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A socially responsible music institution

● **Inspirations and Recommendations**

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A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MUSIC INSTITUTION

Inspirations and Recommendations

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction	6
THE MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE	12
THE AUDIENCE'S PERSPECTIVE	36
THE SOCIAL PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVE	56
THE INSTITUTION'S PERSPECTIVE	80
CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	100
O projekcie	103
Sinfonia Varsovia	105
Notes on editors	106
Literature	108

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introduction

Premises

The purpose of this release is to compile observations, opinions, inspirations and examples of activities pertaining to the social responsibility of a music institution. In the publication, we sought to aggregate conclusions from the conversations, reads and activities in which we participated as part of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, and to articulate recommendations for symphony orchestras and music ensembles that aspire to become a socially responsible organization. We thus present our take at the motivations, conditions and potential for enhancing the social dimension of the professional activity of musicians, as well as that of the institutions and artistic ensemble within which they operate.

This publication is primarily addressed to individuals who contribute or wish to contribute to music organizations together with others. They are those whose focus is or will be on social responsibility, considered within the framework of their daily activities and integrated with their artistic practice, which constitutes the primary mission of an orchestra, ensemble, and community of musicians working as part of an artistic institution employing professionals in this field of art. Other cultural institutions and organizations, such as theater companies, museums, galleries, foundations and associations that have already implemented or wish to start implementing social responsibility measures are also welcome to consult this study.

For maximum relevance of the content covered herein, we adopted several perspectives on the notion of socially responsible music institution. Their combination will serve to characterize the motivations, goals, values, meanings and conditions, as well as model solutions, concerning social responsibility in the operations of a music institution and its personnel:

- 1) **The musician’s perspective**, with the musician construed as an individual, a person, an individual artist and employee of a music institution, and an active professional musician. The content presented in this chapter consists of the knowledge, experiences and opinions regarding the social involvement of a member of an orchestra ensemble, an individual whose professional identity is that of a trained artist.
- 2) **The audience’s perspective**, with the audience defined as an open set of listeners, recipients of the professional work of musicians, both current and prospective. They are persons, individuals who participate in the activities of music institutions, as well as those who are of interest as prospective clients of those entities. This chapter regards the audience as a recipient of artistic

photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

expression produced as part of the activities of a music institution and the musicians it associates.

- 3) **The social partner's perspective**, with social partners understood as entities cooperating with the institution or co-creating social responsibility activities. The pool of partners may include entities from different backgrounds, including partners representing the audience, social organizations, (business) enterprises and entrepreneurs, local governments and public entities (including state and local administration), cultural institutions, entities in the fields of education, health or social welfare. Also addressed are the experiences of international collaborations, including festival organizers and music ensembles.
- 4) **The music institution's perspective**, with the institution characterized as an organization responsible for its employees. In this case, we were interested in issues related to labor standards, organizational culture and employment, planning and management. We sought to include the voices of managers and producers and discussing a range of practices that enable people to perceive a given institution as "their own place."

It is worth emphasizing that one of the central beliefs that informed our work on the publication was the assumption that the social responsibility of a music institution (and any other organization) operates and should be considered in two dimensions: inside the institution and outside of its confines. Therefore, when conducting our research, we were dealing both with issues concerning employees, the team or the organizational culture, as well as those related to the audience, partners, and other stakeholders.

CSR context

The debate over the social responsibility of organizations (both private and public) is dominated by the literature, case studies and practical methodologies characterized as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). Social responsibility issues have also been considered in the light of ESG (Environmental, Social, Corporate Governance) discussions, where categories such as environmental, social and corporate governance are interrogated in the context of corporate sustainability.

Solutions adopted across music institutions under the influence of the practices of corporate sponsors and private patrons can mark the beginning of the implementation of new standards. They typically concern specifically formulated sponsorship or patronage goals, indicators for achieving those goals, the mode of

their reporting, as well as the communication and language used to convey social responsibility.

This range of knowledge and experience can inspire and influence, yet does not determine or constrain the scope and modes of action in the field of social responsibility within arts organizations, such as a symphony orchestra or music institution. The "DNA", roots, manifestations and characteristics of social responsibility in an arts (music) institution remain different from those associated with business corporations.

Values

A music institution is an area of practice and communication in which the motivations, goals, methods and scope of the people working therein, primarily musicians, are grounded in at least four groups of values: artistic, aesthetic, social and ethical; where aesthetic values, in particular, constitute a group of priority factors for musicians, including the attendant artistic values (in the statements of musicians one often hears references to "artistic quality"). Social and ethical values are less prominent both in the statements of musicians themselves and within the mission of a music institution, and they have no clearly delineated boundaries in relation to each other. The concept of "social responsibility" seems to integrate precisely ethical and social values.

In a similar vein, music institutions direct their attention primarily to quality and artistic excellence; as a consequence, their relationship with their audiences focuses on aesthetic values, which in turn translate into other ways of achieving goals that are consistent with their mission, local rooting, and their own institutional needs, which also concern securing their future existence as an organization. Perhaps some overlaps between aesthetic values and other types of values may empower music creators and music institution employees to more readily understand and implement value-based activities that typify "social responsibility."

The special attention paid to artistic quality by the personnel of arts institutions also translates into their expectations in terms of quality in the fields of organization, operational management and communication. In this sense, "organizational quality" can also be evaluated by musicians according to aesthetic standards. Much like kitsch in the field of art, kitsch in organizational activities, including the behavior and decisions of organizational leaders, takes artists out of their comfort zone.

The question relevant to the musician, then, will concern the extent to which the aesthetic and artistic values themselves incorporate social values and values

pertaining to “social impact.” Are the scopes of social, aesthetic and artistic values completely separate, incompatible phenomena with no overlap whatsoever? What do they have in common? Where is the fourth field in all this, i.e. that of ethical values (Berger 2008, Scruton 1999)? Do they fall into the social values category or—for music artists as employees of music institutions—do they comprise their own distinct set?

Why do we consider these questions essential? Because every musician is, first and foremost, an expert in working with artistic and aesthetic values, as a result of their education and through their professional experience. Likewise, motivation at the level of cultures and organizational structures applies to music institutions, which typically direct their attention primarily to quality and artistic excellence, consequently focusing on aesthetic values in their relations with audiences.

It appears that in the concept of “social responsibility” a much-needed integration of ethical values and social values takes place. We hope that some overlaps between them will enable music artists and music institution employees to more readily grasp and implement activities based on the qualities that characterize “social responsibility.” This is the purpose behind the subsequent chapters of our study.

Model solutions vs. institutional individuality

The perception sequence with regard to a specific music institution in the light of social responsibility proceeds from two directions. On the one hand, it is the entire body of known, disseminated, observable and inspirational practices that accounts for the social dimension of the musician’s activities (and those of music institutions). One can imagine and devise a typology within a set of activities undertaken by many artists, ensembles, musicians and the institutions of which they are affiliates, developed in both diachronic (historical) and synchronic (occurring simultaneously in time present in many parts of the world) order. On the other hand, perception sequence is a perspective towards a given music institution—in our case Sinfonia Varsovia—that takes into account mainly its particular characteristics, its rather non-replicable internal dynamics, and the conditions of its operation as a unique phenomenon.

This second direction primarily regards the actions of individuals and the entire team of people as embedded in the overall history of practice in a given organization, locus, and culture, under specific conditions of communication, in the context of a given dominant language and tradition, as well as—most importantly—the institution-specific organizational culture that accumulates all these conditions and dimensions in order to achieve the goals of the institution and its contributors. This culture is passed on to the successive ranks of newly hired employees.

Musical entities—orchestra ensembles, music institutions in almost every country in the world—implement: (a) artistic activities that potentially, though not intentionally, have social impact (in this case, above all, the intention to influence the audience has an aesthetic dimension); (b) educational-artistic activities that directly or indirectly articulate social goals; (c) projects (most frequently financed by institutions and third-party budgets) created with the intention of combining artistic and socially impactful activities.

Regardless of where they are carried out, all of these activities have certain characteristics in common: people in institutions and music ensembles do fairly similar things in different places around the world. Certainly, in addition to the similarities in the practical implementation of such activities—despite their repetitive formats—there are also differences stemming from local, national and cultural contexts and operating conditions. Regardless of such differences—important in that they afford opportunities for more effective, targeted and in-depth impacts on local communities or otherwise specified audiences—all these activities can be collated into a certain typology.

Based on this typology, it is possible to articulate certain models, implementable or adaptable, of their accommodation by specific ensembles and institutions such as Sinfonia Varsovia. At the same time, it is worth noting that musical ensembles and institutions have their own history and experience of past activities. They also have their respective identities, shared values, and operating practices, which afford one with the opportunity to realize original ideas, which in turn do not merely involve the adaptation of other people’s models, or, alternatively, are not merely the fulfillment of models or adaptation of formats successfully applied elsewhere.

In this context, one is tempted to reiterate the call for an analysis seeking to identify the characteristics of the organizational culture of a specific music institution that will allow it to consciously draw on the potential of its own available solutions, ones that are not borrowed from outside. This implies that one may try to compile and put forward activities that do not exactly adhere to the patterns or model solutions acquired from other entities, but instead rely on practices developed on the basis of the phenomenon, experience and potential of an ensemble such as Sinfonia Varsovia. It is also worth remembering that music institutions and ensembles have very different potentials in terms of their entry level conditions and experiences with regard to social impact activities, and that it is impossible to apply an equal measure to music entities operating in very different ways.



the musician's perspective

In the first part of the publication, we will inspect the social responsibility of a music institution, as seen and experienced from the point of view of an active music artist. The object of our interest is not only the activity of a social nature, pursued by a music organization, but also how members of an orchestra ensemble—as persons with individual professional identities—find themselves in the activities and goals identified as part of the social responsibility of an arts organization. The content presented in this chapter was developed based on the statements of artists and employees of the examined music institution, as well as external experts. Their opinions, observations and experiences were obtained in the course of the “Interactions/Integrations” project. The subject of the authors’ attention when organizing this material spanned the various circumstances, motivations and conditions of musicians’ work in the framework of artistic activities, in which the social role of music and its impact are especially highlighted.

