



Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

# Approaches to Community Engagement in the Arts

December 2022

# ABA's Research Process

# Core Research Question

What are the structural transformations and activities organizations have undertaken to become authentically community focused?

# Interview Questions Themes

- Ark and journey of community engagement
- Catalyst and leaders of change
- Types of programs/ flagship initiatives
- Partnership tiers and building trust
- Capability sharing

- Budget and funding
- Staffing
- Board and leadership alignment
- Measuring impact
- Advice and challenges

# Other Sources and Benchmarks

- Analysis of organizational websites, missions and values
- Overview of organizational programs and partnerships
- IRS 990 and Charity Reporting forms for budgeting and funding

# Interview Participants

























# Key Takeaways From Our Calls

- Defining what community engagement is not so clear cut, which leads to different approaches and staffing structures to lead these efforts.
- Organizations should not assume the whole staff and board will automatically be aligned with community engagement efforts, especially as these activities tend not be major sources of earned income. Leaders must commit to making community engagement part of the core mission and all major strategies.
- There is no single way to build a strategy around values-based services to the community. Organizations tend to informally choose one "pillar" for their efforts (artistic programming, education, internal DEI&A, etc.).
- Developing authentic partnerships is a multi-year process. It takes 1-2 years before you are in a position to ask for or offer anything, and many organizations take a very personal approach to building partnerships.
- You can't always wait for funding. Several organizations reported moving ahead with community engagement initiatives without having specific funding for it, instead using existing operating budgets. This has the added benefit of emphasizing how core an activity community engagement is.
- Board & leadership investment is key. Not only does this ensure necessary support for the team members leading community engagement work, but also helps build partnerships at the leadership level, thereby making these relationships integrated and visible throughout the institution.
- Not all community members will be interested in your art form and that's okay. Lowering barriers to your performance hall is not always enough, but you can still have impact and value off the stage.

# Advice From Our Interviews- 'Dos'

### Be Transparent

"One of the things we always try to do is to be really transparent, and do everything through lots of conversation and consultation. If the values, mission and vision of the organization are changing then we'll really workshop it and talk it all through with staff members and young people and our community. Transparency and lots of conversations are key."

# Focus on Depth

"Whatever metrics people are focusing on - focus on the depth of connection. That is going to be labor intensive - so you may need to accept that you'll have fewer major flagship events. For example, we went from large banner moments instead to 65 different genuine community engagement moments. And at the root, that's what community engagement is."

#### Be Adventurous

"One of the things we live by as is testing things out and doing them. Possibly not spending a lot of time talking about something, but just doing it in a small, lowrisk way so that you can learn and do it at the same time. Then we get feedback from each stage."

# Ensure the Whole Organization is Engaged

"Be really thoughtful about how you're going to engage the entire organization on this work, otherwise it tends to feel like an offshoot and then you have a team working incredibly hard to do this meaningful work but not feeling the full support of the organization, and then others in the organization feeling like it's additive rather than fully part of the mission of the organization."

# Advice From Our Interviews- 'Don'ts'

#### Don't Rush

"I think a common mistake is probably just moving too fast. A lot of times that happens because we live in a society that values urgency, and this is a business that has very urgent, perfectionist relationships to time. A lot of times when our measures of success are particularly tied up with capitalism, it becomes really difficult to make the case for the work when the work may take years to complete in an authentic way. But it's so worth it."

# Don't Fall into the False Dichotomy of Excellence vs. Community

"Often when people say "artistic excellence" it's a very narrow perspective that doesn't speak to most people. It's a falsehood to say that nothing has to change to broaden our reach to the community. We do have to make room for different ideas and different versions of artistic excellence [...] So the way for me to boil it down is "artistic excellence for whom?" It might not have anything to do with the music - can be the audience experience."

#### Don't Do Too Much all at Once

"There is so much opportunity out there, and so many exciting ways you could think of doing this project, that program, etc. so I'd be cautious about taking on too much all at once because then you get the mission creep issue, and you won't have the resources and you lose the focus of "what are we doing this for?" The potential is there to be able to suddenly attract grants or fundraising, and then you have the tail wagging the dog, because you're creating a program in response to the grant."

# Don't Start Partnerships by "Selling" to Them

"First you don't ask anything from them. This is not transactional- "come to see us" or "why don't you put this program in your library". In my work we just opened the door to these people- get to know them before asking them anything [...] Be a friend first - get interested in what is important to them / what these institutions do."

# Community-focused Organizations Frame their Work in Different Ways

Organizations have their own mission and vision, as well as their own internal cultures. Organizations are also situated in different communities that lead to diverse approaches to community engagement.

### Leveraging the arts

# Artistic Programming Focus



Removing "mainstage" language and inviting community to develop new work



Making performances accessible via digital



Artistic incubation to promote diverse careers and creative output

### On-site Visitor Experience Focus



Removing "mainstage" language and inviting community to develop new work



Building an accessible audience experience by mixing genres and becoming less formal

#### Internal DEI&A Focus



Establishing an internal DEI "think tank" team

Partnership Focus

Co-creating with partners



Local nonprofit partnerships



Local business & influencer partnerships



Public school partnerships and curriculum resources



Service-centered and school partnerships

# Journey Towards Deeper Community Connectivity



Understanding Wolly Mammoth's Journey and Process to Arrive at their Connectivity Work and Core Partnership Program.

# Towards becoming more connected and embedded in the community

#### Connectivity Department: linking artistic mission with social political mission

#### Phase 1: Artistic outreach and education

- Outside Woolly program when the theatre was in a different less affluent part of town
- Creating connections and raising awareness with mural works, local artists other outreach activities
- Combined with education department when Woolly was leading K-12 programs and visits

2009: Connectivity

Outreach and education models did not feel as aligned with the purpose of the theatre and its provocative sociopolitical mission.

#### Phase 2: Onsite activations

- With Connectivity push to design intentionally the audience for each show
- Finding the hot point of intersection between the artist's inspiration and the community's interests and concerns
- Building a total audience experience with on-site ancillary events (talks, exhibits, workshops etc) and interactive lobby experiences.
- Talks, exhibits, workshops etc.

2021-22: CPP\*

Internal emphasis on distribution and use of discount ticket codes results in imbalance of audience development components of program. Relationships are about getting people to the theatre/transactional.

