

Forty Years of Fellowships: A Study of Orchestras' Efforts to Include African American and Latino Musicians

A report by the League of American Orchestras with research and
analysis by Nick Rabkin and Monica Hairston O'Connell

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League
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Table of Contents

Guide to Reading the Report 4

Introduction 6

- Research questions
- Methods
- Layers of complexity

40 Years of Fellowships 8

- The programs: scale, scope, and dates
- Three program models
- Recruitment
- How many fellows?
- Costs
- Orchestra financials
- Funding sources
- Career paths
- Where do fellows play?
- A benchmark?
- Impact

Forty Years of Fellows 14

- Background
- Fellows' experiences
 - Ensemble immersion and musical improvement
 - Workload expectations
 - Mental toughness
 - Visibility/networking
 - Difference
 - Reception within the orchestra
 - Fellowship duration
 - Proportion of musicians of color
 - Success
- Fellowship elements
 - Mock auditions
 - Salary and stipends
 - Teachers and mentors
 - Ensemble playing
 - Administration and benefits
 - Auditions

Fellowship/Leadership: Voices of Experience 21

- Demography and relevance
- Conflicting values and principles
- Seeking alignment
- Beyond the stage
- The audition conundrum
- Learning and sustaining fellowships
- Getting to scale?

Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations 27

- Pipeline and pool: what is the problem?
- Considering a fellowship program
- A more secure path to orchestra positions
- Becoming more diverse and relevant: fellowships are not enough
- A curriculum for fellows and for orchestras
- Key program elements and the fellowship experience
- Excellence and professional development: resolving tension between goals
- Orchestra accountability
- Fellowship program models
- Recruiting fellowship candidates
- Auditions
- Duration of fellowships
- Multiple fellows
- Growing the pipeline
- Cost of fellowships
- Financing fellowships

In the Final Analysis: A New Paradigm 34

Bibliography 36

The Authors 40

Acknowledgments 41

About the League 42

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Guide to Reading the Report

American orchestras have conducted fellowship programs for promising young African American and Latino musicians for 40 years. The fellowships have supported young musicians making the transition from their formal education into careers in professional orchestras, and they have been a visible and enduring strategy for changing the racial composition of the musicians appearing on orchestra stages, a central element of orchestras' efforts to become more diverse and inclusive organizations.

This report, commissioned by the League of American Orchestras, is the first systematic effort to review the record of those fellowships from the perspectives of the orchestras and the musicians who have participated in them. Until now there has been no single source for information about which orchestras conducted fellowships, when they were conducted, and how many musicians were fellows. This report answers important questions about what happened to fellows across all the programs after their fellowships were completed: Did they successfully compete for orchestra jobs? Did their careers take other paths? It also provides a view of their experiences as fellows: How did they benefit from the experience? What kinds of problems did they experience? Until now, no data has been collected that reflects the judgment of orchestra leaders and other experts about the dynamics of launching and managing a fellowship program. Through the frame of these fellowship programs, what can be learned about broader diversity issues for orchestras? For the first time, we are able to present the following information and analysis:

- The first section of this report, "**Forty Years of Fellowships**," presents all available program and impact data relating to orchestra fellowships, from 1976 to the present day. It reflects documentation supplied by orchestras themselves, following a scoping survey of League members, and the results of supplemental web research. It identifies the orchestras that have had fellowships, counts the fellows, and reviews the elements that are characteristic of fellowship programs. It defines the fundamental characteristics of fellowship programs, notes three different basic models, tracks career outcomes for fellows, and explores the cost and financing of fellowship programs.
- The second section, "**Forty Years of Fellows**," explores the perspectives of musicians who have been fellows over the years. Interviews with 21 fellowship program alumni were conducted, including one or more fellows from every fellowship program.
- The third section, "**Fellowship/Leadership: Voices of Experience**," examines the perspectives of orchestra leaders, program managers, and a few outside experts as they reflect on the dynamics of fellowship programs, their value for orchestras, and the place of fellowships within the larger challenge of making orchestras more inclusive and diverse institutions.

- A final section, “**Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations**,” reviews our conclusions and offers suggestions about how fellowships might be improved and how orchestras might launch them in the future. The section includes conclusions and recommendations on the following topics:
 - Pipeline and pool: what is the problem?
 - Considering a fellowship program
 - A more secure path to orchestra positions
 - Becoming more diverse and relevant: fellowships are not enough
 - A curriculum for fellows and for orchestras
 - Key program elements and the fellowship experience
 - Excellence and professional development: resolving tension between goals
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 - Fellowship program models
 - Recruiting fellowship candidates
 - Auditions
 - Duration of fellowships
 - Multiple fellows
 - Growing the pipeline
 - Cost of fellowships
 - Financing fellowships
- The authors' reflections are included in a brief closing section, “**In the Final Analysis.**”

Introduction

Race is the Gordian knot in American society and culture. That is no less true for American orchestras than it is for our schools, health care, housing, or justice systems. And it is no less true in 2016 than it was in 1976 when the Music Assistance Fund (MAF), a trust “designed specifically to encourage talented non-white instrumentalists to pursue careers in symphony orchestras,” organized the first fellowship program for young African American musicians.

There were many reasons that orchestras were virtually all white in 1976. One was certainly that musicians of color were very rarely “winning” competitive auditions for open positions. Fellowships were intended to provide additional training and finishing that could improve the chances that they would win more often. Fellowship programs have since become the orchestras’ principal vehicle for addressing the racial homogeneity of their players.

In the 40 years since the establishment of the Music Assistance Fund’s fellowship program, the national conversation around race and our racial landscape has changed dramatically. But it remains just as urgent today as it was then. The landscape of symphonic music has changed over that period as well.

- Orchestras are keenly aware of the heightened and volatile national conversation about race and that the domain of orchestral music is not outside or exempt from that conversation. Demonstrations about racial justice and income inequality have been held in the halls of at least two major orchestras in the past few years.
- Though most orchestras are in urban areas that are increasingly diverse racially, orchestras understand that their work force has long been and remains predominantly white, despite efforts to change.
- Perhaps more than ever before, many orchestras recognize that they must take action in the face of new American realities, and they are working to develop new strategies that have the prospect for greater impact.

- Fellowship programs have been the primary vehicles that orchestras have used to diversify the musician workforce. The League of American Orchestras has undertaken this research to provide a factual basis for analyzing and understanding the efficacy of past efforts to diversify the musician workforce.

Research questions

Reflecting on both the new urgency among orchestras and the persistence of homogeneity in orchestra membership, the League of American Orchestras determined that it was time to take a careful look at the record of the fellowships, the experiences of the musicians who have been fellows, and the orchestras that have sponsored them. It posed three key research questions:

1. What are the collective outputs and outcomes of orchestra fellowship programs targeted specifically at young people from underrepresented communities and conducted by American orchestras during the period 1980-2015?
2. What factors appear to have influenced the programs’ outputs and outcomes?
3. What can we learn about the effectiveness of the fellowship model from assessing it in relation to current and emerging discourses around racial diversity?

For analytic purposes the *inputs* of fellowship programs have been the resources and opportunities orchestras have made available to promising young musicians of color, including the cost and the scale of the programs. The *outputs* are the level of skills, the readiness, and inclinations those musicians possess at the conclusion of their fellowships. From the perspective of the orchestral field, the most significant *outcome* is the career path those musicians took after their fellowships. Orchestras, of course, are particularly interested in whether they successfully landed positions with secondary, regional, or major orchestras—after all, the fellowships were intended to diversify the musicians on orchestral stages. But we were concerned with other outcomes too. What other career paths have fellows followed? Were they pleased with the ways things worked out for them, whatever path they took? Can the career paths of fellowship alumni be attributed to their experiences as fellows?

Methods

The first order of business was to map the fellowships universe. Though we aimed to be as comprehensive as possible, we recognized that some data was likely to be unavailable on a timely basis, that the League's membership was not the whole universe of American orchestras, that we would miss some important stories, and that orchestras could not be expected to drop their daily routines and duties to gather data for us. We began with a brief online survey distributed to all League members with annual budgets over \$480,000. These orchestras were asked if they have or have had a fellowship program for young musicians making the transition from their formal music education to their careers; if their program was designed to address diversity and inclusion by focusing on musicians "from underrepresented communities" or if it was open to musicians from all backgrounds; and their start (and end) dates. Some orchestras provided in-depth documentation about their programs; others provided little or none. Additional data on the programs was gathered through web searches.

We also conducted a literature review about the racial history of orchestras and classical music, contemporary discourse on race and race relations in America, diversity and inclusion efforts in other professional fields, and material about strategies for communicating about race more effectively and productively.

The balance of our data collection consisted of nearly 50 interviews—lasting from fifteen minutes to an hour and a half—with alumni and current participants in fellowship programs, other orchestra members, managers of fellowship programs, senior orchestra managers including CEOs, music educators in conservatory and community settings, foundation officers involved in support strategies to advance diversity in the nonprofit arts, and other experts. The interviews were conducted between February 29 and April 27, 2016.

Layers of complexity

Answers to questions about race are never simple, and the research questions had many levels of complexity. Fellowship programs are embedded in institutions with histories, cultures, and relationships to their communities and cities; symphonic music has a history and a place in American culture that goes well beyond the particulars of any individual orchestra. There is a larger context for every decision an orchestra makes when it hires a musician. But ultimately it is individual orchestras that hire individual musicians to play.

This complex context is the background to our research, and understanding it proved crucial to our analysis. What this research has allowed us to do—for the first time—is focus the orchestra field's critical attention on fellowships, deepen its understanding of their strengths and limitations, and inform those orchestras seeking to adapt and grow in ways that genuinely reflect the America we are today.

Forty Years of Fellowships

Five orchestras are currently operating fellowship programs, and another will launch in Fall 2016. Several more are considering or planning fellowship programs for the future. What is the arc of the story of fellowships from their beginning in the 1970s, and how have they fared?