The material is organized into five thematic areas. In the first one, we point out the distinctive circumstances arising from the characteristics of the musician’s profession that affect the definition of social responsibility in an arts institution working with music. The second part of this chapter is devoted to the musician as a person who co-creates the organizational culture of the music ensemble with which they work. A culture that, as a result of many intricate circumstances, pursues, to a greater or lesser extent, a set of goals oriented toward social responsibility.

Professional musicians trained along the formal path of artistic education are oriented primarily to pursue goals in the area of artistic and aesthetic values. While social values undoubtedly remain an important element in the formation of a professional musician, the degree and extent of their involvement in this area is most frequently driven by self-development and individual needs. At some successive stage of their career paths, musicians may also be pushed to implement activities that emphasize the social values of music by a particular music organization, orchestra, or ensemble they co-found. The third part of this chapter seeks to characterize the challenges and struggles in combining these three types of values—artistic, aesthetic and social—by professional musicians.

The fourth section contains observations arising from the distinct qualities of the musician’s professional identity and their own perceptions of their social status. Of particular relevance here is working under the constant “pressure of being judged,” typical of the performing professions, which essentially involves performing in front of an audience on stage or in another public venue. In the final, fifth section of this chapter, the authors turn their attention to the musician’s needs for communication and clarity of message, which concern the music performer’s work and which are supposed to exert socially responsible impact.

photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

Much of the inspiration in the area of social engagement of classical musicians, to which this publication is devoted, comes from activities that transcend the traditional professional training of musicians. One of the most advanced projects in this regard is Musethica (<https://www.musethica.org/>) with whom Sinfonia Varsovia has been working since 2021 as its only Polish partner. Musethica is an international initiative launched in Zaragoza in 2012 by viola player Avri Levitan and co-founded by social economist Carmen Marcuello. Its founders dubbed it “a socially impactful method of (music) education.” It involves young professional classical musicians, handpicked for their excellent performance skills, who, in collaboration with inspiring educators, perfect the art of interpreting music pieces, but also the ability to listen and work in rapport with the audience.

The hallmark of this initiative is the location of performances in unusual venues, where they are staged for uncharacteristic audiences. As per the information provided by the organizers of these endeavors, over 85% of the concerts are held outside regular concert halls. A concert in a philharmonic hall is no more important to the musician than a concert in a hospital ward. Music artists showcase their full technical and interpretive potential in front of audiences who are not usually exposed to classical music and who may not have access to venues where such music is performed on a daily basis. Presentation venues include prisons, schools, refugee centers, hospital wards, kindergartens, nursing homes, homeless shelters, and special education facilities that work with people with various dysfunctions and adaptational problems. Musethica provides people from disfavored social groups in more than a dozen countries around the world with free concerts of superb artistic quality. It seeks to exert social influence in a direct way, coming to sites marked by various types of problems. The performing musicians approach such sites exactly the same as they would the most prestigious concert halls attended by the most aesthetically sophisticated audiences.

Social responsibility of an arts institution from the perspective of a musician's practice

The musician's participation in social projects enriches their needs and changes the way they think about being creative and responsive as a member of an orchestra. However, many artists manifest a distrust and reticence towards socially engaged projects, which stems from their habits, fears or misrepresented challenges involved in social action. We will draw attention to this in the fourth section of the chapter, which is devoted to the dilemmas surrounding the musician's identity in light of the expectations or opportunities for their social activism as part of their institution's operations.

The first issue involves the need to define what social responsibility and social engagement are in relation to the musician's work. Popular among some socially engaged artists—music performers—is an approach that fundamentally questions the disconnect between music and social issues. As such, music remains one of the most social phenomena, with a history dating back to the inception of humankind. Separating the two areas is a mistake. It is difficult to disagree with this position, and yet it is also worth pointing out that, with regard to the conditions of the contemporary audience, merely accepting this state of affairs is not enough. This is stressed by the artists and experts alike, whose opinions were obtained as part of the activities at the “Interactions/Integrations” project. In order to ensure the adequate impact of music, especially towards individuals and social groups for whom access to music and the social values it conveys are, for various reasons, beyond their reach, it may be necessary to reinforce music performance with such modes of action, activities and endeavors that are not merely artistic performances of music sheets. Some of the respondents, experts involved in studying the participation and involvement of young audiences, indicate that the social responsibility of institutions with respect to classical music and the future of this cultural medium is a necessity today.

This also raises the question as to who defines what is and what is not the social responsibility of a professional musician working in a music ensemble. Where lies the boundary of autonomy and freedom of the artist? Who picks the values that drive the musician to work, and who, in this choice, is more or less interested in realistically getting through to people whose living conditions and preparation for interacting with music are completely different? The answer to this question seems very complex. The following chapters of this study, however, put this issue under closer scrutiny.

Working in a music organization offers artists one undeniable ingredient necessary for their development: the institution provides the musician with an audience, solicits it on their behalf and with their assistance, and assumes the responsibility for providing conditions conducive to the musician's contact with the audience, i.e., conditions that should provide the artist with a balance between a sense of stability and job security, on the one hand, and expose them to the unknown, on the other, with the latter inspiring the musician and challenging them to develop as a professional and individual aware of the complexities of social life.

There are several passages in the materials collected as part of this publication that prompt one to elaborate on the theme of “audience development,” i.e. the work of a music institution that involves its audience. This, too, engages musicians and other employees of the institution in enhancing relations with the existing audiences and attracting new ones. This subject, namely the perception of the audience as recipients of the social activities undertaken by the music institution,

is covered in the second chapter of the publication. There are formats and types of activities conducive and detrimental to forging relations between different groups participating in music projects, which include persons with different needs and unequal access to artistic and aesthetic values arising from exposure to music. Musicians focused on artistic values often lack the time to develop a deeper awareness of the various opportunities for social impact in this area, which they can avail themselves of with the help of staff planning the orchestra's program, for example. In the case of ensembles and orchestras, an additional element to consider is the fact that, in the vast majority of situations, social impact requires interaction with the other members of the orchestra and the employees across the organization. Being part of an ensemble obligates or provides one with the opportunity to affect audiences in a different way than in independent, single-artist activities.

In the transcripts of interviews with musicians and organizers of socially engaged projects, we obtained a number of extremely interesting and moving examples of potent, positive emotions experienced by those of them who dared to perform, usually in intimate ensembles, in atypical conditions and for unusual audiences. These stories make a very compelling case for overcoming fears of embarking



I'm starting to get bored with playing in a concert hall like this, I miss getting feedback from the audience, although sometimes we do play concerts for children. These are the coolest concerts. (...) I would rather be involved in performing for people like this all the time. Well, I miss it, this kind of atmosphere at a concert, let's call it a professional one, [I don't like the fact] that you're so terribly stiff and clap at the right moments, because you're not allowed to do so whenever you enjoy something, in fact you're not even allowed to clear your throat. We're not allowed to tune up, not allowed to sit crooked...

on the more difficult path of engagement, one with greater reach and power of impact; we will cite some examples regarding unique accounts of performing in direct contact with prison inmates, residents of refugee centers, psychiatric hospitals, patients treated in rehabilitation centers for limb amputees, students of schools for young people with difficulties and dysfunctions, etc.. The power of such experiences is captivating, and the longevity of their impact on the musician's perception of their own role as an artist working in non-obvious settings is also surprising. Those who have had the opportunity to engage in such activities—with full commitment and concern for the quality of the music played—have seen the aesthetically and socially tangible impact of their work. They have now experienced a renewed sense of agency and a new quality of relationship with the listener across a range of venues other than the concert hall, which has boosted their motivation to work in the musical profession in an unprecedented way.

The stories and observations from these unusual music venues, cited as examples of change in the attitude of musicians towards themselves, as moments of noticing the empowering potential and, if only temporarily, their incomparably strong influence on representatives of different environments, social groups, will remain for a long time in the memory of the authors of this study, be it:

the sight of an inmate serving his sentence, who cried while listening to classical music performed live in prison;

or an amputee learning to function with an arm prosthesis, who watched the perfect, synchronized, fast-working hands of a pianist and violinist performing at a rehabilitation center;

or the story of a psychiatric hospital patient who, upon hearing Bach's music played live from a distant corridor, spontaneously joined the cellist in an unconstrained, dance-like co-performance, as the instrumentalist continued the concert in her company. The epilogue to this story is the account of her doctor, who noticed a marked improvement in her health and mood since the incident. But to better balance these examples, one may also recall an instance involving another patient, in a catatonic state, who awoke and danced during the concert, only to return to her previous state once the performance ended.

It is also a particular sense of animation noticeable in the facial expressions of people with mental disorders, serene and beaming with smiles as they danced to a classical music concert performed at the hospital.

It is also on those occasions that medical staff and patients, persons with severe mental illnesses, for once found themselves side by side, in the same room for the duration of the concert, their reactions to the situation so similar

that they all appeared as healthy persons throughout the concert, and for that single moment they formed an inseparable community of music listeners.

It is also the image of musicians bringing music instruments into hospital rooms or hospices, with patients hooked up to apparatuses listening to these instruments and music perhaps one last time in their lives.

It is also the case of a symphony orchestra musician who reluctantly agreed to accompany participants in a community dance workshop during physical exercises, yet suddenly found his new, uncharted role fascinating, as he eagerly tested new solutions, discarding the score in favor of observing people and responding to their behavior: “I played the same piece for you again during the same exercise, because I wanted to see if I could respond to your movement.”

It is also the true story (as much as any other among those above) of a woman living in a refugee camp, where she listened to a classical music concert, and subsequently encouraged several persons in the camp to go to the philharmonic together, where she and her friends would sit amidst fellow audience members to once more listen to musicians playing pieces she had not known before.

It is also a string of surprisingly astute and never-before-heard questions, which musicians received from children and the youth in response to the music they had played at a school or center for disadvantaged youth, without any verbose, didactic introductions.

It is also a participant in an open dance workshop, who, with tearful eyes, told the symphony orchestra harpist—who had entertained an acoustically daring idea of performing to amateur dance exercises—what a shockingly positive experience it was for her to be close to the instrument and to be able to express her own movement to such live accompaniment. She had dreamed of something like that since childhood.