#### Phase 3: Core Partnership Program\*

- Identify long-term mutually beneficial relationships with organizations who share the same values.
- Allow both parties to accomplish together what neither could do alone
- Results of partnerships are unique to each partner organizations and not just about an artistic product

# Understanding what Organizations are Doing to Be More Community Focused

### **STAGE**

Increasing the relevance of who and what is presented on stage

### EXPERIENCE

Expanding the experiences onsite and around the stage

### **ACCESS**

Fostering access opportunities for community groups

### SPACE

Inviting the community to use your space on their terms

### **PARTNERS**

Developing tiered partnerships to reach higher engagement over time

#### **RESOURCES**

Adopting different staffing and funding models to resource community efforts



# STAGE

Increasing the relevance of who and what is presented on stage

In this section we will look at case examples that demonstrate the opportunities and impact of changing the stage and artistic product:

- Fostering opportunities for the diversification of the sector and empowering BIPOC artists to share their voices
- Creating new works that are relevant and representative of the experiences of our community members
- Inviting community members to the stage and making them feel included and empowered to create their own work
- Leveraging bilingual theatre and co-creations to celebrate diverse cultures and open-up the stage experience to new communities

# Working with Artists to Diversify Voices in the Field



# Arts Commons TD Incubator Program Promotes Sector Diversity

Goal

#### Promoting a diverse artistic sector

Arts Commons Incubator, a first-of-its-kind professional artist development program was designed to support Calgarybased artists who reflect the diversity and vibrancy of the city. The Incubator will provide its cohort (25-35 artists) with a season of engagements under four themes: networking; professional development; mentorship; and paid live performance, exhibition, and teaching opportunities within Arts Commons initiatives.

Description Of Engagement

#### Leveraging Arts Commons resources across four pillars:

#### Performance & Exhibition:

Cohort artists are given paid opportunities to connect their practice with audiences through Arts Commons Presents performances, galleries and/or Arts Commons Education initiatives.

Networking: Artists in the TD Incubator program are invited to meet fellow artists connected to Arts Commons and leaders across Calgary to discuss their work and challenge their practices.



These events and workshops focus on career development and capacity building, artistic approaches to social change, and applying artistic practices to other areas of life, work, and culture.

Mentorship: Using Arts Commons' network of local and visiting artists, this element of the program builds relationships between participants and leaders in their fields of interest.

Results, past events etc.

First cohort welcomed in 2021. Goal is to create a diverse pipeline for artists in Calgary and supporting the needs for arts education around the city. 2022-23 cohort includes 24 inter-disciplinary artists.





# Celebrating Relevant Community Stories on Stage



# HGO's Song of Houston Collaborate with the Community to Commission Relevant New Works

Goal

New original works with relevant narratives for a diverse community In 2007 HGO launched the Song of Houston program with their debut production The Refuge. Song of Houston commissions new chamber operas

and song projects that resonate with contemporary life in Houston.

Description Engagement Engaging community members both behind the scenes and on stage

Song of Houston works with community members across hundreds of interviews to gain insights and personal narratives. Artists also work with community members to perform pieces of the works on the opera's main stage alongside HGO orchestra musicians.

Results, past events etc.

Since 2007, Song of Houston has commissioned 30 new works.

Examples of past and upcoming productions:

- March 2023, "Another City" (stories of unhoused Houstonians)
- 2020, "Marian's Song" (an individual's journey of breaking racial boundaries)
- 2017 "After the Storm" (a family's crisis in midst of a natural disaster)
- 2015 "O Columbia" (celebration of spaceflight frontier explorers)

"Hours and hours of interviews with members of these communities went into crafting the libretto. We involved performers from those communities in the chorus or as musicians and singers. And it was an amazing opportunity to partner with community members to tell their stories - not just us bringing something to them, they were part of the creation."

- Molly Dill, COO



#### Current commission celebrates Lunar New Year

- Submission proposals in 2021
- Libretto draft 2022
- World premier with Asia Society Houston 2024

# Extending the Stage to Community Members



# Round House Theatre Invites the Next Generation to the Stage

Goal

#### Opportunity for professional youth training and access to the stage

In memory of a former intern, the Teen Performance Company (TPC) offers high school students full access to theatre resources, including mentorship and masterclasses. This 20+ year program invites the community to the stage to produce their own full-scale productions.

Description Of Engagement Teen Performance Company (TPC) is a pre-professional program for high school students interested in all areas of theatre. It culminates in a fully realized production of a world premiere on the Round House Theatre stage that is directed, designed, stage managed, and acted by students, under the mentorship of professional Round House staff and artists.

Position filled by student company members:

- Director
- Dramaturg
- Producer
- Production Associate
- Stage Manager
- Assistant Stage Manager
- Run Crew
- Costume Designer
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Properties Designer
- Actors

Results, past events etc.

Since start of program, over 370 students served across 59 high schools

"Being in TPC was such a unique opportunity because young actors typically aren't able to experience the process of putting up a piece of new, professional work. From beginning to end we were immersed in professional settings, showing what the process is for real world actors.'

- TPC Member, TPC Information Sheet



# Making Stage Content Accessible to Diverse Groups



# San Diego Opera Develops Initiatives to Promote Hispanic Cultures and Spanish-Language Productions

Goal

#### Celebrating diverse cultures in their own language

Director of Hispanic and IDEA Initiatives, Andrea Puente Catán at San Diego Opera developed a variety of initiatives to create connections and celebrate the cultures and histories of Hispanic/ Spanish-speaking communities in and around the city.

Description Of Engagement

# Virtual engagement during the pandemic

*Opera en tu sofa,* was a free virtual program started during the pandemic that presented a series of recitals and interviews around opera, zarzuela, song selections celebrating Hispanic cultures.

# Ongoing free bilingual concerts

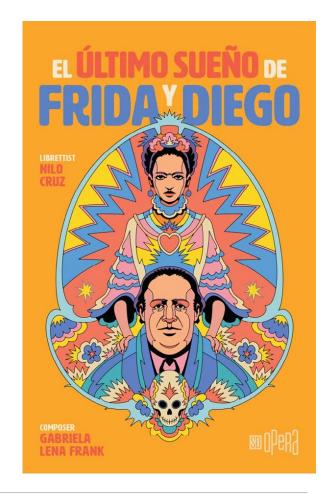
=Voices/Voces= is an ongoing monthly series that brings opera to outdoor and indoor venues throughout San Diego County and the Cali-Baja region. This series focuses on cultural diversity and in particular showcases Spanish-language opera, art songs and popular songs.

# Bi-national program to foster cross-cultural connections

*Opera en Español* is a binational operatic initiative, creating a cultural corridor from San Diego County throughout Mexico's Northwestern States of Baja California, Sinaloa, and Guanajuato. This program involves shared resources, touring, co-productions and commissions.

