 the Learning Through Music project reached four schools with a total student population of about 1,700 on a budget of $160,000.
area public schools. What happens to the rest of those students is anyone’s guess: it would take about $4.5 million per year to reach with similar services every one of the 47,800 elementary students registered in the three school districts where the four *Learning Through Music* schools are found.

Insofar as the resources required for high-profile projects such as this remain inaccessible to all but an elite handful of the most prominent regional and national arts institutions, they are *not* models: they are merely *symbols*. At their best such symbols - while not truly replicable – can demonstrate an ideal that can inspire others to find less costly ways to achieve the same objectives. But at their worst, they allow large arts organizations to siphon off disproportionately large amounts of the nation’s limited philanthropic resources, perhaps in the name of national or regional leadership in arts education, with little but prohibitively expensive projects and shiny report brochures to show for it. Furthermore, such projects can establish unreasonable standards for arts education program outcomes, results that are simply unattainable in the absence of such vast resources.

Unlike organizations with specific geographic constituencies (even if those geographic constituencies are in major cultural capitals like New York and Washington), the national service organizations in music - Chamber Music America, American Symphony Orchestra League, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, and Opera America – make a more credible claim to national leadership role in music outreach. These organizations foster music outreach activities, primarily, by making project-specific grants to their dues-paying member organizations, and occasionally by providing some degree of technical support to these organizations as they implement their projects. But these national service organizations, governed by boards of directors drawn from the existing arts organizations that make up their dues-paying membership, are not typically engaged in the creation of new orchestras, opera companies, or presenters; nor by extension, in the creation of new audiences where there are not already existing orchestras, opera companies, or presenters. Many national service organization grant programs encourage existing arts organizations to work with other sorts of community organizations found outside the music field, and Chamber Music America (with artists and organizations represented equally

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77 New Performing Arts’ experience with technical support from a national service organization was mixed: during a summer 1995 site visit, orienting local community leaders from eastern Kentucky to the *Chamber Music Rural Residencies Program*, a now-former staff member of Chamber Music America – a person with no experience running an arts organization, living in a small town, or working in the arts outside New York City – repeatedly
on its board) makes grants available to ensembles and presenters with very small budgets. But ultimately, the breadth of the outreach activities of national service organizations depends upon the size and geographic distribution of their membership, and the effectiveness of their efforts depends almost entirely upon the quality of project design and implementation by their constituent members.

I hope that the New Performing Arts project has unmasked one prevailing myth: that high quality music outreach programs are necessarily expensive to produce. Indeed, they cannot, and they must not be expensive to produce, if they are ever to address the full scope of the need for effective music outreach in America. In the ten years that New Performing Arts, Inc. has operated in Kentucky, its programs have reached its total audience of 650,000 people at a total cost of about $2.77 per person, factoring in every dime of earned and contributed income the organization has ever received. The outreach programs of large arts organizations need to be accountable, not just for feel-good reportable outcomes in glossy four-color reports, but also for the totality of the income they receive in support of their outreach programs – earned and contributed – in proportion to the full scope of the need. Without that kind of accountability, the limited amount of contributed support available from the nation’s philanthropic community for such activities will only address the needs of the very largest organizations, while the field of live classical music as a whole continues to decline. As New York Times music critic Bernard Holland put it, “I am alarmed for the future of music. The music business I shall not miss at all.”

FOR FUNDING AGENCIES

This brings us, finally, to the contributors themselves, the foundations, corporations and individuals who respond generously – some of them year after year - to requests from arts organizations for grants and contributions in support of efforts to advance the cause of classical music. Music philanthropy is as old as western music itself. Prior to the advent of widespread music publishing in the early nineteenth century (which introduced the sale of printed music as an income stream for composers), musicians relied almost exclusively upon the patronage of the nobility or the church to cover the cost of their work. Similarly, music philanthropy in America referred to small communities as “Podunk,” thereby driving a wedge between the ensemble and the community before the ensemble had even arrived.