The programs: scale, scope, and dates

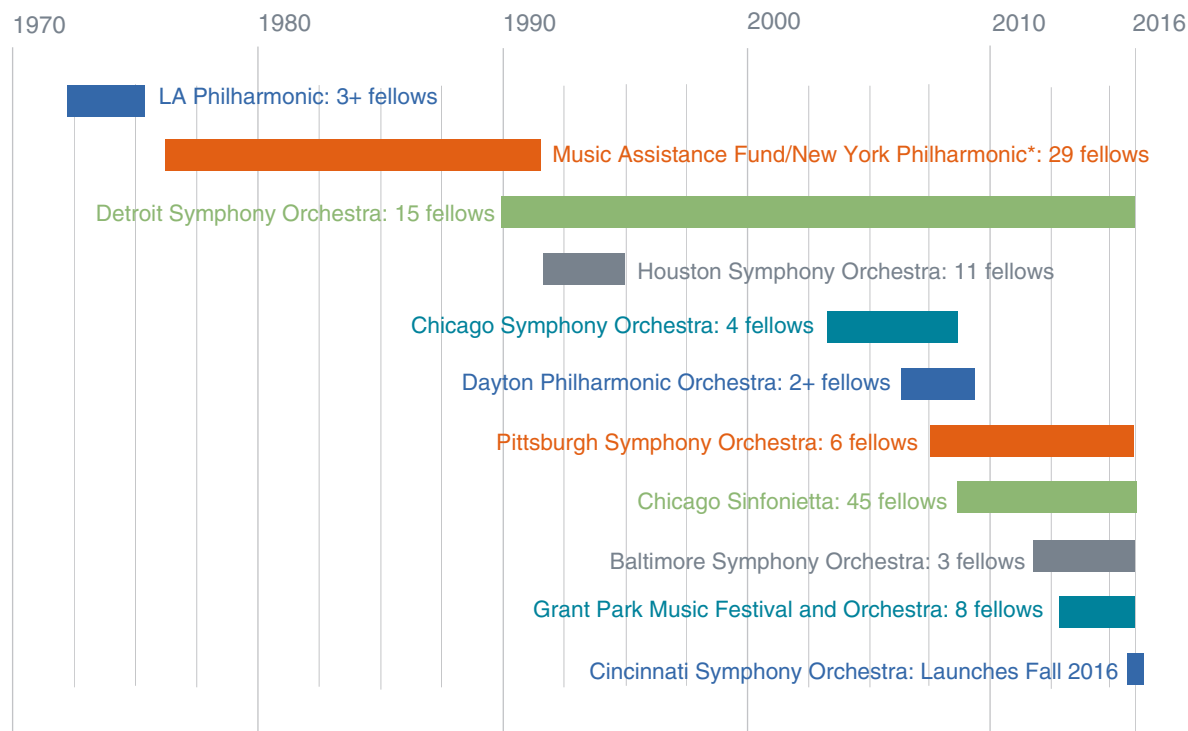
Twenty-five orchestras responded to a simple survey indicating that they had conducted fellowship programs intended to help young musicians make the transition into careers in professional orchestras. Eleven indicated that their programs were “diversity focused.” The others were open to musicians from all backgrounds. Seven indicated that their diversity-focused programs were current. Four had been discontinued. Two additional diversity-focused fellowship programs were discovered when former fellows responded to our calls posted on music websites and social media to contribute to the research. (Both of those programs had been discontinued for more than twenty years, and it is likely that the current orchestra staff was unaware of them.)

The fellowship programs we decided to make the focus of this report were those that:

- Offered opportunities to young African American and Latino musicians who had completed (or nearly completed) their formal music education;
- Immersed them in the day-to-day environment of a professional orchestra for a significant period of time. Fellows rehearsed with the orchestra, played with it at some—sometimes many—performances, participated in its community activities, were mentored and received lessons from members of their section or others, prepared for and performed at mock auditions, and often more;
- Paid fellows for their services to the orchestra;
- Were intended to prepare fellows to compete successfully for positions in orchestras, and, more broadly, contribute to the diversity of musicians in the field.

Applying these standards, we concluded that there have been eleven diversity-focused fellowship programs since 1976 and that twenty-three orchestras have hosted fellows. One orchestra that responded affirmatively to the survey did not focus its program on launching young musicians’ careers, but on other moments in their development, and we chose not to study it. Two that indicated that they had fellowship programs had hosted fellows from a program managed by the Music Assistance Fund (MAF), a trust associated with the New York Philharmonic, but they did not have independent programs of their own. The MAF/New York Philharmonic program was a collaboration in which eleven orchestras (the New York Philharmonic, and the Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Kansas City, Los Angeles Chamber, National, North Carolina, Pittsburgh, Rochester, and St. Louis orchestras) hosted fellows. (We learned that the Los Angeles Philharmonic had a program in the 1970s as well, but as we were not able to find reliable data about it, we are not certain that it focused on musicians who had completed their formal educations, and we are not certain of its start or stop dates.) The Cincinnati Symphony will launch the newest program in Fall 2016.

Figure 1: A timeline of orchestra fellowship programs for African American and Latino musicians



*13 orchestras involved in the MAF program

Three program models

The programs share several important features:

- Fellows are chosen through competitive auditions and supplemental interviews in most cases. They are highly selective.
- They are sustained, lasting for at least one season or year. Some lasted for two or even three years. (The Grant Park Festival and Orchestra program is considerably shorter, as its season is summer only.)
- Most host a limited number of fellows, usually just one or two at a time, but the Chicago Sinfonietta and the new Cincinnati program host from three to eight.

But there are significant differences in fundamental design. We found three basic program models.

Networked fellowships: programs involving multiple orchestras

The MAF/New York Philharmonic program started in 1976, and the Philharmonic assumed responsibility for its management in 1985. The program was a single enterprise, but eleven different orchestras hosted 29 fellows over its sixteen years of operation. The New York Philharmonic and the Atlanta Symphony hosted nearly half of those placements. The Boston, Buffalo, Kansas City, Los Angeles Chamber, National, North Carolina, Pittsburgh, Rochester, and St. Louis orchestras each hosted from one to three fellows.

The program had a complex organizational structure. The MAF provided centralized administration and funding for fellows who were placed in a network of participating orchestras that often changed from year to year. Initial local auditions for fellows were organized by the representatives of the participating orchestras. The MAF matched local audition winners with participating orchestras that had an available seat for their instrument and arranged for the winner to audition with that

orchestra. Those that passed the orchestral audition were placed as fellows for periods of a year or more, usually with a single orchestra, but several fellows moved among orchestras from year to year. The MAF provided some financial support to the orchestra for the fellow and required that the orchestra provide the balance.

The New York Philharmonic passed management of the MAF to the League of American Orchestras in 1992. At the League, the MAF continued to provide scholarships and grants for young African American and Latino musicians, but the fellowships were discontinued. The League invited the Sphinx Organization to host the MAF in 2001, recognizing its dedicated infrastructure and its singular focus on African American and Latino talent identification and development. The Sphinx MAF continues to provide scholarships, education opportunities, and quality instruments to promising young musicians, but it has not reinstated fellowships.

Among the orchestras planning or contemplating fellowship programs in the future, several orchestras are considering a cooperative or networked model.

Proprietary fellowships: programs managed by an individual orchestra

The Detroit Symphony's program was launched in 1990, shortly before the MAF/New York Philharmonic program ended, but it shared the same program elements: immersion in the daily life of the orchestra including rehearsals and performances, mentorship and lessons, mock auditions, and more. It established a second, independent, proprietary model for fellowships managed entirely by a single orchestra.

The Chicago Symphony's program and the programs at the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Grant Park Music Festival, and the Baltimore Symphony are similar proprietary fellowships managed by the hosting orchestras. (Grant Park and the Chicago Sinfonietta, smaller orchestras located in the same city, share some administrative and logistical responsibilities.)

Conservatory partnerships: collaborations between orchestras and local conservatories

The Houston Symphony pioneered a third program model during the early 1990s: a partnership with two local music conservatories, the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and the Moores School at the University of Houston. Fellows were selected from advanced graduate students in instrumental performance at the collaborating conservatories. The Dayton Philharmonic briefly managed a collaborative program with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music about a decade later. Both of those programs have been discontinued, and we were able to find only limited data about them through interviews with fellows. They enabled advanced students to attend graduate school free or at greatly reduced cost, making the graduate school particularly attractive for promising diverse music students interested in orchestral music. The program the Cincinnati Symphony will launch in the Fall of 2016 is also a partnership with the College-Conservatory of Music.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices vary widely among the fellowship programs. Larger orchestras like Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore are able to recruit nationally. Smaller orchestras, such as the Chicago Sinfonietta and Grant Park Orchestra, recruit locally from the several conservatories and university music programs in the region and from freelance musicians in the Chicago area. However, we frequently heard in interviews that the programs have had difficulty reaching potential candidates at highly respected conservatories. The Cincinnati program will be available *only* to graduate students at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, but the Conservatory attracts musicians from across the entire country.

How many fellows?

We found records of 126 different individuals who have been fellows. There has likely been at least a handful more than that. At least three individuals were fellows with two different orchestras at different times.

Costs

We were unable to obtain detailed budgets for any of the fellowship programs. However, we did learn (through interviews with key informants) that the Baltimore and Pittsburgh programs cost “about \$50,000 a year” for each fellow. We also learned that the Chicago Sinfonietta (which has a more limited performance schedule than larger orchestras) provides per-service stipends of around \$10,000 for rehearsals and performances to its fellows, as well as covering individual lessons, mentorship, and mock audition costs and some audition-related travel expenses.

Orchestra financials

We found no correlation between the longevity of a fellowship program and the annual operating budget of its host orchestra. Three of the five currently operational programs are in orchestras with annual operating budgets of between \$25 million and \$35 million. However, two have budgets under \$3 million. The mean budget size of the four orchestras that have discontinued diversity-focused fellowships is currently \$67.5 million, and one discontinued program was in a smaller orchestra, with annual expenses under \$10 million.

Funding sources

Four of the five operating fellowship programs and the Cincinnati program have received grant support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We were unable to determine the funding source for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, and Dayton Philharmonic programs. The Chicago Symphony’s program and older ones appear to have been supported by local sources, sometimes individual donors or trustees, or general revenues.

Career paths

Documentation provided by orchestras indicated the career paths of some of their alumni. That data was supplemented with web-based searches for all 126 fellows. Over the course of a career, musicians commonly hold many positions, freelance contracts, and gigs, often more than one simultaneously. Older musicians who do not play for orchestras now may have done so at an earlier point in their careers; and younger musicians who do not play for orchestras now may at some point in the future. Hence, this data should be understood as a snapshot of a quickly moving subject, not a precise calculation.

Where do fellows play?