Results, past events etc.

Throughout the pandemic SDO hosted over 50 virtual programs in English and in Spanish. The opera continues to offer free Spanish language concerts and their most recent major piece entirely in Spanish, El último sueño de Frida y Diego, is being presented with an adjoining Frida and Diego festival.



# Report Outline

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# **EXPERIENCE**

Expanding the experiences onsite and around the stage

In this section we will look at case examples that demonstrate the opportunities and impact of changing ad expanding the onsite experience:

- Reimaging the on-site experience to be less imposing and formal
- Creating spaces that are accessible to all, all the time
- Inviting audiences to deep dive into artistic works with ancillary events and opportunities for conversations
- Supporting the field beyond the stage with podcasts, and spaces for reflection

# Redefining On-Site Experiences and Reducing "Formality"



# Oakland Symphony's Former Artistic Director Presents Unconventional Concerts

Goal

#### Getting audiences who are different together and building new attendance habits

The Symphony's late music director Michael Morgan, really thought about audiences, and utilized the catalogue of music and commissions in service of them. His goal with his concerts was to see who was already in the audience, who wasn't and who needs to sit in the room together to create a more vibrant and inclusive viewing experience.

Description Of Engagement

#### Challenging artistic expectations

- Curated concerts that had two almost directly opposite themes/ styles or genres.
- Building trust with audiences, "you're going to like some things and dislike others, and that's okay"
- Bringing in diverse audiences helped to infuse a more active listening group

#### Normalizing more relaxed experiences:

- Encouraging clapping
- Musicians in informal/ non-black tie attire
- Food and beverage allowed in the hall
- Dress code also loose, allowing audiences to enjoy experience as they want

Results, past events etc.

"The community that was created and the diversity in the room that was created was what made the artistic experience so special. Our audiences were well primed under the 30+ year leadership of Michael Morgan. Takes time to change habits, but results are really exciting."

- Mieko Hatano, Executive Director

"That permission to take it all in. I think that part of that permission, too, is about having different people in the room who have different attendance habits."

-Mieko Hatano, Executive Director

"We approach this from an artistic-centered way, and it needs to be led by an artistic director who goes out in the community and understands what the community members want."

-Mieko Hatano, Executive Director

# Redefining On-Site Experiences Around Access



#### Battersea Arts Centre Becomes the First Relaxed Venue

Goal

#### To be radically inclusive across all events

Battersea Arts Centre's relaxed venue works to identify and dismantle the barriers faced by disabled people, based on the social model of disability. BAC has committed to being a relaxed venue throughout all their events- not just a few standalone performances. They have also made their works pay as you wish, to further reduce access barriers.

Description Of Engagement

#### What this looks like in practical and strategic terms:

- Permanent 'chill out space' in the building
- Availability of ear defenders
- Public commitment of 90% relaxed performances
- Public commitment of 90% captioned digital performances
- Consistent ongoing offers of other types of access performances (sensory, captions, interpreted performances etc.)
- Programming that reflects disability culture and disabled-led work
- Public commitment of 20% disabled-led work, with artistic control

Results, past events etc.

#### Results thus far match and exceed public commitments:

- 100% accessible digital performances
- Over 90% of in-person events were relaxed in the last year
- Across 2019 and 2020, 97% of performances were relaxed

"We start every performance with an announcement that you're free to come and go as you please, make noise. We have bean bag chairs, a chill out space. People get pre-show information, so they know what they're in for. We did a lot of work on the building to make it physically accessible."

- Liz Moreton, Director of Creativity and Social Change



# Providing Ancillary Experiences to Enrich Stage Performances



# Woolly Mammoth Delivers Lobby Experiences and Curated Events to Expand Stage Experiences

Goal

#### Foster dialogue in connection with performance

For over a decade, the Connectivity Department has activated the civic conversations at the heart of Woolly's productions, through curated events, lobby experiences, and other content in collaboration with community partners.

Description Of Engagement

#### Expanded visitor on-site experiences for different entry points

Curated events are held in conjunction with ongoing performances. The Theatre invites thematically related and relevant community groups and partners to either present, exhibit, perform and/or share their insights on narrative themes presented on stage. These events are more for audience engagement.

Results, past events etc.

Woolly Mammoth has been offering curated experiences since the launch of their Connectivity program in 2009. These programs help cultivate an audience for a show where the material will be either personally or professionally relevant.

"House Light Up events, provided opportunities for more in-depth conversation about the work that might feature community partners coming in and being on panels or leading workshops, etc. And then also I would say that Connectivity at that time was very interested in this question of what was the entry point for a particular play, so a dramaturgical component."

- Kristen Jackson, Connectivity Director/ Associate Artistic Director





# Going Beyond the Stage to Talk Diversity and Inclusion

# Minnesota Opera's The Score Podcast Reviews Opera Through an Inclusion Lens

#### Goal

#### Opera seen through a new lens

The goal of the Score podcast is to provoke conversation and debate around the history and future of Opera. It's a provocative, thoughtful, and humorous commentary on opera's past, present, and future, as seen through an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens.

# Description Of Engagement

#### Ongoing conversations and new perspectives

- 60-90min conversations, released every other Monday
- Hosted by Minnesota Opera lead Administrators
  - Lee Bynum (VP Impact)
  - o Paige Reynolds (former Civic Engagement Manager)
  - Rocky Jones (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director)
- Occasional guest appearances

Results, past events etc.

#### Past episodes and themes have included:

- Radical Imagination
- Classical Agitators
- A Requiem for the Binary
- Let Black Women Lead
- Palm Beach Pride

"The Score podcast is about making space for a public conversation round our work that allows both staff and the public to hear a different different perspectives. [...] We are paying attention to what we are hearing in the podcast- and using that to serve audiences with more accessible and exciting content."

- Lee Bynum, VP Impact







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ACCESS

Fostering access opportunities for different community groups

After looking at price discounts and special offers as a common tactic to increase access, we will look at case examples that demonstrate other ways to increase access:

- Leveraging digital access and tools like QR codes to push art beyond venue four-walls
- Targeting school groups to foster understanding with younger generations and creating curriculum connections for long-term engagement
- Inviting young people of all background to participate in hands-on music experiences as an entry into art and attendance

# Providing Affordable and Accessible Tickets

Organizations almost always offer some form of accessible pricing to encourage access, but there are many ways to address access to the arts...