It is also the image of a string trio performing the music of Grażyna Bacewicz amidst people casually reclining on blankets and deck chairs in their own courtyard in Warsaw’s district of Praga, looking out from balconies and windows; the blending of chamber music with the hum of streetcars and the sound of a ball being kicked by children at a courtyard behind the wall; residents of the neighboring tenements and visitors from other sites gathering together in concentration and without discomfort or impatience to listen to classical music, which they had likely never experienced before.

Such unusual interactions are extremely uplifting for musicians who, after similar professional experiences, continue to work in concert halls, on tour,

at international festivals, in recording studios or daily rehearsals with a symphony orchestra or chamber ensemble. Thanks to the aforementioned events, they may wander off towards their future audiences, who have not yet appeared in these halls or at elite festivals, and who are not yet turning to the music they have recorded. They can conceive of this because they know that they can and do break through the apparent indifference of untrained listeners, disinterested in Friday evenings at the philharmonic hall.

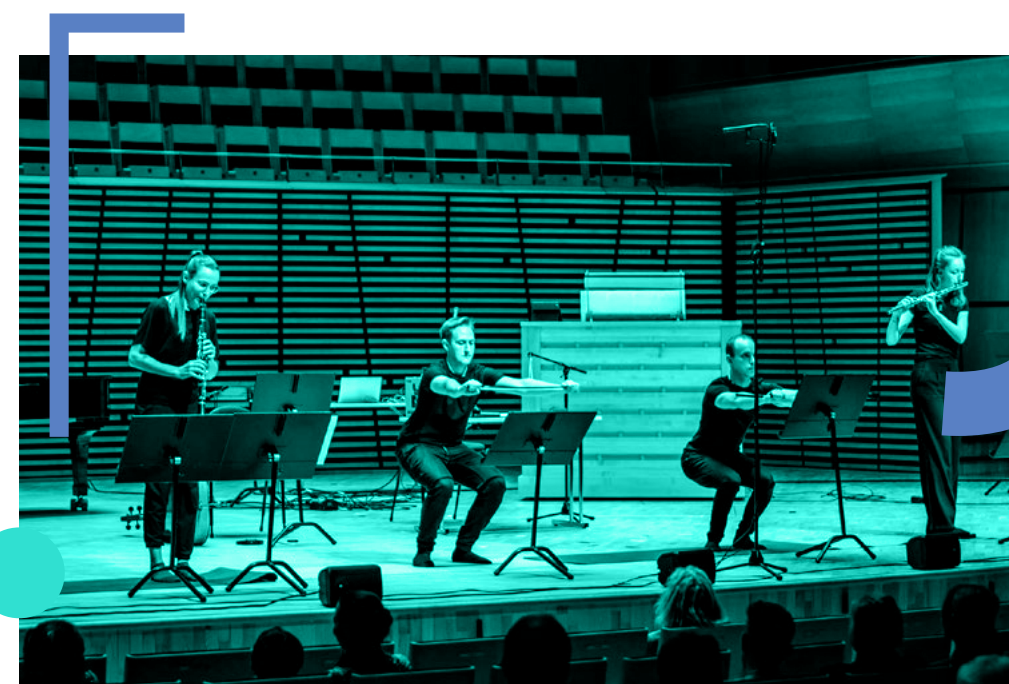


photo: Foppe Schuit

The reasons, motivations and circumstances behind the decisions of musicians who step out of their comfort zone and perform an entire concert in front of an audience unlike the regular patrons of concert halls—safe for musicians and predictable in terms of the “activities” entailed—are of considerable interest. In terms of recommendations, it is important that such individuals have the opportunity to tell their orchestra or bandmates about the cited experiences. As per one expert who works with musicians in similar projects, those who have tried it once, even if they had not been convinced to do so, tend to come back. This is also because of how rewarding it can be for any professional musician to see their work positively received by such audiences and feel how it inspires them towards self-improvement and further challenges. Perhaps this is some sort of remedy for the paradox pointed out by a respondent, revealed in a study of classical musicians as a professional class. According to the respondent, musicians hold themselves in very low regard, at the same time believing that they are somehow special and should be adequately compensated as such.

According to another expert, social engagement is intricately linked to the music profession itself. It helps artists through all stages of preparation. One of the analyzed musicians further emphasized that the most important goal of such community-oriented activities is to use music to reach people who have no physical opportunity to attend musical events in concert halls. Activities carried out in such a mode are often directed at creating, through a variety of tools and methods atypical of the realities practiced with an audience in a concert hall, a common field for interpreting the underlying significance of music. Echoing the thought of philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer and his aesthetics, art (including music) is a vast playground, a host to relatively unimpeded interpretative activity (Gadamer 1993). Art is about playing and being played at the same time. This play, however, renders one a free and authentic participant, integrating one socially into one's community.

The musician as a contributor to an organizational culture focused on social responsibility

In order for an individual musician to be comfortable with the social activities carried out within an orchestra, an organizational culture is necessary within the orchestra that is conducive to social responsibility goals and that is an ally of the musician motivated to engage in new interactions. Social responsibility remains closely entangled with the organizational culture of a particular institution, and as such it must take account for its characteristics. On the one hand, we are looking at a socially responsible music institution (activities addressed to external audiences); on the other, we are interested in social responsibility "within" the music institution (adherence to standards and values relevant to musicians and—more broadly—the entire staff of the institution in a social sense).

Organizational culture is one of the principal areas of research that allows one to understand the specificity of arts organizations (especially if they employ artists in the performing arts, such as musicians). It characterizes and delineates the attitudes, experiences, beliefs, norms and values associated with an organization and shared by its members or smaller constituencies within it. It is a set of (preconditions) that tacitly control or interfere with all relationships among the organization's members both inside and outside of its confines (Martin, 2002). The organizational cultures of entities that employ musicians or, more broadly, the employment patterns of musicians have changed significantly in recent years. Music, theater or dance companies are being transformed into units centered around a specific artistic project, members of a broader network of practitioners selected or pooled to focus on a specific task. Some refer to this phenomenon as a "portfolio career." It is important to understand the changes in organizational patterns, which have evident and far-reaching consequences

for creative processes and the underlying conditions for social engagement from the perspective of a particular musician affiliated more or less permanently with a particular organization or arts initiative.

Organizational culture is a driver of change in the organization. It is a quiet, underestimated, silent element that, in most cases, becomes a key factor influencing any change. According to Edgar Schein, one of the pioneers of in-depth reflection on the nature of organizational cultures, it is a model of shared core premises which a group has learned in the course of solving problems of external adaptation and internal integration; a pattern that has worked well enough to be considered valid and should hence be taught, passed on to new members of the organization as something correct (Schein 1985). This dimension of intergenerational transmission of behavior and unwritten rules of functioning in orchestras is passed on verbally, usually from a senior musician to a younger, newly hired band member.

Schein divided his organizational culture model into three levels. The first outlines the features of an organization that can be seen, felt and heard by an uninitiated observer, such as an orchestra listener who shows up at the orchestra's headquarters once in a while for an evening concert. These are also the physical objects; the premises and places where the orchestra works; the appearance of the interiors, halls or offices; the visible artifacts that "cohabit" with the musicians in the space of their work; lecterns, platforms, to some extent also the music instruments themselves. At this level, these are also the methods of rewarding and distinguishing the orchestra's personnel that are visible to everyone; the way its members dress at concerts, but also on a daily basis, during rehearsals; the styles of relation-building and interacting with coworkers and those from outside the organization.

The second level of organizational culture consists of phenomena visible only to members of an orchestra or employees of an institution. These are, for example, internal documents, unwritten codes of conduct and procedures familiar to all members of the organization.

Finally, the deepest level spans the so-called tacit assumptions of the organization, or to put it another way: elements of the culture that are invisible and cognitively unidentified in everyday interactions among the members of the organization. Notably, members of the organization with sufficient experience to comprehend this deepest level of organizational culture usually internalize it over time, thus reinforcing its invisibility

An orchestra, theater company or any other type of organization employing performing artists is a fascinating laboratory of human relations that provides



photo: Serrvis Sinfonia Varsovia

revealing insight into the social organization of artistic work. However, whenever this facet becomes the focus of analytical interest, many conclusions immediately wander toward determining the role, quality and extent of communication and power. Researchers' attention targets these dimensions as the most frequently perceived sources of conflict in similar places of professional activity. An art organization is always multidimensional, as a workplace for artists and others who provide the necessary conditions for artistic "productions." It is a source of people's identity, a platform for an engaged community and a site of financial investment. This type of organization can be both a problem and a solution; a symbol or a manifesto; a project and a tool for change; a place to dwell and grow as a human being; a refuge and a place of intercultural communication or a place for trapped aspirations and unfulfilled hopes; a place of dynamic growth for the artist and a place where stress and frustration prevail (Strati, 1998, 2015). Practically speaking, an analysis of organizational culture geared toward a specific music organization as a workplace for musicians is largely about detecting and addressing the instability and complexity that exist beneath the surface of "official" communication, which most often seeks to convey an impression of stability and hierarchical order, a well and cohesively functioning structure, and a dependable job site.

Organizational culture is not a feature or element of an organization, but constitutes the organization itself (Smircich 1983). An organization is a continuous process of social construction through symbols, values, beliefs and patterns of intended action that people learn, create and reproduce. It remains simultaneously subjective and objective, immaterial and material, ephemeral and permanent, observable but also impenetrable. Strati dubs an organization an open text, alluding to the intellectual legacy of Barthes and Eco. It comprises a mesh of personal cultures, professional cultures, cultures of communities of practice, corporate cultures, and the dominant cultures in a given field; in this case: professionals in the field of classical music (Strati 1998, 2015).

How can we characterize the elements of an organizational culture in an orchestra, one that is socially responsible, fosters and engenders conditions for musicians' social engagement? How do musicians themselves perceive this, and what do they need from their institution?