We found data on 94 of the 124 fellows who were alive at the time of writing. Thirty-nine are currently playing in orchestras (41 percent of 94 musicians). Sixteen are playing as soloists, freelancing, or subbing with orchestras (17 percent), and sixteen (17 percent) are teaching at some level. At least four play in chamber ensembles, and four have other jobs in the music industry. One plays in a training orchestra. Only five have left professional music.

The orchestras for which fellows are playing are:

Alabama Symphony	Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra	New Jersey Symphony
Carmel Symphony	New Mexico Symphony
Charlotte Symphony	Orchestra Iowa
Chicago Sinfonietta	Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice
Civic Orchestra of Chicago	Phoenix Symphony Orchestra
Colorado Symphony	Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Columbus and LaGrange (GA) Orchestra	Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra
Detroit Symphony	Michigan Opera Theater
Florida Orchestra	San Antonio Symphony
Fort Wayne Philharmonic	San Francisco Opera Symphony
Grant Park Orchestra	West Virginia Symphony Orchestra
Knoxville Symphony	

Some alumni of fellowship programs who have won orchestra positions attribute their success to their experience as fellows, but without a great deal more data it is not possible to quantify the relative level of importance of fellowships to their successes.

A benchmark?

The New World Symphony (NWS) is a training orchestra that calls its members “fellows.” Like orchestra fellowships, it is highly competitive and helps prepare talented young musicians for careers in orchestras. NWS is open to all applicants, and it has a record of being slightly more racially diverse than the mean for all American orchestras. Its fellows play a season of concerts, and study with leading musicians and conductors. They can return for up to three seasons. They study, rehearse, and perform the spectrum of classic orchestra literature and contemporary orchestral and chamber music. They are trained and coached for auditions and do mock auditions. They have solo opportunities, tour domestically and internationally, and get leadership training and professional development, including seminars and workshops on career and

personal development. NWS fellows are paid a modest weekly stipend and get free housing and health benefits.

Over 1,000 musicians are now alumni of NWS. “Ninety percent have embarked on careers in music,” and according to NWS officials, 47 percent have positions with “full-time orchestras.” (Because there is not a uniform definition of “full-time orchestras,” this benchmark cannot be considered a reliable comparison with the proportion of fellows who have positions with professional orchestras.) According to those officials, the proportion of African American and Latino alumni who land positions with orchestras is as high as the proportion of white alumni.

The NWS program is more intensely focused on the musical and professional development of its fellows than orchestral fellowships, and it lasts as long as three years. Though it does not offer the opportunity to work with a professional orchestra, it does offer mentorship from high-level professionals, and a thoughtful curriculum of musical study and professional and career development. Fellowship programs generally do not provide professional and career development on the level or scale provided by NWS.

Impact

Individual orchestras and consortia of orchestras developed the orchestra fellowship model with the intention of improving diversity on their own stages and across the orchestra field. Twenty-three of the estimated 1,200 professional orchestras across the United States have managed fellowship programs or hosted fellows from programs managed by another orchestra.

At the field level, it is difficult to assess the impact made by fellowship programs on the very small gains seen in African American and Latino representation in the orchestral musician community (from 1.4 percent to 1.8 percent for African American musicians between 1975 and 2014, and from 1.6 percent to 2.5 percent of Latino musicians from 1995 to 2014). At the orchestra level, analysis shows no evidence that those orchestras that have run fellowship programs are more diverse than those that have not.

We will explore the impact of fellowship programs on the fellows themselves in the section that follows.

Percent of African American and Latino Musicians in American Orchestras

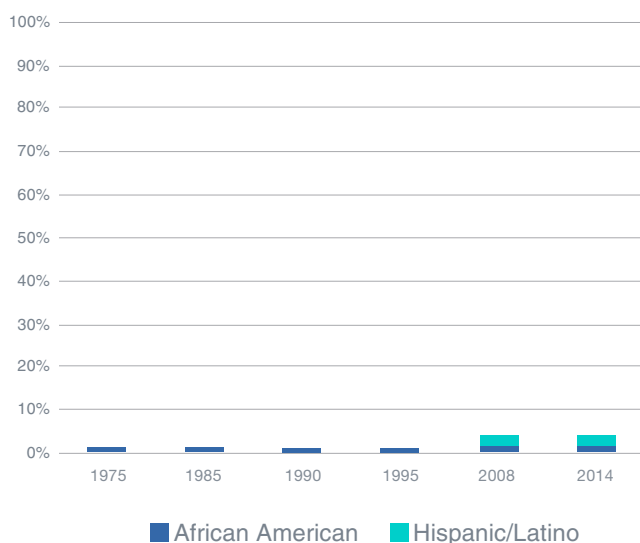


Figure 2

Sources: 1975, *The New York Times*. 1985, Music Assistance Fund Narrative. 1990, 1995, 2008, and 2014, League of American Orchestras.

Forty Years of Fellows

Fellowships have been significant experiences—both positive and negative—for the musicians who have been fellows over the last 40 years. Who were those musicians? What were their experiences like, and what can we learn from those experiences about the dynamics of race in American orchestras? Data for this section is drawn from interviews with 21 fellows and alumni of fellowship programs. At least one fellow was interviewed from every fellowship program, a selection that makes us confident that we have accurately captured the fellowship experience.

Background

Most musicians who have qualified as fellows had other advantages in their musical lives.

Many described growing up in families where one or more parents and/or siblings were musicians. They had often attended public school in a district with a strong music program or where they benefitted from the support of a particularly proactive band director or applied teacher who provided studio practice hours, access to instruments, or lessons at little or no cost. They also received crucial support at important junctures in their trajectories. For example, one band director personally called conservatories to schedule auditions for a talented student who was unsure about pursuing music after high school. Most fellows had taken full advantage of programs such as all-state, youth orchestras, and summer programs. For example, three had attended Aspen, two each Tanglewood and the New World Symphony, and at least three fellows had taken the opportunity to learn from multiple fellowships. Five or more had played with Sphinx and/or at the Gateways Festival. A majority matriculated from top programs at schools and conservatories including Eastman, Mannes, Manhattan, Rice, Curtis, Michigan, and Yale.

Whether or not they landed full-time orchestral jobs post-fellowship, these musicians had successfully navigated the pipeline. They had worked hard, practiced rigorously, and took full advantage of all opportunities to play and improve. They had also had proactive support and access to important networks and resources at crucial junctures in their young careers.

Fellows' experiences

Perhaps the most distinctive pattern that fellows described about their experiences was that fellowships were multidimensional, complex, and sometimes internally contradictory. As one fellow put it:

I have mixed emotions about the whole program, given my true gratitude in having had that springboard to jump-start my musical career contrasted to my dislike and distaste at being viewed so differently by my colleagues at that time, which was awkward and often uncomfortable—feeling singled out in that way.

Another fellow described the difference she felt as a result of a mixed reception, uneven support, and racialized perceptions or assumptions over the course of a few sentences:

I was treated definitely as a fellow—not a fellow musician. There were different dynamics going on. Some people appreciated what the orchestra was doing [with the fellowship], some did not. Some couldn't care less about this and they were not warm and friendly! But generally [there was] enthusiasm among the orchestra. Some specific people were driving it. The members don't really care. They want to play and get their check. So the players could care less. They definitely had a perception of me before I got there. That I was a student, that I didn't have much experience playing. Not a fellow musician. When I played they were like: "Oh, my gosh! You can play!"

As those lines got broken down, so too did the fellow's full experience: important relational information (that administration drove the program, and members didn't care), the nature of micro-aggressions ("Oh, you can play!"), and the struggle to offer a balanced report for an experience that was simultaneously helpful, positive, and difficult for reasons orchestra leaders and program managers may not have noticed. In what follows, we identify major themes as fellows saw them, and also recognize that they often emerged in complex, ambivalent, even contradictory expressions.

Ensemble immersion and musical improvement

The vast majority of fellows described positive professional and artistic gains as a result of the fellowship. The immersive nature of the fellowships helped them grow as artists in ways that would not be possible by other means. The program components all reinforce one another but it seems to be ensemble playing—"getting to play with the big boys"—where everything learned comes together. One musician noted that playing with the orchestra was "another level" and that his "confidence improved a lot" as a result of it. Another noted that "musically, [the fellowship] opened my ears in a new way." Finally, a fellow describes the ineffable resource of sitting in a professional section in this way:

The experience was equivalent to getting an advanced degree in orchestral playing. Even just sitting in the section was great. Needing to match those people! I can still draw on that! I can think of which one I want to sound like, and can use that to change the way I play. Kind of intuitive...a tone color, or a particular style...

Even when fellows weren't playing, having the opportunity to sit onstage and follow along helped them understand "the ins and outs, the musical decisions," and "points of connection between orchestra and director" much better. It was a good way of "expanding their ear."

Workload expectations

Most fellows described some level of professional activity before joining programs, but several were surprised by the workload associated with full-time orchestral positions. Gaining that first-hand knowledge and learning how to meet or exceed the demands was a plus for them. One fellow described the fellowship as a "different experience" compared to previous professional work. She had more responsibility and felt "under the gun" because of a "different set of expectations." Others mirrored the sentiment. They "really learned what it meant to work! To prepare! You must come prepared—from the very first rehearsal." By learning repertoire more quickly and coming to rehearsals with a high level of preparedness every day, musicians developed consistency.

Mental toughness

Learning to turn around repertoire quickly and play consistently at a high level requires physical toughness, but musicians felt they learned “mental toughness” as well. Several used that phrase and linked it to both positive and negative factors. For instance, one connected it to “a high level of discipline and training.” Another linked the “emotional toughness” he developed during his tenure to the racialized assumptions he had to navigate from other musicians. A fellow captures the complex nature of the experience:

The nature of what we do...it is very brutal. Very competitive—50 people [competing] for one spot. Very cut-throat. They have to prepare you to compete with sharks. [This is] not a nurturing thing. In hindsight, it was awesome. But at the time, it was a nightmare.

Visibility/networking

The advantages of having a strong profile and professional network extend far beyond “gigging culture.” Many fellows noted that being associated with a top orchestra helped them strengthen their network of connections. Fellows described “still having friends there from all that time ago.” One explained, “The orchestra world is very small. The fellowship helped with my network, with my validity, and with name recognition.” Another felt that the positive identification with their fellowship orchestra was compromised by what they saw as the qualified nature of the fellowships: “Oh you played with X, you must be really good! Someone will always say, ‘it was as a fellow though.’ There is always an asterisk by that accomplishment that takes something away from it.”