	Pay what you will	Rush tickets	Under 18 discounts or free tickets	College nights / free events and discounts	Young adult discounts / free tickets	Senior/or veteran discounts	Educator/ or artist discounts	New/ local audience free tickets and discounts	School matinees/ group rates	Free tickets for partners/or community groups
Arts Commons									x	×
BAC	×		х		×			×		×
HGO			х		х			×	x	
Minnesota Opera		×	х	×	x		х		х	×
Oakland Symphony			х				х	x	х	х
ROCO	х								х	×
Round House US	×		х	x		х	х			x
San Diego Opera		×		x		х				
Spoleto Festival USA	x (select dates & performances)		x (select dates & performances)	x	х	х	х		х	х
Woolly Mammoth	×	х		×	x		х			

# Leveraging Digital To Expand Access Beyond On-site Venues



# ROCO on the Go Pushes their Work Out Beyond their Core Venues

Goal

#### Creating access to music across Houston

Over the past seventeen years ROCO has invested in performances, recordings, and distribution rights to provide free access to their music. During the pandemic, ROCO developed ROCO on the Go, where they weave music throughout the Houston community with QR codes.

Description Of Engagement

#### Scan QR codes for free music access

Posted across the city in non-traditional sites, visitors can easily scan QR codes to access curated playlists based on different adjectives and moods like joy, bold, soothing etc. The QR codes allow visitors to enjoy music from anywhere.

Results, past events etc.

Roco on the Go's first QR kiosks started along a local park's trails in October 2020. Since then, ROCO has partnered with 16 other area organizations, placing QRs in over 30 different facilities. Sites include: Texas Southern University, Texas Children's Hospital, The Menninger Clinic, Houston Botanic Gardens and ROCO's home-base venue, the Church of St. John the Divine in River Oaks.

"When we talk about community engagement, we use the umbrella term "access". From our very founding, ROCO has developed a reputation to reduce barriers to access for all- creating accessible experiences for people with physical and neuro divergences, as well as removing price barrier and making our programs approachable and easy"

- Amy Gibbs, Managing Director





# Serving Schools to Scaffold Understanding with Young Audiences



# Spoleto Festival USA Targets Schools to Build Community Understanding and Access

Goal

### Foster understanding and connections for students first

Spoleto Festival USA has focused a lot of their community efforts towards creating resources and partnerships with the local school system. By focusing on schools, they hope to encourage the next generation of viewers through active engagement and support, rather than just inviting them to performances without context.

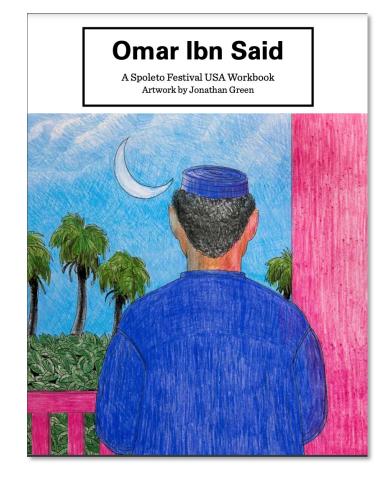
Description Of Engagement

#### Providing resources and pre-show encounters:

Spoleto Festival USA actively connects with South Carolina schools and finds areas of alignment between their school curriculums and the performances from the festival. With the world premier of *Omar*, they developed a workbook for students, as well as worksheets and coloring pages providing access points and context of slavery in the world. After these initial introductions school groups were invited to attend for dedicated events and dress rehearsals.

Results, past events etc.

For the Omar project specifically, Spoleto Festival USA was able to share coloring books and worksheets with over 3800 students in one year across 17 different schools. Their hope is to expand this outreach and create deeper community ties with teachers, students and their parents.



# Providing Hands-on Experiences For the Next Generation



# Oakland Symphony's MUSE Program Fosters Access to Music Experiences

Goal

#### Multiple Entry Points to Music Practice

MUSE Program is a music education and enrichment initiative that serves young people at public schools and community sites throughout Oakland. By providing these programs free to participants, the Symphony ensures that students of all socio-economic background can have access to a variety of music education and enrichment activities.

"We want to develop a pipeline of music lovers, and we understand that music literacy is a step to equity and social justice."

- Mieko Hatano, Executive Director

Description Of Engagement

#### In and After School Opportunities

#### In-school Mentor Program

Mentors lead small group coaching and private instruction to improve students' technique, interpretation, ensemble skills, and repertoire comprehension.

MUSE Saturday Strings is a new partnership with Harmony Project. These Saturday sessions are open to 5th thru 7th grade string students in Oakland Public Schools

MUSE Stringendo is their afterschool program aimed at beginning elementary string players in selected school locations throughout Oakland.



Results, past events etc.

Over 2,500 students are served through the different MUSE programs every year. Over 400 students per year receive specialized instrumental instruction.

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# SPACE

Inviting the community to use your space on their terms

In this section we will look at case examples that demonstrate the opportunities and impact of creating new spaces and inviting community members in:

- Renovating spaces specifically for enhanced audience experiences and community partnerships
- Inviting local groups to use your available spaces as neededthat in turns creates a vibrant ecosystem of community groups
- Setting yourself up to share a variety of organizational capabilities and going beyond your space and art product

# Organizations Renovate their Spaces to Put Experiences at the Centre

Round House Theatre executes a complete internal renovation for a more welcoming visitor experience



Round House Theatre transformed their lobby and theatre space for improved visitor experiences:

- Adaptable performance space with improved sightlines and acoustics
- Welcoming lobby including a new full service bar and cafe
- Accommodating and conformable for artists and patrons
- Space to gather and share -conversations before and after performances

https://www.roundhousefullcircle.org/renovation

Arts Commons expansion fits into a larger plan to revitalize the city of Calgary



Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) aims to provide more and more diverse performing arts venues and programs. The project also aims to showcase the city's cultural identity

- Expansion of spaces to meet growing market demand and community aspirations.
- Modernization of the existing facility to elevate the public's experience

https://www.artscommons.ca/act/about

Minnesota Opera's Luminary Art Center invites innovation and diverse artistic experiences



Luminary space- creating potential for new works and partnerships:

- New Works Initiative invites artists to experiment
- Developing new Luminary Partnership Ecosystem
- Have artists and community use space in innovative/ non-traditional ways
- Preserving and creating a resource for the community when Minnesota Opera is not performing in space
- Allow exploration of repertoire that isn't t well suited for a larger space

https://mnopera.org/blog/introducing-the-luminary-arts-center/

# Some Organizations Welcome Non-Artistic Uses of their Spaces



# Battersea Arts Centre Seeks to Partner and Support Local Groups with Their Co-working Spaces

Goal

#### Supporting other local organizations

With BAC's **Scratch co-working hub**, they hope to share their resources and put their spaces to service for smaller local organizations in need of space and meeting areas. They want to be more than an arts centre, but really a community shared space.