There are several main themes indicated by the respondents when answering this question. While their main outline is provided in the chapter on the perspective of institutions, several elements are worth recalling in the section on music artists. This is, in a sense, an encouragement for musicians to gain new music experiences, to awaken their curiosity about the new, which ultimately helps reinforce the social dimension of musicians' activity. Socially responsible projects provide a space to integrate different backgrounds, experiences, organizational

cultures, values, etc. Providing opportunities for experience, comparing different national or cultural perspectives, builds a musician's confidence and willingness to engage in new activities. Interactions of this kind can refresh a musician's motivations, induce them to change their habits and make new artistic and aesthetic choices that affect the final outcome of their work. In particular, an out-of-the-ordinary audience prompts musicians towards a lasting motivation for artistic work and further social involvement. However, this relationship has to be a two-way street: it should not only be based on taking but also on giving (Benson 2003). This involves, first and foremost, reinforcing the ethos of the musician as one who shares with others. This was pointed out by one of the respondents in the project, who directly stated that the classical musician suffers from the image of the "puffed-up" classical artist, who tends to be selfish and does not care about the needs of others. Activities of a social nature, if only for the local community, for nonprofessionals, can become a kind of remedy for such an unjust image of classical musicians.

In addition to a certain freedom of (bottom-up) exploration, necessary for an individual in an ensemble, a similar process should also take place (top-down) on the part of the institution itself, so as to provide its musicians with opportunities for development: from the program/repertoire through guest performers, projects and concert schedule, including the location of activities in new and non-obvious, culturally and socially inspiring venues conducive for inter-cultural and interdisciplinary encounters. The "Interactions/Integrations" project certainly included such activities, e.g. the cooperation of the Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra with Norwegian and Polish traditional musicians, as well as activities featuring visual artists working in the fields of painting, comic books, etc..

The chapter on partnerships offers a detailed discussion of these elements at the intersection of fields and practices. Likewise, in the chapter on the institutional perspective, the reader will find a catalog of scopes that tap into the concept of organizational culture. Among others, it includes the voluntary participation of musicians in projects, especially those focused on social responsibility and values. It also addresses the well-being of musicians as causal and co-determining actors, in some sense artistically self-determined, able to refuse to participate in certain activities for various legitimate reasons.

Perhaps it is worth adding that, from the musician's perspective, planning can also be a tool of (at times undesirable) control and oppression. The schedule itself, along with a precise plan of action, can turn out to be a double-edged sword in this case; on the one hand, it offers security, but on the other it can also introduce certain constraints. What is often forgotten is that the schedule itself remains a method of exerting control—which is probably good for the direct efficiency of the project, and which dovetails with the demand for clarity of communication—but

may not be the most fortunate measure in fostering long-term relationships within a team of people, especially artists. The schedule helps, but only on condition that one does not reduce it to a top-down instruction, but instead treats it as an element, tool or result of a process conducted in a participatory manner. Planning is not only a purely practical act but also a symbolic one that consolidates the quality of interpersonal relations in artistic companies. All too often, however, artifacts such as plans and schedules symbolize and tangibly perpetuate disparities and/or abuses of power. At the opposite end of such phenomena is an organizational culture that instills trust and affords each member of the company a sense of a certain healthy intimacy, a place that the artist can call "a place of their own." This recommendation correlates perfectly with the statement of one musician respondent, who emphasized the very possibility of co-creating a music institution as "a place of one's own."

In the top-ranked organizations across the classical music community, the issue of the musician's sense of security functions in a rather special way. One of the core values cultivated in this type of organizational culture remains artistic quality, i.e. the so-called artistic standard and excellence in performance. Musicians are afraid to compromise these qualities in favor of, for example, the standard associated with educational, publicity activities. This fear, by the way, seems to be a bit of a misconception in and of itself, since education by no means excludes striving for the highest standard of performance; on the contrary, it should be



photo: Patrick Doherty Productions

concomitant with such pursuits, along with musicians' engagement. Nevertheless, artists wish to avoid a situation in which they will be perceived as "squandering" their talent, technique, experience, professional position in the music community. Therefore, in the process of developing projects addressed to atypical audiences, musicians need guarantees to ensure that those in charge of such activities will deliver a quality undertaking. This area raises the issue of effective communication on the part of event programmers, who must guarantee musicians that a given venture runs no risk of breaching the above "safety threshold." One of the interviewed managers, who engages musicians for concerts of a social nature, described the dilemmas of musicians who were waging an internal, spiritual battle before his eyes; they were unable to refuse him, but were equally afraid of agreeing to participate in something that could embarrass them or make them uncomfortable. Over the course of several days, they kept changing their minds about their involvement in the project, only to eventually refuse out of concern for their image and position as soloists in the orchestra: "Nonetheless, he kept struggling, wondering if it wasn't a project for him after all. So there is a chance, after all..."



We were playing in a psychiatric ward; I had played Bach's Prelude beforehand, and saw a woman walking towards me from a corridor. She approached me and started dancing to the beat of the music, and I thought to myself: well, good, we're in this together now. My heart was about to explode as I played, it was a stress like no other, but a positive one. Then we played some Schönberg, Verklärte Nacht. Some time later, we spoke with a doctor from that ward, who told us that the person was gravely ill, suffered from various neurotic disorders, and her condition had improved since our concerts. She had overcome some of her barriers thanks to our music. It was a powerful experience.

Here, we return to the definition of organizational culture coined by Edgar Schein (Schein 1983), who situated its core in the transmission, from one employee to another, of the way of doing things in an institution. However, in the case of opening a music institution towards activities related to challenging and demanding audiences: patients, prisoners, disadvantaged youth, etc., we learned from the accounts of managers of such projects that, more often than not, transmission and inspiration are mostly transferred from younger musicians to their older colleagues. More and more of such individuals, younger members of musical ensembles and orchestras, have experienced performing for persons unable to get to a concert hall. Instrumentalists who have participated in projects such as Musethica, which in the course of ten years has implemented activities on a huge scale—more than 500 concerts featuring 600 musicians in several cities in Europe (including Warsaw, where the concert featured artists associated with Sinfonia Varsovia) or in China and Israel—can remind their colleagues that there are opportunities at hand that result in memorable experiences adding to one's motivation as a musician. Such persons are like highly serviceable Trojan horses: they sneak into the rigid structures and established practices of musicians working in symphony orchestras, and change them from within. This is how the practice of transcending the framework of the concert hall and the barriers in musicians' heads can proliferate. The individual, particular experiences of social engagement in individual artists can translate into the lives of entire ensembles, institutions and orchestras.



photo: Sennis Sintonia Warszawa

Professional musicians in the process of integrating social, artistic and aesthetic values

In the introduction to this publication, we referred to four value fields that organize the mission and crucial motivations of those working in music institutions. We also pointed out that in this constellation of values, musicians feel more at ease in the realm of artistic and aesthetic values. The latter constituted an important part in the formation of their professional identity during the training process. Ethical and social values are areas of motivation that tend to take the back seat, so to speak.

Musicians engage in something that holds the promise of superior artistic quality, virtuosity, technique, ingenuity, but they do so only upon promise of the utmost standard of craftsmanship. This translates into their approach towards situations in which classical musicians are invited to participate in projects with a distinctly social profile, or initiate such activities themselves. If something promises to be an artistic stopgap, seems “kitschy” and awkward or underdeveloped, unprepared, shoddy, professional musicians will have nothing to do with it, for fear of being embarrassed by the level of an undertaking in which they agreed to participate. This is what classical musicians are taught: to strive for perfection when performing a piece, and this extends to music as well as activities at the intersection of music and other disciplines. Musicians want to be able to withdraw from a project if it is headed for artistic failure or if its quality is unsatisfactory; when it lacks the quality that enables musicians to feel secure in the area of their expertise and ensure the right level of preparation. To achieve the above, artists need time to prepare and study the context of the music they play: this often involves historical studies, consulting source materials, continuous re-reading of musical texts, struggling to understand the context of the times and circumstances in which a given sheet was created and first performed. This is the essential element of classical musicians’ identity, which they explore anew each time, seeking an adequate approach to the interpretation of music originally written for an altogether different audience.

Musicians who are educated in a standard way, within the dynamics determined by artistic values (values encoded by the artist) to aesthetic values (values decoded by the listener) (Poprawski 2009), only gain the experience of contributing social values through music through activities offered by educational projects addressed to artists, such as the aforementioned Musethica project. Its goal is to train mindful musicians who know that their work can culminate in a magnificent concert hall, where they will be admired, applauded and well compensated, but who are also aware that the path to such splendors also leads through experiences that make them realize the power of the music they create. The model project cited in this publication, created by Avri Levitan, focuses on professionalism, as

emphasized by Levitan himself. The social and ethical elements arise, as it were, aside from this overarching goal, which is to enable musicians to play a large number of concerts outside of venues tailored for this purpose, and to do so among people who have never been and/or will never go to a philharmonic hall because they are incapacitated for various reasons. Thanks to such audiences, musicians find out—sometimes for the first time in their careers—that their music speaks.

According to the founder of Musethika the musician’s artistic excellence and their social commitment go hand in hand. On another note, many projects, citing the social values they seek to communicate, use them as a cover for their flaws or inferior artistic quality. In Levitan’s view, if such activities—crucial from an aesthetic and ethical perspective—involve persons without proper training, talent and attitude, with poorly selected repertoire, they are essentially dishonest because they fail to respect music, the musical profession, and above all the venues and audiences they purport to engage.

In doing so, it should be noted that there is also a type of musician educated in a different paradigm, for whom a concert with children or the backyard of a residential building falls outside their value system. This should not be subject to judgment. This is a matter of a different sensibility and a different prioritization

of artistic and social values; a legacy of working with great musical personalities, conductors and soloists educated in a rather conservative model. For artists formed in this mold, it is working under the guidance of a “superior” artist that remains their priority and the foremost source of growth, a chance to create art of the highest possible standard. Such persons usually view their work as an artistic rather than social vocation, considering it the only appropriate path of self-development for the classical musician’s profession. It is worth noting that this paradigm is often represented by people who do not beat around the bush when it comes to assessing the artistic quality of a given concert or performed piece, therefore one can rely on the honesty of their judgment regarding the parameters of the musical craft. After all, these artists often show no interest in venturing beyond such preset standards, nor do they entertain the possibility of stepping down from their “ivory towers.”