Difference

Fellows experienced themselves as different than, apart from, or “other” in a range of individual and personal ways. “Everyone was kind, but I wasn’t part of the corps in the same way.” “You aren’t just the ‘new kid on the block,’ you’re not even really on the block! You’re perceived as a temp, so people don’t make the same kind of effort.” A few fellows noted that difference has been a defining feature of their entire musical career. As one put it: “Black classical musicians are well versed at

being the only black person in the room. That’s really core to your identity.” Even so, fellows’ stories indicate that being made to feel different did not seem to be more pleasant because they were used to it.

Difference, however, was felt by many fellows as a source of strength and a site of potential for the orchestra. Musicians suggested that cultural difference generates a sense of perspective and helps them to maintain balance and understand what happens onstage as a part of a larger ecosystem. It benefits what happens onstage as well. One described playing a composition with the Sphinx Orchestra that featured elements of Latin funk:

The orchestra grooved like it was a salsa band or something! Because we had *listened* to this music. We knew how to play it. A regular orchestra would sound so flat. [Regular] American orchestras don’t know how to interpret it.

In that example, a lifetime of cultural exposure and knowledge informs (and improves) artistic interpretation. Another fellow put it more succinctly: “Orchestral work brings *all* of me to bear! And the music needs me [for it] to continue to be relevant.”

Reception within the orchestra

The challenges of introducing fellows into the body of the orchestra are complicated. As discussed in the next section, until the organization has cultivated cohesive alignment around the value of diversity, the space of encounter between orchestra members and fellows will continue to generate some measure of tension:

Orchestra musicians feel entitlement to their money—that they earned it through blind audition. Now some of “their” funds are going to “this kid” who did the audition, but kind of got in through the back door. They don’t know if they are going to mess up the section sound. They don’t know how the kid plays. It’s like, “Why are you so special?!”

Most fellows had a good understanding of the dynamics at play, but understanding does not make bearing the brunt of member frustration, exasperation, confusion, or defensiveness easier. Several spoke to the extra energy required to ignore, absorb, or deflect micro-aggressions and racialized assumptions from orchestra members:

Why look surprised when I nail a passage instead of saying bravo? You have to ignore it and do your job. That takes energy. I'm sitting there worried—what if I make a mistake? Everybody makes them but you have to wear a layer of armor.

According to fellows, orchestra members often assumed the worst about them, at least at first. Misunderstanding or poor communication could lead to a fellow being understood as “difficult,” “not caring,” “slacking,” or feeling “talked down to.” Fellows recognized—often in retrospect—that “success in these fellowships depended almost entirely on the demeanor and personality of the principal.” They came to understand that where their experience fell on the spectrum from pleasant and productive to tense and unproductive had much to do with the section leader and with the culture within their section. One fellow “was green and nervous, wanted to do well and felt supported.” Another said players “really made her feel at home. They were tremendously gracious to [her].” Still another asked his section leader,

“...so how often will I get to play with you guys?” coming from the point of view of being excited to be there. His response to me was: “I didn’t know you’d be playing with us and I don’t know why we’d have you playing with us when we already have qualified subs for the season.” So why didn’t he even know? Why didn’t they have a plan to include me in the orchestra?

Things became so tense for this player that

...even though I was playing with them once a month, I really only came to the hall if I had to. Did not practice or hang out there. Didn’t talk to anyone there, because I really hated it. I hated it before then, but there was nothing I could do to advocate for myself or have anything nice happen between me and these people who were in control of my fellowship.

Most fellows’ experiences fell somewhere between the extremes of gracious welcome and hostile suspicion, but the fellows’ observations illustrate the value of carefully pairing fellow and section, and of priming all members to understand the connection between fellowships and mission fulfillment.

Fellowship duration

Another reason fellows’ experiences are not easily characterized is because they evolved over time. Longer fellowship tenures (two years as opposed to one year or shorter) seemed to provide more stable, richer opportunities by giving the fellow and orchestra musicians time to acclimate. Several fellows noted that the reticence with which they were initially greeted faded somewhat as orchestra musicians heard them play or improve. They had time to find common ground. Others shared that they appreciated being given the time to immerse themselves gradually and learn the lay of the land. Musicians in several programs were given the space to decide for themselves when to move from an observation mode (going to rehearsals, following along with scores, taking lessons and mock auditions) to actively participating in performances. The key here was tailoring the curriculum and schedule to a fellow’s needs. Fellows for whom the observation period was mandated tended not to respond positively.

Proportion of musicians of color

The stresses of fellow-status can exacerbate feelings of isolation that African American and Latino musicians experience in orchestral contexts. It is not uncommon for these musicians to be one of only two or three black or brown people in an entire organization including stage, staff, board, and as one fellow reminded us, “in a hall of 1,700 people.” Fellows understand too that on some level “as an African American in an orchestra—all eyes and ears are on you.” Increasing the number of African American and Latino Americans onstage and in the organization goes far in addressing the loneliness many feel. Indeed, the proportion of members of color may define a fellow’s experience as much if not more than other variables. The Chicago Sinfonietta is highly unusual among the orchestras that sponsor fellowships and among orchestras in America. Its membership is usually

between 35 and 38 percent musicians of color. We were not surprised to find that fellows found the atmosphere at the Sinfonietta particularly warm, supportive, and friendly. One Sinfonietta fellow had an earlier experience with another program:

There's a welcoming family environment at the Sinfonietta. It's relaxed. Lots of musicians of color. The learning experience is wonderful.

Success

Fellowships were created as a strategy for increasing diversity in orchestras. Their architects understood success in terms of fellows getting jobs in orchestras. A number of fellows shared this definition of success, but some understood it differently or more expansively, with orchestra jobs as *part of* or one *possible* successful outcome. Fellows who participated in this study work in orchestra administration, have terminal graduate degrees, have founded nonprofits, and are teachers, educators, arts activists, entrepreneurs, or conductors, as well as orchestra musicians. The fellowship experience helped all of them in some way, and the majority of them have gone on to contribute to the classical music ecosystem—in ways of their choosing. One fellow summed it up nicely:

I don't know if [my program] thought I was a success. I wanted to do other things. I started a nonprofit focused on musicians, years eight to twelve. I'd say I was very successful. I'm happy, I have a great instrument and no debt.

Fellowship elements

Fellows bring diverse experiences and needs to their fellowships, and while the programs we examined shared the same basic elements, they varied in emphasis. Even taking into consideration this range of factors, distinct patterns emerged.

Mock auditions

Given that the overriding stated goal of the orchestras that have fellowship programs is to prepare musicians to succeed at auditions and ultimately increase the number of African American and Latino musicians in symphony

orchestras, it was surprising to learn that not all programs offered robust audition support. Fellows overwhelmingly listed regular or convenient mock auditions and subsidized audition travel expenses among the most helpful elements of their fellowships. The mock auditions were “huge,” and fellows whose program either did not have these supports at all or did not provide clear, consistent access to them felt the absence.

Salary and stipends

The expenses associated with classical musical training are considerable and sustained. The fellows' discussion of them brings to mind cultural theorist Stuart Hall's maxim that “race is the modality through which class is lived.” These expenses are barely within reach or out of reach for many African American and Latino musicians, throughout their musical development. Reaching them can often mean sacrifice or hardship in other areas. So while a fellow or young musician of any background has reason to speak positively about salary and stipends associated with an opportunity, they can make or break the experience for many African American or Latino musicians.

Several musicians noted that they sought additional playing jobs to make ends meet, or for additional playing experience. Sometimes the orchestra granted permission, sometimes it denied it, sometimes it was not asked. This almost always created some level and combination of tension, a perception of disloyalty, mixed communications, confusion or even resentment, as well as the occasional scheduling conflict. One fellow was accused of not being committed to his fellowship.

Teachers and mentors

All fellows took some number of lessons and nearly all gained musically from them. One made a direct connection between the lessons he took as a fellow and his ability to win a principal position. While lessons were clearly a cornerstone of fellowship programs, the definition and the role of the “mentor” varied across programs. In some programs, mentor and teacher were synonymous—the musician who gives fellows their lessons, and, in some cases, advice on navigating the extra-musical elements of orchestral life. Often, it was the

section leader who held the role of the mentor/teacher by default—even in instances where that person was not the most appropriate for or does not want the role.

In some cases, the teacher (still usually a section member or leader) and mentor played different roles that may overlap. In these instances, while the teacher conducted lessons and helped the musician develop and prepare for performances and auditions, the mentor served more as an advisor or confidant. In these cases, mentors were usually chosen from outside a fellow's section and helped the fellow understand the climate and how things worked within the orchestra's culture. Fellows found these mentors "fonts of information," someone they could "bond with" and "confide in" and "very helpful." Based on fellows' experiences, the opportunity to have a teacher (or multiple teachers) *and* a mentor seems the most potentially supportive.

Ensemble playing

Fellows spoke highly of the benefits of playing with a professional orchestra. The immersion took their musicianship to another level. Along with that acknowledgment, however, was a desire by many to have played more and in performances of more consequence—subscription or masterworks concerts as opposed to education and outreach or pops concerts, or, in the words of one fellow, "not just the lame stuff where I could hide and do no harm." Those who did said the experience boosted their confidence, "felt like an endorsement [and a] sign of support," and was more musically valuable. Some however, were frustrated by the lack of clarity around playing expectations and assignments. It is not clear from our data whether promised playing opportunities were retracted or they were never clarified and agreed upon. One fellow noted that it was "disheartening that [he] could get a call to play [as a sub] with the CSO or DSO to do masterworks concerts and then go back to [the fellowship orchestra] and not get to play." Several made explicit links between their presence in education and outreach programs and the orchestra's public relations and funding exigencies. Fellows, again, felt quite differently about those experiences:

We all know the orchestra wants to benefit from having a fellow. It trumpets their agenda. I enjoyed doing the outreach, but the emphasis should be on the playing. They need outreach because they need donors. Do the fellows need that? Probably not. These things are not building them as artists. They need to play.

The goal of the program is to get more culture into the orchestra. The point [for the institution] is sort of to have me show my face. They have me going to many outreach gigs, to schools. I talk about what it is like to play in an orchestra, to follow a conductor, to practice every day.

As orchestras question and redefine the ways they engage with the communities they serve, finding and communicating a clearly articulated role for fellows will be essential to program success. Some fellows worried that if they do heavy engagement and outreach lifting, the remainder of the musicians and the orchestra in general will be free to maintain the same limited relationship to its surrounding communities. As one fellow put it when asked about diversity efforts: "They...can say, 'we are way past this now' –which is another way of not having to do any work."