Description
Of
Engagement

### Prioritizing values-aligned groups

Currently BAC offers a variety of spaces for team meeting rooms, individual work, as well as larger conference halls etc. They are looking at expanding their offer specifically for values-aligned and smaller grassroots organizations who can invite their staff and colleagues to their spaces.

Results, past events etc.

"We really want to get local community organizations in this space who genuinely need this because they're running their organizations very hand-to-mouth. We also want to have a diversity of organizations with different age ranges and from different pockets of the community so it feels like a vibrant space".

- Liz Moreton, Director of Creativity and Social Change



"One of the things we're wanting to do is that we have a coworking space where local charities and organizations come to use desk space, but now we're choosing partners who can use our larger rehearsal spaces so they can bring their communities into the building."

- Liz Moreton, Director of Creativity and Social Change

# Broadening and Sharing Capabilities Beyond Physical Spaces

With different tiers of partnerships being more or less involved, organizations are thinking beyond their spaces and their core art product to envision a variety of shared capability opportunities.

## Physical assets/ less time commitment



Co-working, office spaces



Meetings and conferences



Events and performances



Equipment, AV systems etc.

## Promotions/ moderate time commitment



Ticket inventory



Audience access/ lists



Promotions and marketing



Information sharing

# Skills support/ greater time commitment



Grant writing



Project management



Skills, video editing, etc.



Storytelling, crafting

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# **PARTNERS**

Developing tiered partnership to reach higher engagement over time

In this section we will look at how organizations are approaching partnerships and the ways they ensure success and impact with reciprocal collaborators:

- Starting the conversations with empathy and humility
- Creating guiding principles for all partnerships
- Identifying internal preparedness for developing partnership
- Sharing authority and revising your processes to better engage and include community partners and participants

# Building Trust: A Deeper Look

Whether a partnership is long-term or a short-term event/project, time spent building trust is crucial. We've gathered practices our interviewees shared to ensure a collaborative relationship founded on trust.

#### Phase 1

- Showing up to community events to build genuine relationships and listen
- Not offering anything but thinking through what you want to understand about community members as you get to know them
- Building cultural competency into your organization by hiring from Latinx community
- Inviting community members to things and making clear your willingness to share your organization with them

#### Phase 2

- Assessing values alignment with potential partner organizations
- Coming to the table as equals to understand what you both can offer one another
- Changing your own processes to accommodate partners' needs
- Engaging with a few more transactional partners as you deepen your more values-aligned relationships

#### Phase 3

- Continuing regular assessment of the partnership from both sides
- Deepening the successful relationships with new programs, events, etc.
- Understanding when a partnership has reached its natural end-point

"It's okay if not every partnership is longterm; some transactional relationships can still have value for your organization and partners."

# Starting Empathetic Conversations with Partners



OF/BY/FOR ALL is a non-profit organization that is helping civic and cultural organizations become **of, by and for** their communities. They provide tools, community, accountability and coaching on radical inclusion and how to build truly reciprocal partnerships with community members.

<u>Starting the conversation with The Partner Power Tool</u> encourages a mindset shift from partner transaction to collaboration, where you actively empower and learn about your existing/ potential partners and thus foster partnerships built on trust and reciprocal interest.

#### Values behind this framework

- ✓ Partners success is our success
- ✓ It is critical to understand a community before building something for them
- Beginning with partner perspectives fosters empathy and trust
- ✓ Partner Power helps build a vision of success together
- Avoids falling into box ticking and imposing pre-established project ideas

#### Empathetic listening to learn about your community of interest

Questions to learn about the challenges they face

What/ who inspires you?

Questions to learn about the values they hold

• What are you most concerned about in your community?

Questions to learn about the goals they are pursuing

• What is one of your life goals? ...

Questions to learn about the commitments they can make

• what is your schedule like?

Questions about what success looks like for your partners

• What does a great day look like for you?

CHALLENGES THEY FACE	VALUES THEY HOLD					
COALC THEWRE PURCHAS	COMMITMENTS THEY CAN MAKE					
GOALS THEY'RE PURSUING	COMMITMENTS THEY CAN MAKE					
TO THIS PARTNER, SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:						

# Co-Identifying Relevant Community Partners

# Community Partnership Selection Process

# Exhaust Existing Community Networks

Perform an internal scan of your artists and organization, including all board members, staff, and volunteers, to evaluate if they already have connections with key community constituents. Use these relationships as a starting access point into the community, relying on already built trust.



# Research/Connect with New Community Partners

As the project begins to narrow its scope, ask artists to search for community partners who can fill the gaps of your existing networks. Do necessary research before introductions and beginning conversations.



#### Select Main Collaborator(s)

Together with artists, determine which community partner(s) will be your core collaborators in the project. Evaluate successful partnerships on their ability to hit hallmark characteristics, including alignment to the organization's mission and capacity to co-create the program (see right).

# Alignment to Organization's Mission

#### Dependency

The artist/arts organization is critical for the partner's success, and vice versa

#### **Shared Vision**

The artist/arts organization project aligns to a core value of the partner

#### Reciprocity

Both sides have something to offer to help the other reach their respective goals

# Partner Capacity to Co-Create and Sustain Project

#### Quality of Existing Assets

Resources the partner can provide, including funding and physical space for activities.

#### Originality of Work

Work provided is distinct and irreplaceable by other artists or organizations

#### Presence of Champion Personnel

Key champions within the partner are the people who make the program happen. Have multiple points of contact in case of institutional turnover.

#### Partner Ability/Authenticity

Geographic proximity, cultural context, coordination, and understanding of the target population

# Creating Organizational Guiding Principles





University of Michigan Ginsberg Center: Establish Overarching Principles for Projects



To ensure project proposals followed their strategic plan's model of collective impact, the Center uses a set of 6 principles that proposals must align to.

These principles are part of the rubric for grading proposals and are presented to all applicants.

These principles are highlevel, so they do not rule out specific projects but serve as an "invisible hand" for how to help proposals become more communitycentered.