Playing in a prison or school is a huge challenge for musicians at any level. After all, coupling social or ethical values with the essential duo of artistic and aesthetic values is quite an effort. In such venues, it is paramount to really captivate the audience with one’s play and to use music to tell a story. This calls for maximum focus from the artist, along with the employment of all musical skills at their disposal at a given moment.

The effect of being judged and the perception of the musician’s professional identity vs. social responsibility

Professional identity is a representation of the negotiation patterns between social aspirations, desires, expectations and various forms of socialization encountered; inherited or learned, ascribed to and sometimes rejected by individuals entering the professional world. It is a de facto two-way operation, during which one identifies with certain values and norms or wants to distinguish them strongly from one’s own identity (Dubar 2022). Professional identities of artists are complex phenomena, affected by multiple tensions: a stabilized result of individual and collective processes, subjective and objective conditions, as well as biographical and structural conditions that shape individuals and institutions. The professional identity of cultural professionals, including musicians, and—in particular—the concept of professionalism in the field, refer to standards of conduct as a certain number of collective values (Dubois 2016). Unfortunately, such an approach is too inward-looking and fails to account for the complexity of the broad social landscape into which the arts, culture and heritage professions are embedded (Paquette2012).



If you’re really into music as a musician, which not everyone is, and you come to places like hospitals, it infuses you with energy and reminds you of why you do it, why you have to wake up in the morning and pick up your violin and play the scales, because there’s a reason for it, and you realize that the quality of your play does have an impact on the people who really need it.

Professional musicians are not only people with musical talent, but also ones who work strenuously to hone both their playing or singing technique, and their interpretation of a musical work (Poprawski 2011). This effort is necessary to be capable of practicing the profession, and its components are developed by musicians during their studies at a music university. Significantly, respondents were unable to cite even a single class at a music university or academy in which the school offered internships to help one overcome the barriers between the audience and the musician, to help one interact with the audience, including strictly at the musical plane.

An essential part of the job description for any musician performing in front of an audience and their fellow musicians involves being constantly subjected to the pressure of being judged. This particular feature of the musician's profession can entail a significant risk of stress. The artist's participation in activities aimed at fostering social values is by no means an exception to this rule. In this sense, non-musical elements of artistic activities that do not meet the standards of quality expected by the artist can negatively affect them and be detrimental to the outcome of their work. But this weakness can also be a potential springboard for the musician to leap into a very important dimension. Since stage fright remains an everyday occurrence for a musician, different ways of dealing with it can also be of interest to individuals who are not professionally involved in this field of art. Thus, an open exposure to the musician's struggle with stage fright can have an educational value; it can also assume the character of a dialogue with the audience and have "therapeutic" qualities. In disclosing their struggles with stress, musicians initiate communication with the audience, sharing their experience

in this regard, and experiencing reciprocity for as long as they are honest with themselves and others.

Oriented towards working with audiences and maintaining a focus on social issues, musicians see their role as "trainers" of the senses, emotions and imagination, guides that enable various people, including non-musicians, to enter the creative process. This is not limited to the music milieu and the strictly aesthetic context; on the contrary, it also bolsters the potential for projects with a social dimension. The musician can also become a person designing a participatory space. Thanks to this, listeners will find a place for their own (co-)creative role in the musician's activities. Statements of musicians participating in our project resound with such "guiding" experiences, gained in the course of projects that rely on non-standard, experimental approaches to the work of musicians with persons with different types of disabilities.

Quality of communication in social projects: the musician's needs

One of the essential recommendations arising from our interviews and from observing the work of musicians is to meet the needs they articulate with respect to clarity of and conditions for effective communication, such as using a vocabulary intimate to musicians. Speaking in a language that will be clear to a professional musician proves extremely important, because it engenders the conditions for a clear articulation of the message, purpose, and course of action intended as both musical (artistic) and social (or related to social responsibility). This language and narrative should take into account, among others: the characteristics of the creative process of the music artist; the ontological characteristics of musical works; the specificity of work formats such as concert, rehearsal, recording, concert tour; the way of handling a music instrument or the conditions arising from the physical laws of musical acoustics; and, finally, the conditions of music performance and perception arising from direct contact with the audience. Thanks to the music itself, the "language" of social projects in the field of music remains an international language. It is about the unique phenomenon of the creative musical process which, like no other performing art (except dance), has the power to transcend the boundaries of national languages. Moreover, music itself transcends the boundaries of verbal communication, as it offers other dimensions of contact between people from different social, cultural, linguistic backgrounds. Non-verbal communication remains an integral element in many musical activities, including those that involve working without the audience and those that are required by the internal cooperation of the ensemble. These include non-verbal signals, gestures, glances, usually intelligible only to the artists and, possibly, technical staff and orchestra managers. Non-verbalism in this case



photo: Sermis Sinfonia Warszawa

is not a weakness, but rather a strength embedded in the medium of music and the role played by the musician (Benson 2003). The recipient has to be exposed to multiple minutes of a performed piece, as well as an internal trigger, but they will usually receive no guidance as to which leads they should follow, or where to direct their attention. Paradoxically, this constitutes a certain strength of the musician's work: they can appeal to a great many people in very different ways, and do so without resorting to words. This is not a theater stage, where the actor has to say their lines. The raw material in music is not words, but time.

Viewed from a musician's perspective, internal communication standards are coupled with attention for clear rules, legibly demarcated functions and competencies of individual employees and departments, and transparent goals and activities addressed in the communication. More space is devoted to this issue in the chapter on the institutional perspective.

The first chapter of this study sought to sketch the critical dimensions of a musician's practice as a member of an ensemble affiliated with a music institution, in which the social impact of artistic activity resonates more strongly. We cited over a dozen examples, challenges and dilemmas as well as model situations and solutions that can serve musicians and orchestra ensembles to achieve social goals more effectively, while keeping these activities adequate to the characteristics of the musical profession. This includes meeting the professional needs of artists and providing them with space for individual development. In light of the aforementioned elements, particularly important in the activities of musicians is a skillful, balanced integration of activities that implement to an equal degree not only the musician's core artistic and aesthetic values but also ethical and social values. It is also important in each case to take into consideration the specific circumstances, and the conditions that affect the motivations and decisions of classical music performers.

Musicians co-create the organizational cultures of orchestras. The material presented in this part of the publication can provide a sound starting point and initial inspiration for the preparation and implementation of tailored action scenarios in each music institution that will serve to increase the social impact of these ensembles. Such processes should be initiated in a way that is attractive from the musician's perspective and conducted in the mode of a careful conversation that incorporates the values and conditions motivating artists to explore their role in a socially responsible music organization.



photo: Foppe Schut



the audience's perspective

The second chapter of the publication centers on the audience of a socially responsible music institution. The adopted perspective is that of a broad horizon, accounting for the various opinions and feedback regarding the audience of this type of organization that materialized in the course of the “Interactions/Integrations” project and provided the pretext for this study. The voice of the audience is mediated by the voices of experts, managers, employees of the institution and the observations made by musicians during projects featuring audience participation.

The chapter consists of four components. The first is an outline of the notion of audience development, which emphasizes the importance of strategic work of cultural institutions and organizations with their audiences (Firych, Grenda and Poprawski 2022). It can serve as a springboard for long-term action in an organization interested in the needs of its current and potential audiences. It is here that the theoretical seed of the idea of placing the audience at the center of a socially engaged music institution appears. The second section of this chapter aggregates expertise on the potential behind the audience’s music competences for the use and in the context of activities conducted by the music institution. In the third section, the authors focus their interests on the various interactions of musicians and institutions with audiences, which entail various parallel paths of action and project planning. A particular type of such activities is the so-called verbal introduction to a concert, which for some is crucial and for others very problematic and distracting, if not, in certain circumstances, redundant. The last section of the chapter is devoted to programming event formats designed for working with audiences.

The audience perspective comprises the second major range of insights and recommendations formulated by the authors of this study, based on their observation of and cooperation with one of the most exciting symphony orchestras in Poland: an ensemble of individuals gearing up to move into a brand-new venue for themselves and their musical audiences, situated in an unusually inspiring part of the capital. The remarks featured in this and other parts of the publication would not have been collected had it not been for the observation of the work of said symphony orchestra as a public institution in a process of change directed toward making new commitments in the sphere of social responsibility.

The construction of brand-new infrastructure, a venue crafted as a space open to very different audiences, will not change the fact that Sinfonia Varsovia will remain—above all others—an ensemble of artists fulfilling themselves as individuals in a joint artistic work that helps their personalities grow. At the same time, the ensemble will continue the mission of its founders, presenting its current and future listeners with successive, aesthetically inspiring challenges.

photo: Sennis Sinfonia Varsovia

As they enter the next stage of development as an artistic ensemble and an organization as a whole, musicians and employees of a music institution should not become another creative variation on a welfare center. Expanding the perspective of artists to include the everyday, non-artistic needs and diversity of people from other social circles, unseals the “bubble” of the professional classical musician community. For many years, Sinfonia Varsovia has operated without a seat and proper concert hall of its own. This has caused the ensemble to move around different venues across Warsaw. Similarly, the activities carried out in the “Interactions/Integrations” project were held in many places: theaters, a museum, the opera house, a concert tent, and a Praga courtyard. With the construction of its own venue, which functions as a bona fide music center, the institution enters the next stage of development and organizational changes as an artistic ensemble. The biggest challenge seems to be to preserve the vitality and existing dynamics of the orchestra’s activity, for years appreciated by the public and so typical of Sinfonia Varsovia. It would be a major strategic and branding mistake for the musicians to confine themselves to spanking new concert halls, targeting their accessibility primarily to educated music aficionados. The orchestra’s and the institution’s priority should be to remain an open and accessible entity in order to uphold the orchestra’s extremely valuable and socially relevant reputation. The orchestra will then be able to use its new, more comfortable premises to both enhance the quality of its artistic work and to attract a larger and more diverse audience.



photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

Audience development as a concept and initial formula in placing the audience at the center of a socially conscious music institution

Audience development is a strategic, dynamic and interactive process that seeks to ensure the wide availability of artifacts of culture and the arts. It strives to engage individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and appreciating the arts, through a variety of means available to cultural operators, from digital tools to volunteerism, from co-creation to broad cross-sector partnerships. It is also an active and thoughtful process of establishing meaningful, long-term connections between people and cultural organizations, such as music institutions. Audience development work transcends the idea of (merely) boosting the number of visitors and participants in cultural events. This approach strives to consolidate the groups and communities that form around an organization and to solidify their mutual relations. In an advanced variant, it is the long-term formation of a network of natural social support for entire art organizations, their programs and people (Lipps 2015). It is an ongoing, actively managed process in which the organization encourages each audience participant (including potential participants) to develop confidence in the world of culture and the arts, bolstering their knowledge, experience and engagement with the wide range of cultural expressions available, so that they can realize their full potential while also meeting the organization’s needs, along with its artistic, social and economic goals (Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre, <https://www.mhminsight.com/>). According



I love it when people clap in between the successive movements of a piece. It’s rather old-school to tell people when to clap. I love it when people clap whenever they feel like it, and I wish things were more jazz-like in this respect.

to the UK Audience Agency, a leading entity in the field, audience development is a planned, all-encompassing approach to expanding the scope and nature of a cultural organization's relations with the public that helps it achieve its mission and addresses the social dimensions of its operations, as well as its financial sustainability and creative ambitions.