Administration and benefits

Administration and benefits were subjects that surfaced often during conversations about fellowship content. Fellows had difficulty understanding how fellowships were administered; they found lines of reporting and communication to be frustrating or confusing. Explained one, "Sometimes [I reported to] the general manager, sometimes the community engagement person. [It was difficult] just turning in certain documents for reimbursements." Another explained:

There were too many cooks involved. I had to talk to too many people about the same thing. It started to feel like I was banging my head against the wall. They need to streamline. The education people don't understand the dynamics of what it takes to play in an orchestra. I had to teach them about what I am doing in my life.

Where orchestra members may not be supportive, where “education people” may not understand the dynamics, where administrative and artistic leadership may be pressed for time, it may not be surprising that one fellow mentioned the need for a human resources position or department: “Who am I supposed to talk to if I am in another unfair situation?”

We did not gather data about health insurance benefits across all of the fellowship programs systematically, but some fellows reported that they also struggled to cover health insurance and sometimes went without:

I didn't love the way you got your health insurance. The wage was pretty low. We had to pay for insurance and they'd reimburse us instead of just putting us on the orchestra's plan. [On that salary] I couldn't do it. I wound up without.

What to do better? The stipend for health insurance didn't cover it. I had to make a decision to get a car instead of health insurance.

Auditions

One program component that fellows appreciated and spoke highly of occurred before they were selected and offered fellowships: an expanded audition process. The first stages were conventional—a recorded audition, then a live audition—sometimes screened, sometimes not. Fellows welcomed all audition experience (and the paid audition travel expenses) and one mentioned the camaraderie of the live auditions, noting:

We were young people trying to make this happen! There is an opportunity right there to do more! An opportunity for the field at large to take advantage of those moments. Network building, the sense of mutual support. Rising water lifts all ships.

But the interview round was an innovation that genuinely excited them. Most programs invited finalists to participate in an interview/conversation. They asked fellows about their backgrounds, professional goals, fellowship goals, and musical and interpersonal skill sets, and gave them the chance to share what they might bring to the opportunity beyond great technique and musical discipline. As one fellow put it:

My audition was standard—blind, some excerpts, parts of a concerto. But after that, I also had an interview with conductor, players, and staff. They asked why I was interested. Did I think classical music was still relevant? Why? I appreciated it. A component that's missing from the audition process in general is they know how you play basically but nothing about how you think. Not anything about you as a person. What are your skills? Can you do outreach? Can you go into communities different from yours?

Even those in favor of blind auditions appreciated the opportunity to come from behind the screen and bring their full selves to bear on the process. They recognized something exciting and vital about the approach that may make sense to explore on a larger scale.

Fellowship/Leadership: Voices of Experience

As more orchestras turn to face the challenges of becoming more diverse and inclusive, the perspectives of orchestra leaders who have managed fellowship programs and others who have been careful, thoughtful, and longtime observers of orchestras have particular value, especially for orchestras that might consider fellowship programs themselves.

Demography and relevance

Detroit had a population of nearly 2 million people in 1950, and 84 percent of them were white. It has less than half that population now and is 82 percent African American. The city became a symbol of racial conflict for the entire country when, in 1967, a police raid of a party celebrating the return of black Vietnam veterans in an unlicensed club sparked the biggest urban riot since the Civil War. The riot cast a long shadow over the city and accelerated a downward spiral through which Detroit lost much of its industry and the wealth it generated—wealth that had been essential to sustaining the Detroit Symphony and other cultural institutions.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, which had hosted two fellows through the MAF/New York Philharmonic fellowship program, started its own program in 1990. It was the first new fellowship program since 1976. Anne Parsons, the DSO's current CEO, told us, "The context for the DSO fellowships was the 1967 riots in Detroit." More than twenty years had passed, but the orchestra was still looking for an effective way to adapt to the transformation of its city and respond to the broader challenge of creating opportunities for African Americans. The DSO's is now the most venerable of operating fellowship programs. It is not the only tool the DSO uses to advance diversity, but it is a cornerstone of the orchestra's broader effort. "It gives the audience a different perspective on who and what we are if we represent ourselves differently onstage. We know the audience won't change if we don't.

So for any given concert we now have current fellows and ex-fellows—five or so—onstage in addition to our regular African American members," said Parsons.

Other orchestra leaders share Parsons's belief that the complexion of the orchestra in concert is a representation of its commitment to opportunity for African Americans and Latinos, to diversity and inclusion as an institutional value, and to a claim to cultural "relevance." Marin Alsop, the music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, added that a serious effort is a moral imperative: "Orchestras simply *must* reflect their community. That *must* be a top priority."

The Chicago Sinfonietta is an orchestra that takes that priority to heart. More than a third of its members are musicians of color. "Part of relevance," said Jim Hirsch, the Sinfonietta's executive director, "is reflecting the community in which they perform. If the community doesn't see itself onstage, it is not likely to believe that what we do is relevant to them." The Sinfonietta was founded by Paul Freeman, an African American conductor, who personally nurtured young musicians and composers throughout his career, including time at the Detroit Symphony, where he pioneered the Classical Roots Celebration. The Sinfonietta married Freeman's personal commitment to a strategic plan that made an institutional priority of helping "early career diverse musicians to compete for and win jobs in American orchestras." Hirsch explained:

As I recall there were a few musicians who were involved in the strategic planning process so there was some immediate ownership and buy-in. We had a lot of conversations about how to structure our fellowship program to make sure that the musicians understood what we were trying to accomplish, didn't feel threatened by it, and might also personally benefit from it in some ways. There was essentially no resistance to it, though it has been a topic of discussion through the two CBA negotiations we have had since the program started. My impression is that our musicians understand that this program is very tied to our mission, and they support it.

Conflicting values and principles

The Sinfonietta is something of an outlier among orchestras. Its mission makes clear that it is “dedicated to modeling and promoting diversity, inclusion, and both racial and cultural equity in the arts through ... symphonic music.” Its musicians know from the start that they are joining an organization whose brand is built around the principles of diversity.

That is not the case in most orchestras. Indeed, the other fellowship programs we studied emerged in a context that included some disharmony, much of it between management and musicians. Deborah Borda, now the CEO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, was the newly installed CEO of the Detroit Symphony in 1989. The orchestra was in crisis at the time, having difficulty meeting payroll, and was on a European tour, anticipating a desperately needed \$1.3 million dollar grant from the State of Michigan. A pair of state legislators who had criticized the DSO for several years for having only one African American in the ensemble threatened to block the grant if the orchestra did not hire more immediately. Borda proposed offering positions to three African American substitutes who were playing with the orchestra on the European tour.

Some orchestra members, at a late-night meeting, objected to making an exception to blind audition protocols that were intended to assure fairness in hiring. They argued that the DSO was caving in to

political pressure and stepping on a slippery slope that would compromise the quality of its musicianship. Somewhat reluctantly the musicians voted to affirm the appointment of one of the substitute musicians, Rick Robinson, a bassist who was highly regarded by the bass section. Robinson himself was reluctant to join the orchestra without winning an audition, but the musicians and Robinson did agree to the appointment, and the DSO got the state money.¹ The decision was highly controversial in classical music circles. One critical commentator charged the decision was an abandonment of the principle of meritocracy and an embrace of “the decadent period of the civil rights movement.”² In Borda's retrospective opinion, it was a “pragmatic compromise that was necessary so the orchestra could survive and play another day.”

The Detroit fellowships were born beneath complex layers of conflict and contradiction around professional standards, orchestra finances, public funding and accountability, political pressure, demographic upheaval, the merits and limits of blind auditions, the meaning of excellence, and the place of education and talent development in an organization designed to produce concerts, not train musicians. Race was a thread through all those layers, though not the only one. “When the fellowship program was launched, the culture of the DSO was hostile and dysfunctional in general—not only around race,” said Parsons. “We needed to move beyond that before the fellowships were fully accepted. When the level of hostility between management and musicians is high, as it was, it is impossible to do this work well.” Asked why she chose to launch fellowships at the DSO in that context, Borda said, “That was really the only thing the musicians would agree to.”

Other fellowship programs emerged from similar, if less dramatic circumstances. Paul Meecham, the Baltimore Symphony's then-CEO, explained, “Our timing on the fellowships was not ideal. Coming off the economic collapse (2008), we were in negotiations with the musicians and arguing that we needed to tighten our belt *and* invest in the future. The musicians found that contradictory. They suspected that the fellowships were

¹ Wilkerson, “Discordant notes in Detroit,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 1989.

² Blanton, “A limit to affirmative action,” *Commentary*, June 1, 1989.

a strategy to fill vacancies with musicians who would get paid less than scale.” At a time when orchestras across the country face significant financial stresses and many boards have insisted that they cut deeply into labor costs, one can understand why the musicians would have such a concern. Baltimore ultimately did manage to negotiate a satisfactory compromise with the musicians that began with a three-year trial run.

In the case of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, both management and musicians were concerned with protecting the orchestra’s high musical standards. If fellows were to play in concerts, they did not want to “establish a second-class citizenship within the orchestra,” said Cayenne Harris, who managed the program for the CSO. A complex negotiation led to an agreement that fellowships would be offered only to candidates who qualified to be substitutes at an audition. “The problem with the program was that it had a very high hurdle. We spread a wide recruiting net, but it was very difficult to find players coming out of conservatory who were qualified to play as subs,” we were told by Vanessa Moss, the CSO’s vice president for orchestra and building operations. Over six years, the CSO found two candidates who met that standard. It offered “Civic” fellowships to two others who came close, and they played with the CSO’s training orchestra, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. “Without that experience, the program withered,” she explained. The CSO discontinued its program after six years.

Seeking alignment

Labor/management tension and a related tension between the value of diversity and the core principle of musical standards have not been the only significant challenges to fellowship programs. Reflecting on his experience running the MAF/New York Philharmonic fellowships from 1986 to 1992, Daniel Windham, now director of arts for the Wallace Foundation, observed that orchestras’ rapid production of polished concerts week after week conflicted with the patient process of teaching and learning that are the hallmarks of good education: “The volume of rep that changes weekly doesn’t allow time for reflection and refinement. A few players might be able to keep up, but more are likely to need more time. A

season isn’t a curriculum.” The education director of one orchestra with a fellowship program told us that training young musicians is a new responsibility, one for which the orchestra is just not designed: “We are not a training orchestra like the New World Symphony!”