# Bravo! Vail Music Festival Program Vetting Matrix

In implementing new engagement programs, Bravo! Vail uses 6 categories of program criteria to ensure new ideas meet their overall goals and values:

<ul> <li>Identify Need or Opportunity</li> <li>Area of Bravo's mission we're not fulfilling?</li> <li>Interest/demand for the program?</li> <li>Is there a demonstrated need?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Timing</li> <li>Time constraints on the program?</li> <li>Ample lead time to plan, fund, market, and execute property?</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Departmental Considerations</li> <li>Program further Bravo's engagement vision?</li> <li>Does it fit in 1+ of Bravo's engagement categories? If not, does Bravo need to create a new category?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Evaluation and Metrics</li> <li>Have S.M.A.R.T. goals been defined?</li> <li>Has this program been tried before? What was the outcome and why?</li> <li>What are the measurable outcomes that can be assessed to determine success?</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Organizational Alignment</li> <li>Will program further Bravo's org mission?</li> <li>Will the program and its impacts align with Bravo's core values?</li> <li>Does the program satisfy X number of Bravo's hallmarks?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Resources</li> <li>Financial: program cost; seed funding; sufficient funding to sustain 3 years?</li> <li>Community: appropriate community stakeholders informed and on board?</li> <li>Human: staff capacity to plan, market, and execute; need new staff/volunteers?</li> </ul>

#### Each category is scored from (1) Definitely no to (4) Definitely yes.

If the total score is 6-14, the program idea is a "NO"; 15 is "MAYBE"; and 16-24 is "YES."

# What Does It Look Like To Be Ready for Partnership?



When approaching a community or arts organization for a potential partnership, there are certain steps an organization must take to be prepared. Below we have adapted a framework of steps that Ballet Hispánico shared are important for them to see in any potential partner before agreeing to work together.



## You've aligned your values

- ☐ Shared purpose: responsibility lies with the approaching organization to conduct research on the stated values of the community partner and to ensure alignment.
- Feasible goal: your goals for partnership with a community organization must be feasible within that organization's capabilities.



## You've aligned your team

- Organization-wide buy-in: while leadership is often making the decision to partner, they must ensure that the full organization is aware of, understands, and is bought into the partnership to foster a welcoming environment.
- ☐ Cultural competence: the organization needs various diverse leaders, including several that represent the cultural group they would like to partner with, when approaching a new community partnership.
- Assigned ownership for coordination: the arts organization must ensure that they have an internal project coordinator for the partnership so that this work does not fall primarily on the partner.



## You've aligned your assets

- Internal assessment: the arts institution has thought critically about the capabilities and assets your organization holds that can be of use to this specific partner organization.
- Ideas for a project plan that benefits both partners: the arts organization has developed thoughtful proposals for how the two partners might work together in ways that are mutually beneficial and clearly outlines the resources they will dedicate to this work.

Source: Ballet Hispanico

# Adapting Your Process for Effective Partnership



## On Site Opera Adapts Their Process for a More Enriching and Empowering Partner Experience

Goal

The partnership between On Site Opera (OSO) and Breaking Ground (BG) grew on a foundation of aligned missions. BG is an organization in New York that provides supportive housing for homeless and housing-vulnerable individuals. BG knows that the more community connection they can provide within the tenancy, the less likely it is that tenants will return to the streets. They were excited by this opportunity to partner with OSO that builds a chorus of tenants from BG's buildings to perform alongside professional musicians and singers.

Description Of Engagement







Rehearsal

**Typical Process** 

Joins professional singers for rehearsal after the singers have already vocally warmed up

Costumes are designed around the characters; production keeps costumes post-production

Rehearsals run during a daytime schedule at a central location



Adapted Process

Participated in vocal warmups with the chorus to build trust and show them that this is part of the process

Costume designer meets with each chorus member to design a costume that reflects them; they keep the costumes after the show

Rehearsals are held at night on-site at a Breaking Ground residence to ensure chorus members' comfort





Results, past events etc.

After a resounding success of Amahl and the Night Visitors produced in partnership with Breaking Ground in 2018, the production has returned in 2019 and is set to return this December 2022 for its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

# Report Outline

## STAGE

Increasing the relevance of who and what is presented on stage

## **ACCESS**

Fostering access opportunities for different community groups

## **EXPERIENCE**

Expanding the experiences onsite and around the stage

## **SPACE**

Inviting the community to use your space on their terms

## **PARTNERS**

Developing tiered partnership to reach higher engagement over time

## **RESOURCES**

Adopting different staffing and funding models to resource community efforts



## **RESOURCES**

Adopting different staffing and funding models to resource community efforts

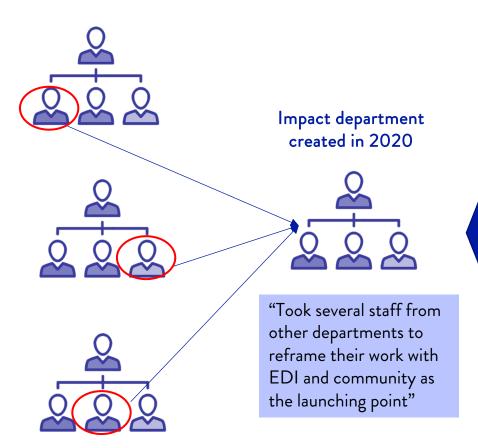
In this section we will look at how organizations have modified their team structures and worked to prioritize and fund community efforts:

- Merging staff from different departments to create new departments around community and inclusion
- Testing models for cross-collaboration versus more separate and dedicated community teams
- Identifying the pros and cons of having a separate and dedicated community brand
- Visions and values that impact new leadership roles and titles
- Funding commonalities/ trends





## Minnesota Opera Merges Community & EDU Under a Single Department



## Department serves as a catalyst for change, the Opera's "think tank"

- Department includes impact, inclusion, civic engagement and education responsibilities
- Almost always someone from Impact team to be on the hiring panels
- Department is new and the organization appreciates that functions are new and evolving
- Actively learning what we need to do to help broader opera
- Role of the department is to really focus on the conversations happening around us- even if not directly linked it programming it's all about relating with the next generation of and new audiences

# Organizations Test Different Department Models



## Battersea Arts Centre Reverts Back to Two Sperate Teams to Manage Overworking and Reinstate Accountability



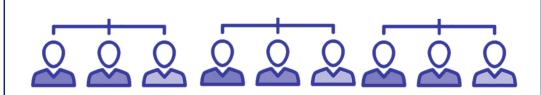


Head of Programming



Head of Communities

Producing teams across Programming and Communities had become one team



"That was incredible because it meant that everyone bought into it and thought really strategically and holistically about everything."

#### Back to two teams

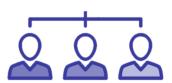


Head of Programming





Head of Communities



Spilt back into two teams to manage both overworking and reinstate clear line of accountability

"When everyone was doing everything there were lots of issues around people's time... there were no separate departments which is great but also meant it was hard for people to manage and track workloads."