78 Holland.
has focused primarily upon the supply side of the transaction between artists and audiences: orchestras, opera companies, conservatories of music, etc., at least until the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, single committed philanthropists founded both the Boston and Chicago Symphony Orchestras. The non-profit presenting organization – philanthropy on the demand side - developed later. Patrick Hayes, the non-profit presenting pioneer who founded the Washington Performing Arts Society (one of the first non-profit presenters in America), was still alive in the 1990’s, serving as an early advisor and contributor to New Performing Arts, Inc.

To this day, this philanthropic tradition of supporting and rewarding of the supply side continues through giving to orchestras, opera companies, music schools, music competitions, young artist fellowship programs, etc. Certainly, there will always be a need for the next Pavarotti or Perlman. But the philanthropic glory of identifying them, educating them, and supporting them on their path to stardom does little to address the real problem facing classical music in America: too few Americans have ever experienced the thrill of hearing a live performance by even the average gifted tenor or violinist. With so much social cache inherent in contributions that support the glittering institutions of supply, there is too little philanthropic attention paid to the need for the hard work of building demand, or to the wider distribution of what is now already a huge supply of artists. And as seen in the outreach operations of so many large arts organizations, much of what masquerades as demand-building arts education outreach is, in fact, cleverly disguised operating support for the supply.

If the New Performing Arts experience were to make a single suggestion about the music outreach field to the nation’s philanthropic community, it would be for funding entities – both institutional and individual – to ask applicants this simple question: What is your plan to convert your education-based outreach activities into programs for which there is a substantial, sustainable earned income demand? In the absence of the credible prospect of generating sufficient earned income to cover a majority of the program’s expenses, the program is simply too expensive to begin with, no matter how prominent the organization that produces it.
THE FUTURE OF NEW PERFORMING ARTS

If New Performing Arts, Inc., the organization this project gave birth to, can serve as a replicable model for the expansion of live, professional classical music activity into small markets, rural communities, schools and underserved areas, this paper would be incomplete without some concrete suggestions about how a replication of this organizational concept might be advanced elsewhere:

- The first and most obvious question is: where else might this work? While a thorough answer to that question is beyond the scope of this study, several of the previously discussed features of the Kentucky location may serve as a guide to answering this question: a region with a large number of autonomous smaller communities or counties, few major cities - but at least one nearby where program subsidy can be raised and perhaps a headquarters located, an education system where the arts are at least somewhat welcome and respected, and an area that visiting artists can reach without extreme difficulty. Many states in the Midwest may recommend themselves upon closer examination.

- Another obvious question is: who? Again, the mixture of skills I brought to bear on this project may be instructive. First, I was enough of a musician to be able to demonstrate to potential contributors and program buyers the level of music making I wished to provide to underserved schools and communities on a regular basis. Second, I had an extensive network of personal artistic contacts to expand program offerings easily as soon as the need arose. Third, I had enough of a business background to do basic accounting, project budgeting and organizational cash flow, and to learn about a variety of non-profit legal issues quickly. Fourth, I had enough computer ability to provide for my own clerical needs and save money on desktop publishing and similar, otherwise costly, services. Fifth, passionate and articulate enough about the mission to be able to make a strong case for the support of new live music to donors and potential program buyers. And finally, I was persistent enough (and perhaps sometimes, desperate enough) to make and learn from mistakes.
many times over. Beyond these few things, I was able to learn everything else along the way.

- One would hope, in creating another “New Performing Arts, Inc.,” that the lessons learned in Kentucky might speed the process of organizational initiation and development. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of financing: not only the balance between earned and contributed income, but in the sequence in which those two types of income are sought as well. Specifically, any attempt to create an organization like this can benefit from an assessment, in advance, of the level at which grants and contributions can reasonably be expected to be generated each year, followed by a drive to raise the funds needed to subsidize a year of programs during the season prior to the commencement of any programs. In that way, each year’s fund raising provides the following year’s program subsidy, and the chronic cash shortages that too often have plagued New Performing Arts due to fund raising shortfalls can be avoided. On the earned income side (perhaps at the same time an initial funding drive is taking place), a similar advance study can be undertaken to determine whatever norms and precedents may already exist in regional community- and school-based presenting. In school-based programming, success in generating earned income will depend heavily upon the perception by educators that programming is responsive to whatever curricular mandates they operate under (whether arts-based or not).