In retrospect, Parsons recommends, “The fellowship programs must be integrated into the core of the orchestra’s program so it is not out there on the margins. It needs to be owned by the musicians and supported by the board and the staff.” Orchestra managers stressed that the institution must be “aligned” to get the best results from fellowship programs.

Alignment, a widely touted concept in business management, has two basic components: consistency and synergy across all of the organization’s goals and plans, and strong links between organizational goals and the personal goals of employees. Research suggests that less than 10 percent of all businesses are successfully aligned, and that just 14 percent of employees understand their employer’s strategy.³

Again and again, we heard that such alignment is an elusive state for orchestras at the start of the 21st century. Financial stress has intensified conflict around many issues between management and musicians in many orchestras. Diversity is certainly one of them. It can be difficult, as it was in Baltimore, for some orchestra members to understand how fellowships will advance *their* interests—interests they understand as synonymous with those of the orchestra. Management, which has responsibility for cultivating the orchestra’s civic relationships—with public agencies, philanthropy and donors, audiences and potential audiences, and community organizations in many domains—sees its interests as synonymous with those of the institution. Establishing “consistency and synergy” around the goals of the orchestra across all its stakeholders is daunting. It may be even more confounding for goals that challenge the legacy of racial homogeneity.

Conceptually, fellowships might seem to be a vehicle for reconciling the goal of a more inclusive orchestra with the principle of high musical standards. After all,

³ “Strategy 101: It’s all about alignment,” Larry Myler. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrymyler/2012/10/16/strategy-101-its-all-about-alignment/#e2638772257f> Downloaded 4/16.

they are intended to provide additional professional development to young African American and Latino musicians that will help them reach those standards. (Not everyone agrees that the available pool of highly trained African American and Latino musicians is not yet playing at levels that qualify them for orchestra positions. Aaron Dworkin, for one, argues that there are significant numbers of highly qualified African American and Latino musicians, and the Sphinx Organization has made public demonstrations of their skills in concert a central element of its programming. The pioneering African American conductor James DePreist made the same point 30 years ago at a MAF convening: “Discrimination [is] the issue, the problem, the outrage...” In an effort to help, DePreist argued that orchestras subtly “shift[ed] the burden [from orchestral discrimination]...with the assumption that the problem was the black musicians’ being unqualified and requiring a special compensatory program.”)

The reconciliation gets undermined by labor-management mistrust, different opinions about the value of diversity for the orchestra, suspicion that fellows may be getting in through the “back door” of a quasi-affirmative-action program, and the absence of teaching and learning infrastructure for musicians in the orchestra. Anne Parsons and Paul Meecham advised that orchestras craft more consensus around the importance of diversity as an institutional value *before* launching fellowship programs. But when queried about *how* that consensus might be built, none of the managers we spoke with saw a singular pathway. Orchestras considering fellowship programs, Parsons advised, “should ask across the organization if people care about diversity. Ask if the business model of the organization supports diversity beyond the stage. Talk about different models for fellowships and determine what is best for your particular organization.” She added, “Do not expect buy-in if this [diversity values and programmatic initiatives like fellowships] comes from the top down and is heavy-handed. The DSO’s program is 27 years old. It takes time to make it work and align the organization behind it.” Parsons’s advice suggests that the struggles orchestras must work through as they develop fellowships or other initiatives to advance diversity build the pathways to alignment, rather than vice versa.

Beyond the stage

Jeri Lynne Johnson, founder and music director of the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra in Philadelphia, suggested a frame for thinking about the relevance of orchestras. “What if orchestras were not gatekeepers but enablers of creativity and appreciation?” Though many orchestras today are beginning to pay more careful attention to the musical culture of the cities around them, the Chicago Sinfonietta’s Jim Hirsch noted that in Chicago there has not been much effort made to connect the music education programs in the city, many of which serve children of color, with the area music schools and conservatories or with the orchestras. “Orchestras should work with feeder programs to get a stream coming up,” says Hirsch. “Just this winter we worked with one of the important community music schools to gather a meeting of the college music programs, and other programs for young people. It was the first meeting of its kind. If you don’t address the feeder system, you’re missing the boat.”

The idea that orchestras “must reflect their communities” is on one level an ethical principle. But the implication of Anne Parsons’s comment, “The audience won’t change if we don’t,” is that the audience *will* change if the orchestra does—that diversity on the stage will contribute to building a more diverse audience. But Aaron Dworkin, who often makes exactly that point, cautions that, “Reflecting the community means more than who’s on the stage. It refers to repertoire, too. Have the orchestras employed resources to identify works by composers of color? They haven’t done it...And then it goes to staffing. There’s a lack of diversity in staff, which may be even lower than on stage.”

Paul Meecham reports that the Baltimore Symphony—nearly eight years after starting its fellowships and a rigorous program that now serves 1,000 Baltimore youngsters year-round, in- and out-of-school—is still at the start of its journey, and the results have not yet been manifest at the box office. “We do a broader range of programming now. Last week we did *Porgy and Bess*, and it did draw a diverse audience—but the audience for the core symphonic product has not changed. There are lots of reasons for that—price resistance, the formality of the traditional concert, availability of diverse repertoire. We’re working on it all, but it is very inhibiting.”

The audition conundrum

Screened auditions, which have long been a feature of collective bargaining agreements at many orchestras, were designed to eliminate or reduce the possibility of personal preference or bias in the selection of new players. While they have had a laudatory effect on the inclusion of women in orchestras, they have had little effect on the inclusion of musicians of color. Auditions were an issue for the Detroit Symphony when it hired Rick Robinson in 1989, a development that contributed to the DSO's subsequent decision to create its fellowship program. And they were a difficult design issue for the fellowship program at the Chicago Symphony.

While many of the fellows we spoke to support screened auditions as an enormously significant validation of the musicians selected for orchestra positions, we also heard considerable skepticism about them. Some veteran African American musicians simply do not believe that they are fair at all. "Blind auditions just don't work. They screen candidates before they invite them to auditions. You have to go to the right schools and have the right teachers to start with," said one. *Philadelphia Inquirer* music critic Peter Dobrin has been a critic of screened auditions for many years, calling them "smoke screens." He argues that orchestras have invented creative workarounds to try out and select candidates without a screen. "Despite the declared rules and guidelines, an orchestra will hire the player it wants to hire," wrote Dobrin.⁴ Jim Hirsch of the Sinfonietta tends to agree: "Orchestras listen for a particular sound, teachers recognize their students, and they recognize the sound of a particular conservatory. And it is rare that the audition process is blind through the final selection."

Rick Robinson, who was hired without a screened audition but after he had played many times with the DSO, told us, "The audition process is so cutthroat. You have to be able to crank out those tough licks. They tend to favor precision playing over musicianship. An orchestra player must be part machine, part human. The audition favors evidence of machine playing over human qualities." Not only are very fine musicians sometimes overlooked in such a process, but qualities

⁴ Dobrin, Peter, "Blind auditions at orchestras? Hardly," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 31, 2010.

that orchestras may need badly as they work toward becoming more relevant institutions are not given any consideration at all. Eric Booth, who frequently consults with leading orchestras around issues of community engagement, relevance, and education said, "I can tell which members have a rich musical life outside the orchestra within ten minutes. They're the ones who are awake, curious, ready to take risks, and play. They are willing to work with ensembles and in communities—those other things that are part of the musical vitality of the institution. Those with great technique sometimes lack the inclination to do that other work."

Learning and sustaining fellowships

In the course of our interviews we heard emerging interest in the development of a network of fellowship programs that could help each learn from the experience of others, reflect on and critique practices and strategies, and make fellowships more effective. Anne Parsons summed it up: "Cohort groups are really important—they make learning much more powerful. There should be ten or fifteen orchestras doing fellowships. We should study them, understand how they differ in practice and context, and learn how they succeed and what their limits are. Then we should extend the practice and get to a scale that will really matter."

Getting to scale?

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, currently the principal source of funding for five fellowship programs, is interested in expanding the numbers of musicians in each, and it has encouraged innovations and planning for new programs. Liz Alsina, the Mellon associate who works most closely with fellowship orchestras, explained their motives: "Imagine you are somewhere completely new. You're young, not as secure as a more mature musician. Fellowships can be places of extreme vulnerability. If you don't have someone to share that with, you start to feel invisible. When there's two or three of you, there's more visibility and awareness in the orchestra." The Mellon-supported fellowship program at the Cincinnati Symphony will revisit the conservatory partnership model as a strategy for expanding the

number of fellows in a single program. The Baltimore Symphony has been discussing a similar arrangement with a local conservatory as well. These developments suggest that there may be some growth in the number of fellowships and the number of fellows as well in the short term. These are small steps, but there are currently more fellowship programs for musicians than at any time since the 1970s, and it is clear that interest is growing.

Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

For four decades, fellowships have been a vehicle for addressing a serious problem for American orchestras—the homogeneity of the musicians who play on their stages. They were designed to give a boost to young African American and Latino musicians in competitions for positions. What difference have they made, in practice? What factors appear to influence the outcomes they produce? Do fellowships address the underlying reasons for homogeneity? Do they offer a measure of hope for change?

Fellowship programs have helped prepare a small number of African American and Latino musicians who had other advantages as well—access to high-quality programs and instruction earlier in their musical development and some of the best conservatories and university music programs.

Without more data, it is impossible to quantify how much *fellowships*, as opposed to other advantages, contributed to their career paths, but the fellows themselves believe the contribution was very significant. The instruction they received and the opportunity to play with a professional orchestra and do mock auditions, in the fellows' opinions, made them more prepared and competitive at position auditions. Fellows built their confidence and expanded their network of professional contacts. Over 40 percent of the alumni of fellowship programs have won positions in orchestras. Some, though, chose other directions for their careers, most remaining in music, where they have become musical entrepreneurs, educators, and often role models for other young people in their communities.

On the other hand, fellows' experiences were also often painful lessons in how difficult it is to be an “outsider” in the clubby, closed world of orchestral music—how easily, frequently, and naturally white members and staff insult or dismiss musicians whose fellowships are a reward for discipline, hard work, and talent rather than a “special break.” Entry into the high-pressure concert production culture of a professional orchestra is undoubtedly difficult for all newcomers to the field. But their race and their

special status add an extra layer of complexity and difficulty for fellows, informing nearly every aspect of their daily life as they compete for jobs, join an orchestra, get up to speed musically, and are gradually woven into the social fabric of the orchestra. For some, the racial layer was experienced more sharply; for some, less so.⁵

The record clearly demonstrates that fellowships are not a “silver bullet” for orchestras that wish to come to grips with the challenges and problems associated with becoming more diverse, inclusive, and relevant. *There is no silver bullet.* Those problems persist on many levels, and orchestras ultimately must look more systematically at their organizational and musical culture, operational and programming practices, and relationships with the communities around them. Fellowships' focus on access and opportunity for just a few individuals can divert attention from the systemic reasons the field remains homogeneous.