# Organizations Test Different Branding Models



## Houston Grand Opera Repositioned their Community Work Back into their Master Brand

## Created a dedicated community brand





"The idea of making what had been Education and Outreach its own brand was the big shift, and what that required...But it started with the vision of the right person who was brought in to lead that transition"

- Molly Dill, COO

With it's own brand HGOco could take on larger projects and productions

 With its own brand HGOco led to some confusion with the board and a lack of purpose and clarity Repositioned HGOco under Opera's master brand as "Community & Learning"



# New Leadership Roles and Titles Emerge



## Arts Commons Shift to Social Impact in their Vision and Programming with new Dedicated Staff

## Values and vision changes at Arts Commons lead to a more mature programming department:

- Values shift started 13 years ago
- Organizational change in vision and mission to "Compassionate society through the arts" led to a revision of strategic priorities and resources for programming
- Currently in the process of refining organization's future to lean into belief "that equitable access to the arts is a human right"

"A game changer was when we prioritized adding a dedicated staff member specifically to grow our social impact. The work within this area has snowballed over the past 5 years and has seeped into all of our programs and initiatives."

- Jennifer Johnson, VP Programming

## Programming Department, Led by VP of Programming

#### Presenting

- Manager, Presenting
- Programs Coordinator

#### Education

- Associate Director, Education
- **Education Specialist**

## Social Impact

- Associate Director, Social Impact
- Visual & Media Arts Curator

Leadership positions and titles matter as a means to garner legitimacy for community engagement work within organization's core services. Also helps to be more visible in organizational strategies, marketing, storytelling etc.

# Additional Fundraising Most Often Needed to Support Community Efforts

# Many start with certain core funding and then fundraise for additional support

"We have a certain level of work that we do on our core funding - we'll run those certain things whatever the weather. But there are others that we can only do with additional funding."

"Community engagement is baked into our programming operating costs. If we add new things, we aren't looking at it as a separate area or something we have to fundraise for - of course we do that also, but really our funding comes from within our operational budgets."

"We've gotten much better support from foundations. Much better return then trying to charge the individual user. So, we are definitely on a contributed income over earned income model."

# There is a strong case for community engagement exciting donor motivations

"We do have a finite amount of core money, so it's just about our priorities. The argument is that prioritizing the community work enables us to do a lot more fundraising, which brings a lot more money back to our organization"

"It started with a core set of funded programs, but anything beyond that we have to fundraise for it. Now we've kind of shifted away from that, but that was the structure in the beginning...thinking of that as a way to excite funders who might not usually consider us, because we were reaching into the community in a new way."

# Some organization adopt a "cow-boy" mentality with program before funding

"Since I've been here our approach has been to fund this work with core operating funding. But also, for better or worse we don't let funding hold us back. We take risks. Our programs may not always be fully underwritten, but we make it work. Being younger and more nimble allows us to be more flexible."

"Being willing to accept greater risk and sometimes jump in with both feet and then once something gets going money finds itself".

"We do believe that there's a really strong case for support that we plan to dig into more in the coming years so we can get some of this work covered. But we're a "leap before you look" kind of organization sometimes."

# Benchmark Appendix

# Overview of Interviewee Budgets & Funding

	Total operating budget	Total operating revenue	Endowments	Total contributions	Total government funding	Total revenue from program services	% of revenue from contributions	% revenue from government	% of revenue from program services
Arts Commons	\$8,819,959	\$8,763,127	\$39,714,234	\$6,467,183	\$2,136,875.00	\$27,303	73.80%	24.38%	0.31%
Battersea Arts Center	\$5,124,154	\$6,336,025	1	\$4,790,625	1	\$168,711	75.61%	1	2.66%
Houston Grand Opera	\$29,422,667	\$24,459,115	\$65,763,869	\$19,305,356	1	\$4,757,832	78.93%	1	19.45%
Minnesota Opera	\$12,169,363	\$7,409,847	\$20,209,681	\$5,507,046	\$385,428.00	\$1,790,898	74.32%	5.20%	24.17%
Oakland Symohony	\$3,155,800	\$3,085,012	\$1,956,090	\$1,851,613	\$71,486.00	\$1,077,076	60.02%	2.32%	34.91%
ROCO	\$1,062,862	\$1,283,588	1	\$1,215,345	\$23,500.00	\$53,047	94.68%	1.83%	4.13%
Round House Theatre US	\$6,740,483	\$5,518,090	\$753,267	\$3,459,572	\$835,285.00	\$1,998,429	62.70%	15.14%	36.22%
San Diego Opera	\$6,404,013	\$8,117,025	\$7,777,071	\$6,318,453	\$509,156.00	\$1,603,940	77.84%	6.27%	19.76%
Spoleto Fetsival US	\$4,722,897	\$5,542,557	\$11,710,633	\$4,727,347	\$148,803.00	\$4,894	85.29%	2.68%	0.09%
Woolly Mammoth	\$4,817,656	\$4,734,091	1	\$3,777,153	\$1,216,634.00	\$941,108	79.79%	25.70%	19.88%

<sup>\*</sup>Note for US institutions these figures were sourced from 2019 IRS990 forms. But the UK and CAN examples we sourced their financial statement and charity reports.

# Cultural Organizations Mission Statements



To be an inspirational force where artists, community, and organizations celebrate cultural identities, experience the full breadth of human emotions, and ignite positive change.



Our mission is to create welcoming and inclusive spaces where communities, artists and audiences can come together to connect, collaborate, and be creative; to develop artistic ideas that are bold, innovative and unexpected; and to offer a platform for ground-breaking performance to be shared and amplified, locally, nationally or internationally.



The mission of HGO is to enrich our diverse **community** through the art of opera. We will do so by creating, curating, exploring, and producing outstanding experiences centered around the human voice



Minnesota Opera changes lives by bringing together artists, audiences, and community, advancing the arts of opera for today and for future generations.



The Oakland Symphony, Youth Orchestra and Chorus bring together orchestral music, choral music and youth education to strengthen the Oakland/East Bay community by providing quality live performances, education for lifetime enrichment and the perpetuation of the performing arts.

# Cultural Organization Mission Statements



Shaping the Future of Classical Music through energizing, modernizing, and personalizing the concept experience.



Round House is a theatre for everyone. We enrich our community through bold, outstanding theatrical and educational experiences that inspire empathy and demand conversation.