A study commissioned by the European Commission (Engage Audiences, <http://engageaudiences.eu/>) considers three types of audiences, although this is only one possible typology. According to Engage Audiences, the first type is an audience by habit. This category includes individuals who routinely attend cultural venues or participate in cultural activities without any obstacles standing in their way. These are generally regular attendees for whom any barriers to accessing these places and activities are relatively easy to overcome. The second category in this typology is an audience by choice, and for the sake of this study one can think of some deviations from the definition proposed by the authors of the EC publication, instead breaking it down into two different types of audiences. On the one hand, an audience by choice includes persons who are potentially close to actual participation and active use of the cultural offer, are already allies of cultural organizations but face certain barriers, which, by the way, they most often want to deal with. The obstacle can be a specific life situation, such as caring for young children, a certain lifestyle, variously being unable to come to a particular site or event. Another type of barrier is insufficient financial resources. On the other hand—and still closer to the original idea behind the proposed segmentation—an audience by choice may include individuals for whom participation in artistic activities and attendance at cultural venues is mostly not a habit, or who rarely choose to attend a performance or concert, but we know little about the possible hurdles they face; importantly, these individuals are not particularly disadvantaged socioeconomically. Last but not least, the third type of audience is an audience by surprise (also known as audience by chance), or, as some would put it, a “chance” audience. Such audiences remain outside the effective influence of cultural institutions and organizations, or manifest complete indifference to the artistic offer, at times even a degree of hostility towards artists, personnel and cultural venues. These individuals do not participate in cultural activities whatsoever and this is due to many complex reasons, most often related to social exclusion and education factors. These are individuals who do not even know that the offer of cultural entities and artists can be interesting and beneficial to them.

Audience development is a practice that targets both current and new participants not yet present in the life of an organization. Utilizing a variety of tools and strategies, it requires time, professional competence and, most importantly, the impetus to undertake change and the determination to implement it. Audience development is not strictly about “developing” audiences, but about developing cultural organizations and orienting them to adequately identify audience needs.

All of these scopes can clearly be employed to better understand the challenges faced by different types of music institution personnel, especially in those entities that are not indifferent to the social context in which they operate.

Working on future audiences is identified as a priority, an obvious activity arising from the need to ensure the survival of an institution dealing with classical music. At the same time, it is worth emphasizing that it is precisely this type of public institution that has the fullest authority and human resources, along with the ideas and experiences gained in the course of numerous successful and unsuccessful attempts to attract audiences through various methods of operation. No one will take responsibility for the audience in the same way as those who have a vested interest in not performing in an empty concert hall.

Orchestra musicians perched on the concert stage are often so focused on their own activities that they sometimes lack the divided attention span that would allow them to conduct audience observations and keep track of what takes place in the auditorium seats and how the audience reacts to their music in real time. This follows from the lack of eye contact with the audience and the need to focus primarily on the conductor. In many cases, one of the few moments in which such contact with the audience is established is during applause, heard at “appropriate” or “inappropriate” moments.

Nevertheless, we asked the selected orchestra musicians to name some examples of audiences of habit, choice and chance. Our respondents were completely frank in admitting that, while they themselves would like to see sellout audiences at every one of their performances, paradoxically they often do not have the time or, in the case of young musicians, the proper means to participate in culture; so they simply either cannot afford tickets to events they would like to attend, or they are too tired or busy working and practicing to fit additional entertainment or cultural outlets into their busy daily schedules. These statements suggest that musicians have a good understanding of the complex challenge that attracting listeners to a concert is, while also realizing the scale of the possible obstacles.



photo: Sewis Sintonia Warszawa

Musical competence of the audience vs. social activity of a music institution

When asked for their opinion on the orchestra's work with audiences, experts point to a fundamental problem facing music institutions: in Poland, classical music has had no place in general education for the past thirty years. The situation in other countries also leaves much to be desired. According to one respondent, artistic vocational education supplies the music market with fewer and fewer professional musicians capable of meeting international standards and the expectations of professional ensembles. Working with audiences in the field of classical music therefore necessitates a great deal of strategic work, which ultimately falls primarily on music institutions, such as symphony orchestras and philharmonic companies.

The apparent generation gap also remains an important issue, with a shortage of teenagers and young adults at symphony concerts. Interestingly, musicians tend to perceive this age group as volunteers, usually already connected to the music community by at least their educational background. The experience of playing concerts in schools indicates that there are places where teachers and entertainers are able to adequately reinforce interest in classical music through creative methods of working with young people. However, these are exceptional situations that primarily involve young individuals participating in the creation of their own music. Thus, the younger generation is no longer merely seen as an audience.

Another respondent pointed to the inexorable progress of technology, which deprives modern humans of the conditions necessary for concentration, silence, time and space for reflection. In turn, such conditions are required for the presentation of the vast majority of the repertoire of symphony orchestra or chamber ensembles. According to the aforementioned expert, there is a type of listeners who search for the determining factor in contemporary art, and this applies not only to music but also, if not more often, to theater or visual arts. This brand of audience wish to relate to contemporary reality precisely through the lens of art. They may be disconnected from the classical music canon, which they may even know, albeit only as a reference point for something more contemporary. Classical music still exploits the canon, which no longer seems as attractive for this particular age group as it did for the past generation audiences. Naturally, this generalization serves only to articulate certain trending interest in a specific section of the general audience that sometimes avails itself of the cultural offer provided by a music institution and is primarily interested in novelty and the dialogue between the achievements of the past and the advances and challenges of the present. One idea for attracting such audiences is to direct the attention

of the music institution to theatergoers, especially those frequenting theater companies whose repertoire is grounded in a critical and social perspective as they actively engage in debates with the modern world. For example: classical music can be performed amidst decorations left over from a theater production, while concert programs may be drafted with a specific title in mind can permanently attract a new, valuable and potentially highly loyal audience to a music institution. Paradoxically, this particular idea emerged under circumstances arising from certain constraints, so it can also have a practical aspect: the nature of the production process in a theater company sometimes requires that decorations be left on stage due to the lack of time needed to dismantle them, and so they can be put to interesting and creative uses.

It is worth remembering that cultural competences also include the ability to read a music piece, which can be done in a number of ways. Following in the footsteps of philosophers of aesthetics such as Umberto Eco or Roman Ingarden (Poprawski 2008), one can conclude that listening to a particular piece of music sparks multiple overlapping or independent levels of perception and interpretation. There are also different strategies for deciphering a work. Some listeners will pay attention to the beautiful melody, others will focus on the story unfolding between the successive pieces, while still others will pay special attention to the environment in which the music is performed.

Based on several hundred concerts performed in a wide variety of conditions, the leader of the Musethica Project noted that there is a very clear correlation between the quality of performance and the listeners' attention span. "When you play in a prison and in a closed psychiatric ward, in centers for the homeless and for children with special educational needs, including some with rather harsh diagnoses, and you see a more focused audience, when a musician, a band or individuals play with better sound quality, pulse, intonation, dynamic, it's amazing." Such experiences enable one to study the practice of influencing listeners, creating impact, which the artist is likely to do on future occasions, perhaps also when working with another ensemble.

The window of possible impact on the listeners' attention span has been steadily decreasing in the past decades. Classical music is an area where the shortest unit of impact falls between five to ten minutes. The difficulty is that in the social media-dominated world, the time at our disposal dwindles to as little as thirty seconds.

There are, of course, instances when even children can maintain their attention for the duration of a forty-, fifty-, or sixty-minute concert; however, this requires a great deal of discipline and a thoughtful strategy on the part of the producer drafting the program, let alone the musicians' ability to lead and sustain the

tension in the sequence of performed pieces. According to one respondent, it is not uncommon for hospital staff or teachers to start crying because they have never expected or experienced a particularly agitated child being able to sit for more than two minutes at a time, yet here it is, sitting for forty to fifty minutes, listening to a Beethoven quartet.

One interesting variable in the recent years is a noticeable increase in the popularity of music therapy, as well as the interest in human wellbeing and the effects of listening to music and making music on one's physical and mental health. People who treat classical music as medicine indirectly get involved in community projects for orchestras and ensembles that perform such repertoire. At the same time, the generation of touchscreen users may have some difficulty understanding the physical aspect of music making, such as rubbing a bow against a string stretched over a wooden object. This is why, in audience development applied to the conditions of a symphony orchestra, it seems so important to expose audiences to the artisanal, material part of music production.