But fellowships have been a place to start for some orchestras, and those that have sustained the energy and resources necessary to conduct a fellowship program over time have found that the effort has contributed to their “alignment” around the values of diversity and inclusion in important ways.

5 Of course, race informs daily life for all of us. One marker of white privilege is the ability to assume that one's own experiences are universal and “normal,” leaving others, then marked as different, to bear the burden of “race.”

Fellowships will not be the right choice for all orchestras, and they will not quickly change the numbers by which we most easily measure racial inclusion for any. But if they are understood as a step on a journey that will require dedication and practice at the level orchestras commit to making great music, fellowships can be significant contributors to building values and strategies that ultimately will make orchestras the inclusive, diverse, and relevant institutions they are striving to become.

Here are the conclusions we have drawn—and recommendations that flow from those conclusions—from our review of four decades of fellowships. We begin with “big picture” issues about the broad effects and implications of fellowships on the field, orchestras, and fellows, and move on to more focused observations about how fellowship programs can become more meaningful and effective.

Pipeline and pool: what is the problem?

The year Jackie Robinson broke the racial barrier in professional baseball, 1947, Leonard Bernstein described an audition he conducted for an orchestra position: “I must have heard about four hundred musicians, but of this number, only three were Negroes.” The odds that one of those, less than 1 percent of the competitors, would win the position, were statistically remote. But more than daunting odds limited their chances. Bernstein also affirmed the charge of civil-rights critics of orchestras: “I believe that the prejudice that exists against the Negro everywhere becomes a double-barrel load in the field of music. First of all, there is the obvious type of discrimination, which results in few good jobs for them; but to add to this, there is the subtle type of oppression, the economic factor.”⁶

Certainly “economic” factors, as Bernstein suggested, are profound. They are at the heart of the access and cultural issues that lead to what is often referred to the “pipeline problem” that constrains opportunities for young African American and Latino musicians—especially those in low-income communities. This begins with limited early exposure to classical music. It includes

6 Bernstein, Leonard, “The Negro in Music,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 1947.

the erosion of music education in public schools and the extremely limited availability of out-of-school programs, private instruction, and youth music ensembles. Those young musicians of color who do remain in the pipeline may find other kinds of music appealing or more remunerative and turn away from classical music.

In addition to these structural issues, orchestras—like all institutions in the United States—are challenged by a historic legacy of discrimination. Several fellows questioned whether screened auditions effectively remove bias from the selection process, and some thoughtful observers, including Aaron Dworkin, believe that there is a substantial number of highly qualified black and Latino musicians who are simply not winning positions despite outstanding skills. A sizeable body of scholarship has established that unconscious racial bias⁷ is pervasive across American institutions, and there is no reason to believe that orchestras are exempt from its effects.

In any event, fellowships do not change the fundamentals of the pipeline problem. They are not, in and of themselves, a solution to the persistent racial homogeneity of orchestras.

But fellowships clearly make a contribution. They provide an important advantage to a small number of talented young musicians at the inflection point between their education and their careers by polishing skills, familiarizing them with repertoire and the organizational culture of orchestras, and preparing them for the rigors of the audition process. Fellowship experiences were significant to fellows’ musical development, and, in some cases, vital to their winning positions in orchestras. Fellowships have added highly qualified African American and Latino musicians to the pool of candidates for positions, and they make them more competitive.

7 There is a large scholarly literature on unconscious racial bias and what is sometimes called “aversive racism.” See, for example, “The Nature of Contemporary Prejudice: Insights from Aversive Racism” (Pearson, Dovidio and Gaertner), or “Not Yet Human: Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences” (Eberhardt, Goff, Jackson and Williams).

Considering a fellowship program

In addition to fellowships' benefiting individual musicians, orchestra leaders believe they may also have an *indirect* effect on who enters the pipeline because they change the *perception* of orchestras as “white” organizations, establish the possibility of inclusion, and offer role models to young African Americans and Latinos. Perhaps they may even have an indirect effect on who comes to concerts. So there are ample reasons for virtually all orchestras to consider establishing a fellowship program.

Some managers of fellowship orchestras suggested that it is best to align the organization behind diversity goals prior to establishing fellowships, but they admitted that this is easier said than done. Orchestras must attend to diversity across all functions and stakeholders—staff and management, board and governance, programming, repertoire, and audience—not just the performers on their stages. And that focus must come from shared values about inclusion. This is what orchestra managers mean by “alignment.” Planning for fellowship programs is likely to bring into the open any disagreements about the value of diversity to the orchestra, conflict between management and labor over money and priorities, and/or tension between the orchestra's commitment to excellence and the professional development of young musicians. Reconciling these matters requires skillful leadership and the development of trust in the institution. Successfully navigating them requires an ongoing investment of human resources and time.

Fellowships were established in most cases under some measure of internal or external pressure—highly motivated managers, directors, or trustees in some cases, or pressure in the civic or political arena in others. They have not usually been the *outcome* of alignment in orchestras. Rather, they have provoked controversy and struggle that has been the prelude to higher levels of alignment behind the values of diversity. They can be a small but important step in a longer journey toward alignment that will require dedication and practice at the level orchestras commit to making great music.

Recommendation: Exploring the establishment of fellowships is an exercise that could prove valuable in virtually all orchestras—as a way to engage in serious discussion of diversity

as a value and goal, even in orchestras that choose not to create a program. Fellowships can be explored within the context of planning more broadly for inclusion and diversity in an orchestra or as initiatives on their own merit that are likely to precipitate a web of related issues. Fellowships will not be for every orchestra, but that conversation surely is. Alignment is the result of struggling with the issue of diversity, and that struggle should be around taking practical steps aimed at progress.

A more secure path to orchestra positions

The Chicago Sinfonietta, the Detroit Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, and the Grant Park Orchestra have hired alumni of fellowship programs as regular members, but with the exception of the Sinfonietta, none has hired more than one or two, and no fellowship orchestra is more racially diverse than the average American orchestra. The Sinfonietta, the Detroit Symphony, and the Grant Park Orchestra have each hired musicians who went through their own fellowship programs. But again, the Sinfonietta is the only one that has hired more than one or two and converted a fellowship program directly into a higher level of diversity on its stage.

Recommendation: Serious consideration should be given to how fellowships might lead directly to employment with the host orchestra, much like legal internships are designed to lead to positions in law firms for law students. Fellowships need not be a guarantee of employment, but can be a “pathway” to employment that both orchestra and player can refuse if progress is inadequate or the “fit” is not right. Such an arrangement will give the orchestra a more compelling stake and accountability for each fellow's success, and their successes will be markers of each program's success. It will also, of course, require engaging the musicians' union in a conversation about changing the protocols for auditioning and hiring musicians.

Becoming more diverse and relevant: fellowships are not enough

Orchestra leaders and outside experts consistently suggested that becoming more relevant to diverse communities will likely require many skills, assets, and practices beyond what happens onstage. More African American and Latino faces may contribute to the relevance of symphonic music to African Americans and Latinos. But orchestras will surely also need new ideas about how to make the music meaningful to a much broader cross-section of Americans, as well as leadership that can imagine the kind of organization that can do that job. Many orchestras are starting to rethink what they will be in this still-new century, and they are placing the relationship to their communities at the center of that question. That is why diversity is so central to it. Where will those ideas come from?

Recommendation: Diversity is needed in all aspects of orchestra operations and governance, not just music making. Orchestras should borrow ideas from other sectors that have struggled with diversity and made better progress. Among those ideas that deserve consideration are diversity training for staff, musicians, and trustees; a diversity “audit” that explores the state of inclusion and the ways the culture may inhibit or advance it; and development of a diversity plan for the institution that includes specific goals for all its parts. Powerful ideas are likely to emerge from the creative efforts of more diverse staffs, boards, and musicians. Obstacles to diversity, which many suggest include the screened audition, originally intended to eliminate discrimination, should be systematically reexamined.

A curriculum for fellows and for orchestras

Fellowship program curricula should, of course, be built around the musical development of the fellows themselves. But curricula need not end with the repertoire and the technique fellows need to learn to play at the level of the orchestra. Many fellows expressed

serious interest in a range of issues that confront orchestras as they adapt to the changing realities of the 21st century. These certainly include diversity, and most fellows would welcome serious conversations about that and other civic issues as a part of the fellowship experience. A curriculum that is attentive to a range of issues of significance to the music world could become a curriculum for the entire orchestra, a way to encourage participation in discussions that most fellows and others we interviewed believe are necessary for orchestras to be vital and relevant for the long term.

Recommendation: This broader curriculum could engage the larger orchestra community if staff and members are involved in its development and participate in discussions with fellows about the issues.

Key program elements and the fellowship experience

Entry into orchestra culture is a difficult transition for any young musician, but it is more difficult for musicians of color. Race is a complicating layer over all the other difficulties they face. Fellows said that they “rose to the next level” musically, became more confident, and built networks of social and professional support. But even those fellows who had overwhelmingly positive experiences said that there were times when they felt alienated from the orchestra family. For a few, the alienation became quite difficult. Difficulties with section members were compounded by administrative departments that were sometimes unresponsive and treated fellows as an afterthought. Fellowships affect the operational practices of the entire orchestra.

Recommendation: Fellowship programs can do better to prepare the musicians and staff to welcome fellows. Sections should be responsible and accountable for their fellows’ success, and training of those responsible for lessons and mentoring may sometimes be appropriate. It is particularly important that the roles and responsibilities of teachers and mentors, and those of human resources departments and staff, are clearly articulated

from the start. Fellowship program design should be attentive to the elements that fellows indicated were most important to them, including: mock auditions, flexibility for freelancing and gigs, more ensemble playing, and efficient administration.

Excellence and professional development: resolving tension between goals

Orchestras take great pride in the quality of their sound, and strive to embody musical excellence. That is an overriding goal and fundamental principle. Orchestras are organized to perform at an extraordinary level of virtuosity, not to provide professional development for musicians.