- In terms of expenses, a careful study can be made, also in advance, to determine the availability and cost of high-quality professional artists. New Performing Arts has found it effective to bring artists to the Kentucky region from as far away as France, Spain and Brazil, so long as the costs were framed in terms of two-week residencies for a single artist fee, plus foreseeable expenses. Residencies shorter than one week, on the other hand, have been limited primarily to artists from within Kentucky itself. Non-artistic costs need equal advance consideration: office furniture, computer equipment, telecommunications (phone, long-distance, internet), travel for planning and
marketing, printing, postage, office supplies and rent, as well as reasonable staff compensation and benefits.

- Once underway, a “new” New Performing Arts should start programming at a conservative level and grow with deliberate care: while increases in programming occur in small increments, the capacity of staff members to administer programming increases in larger stages with each new staff addition. Therefore, it is imperative not to grow beyond the program-support capacity of a first staff member before making an accommodation for the increased income needed to support the addition of a second staff member. To illustrate this, a “new” New Performing Arts might begin at a budget level of $100,000: $40,000 raised each year for program subsidy, and $60,000 generated from school and community sources (about 67 days of school programming at the New Performing Arts average of $900 per program day). Artist fees for these 67 days might cost $42,000 (averaging just over $3,000 for a five-day residency). A full-time staff position with benefits might cost another $37,000, leaving $21,000 to cover all other supporting expenses. While it might be possible to generate more than $60,000 in earned income, it would take an additional $25,000 in earned income and $10,000 more fund raising to generate $35,000 more to support a second staff position (including modest increases in other expenses needed to support the new position). Somewhere between the $100,000 budget and the $135,000 budget, a “new” New Performing Arts might easily reach a breaking point in the programming and fund raising capacity of that first staff member working alone.

- Finally, a “new” New Performing Arts needs a strong, committed board of directors. New Performing Arts, Inc. in Kentucky has been extraordinarily fortunate to find persons whose commitment to the future of live music – in places often far from their own homes – is matched by their ability to help the organization secure resources (and to give personally at a very generous level), guide the organization through difficult situations beyond the expertise of the staff, to make their own program and fund raising contacts for the organization, and, above all, to serve as the stewards of the organization’s
mission, from their perspective as members of the primary community that supports it: Louisville.

Although this is perhaps an exercise in wishful thinking, if a large foundation wished to establish a “new” New Performing Arts elsewhere in the country, it might do so by making targeted grants in two stages. To begin with, the foundation could fund a feasibility study in selected locations to explore potential levels of earned and contributed income, and artistic and support expenses. Then, the foundation could provide seed money equal to the projected contributed income need for the first programming year, thus ensuring that the organization could begin the practice of always raising its program subsidy a year in advance. After the initial grant, each “new” New Performing Arts organization might be able to operate and grow entirely on its own.
CONCLUSION

Whether accomplished by individual musicians and ensembles, by newly created organizations like New Performing Arts, or perhaps even by larger organizations able to develop more efficient (and generous) ways to deliver their outreach programs, a widespread commitment to live music will be greatly enhanced if the surplus of available musicians and the great majority of Americans never reached by live classical music can find efficient, cost-effective and sustainable ways to get together, at fee levels that do not repel potential new audiences and arts supporters. Like the system of independent for-profit artist managers that seek and service engagements at the higher levels of the classical music career pyramid, a large network of independent entrepreneurial musicians and small non-profit enterprises – capable of reaching even the smallest and most remote of audiences – can fill out the bottom and middle of the musical career pyramid with high quality, professional activity.

A pyramid with a wider base is less likely to tip over. If successful, such efforts – in sufficient numbers – will contribute to keeping this great artistic tradition alive and growing, enriching the lives of generations yet to come.
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