One of the significant gaps in terms of musical competence is the lack of connectivity with the musical code that has been perpetuated for hundreds of years; with the heritage of musical styles and—above all—the specific tonality present in the harmony of musical works. According to one expert, the lack of a tonal center is considered to be a hindrance in working with audiences: the ability to hear the musical phrases that a musician conducts from the beginning to the end of a performance has been declining. Put simply, it is about nuancing of the audience's music competencies in a way that enables one to hear the melody and be aware that a given movement is not over yet. The listener clearly senses this tension and emotion in the harmony. Throughout the 20th century, the tonality in question gradually became less and less clear to the audience, and today one can see the effects when people at concerts begin to clap as early as halfway through a piece, or even during the first possible pause written into the score, unaware or deaf to the fact that this the piece has not yet played out. According to one respondent, a socially responsible music institution should be aware of these problems and try to address them. This is also related to the functioning of the orchestra at a particular venue, in a specific social environment, where social responsibility is distributed differently.

The problem with musical competences in society is also apparent in another aspect related to the quality of musical performances. A listener who enjoys music, but is not too willing or able to go into detail about its quality, simply wants to hear a performance of a particular piece of music. Such a person may not perceive any difference at all in the quality of individual renditions, thus in a sense invalidating the musician's struggle with the material, many years of study and work, and the long hours spent perfecting a given piece. If we assume that the target of

the musician's work is only their audience, then such an attitude of listeners—characterized by poor orientation, uneducated critical apparatus—fails to provide artists with any challenge or quality control mechanisms, ultimately reducing the musician's motivation to continuously hone their artistic skills.

During our discussions with managers of music institutions, we were reminded of the strategic plan for audience work carried out in Wrocław by the orchestra of the National Forum of Music, whose director was responsible for the institution's seat, which had been under construction for seven years, with a concert hall seating several hundred people. This involved not only making arrangements for the orchestra well in advance, but also, more importantly, educating the audience that would be seated in this state-of-the-art concert venue. Such foresight entails investing enormous energy knowing full well that the effect of such an investment will be deferred in time, on the one hand, and correlated with a long-term strategy for the establishment and development of the institution, on the other. In the cited example, the period of construction was devoted to generating—using the city's education curricula—the approval, conditions and space for work with children and young adolescents in grade schools by expanding their profiles to include more music education classes.

The problems discussed above seem to concern not only the audience but also the classical music performers themselves. They include, among other things, a shortage of ideas for quality cultural offer targeting teenagers or young adults. Instead of using off-the-shelf solutions, institutions opt for bombastic acts, produced as part of specific externally-funded projects. There are, of course, many events addressed to parents with young children (the offer even includes



It's great if people express themselves by clapping and shouting, and it would be great if they could do it at any time. This is best proven when one plays wherever people can't go to a concert because of limited accessibility: take, for example, the blind, or children with serious disabilities, who can't move or speak. It's there that you get to see everything, because there are no restrictions, no rules in place. Those people are what they are.

occasional events for expectant mothers!), as well as initiatives for preschool and early grade elementary school audiences; however, the remaining part of repertoires is targeted solely at adults, including (predominantly) senior citizens. Thus, a serious gap occurs in the cultural offer, which fails to cater to age groups situated in the middle of the above spectrum.

Similarly surprising is the “segment” of the audience referred to as an “audience by chance.” One of the interviewed artists stated that representatives of this group make for the most grateful audience: their reception is all about raw emotions, unfettered by conventions or unwritten standards of conduct in the concert hall. It is not uncommon for musicians to think that such people come to a concert with a certain mindset, which is not necessarily positive, yet the spontaneity of their reactions they can genuinely mobilize the musician towards greater efforts. When the musical offer is not up to their liking, they do not return; conversely, if it pleases them, they are capable of demonstrating it expressly, hence their feedback reaches the artists much more effectively than in the case of regular concert-goers who abide by the established conventions in this regard.

Interactions of musicians and their institutions with the audience. Adequacy of verbal introductions to music. Different paths of interaction and dialogue between institutions and their audiences

Audiences are also sometimes characterized as entities of significant value to musicians. One group that fits this bill is children, whose presence in the concert hall is especially trying for any musician, testing their social commitment, and the clarity and authenticity of their message. The argument in favor of this conclusion is grounded in their honest reactions to music. The youngest audiences require the musician to play in a way that sustains their tension and interest, and a desire to continue listening. After all, children cannot hide their fatigue or inability to understand art. On the contrary, they react promptly to the course of events in the concert hall.

In the statements of musicians, the desire for spontaneity and sincere responses to music, which fosters new relations between musicians and audiences, especially those unaccustomed to classical music, features quite frequently. This is how socially oriented projects, unfettered by conventions, resonate with audiences.. Such reactions appeal to some artists, who admittedly profess a similar type of social sensitivity. For them, the opportunity to interact with this sort of audience provides a welcome change from the predictable reactions of music lovers who regularly attend concerts and follow the usual rules, i.e. people whose behavior usually contains elements of judgementalism, tension, and a certain degree of artifice.



photo: Serwis Symfonia Warszawa

Also pleasing to musicians are projects addressed to audiences that do not follow any codified rules; interestingly, some of the interviewed artists deemed such experiences almost exclusively positive, contrary to conventional thinking. Similarly to jazz, manifestations of such out-of-the-box behaviors include, among others, expressing one's enthusiasm by clapping after particularly spectacular movements of a piece, in order to reward musicians immediately, without unnecessary delay, for choosing a given piece or for the sheer quality of the performance.

When dealing with such an audience, the musician who treasures a sincere response and honest reaction to art—as one orchestra member put it—realizes that what they do is meaningful.

One interesting dimension of the audience's contact with the musician is a type of performance during which the audience sits at a distance of no more than of two to three meters from the performers, which allows the listeners to monitor the artists and their work. As recounted by the experts organizing the event in question, the audience showed a noticeable surge in the emotional impact and overall appreciation of their participation in the concert, concomitant with the shortened physical distance from the performer.

In contrast, a complete lack of contact with the audience is an extremely different experience, which was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. For many musicians, having to play concerts exclusively to the cameras, in silence, proved to be an acutely challenging experience and sensitized them even more to the banal truth that “we can't exist without the audience.”

The audience also provides musicians with a different perspective on the subject of their work. When preparing to perform a pre-planned repertoire, and while still in the rehearsal room, musicians think about the finest details of the rehearsed piece, specific movements and technical concerns. However, it turns out that those sitting in the audience perceive the music they like from an altogether different perspective. Musicians pay attention to (and evaluate, to their own satisfaction or lack thereof) specific moments of the piece, shifts in phrasing, more or less precise modifications in the harmony of the piece, the quality of vibratos, etc. Those sitting in the audience listen to music from a different perspective, which comprises a more general plan, one where the emotions evoked by individual pieces also play a significant role. The awareness of these different perspectives on the quality of musical performance helps every musician to think about their work in the context of different dimensions of sound perception as early as at the stage of preparation, when one practices before a concert.

One of the significant problems that emerged in the statements collected during the “Interactions/Integrations” project turned out to be the issue of verbal

introductions to the music played by the orchestra. This included the very presence of this form of mediation between the audience and the musicians, the style in which this narrative is implemented, and the amount of information regarding the music itself. The question still remains whether supplementing the audience's knowledge in this manner helps or hinders the listener; whether it assists the artists and facilitates audience participation. Based on what rationale and what purposes does one elect to introduce or abandon this element of contact between musicians/music institution and the audience? This is especially relevant when reaching out to new audiences in new settings and, most often, in socially engaged activities.



photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

Some artists fervently believe that music can defend itself and should not be supplemented with words. However, others are of the opinion that a verbal introduction helps groom the audience for the performance, orient them to a more sensitive reception, and help them focus on listening to the music. The intervention of a third party, i.e. a representative of the institution, who is not a musician but expounds on a coherent program, supplying it with a narrative, paradoxically addresses both “parties” in the concert hall, as it reminds the musicians of and justifies the interrelated nature of the various components of the concert program. Many musicians are unaware of the importance of such activities, which is also manifest during rehearsals, with no audience in

attendance, when the author of the program concert introduces the orchestra to the idea behind a specific selection of music pieces.

Verbal introductions to concerts are something that audiences expect, in particular the most loyal ones, or such is the feedback frequently received by the institution's staff. It provides one with access to information that is otherwise difficult to find on such a scale, while also unlocking the door to a certain amount of secret knowledge regarding the orchestra's work, and triggering various thoughts and associations that can help one to enjoy music in a more mindful way, especially in the case of previously unperformed or obscure compositions. An introduction that offers knowledge about the structure of the pieces, the number of movements, etc., also provides a greater part of the audience with a sense of security, as the listeners simply know what is in store for them.

Also shared as part of the work on the “Interactions/Integrations” project was the experience of other variants of introductory narratives, preceding the performance of the concert program. Alternatively, it was the musicians themselves who were asked to make introductory comments before performing a given piece. In addition, their statements were not to convey any precise information about specific pieces, nor transmit any knowledge of music history, but to impart a certain mood, emotion, and mindset accompanying the musician while performing the piece. The above role was assigned to the musicians on a rotating basis. This enabled the orchestra to maintain a relative diversity of its messages, opinions, and styles of expression, while also giving many musicians a chance to introduce themselves to returning audiences, to become known as professionals willing to share their motivations and attitudes, their intimate relationship to the performed repertoire.

In doing so, there are various options for both the introduction of necessary information and an actual conversation or dialogue with the audience. The musicians who participated in the “Interactions/Integrations” project and partook of Musethica's activities, invoked this very mode of operation. As part of the endeavor, artists usually perform without a verbal introduction; however, once the pieces are played, the audience—depending on the type of venue and listeners—are encouraged to stay, which enables a conversation in which each person present can participate by asking a question or sharing an opinion. During concerts for children and young people, audience members are also able to ask the following question after some or each of the pieces has been played: “Do you want to listen further?” On the one hand, this seems like a risky proposition that can bring the concert to an abrupt end. On the other, it helps establish a degree of trust between musicians and audiences, a solution based on honesty and, at the same time, an excellent opportunity to measure the listeners' preferences. Such audience testing *de facto* tests the effectiveness of the message proffered

by the musicians and the appropriateness of the selected repertoire. This, in turn, facilitates the sustainable development of a given project and helps the ensemble in targeting the needs of their audience.