With a fellowship program, the orchestra is bringing in musicians who have not yet acquired the level of excellence required of its other musicians. In other words, musicians who are not yet judged to be good enough to be *in* the orchestra work *with* the orchestra, and that work often includes playing *in* the orchestra.

This strategy often creates some tension between the orchestra's commitment to excellence in performance and its commitment to the professional development of its fellows. Fellows experience this tension in many ways. Perhaps the most significant operationally has been insufficient transparency about what and when they will play with the orchestra.

Recommendation: Orchestras that consider fellowship programs must reconcile their commitment to excellence with their commitment to the professional development of fellows who do not yet play at a sufficiently high level to become members. If it is understood that fellows have particular needs with regard to learning technique or repertoire to reach a higher level of proficiency, curriculum should be designed to help them succeed. Thoughtful and transparent strategies for deciding which concerts fellows play, and which they don't, should be designed around the strengths and the progress of each fellow.

Orchestra accountability

Fellows are young musicians with demonstrable talent and a strong work ethic. The goal of fellowship programs should be to raise their playing to match the level of those in the host orchestra across all relevant measures and qualify them to be a member of the host orchestra. If programs do not regularly meet such a standard, they should evaluate and improve their practices. Orchestras should consider themselves accountable for fellows' successes (or failures).

Recommendation: While the long-range goal of fellowship programs may be to diversify the field, orchestras need to establish near-term standards for success, be accountable to those standards, and work to improve their programs until they meet them.

Fellowship program models

Three basic models have appeared over the four decades of fellowships: proprietary fellowships in individual orchestras, networked fellowships, and conservatory partnerships. The small sample limits analysis of their relative effectiveness, but the models may each have particular strengths and weaknesses. Networked fellowships can leverage faster organizational learning through a community. Proprietary fellowships give orchestras complete control of program, enable individual focus on fellows' needs, and facilitate local fundraising. Conservatory partnerships open up the pool of quality musicians *before* graduation, make conservatories more competitive for students of color, and support both the orchestra and the school.

Recommendation: Orchestras considering fellowships should carefully consider which program model fits them best, including creative new models or hybrids. Fellowship programs should conduct formative evaluations and track the career paths of alumni.

Recruiting fellowship candidates

Fellowships are not well known or publicized at leading conservatories. Fellows repeatedly told us that they learned about the opportunity by lucky happenstance.

Recommendation: A calendar of all auditions for fellowships should be developed collaboratively and distributed to diversity officers and career counselors at conservatories and music schools and through the Sphinx Organization and Gateways Festival. Those orchestras that wish to attract talent nationally should be prepared to support travel to live auditions. In some regions, smaller orchestras will have little trouble finding qualified candidates, but in others that may prove to be difficult.

Auditions

The audition itself is an opportunity to evaluate the quality of playing at a particular moment. It reveals little or nothing about a musician's *potential, disposition, or other skills*. Fellows felt strongly that interviews were a welcome addition to their audition experiences. They gave them a chance to discuss their ambitions and aspirations, interests, extra-musical skills, and experience. As a growing number of orchestras rethink and reimagine what they hope to become in the future, many recognize that building a meaningful relationship to the diverse communities around them is at the center of that process. Orchestras will need many skills and assets beyond their players' technical mastery and their musical "fit" to do that. The fellowship interview suggests that auditions for open positions can also be complemented with other selection methodologies as orchestras seek the kinds of musicians they will need for the future.

Recommendation: Interviews have been a valuable addition to the fellowship audition and should be standard practice. Orchestras should consider ideas for how potential can be evaluated and articulate clearly what kinds of skills and dispositions they are looking for in fellows beyond their playing ability. They should also consider selection methods

beyond or in addition to the screened audition for identifying the best candidates for new members.

Duration of fellowships

Fellowships of just a single summer season have yielded benefits for some fellows, but in general, longer fellowships have had more substantial benefits. More is better, when it comes to time. Longer fellowships enable people to get to know each other musically and socially, to overcome feelings of alienation and isolation, to build the networks that sustain a career, and to learn and enter the performance schedule.

Recommendation: By the end of a fellowship, fellows should be musically ready to play with the orchestra at virtually all of its concerts, including subscription performances and masterworks. The duration of a fellowship program should be calculated on the basis of how long it is likely to take for a fellow to get to that level.

Multiple fellows

Consistent observation from fellows that the fellowship experience is isolating suggests that programs should, as a rule, enroll more than one fellow simultaneously. Two or three fellows, at a minimum, also helps make the presence of musicians of color less of a novelty for the orchestra. This strategy may increase the level of tension about musical excellence. However, it is also likely to make the experience less stressful for fellows and increase the chances of their success by providing an invaluable community of support, collaboration, and learning.

Recommendation: New programs should plan to enroll no fewer than two fellows at a time. Older programs should strive to expand to include two or more.

Growing the pipeline

Fellowships can increase the number of competitive African American and Latino musicians in the larger pool of competitors, but the increase will be marginal unless and until more are given opportunities for music education and training, enter the pipeline at earlier ages, and remain in it. Despite limited resources, some orchestras are taking leading roles in generating those opportunities through direct engagement with community music programs (like El Sistema-inspired and other strategies) and the civic influence of their trustees on public and educational policy.

Recommendation: Orchestras can take a leadership role to build collaborations with community music programs and conservatories to select and implement the most strategic approaches to expanding the pipeline in their communities on a sustained basis. And they can actively use their civic influence to advocate for expanded music programs in public schools.

Cost of fellowships

The largest expense for fellowship programs are the payments to fellows, which are generally tied in some way to wages of entry-level players. One small orchestra has devoted 4 percent of its annual operating budget to its fellowship program. Though the per-capita cost is higher for large orchestras, they have devoted a lower proportion of their annual budgets to fellowships, generally far less than 1 percent.

Recommendation: Orchestras should be realistic about the costs of a fellowship program. They should pay stipends that are appropriate to the cost of living and cover health insurance. They should also be prepared to be reasonable about fellows' freelancing.

Financing fellowships

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is, at this point, the only national arts funder that has embraced orchestra fellowships as a strategy, and despite its continuing commitment, it is unlikely that a significant number of additional fellowship programs and fellows can be supported by a single funder. There is an emerging discourse among funders about diversity and inclusion in the arts. That is a promising development, but turning to more funders—other foundations, patrons, trustees—or reallocating an orchestra's existing resources to fellowships will require that orchestras answer this question: "How will a fellowship program advance our orchestra's diversity goals and those of the field?" A clear articulation of the case for investment that aligns programmatic and strategic needs around the orchestra's role in the 21st century will be crucial to future financing.

Recommendation: A variety of funding options should be pursued. Key to all of them will be development of a powerful case statement for fellowships that can be used to advocate for foundation support, contributions from trustees and other patrons, and reallocation of existing resources.

In the Final Analysis: A New Paradigm

Shifting attitudes and beliefs about two things are probably the most important ideas that emerged from this study: First, fellowships are viewed now primarily as a service to fellows that helps them advance musically. Their benefits to orchestras are less explicit, especially since fellows are not expected to win positions in most host orchestras. And second, while orchestras provide a range of support to fellows, the programs are not accountable for their musical growth or success as musicians.

The paradigm needs to shift and become both more reciprocal and accountable: First, *orchestras should be accountable for fellows' success*. Naturally fellows must push themselves and work hard, continuing to demonstrate the dedication and ability characterizing their previous education and training. The key to successful fellowship programs, more often than not, will be for orchestras to resolve the tension between excellence and professional development and to cultivate a definition of success in which fellows come to perform at a level that would qualify them to become members by the conclusion of the fellowship. A committed orchestra will tweak and improve the program until it is able to do that consistently.

And second, *the success of the fellowship is not just on and for the fellow who has to work hard, fit in, and compete, but on and for the orchestra that hosts the fellow*. It needs to advance the orchestra's diversity and inclusion objectives. That may eventually include a direct pathway to a job for the fellow. But, in the near term, it should at least advance the conversations and planning that all American institutions, including orchestras, need in order to become more inclusive and diverse. Orchestras that have found ways to use fellowships to do that have sustained them and made progress on the diversity front.

Taking action on diversity has been difficult, messy, confounding, and emotionally charged in all fields. It is worth considering that controversy and higher "temperatures" are important drivers of change. Art museums responded to the heat that the Guerrilla Girls (a group of feminist visual art activists) generated when they burst into the public arena in the 1990s. Anita Hill's testimony at the Senate confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas raised race and gender issues for all professions. Hollywood is under increasing pressure as a result of the persistent exclusion of African American artists from Oscar nominations. Indeed, public pressure on orchestras contributed to some orchestras' motivation to establish fellowship programs. The heat is important.

But so are the facts and a deeper understanding of the problem. At the start of the 21st century, there appears to be a new will to confront the racial homogeneity of the nonprofit arts and of American orchestras in particular. Fellowships for African American and Latino musicians are the only strategy for increasing diversity of orchestras that has been time-tested. This study represents the commitment of the orchestral field to thoughtful, open-minded review and critique of its efforts, a willingness to think deeply and learn from its experience. There is more to be learned. Formative evaluation of fellowship initiatives should be a part of plans for new fellowships, so that the learning continues.

The League of American Orchestras, by collecting longitudinal data on race (starting in 1980 and with more precision since 2002), and now with this report, is helping the orchestra field understand the depth of the challenge it faces and the value that fellowships can add. But there is far more that can be done. Here are a few ideas intended to stimulate thinking by orchestra leaders, funders, and others about where else to shine the light:

- Systematic empirical research on the diversity of boards, staffs, and audiences and on efforts to improve diversity in each of those domains.
- Identification and investigation of “bright spots” in the orchestral universe—orchestras that have made meaningful and significant progress on diversity—and an understanding of how they did it. Their stories need to be unpacked to find the concrete steps they have taken that have made a difference, the principles that have guided them, and the strategies they have used to overcome obstacles.
- Investigation of the methods other professional fields have successfully applied to improving diversity and consideration of how they might be adapted for orchestras.
- Consideration of training orchestras as another strategy for launching the careers of young African American and Latino musicians.
- A serious evaluation of screened auditions’ role: Do they limit or eliminate discriminatory hiring? Do they contribute to homogeneity at the same time?
- Deeper exploration of the experiences of African American and Latino musicians in orchestras.

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Nick Rabkin and Monica Hairston O'Connell
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About the League

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners.

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