The mission of San Diego
Opera is to deliver
exceptional performances
and exciting, accessible
programs to diverse
audiences, focusing on
community partnerships,
and the transformative
and expressive power of
the human voice.



Spoleto: The Festival's mission is to present programs of the highest artistic caliber while maintaining a dedication to young artists, a commitment to all forms of the performing arts, a passion for contemporary innovation, and an enthusiasm for providing unusual performance opportunities for established artists.



Woolly Mammoth produces courageous and invigorating new work to radically redefine theatre as a catalyst for an equitable, creative, and engaged society.

# Varying Website Structures To Publicize Community Work

## Insights

- Overall websites are missing elements and nuances about community engagement that we gained from interviews
- Most websites don't highlight a lot of partnership work
- Combining community and education is a predominant model for classifying community activities on organizational websites
- Concerts and performances are often set apart from community work
- Most organizations seem to structure programs around demographics segments, such as youth, adult, school etc.
- There is a strong presence of apprenticeships and artists opportunities as part of community work



#### Section Header: Learn & Engage

- Education
  - Hub for Learning
  - Student & Learning Programs
  - Wonder Program
- Visual and Media Arts
  - Galleries
  - Current Exhibitions
- Connects
  - TD Incubator
  - Emerging Visual Artist Program
  - **Artist Opportunities**
  - Artist Mailing Lists



#### Section Header: Create with Us

- We're open to ideas
  - What we're looking for
  - How we support artists
  - How we programme
  - How to to connect
- Young Creatives
  - Beatbox Academy
  - The Agency Dance Academy
  - Current Exhibitions
- Community Projects
  - Community Garden
  - Far Apart But Close At Heart
  - Make it Live

# Varying Website Structures To Publicize Community Work



#### Section Header: Community & Learning

- Community
  - Seeking the Human Spirit
  - Music and Healing
  - O Song of Houston Commissions
- Learning
  - o Summer Camps
  - Opera To-go
  - o Story Book Opera
  - o Sing! Move! Play!
  - Student Performances
  - High School Voice Studio
  - School Residencies
  - o Professional Development
  - Creative Ageing Workshops



#### Section Header: Community

- Opera 101
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Diversity Charter
  - o The Score Podcast
  - o EDI Resources etc.
- Creative Development
  - O Youth Programs
  - Adult Programs
- Civic Engagement
  - Off Stage/ Outdoor events
  - o Tempo Program
- Resident Artist Program



#### Section Header: Community & Education

- Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra
  - Audition
  - Season
- MUSE
  - O Harmonies at Home
  - Lifelong Enrichment
  - o In-school mentor program
  - After-school program
  - Saturday Strings
  - VIVO Orchestra



#### Section Header: Attend & Listen

- Attend (in person access)
  - o ROCOrooters
    - Performances
    - Accessibility
    - Pay what you wish
- Listen (Digital access)
  - Listening Room
  - Streaming
  - ROCO on the Go
  - Commissions, premieres etc.

# Varying Website Structures To Publicize Community Work



#### Section Header: Education

- Camps
  - o Summer camps K-12
- Classes
  - o Youth
  - o Teen
  - o Adult
  - Seniors
- School Programs
  - Matinees
  - After school residencies
  - In-school residencies
- Performance Companies
  - o Teen
  - Young Artist
  - Roundlings
- Free Plays
- Apprenticeships



#### Section Header: In the Community

- Community
  - o Opera on the Concourse
  - o Backstage tours
  - o =Voices/Voces=
  - o Opera en Español
- Education
  - Latin Jazz Youth Ensemble
  - Music and Science Curriculum
  - Summer Youth programs
  - o Education Partners
  - Words and Music school programs, after school and residencies
- Student Night
- Special Projects
  - o Building a costume
  - Word and Music online
  - o Civic concourse mural



#### Section Header: About

- Engaging the Community
  - Discussions series
  - Performances for People on the Autism spectrum
  - Open Stage Door Program Ticket
     Scheme
- Professional Advancement
  - Spoleto Festival Orchestra
  - Apprentice program
- Tailored Education Programs- Students
  - Workbooks
  - Worksheets etc.



#### Section Header: Connectivity

- About
- Social Justice Fellowship
  - 8 Teen Fellows
- Events and Lobby Experiences
  - Partners in Residence
- Core Partner Program
  - 6 Inaugural Partners
- Ambassador Program
  - o Community Org. Network
- Liberating Library
- Community Resources
- Communal Rituals

# Community Engagement & Education Staffing

	Arts Commons	Battersea Arts Centre	Houston Grand Opera	Minnesota Opera	Oakland Symphony
Department Name	Programming	Communities	Community & Learning	Impact	Community & Education
Position Titles	VP, Programming  Manager, Presenting  Programs Coordinator  Associate Director, Social Impact  Social Impact Programming Coordinator  Visual & Media Arts Curator  Associate Director, Education  Education Specialist	Director of Creativity & Social Change  The Agency National Program Manager  Live & Digital Producer  The Agency Project Manager  Communities Project Manager  Next Gen Coordinator  Young People's Program Manager	Director of Community & Learning  Associate Director of Programming & Engagement in Community & Learning  Programs Coordinator  Dramaturg & Manager of New Works and Community Engagement  Programs Manager  Operations Manager  Composer-in Residence  Bauer Family High School Voice Studio Manager	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director  Access and Civic Engagement Director  School Programs Managers  Department Coordinator  Creative Development Programs Coordinator  Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator  Youth Programs Music Director	Director of Education and Social Impact  Youth Orchestra Director  Operations and Youth Orchestra Coordinator  Youth Orchestra Manager (not regular hours)  Senior Engagement Officer  MUSE Program Manager (not regular hours)

<sup>\*</sup>Note: We did not include teaching artists or per diem educators.

# Community Engagement & Education Staffing

	ROCO	Round House	San Diego Opera	Spoleto	Woolly Mammoth
Department Name	Cross-Organizational	Education, Administration and Artistic	Education & Engagement	Artist Services	Connectivity
Position Titles	Primaries: Access & Production Manager  Artistic Director  Support: Director of Marketing  Marketing Manager	Director of Education  Education Programs Manager  Education Patron Services Manager  Education Apprentice  Director of EDIA & Community Engagement  Associate Artist & Literary New Plays (Part of partnerships team)	Education Director  ~  Director Hispanic Initiatives/ Senior Development Officer	Community Engagement Coordinator  Producing Associate	Connectivity Director/ Associate Artist  Connectivity Manager  Connectivity Assistant  Connectivity Fellow

<sup>\*</sup>Note: We did not include teaching artists or per diem educators.