In addition, such a self-reflective approach on the part of the musicians naturally encourages the audience to be honest, as it frequently drives to ask the musicians more insightful questions in the final part of the meeting. This allows the artists to elucidate a number of interesting questions: “Why did the musicians play without a conductor?” “When is a conductor needed?” “How do musicians communicate among themselves through music, during a concert, without using words?” Someone says: “I noticed that you play louder here and quieter there. Why?” “You take a breath together. What is the significance of this?” Seemingly, such questions are not difficult to answer for a professional, and yet, at the same time, they turn out to be fundamental for professional identity and musical practice, as they enable one to expound on a given topic, while also situating the musician in the midst of vital notions. A conversation conducted in this fashion can greatly inspire any and all of its participants.

Social responsibility and programming event formats for the public

In a music institution, paying special attention to the elements of its mission with respect to social responsibility incentivizes the staff to come up with new, unconventional formats for presenting music and interacting with the audience. In the activities implemented in the “Interactions/Integrations” project, as well as in other Sinfonia Varsovia ventures oriented towards activities featuring audience participation, one can find over a dozen examples of such solutions, types of activities and projects, of which several exemplary ones are signaled below. In doing so, it is important to not only create an innovative type of format but also to arrange for this artifact in a way that recognizes the centrality of the listener, the audience.

- 1) Open workshops for amateur musicians in an unusual setting (e.g., a concert tent), including playing instruments used by a symphony orchestra (e.g., marimba, wind instruments). Such activities sometimes require special preparation: the workshops are open to people with no prior ability to play an instrument, including those who cannot read music notation; the instruments are well labeled on purpose, complete with readers mirroring the keyboard (superfluous for professional musicians). The workshop ends with a performance featuring a popular artist, whose songs may be arranged in advance. For such a performing audience, an unexpected encounter with a familiar pop or rock musician makes for a highlight of the music season: “I played with Pablopavo. He sang, and I accompanied him.”



photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

- 2) A variation on such a proposal could involve an open workshop designed to teach the participants how to play a particular instrument, a form of “Bring your own instrument and we’ll teach you how to play it,” in the grain of the “Na-Dęte” workshop.
- 3) Another similar type of activity addressed to a very wide audience is dance workshops featuring live music, i.e. open-access dance events, free of charge and with no preconditions. This type of activity is implemented with the partial use of the artistic potential of orchestra musicians. The essence of this format is to invite artists from outside the organization, to the institution’s premises, including, for example, musicians from a traditional music ensemble, and professional dancers. Furthermore, these events take the form of a journey through various musical genres that range significantly beyond the repertoire of a symphony orchestra or classical chamber music ensemble. These include traditional and popular music: Balkan, Irish, Norwegian, salsa, Varsovian urban folklore, ethnic music from various Polish regions, such as Mazovia and Greater Poland.
- 4) Also of considerable potential are workshops that involve collaborations with artists from fields other than music: visual arts, theater, comic book, etc.. Some of these formats were implemented as part of the “Interactions/Integrations” project.
- 5) A concert by the Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra for children and parents with children, accompanied by a “mascot,” the so-called Basilisk Dragon, who guides the listeners through the world of the performed music. The concert is accompanied by animation activities, a narrator-host, i.e., the person moderating the meetings, and by puppeteers.
- 6) Festival or quasi-festival activities, e.g. Crazy Music Days, a lavish three-day celebration of music, featuring accessible events with diverse agendas and a wide range of audience experiences.
- 7) An inside-out concert, inviting the audience to sit among the orchestra musicians; the event is projected to take place in a concert pavilion under the theme “Sit among the orchestra,” combined with conversations on the concert and/or rehearsal experience.
- 8) Concerts in sites whose residents are unable to come to the main concert hall: nursing homes, hospices, hospital wards, prisons, rehabilitation centers, refugee camps, schools for disadvantaged youth. This initiative, held as part

of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, was carried out jointly by musicians from Poland and Norway at a nursing home in Setesdal; another concert was held in Warsaw at a center housing migrants from Ukraine. These objectives are also implemented across all venues visited by the aforementioned Musethica, of which Sinfonia Varsovia is an affiliate (both its musicians and the participants of its Academy).

It is extremely important for a music institution such as a symphony orchestra to undertake educational and animation activities whose long-term goal is to educate the future listener. When asked about the key activities of a socially responsible institution, musicians point to this as the single most important initiative that ensures the longevity of the institution and the orchestra ensemble. In addition, regardless of what formats the institution opts for to deepen its relationship with its audience, consistency in its interactions with the audience remains of utmost significance, as it helps the institution to deliver on its commitment to this relationship.



If a child hasn't smiled in months, and you show up and play for them, and their caregiver tells you that it's the first time they've smiled in six months, it gives you a completely different perspective as a musician: you gain a tremendous sense of purpose, you're reminded of where you belong - but it's not you that's good, it's the music that does the good.



the social partners' perspective

A socially responsible music institution is one that consciously operates in a social environment and builds partnerships based on synergy. The extensive list of partners in the “Interactions/Integrations” project allowed us to examine various forms of activities in this area, draw valuable conclusions, and develop tools and recommendations for supporting socially responsible cultural institutions in consciously building partnerships.

Who can become a partner of a socially responsible music institution?

The list of actors is long: from partners representing the public (e.g., a music lovers’ club), non-governmental organizations, enterprises (business) and entrepreneurs, to local government and public entities, including state administration and other cultural institutions, to entities in the fields of education, health and welfare. One can also list international partners, such as festival organizers, other bands or music institutions. Still other partners may include artists working in other fields of art, as well as curators or producers. Finally, partners may be found in the field of media (e.g. music criticism - opinion-forming media, social media) or in the music community (trade unions, social networks of musicians and managers, music producers).

In the course of the project, we established that a socially responsible music institution can also partner with a person or entity that enters into a collaboration with the institution to achieve the common goal of supporting activities of a social nature.

The “Interactions/Integrations” project was a study of an international partnership between two entities for whom issues of social responsibility constitute an important frame of reference: Sinfonia Varsovia (Poland) and the Norwegian Youth Chamber Music Festival (Norway). It is worth noting that the artistic and managerial teams collaborating on the project are characterized by a different profile and different potential: Sinfonia Varsovia is an institution that employs experienced professionals selected in the course of rigorous auditions, while the Norwegian Youth Chamber Music Festival is an entity working predominantly with young and less experienced musicians; its financial and organizational resources are in no way comparable to those of its Polish partner.

In addition, in the course of the project, a number of minor partnerships emerged, including with artists (a number of musicians; a painter, a performer, a comic book author), cultural institutions (a theater company, a museum, an opera house), festivals (Setesdal Folkemusikkfestival), social welfare organizations (Żupnicza Long-Term Residence Point), educational units or representatives of NGOs serving in an expert capacity.

All of the above was instrumental in collecting observations and conclusions that can prove useful for music organizations implementing community projects at different scales, as well as for other entities (e.g., cultural institutions).

photo: Sewis Sinfonia Varsovia

Partnership characteristics

As per *Słownik języka polskiego* (The Dictionary of the Polish Language), partnership can be understood as: being someone's partner, accompanying someone, co-participating in something. Whenever partnership is mentioned, it is concomitant with such terms as: cooperation, collaboration, co-organization or co-participation in a process.

For a successful partnership, it is important to agree at the outset on how all the stakeholders involved understand the process, what expectations they have and what resources they possess to contribute as partners. One should also discuss the basic premises for cooperation, clearly define mutual obligations, and work towards a positive mindset for cooperation.

This can be accomplished through a simple checklist of questions one should ask oneself before undertaking a project, when deciding to enter into a partnership.

1) What do we know about each other?

When designing projects of a social nature, one should take the time to learn more about one's partner: inquire about their experience in implementing similar projects and, if in doubt, ask for references. It is helpful to discuss the type and scale of projects organized so far, along with their deliverables. It is also worth asking about partnerships established in the past and their results. In case of any concerns, it is better to address them frankly and dispel any doubts, rather than suppress them, exposing oneself to potential difficulties (e.g., because the organization is anxious to solicit a partner for a grant project at any cost). The greater the mutual awareness of the partners' capabilities and limitations, the easier it is to delineate the scope of trouble-free cooperation during the subsequent project implementation.

2) What resources do we have at our disposal?

Depending on the project, partners may have different resources at hand (e.g. physical, human, financial or information resources). One should identify the partners' capabilities in terms of time, production, financial, logistical and human resources available. This will facilitate the implementation of the project, fulfilment of mutual obligations (e.g. timeliness), and continuous reviews of the successive stages of implementation, as well as its subsequent evaluation.

It would seem that planning and implementing a project with an even balance of power among partners is the key to success. However, what turns out to

be more important than striving for equity is to clearly determine the scope of contributions from each partner from the outset: successful partnerships can be implemented in teams consisting of, for example, one major partner (institutions) and several minor ones (e.g., NGOs), provided that the mutual arrangements are transparent.

3) Do we share common values?

While working towards establishing a partnership, it is useful to establish a conversation about values. Do we share similar values? Do we define specific values in the same way? What does "social responsibility" mean to each party? Are the values we invoke merely postulated or actually implemented in the daily activities of our organization? What do we gain by referring to selected values, and how can they empower our partnership?

4) Do we have a similar understanding of the idea and purpose behind the project?

Establishing a relationship with a partner who understands the idea behind the project and is focused on achieving the same goal greatly simplifies its



It seems to me that, first of all, the social responsibility of institutions is a necessity today. It is a necessity in Poland, but also worldwide, especially when it comes to classical music. No one will take responsibility for audiences the way we do as those with a vested interest in getting more people to attend our events. Also, no one will do it for us unless we do it ourselves.

implementation. Partners who work in unison find it is easier to communicate, collaborate, and overcome any possible difficulties. Unity of partners on the ground of the idea also fosters communication with other stakeholders. In cohesive projects, everyone has a sense of “being on the same team” and is able to celebrate the end-result together.

5) What are the needs and expectations of each party regarding cooperation?

The ability to express one’s needs and communicate effectively makes it significantly easier to establish a partnership in the first place, and to effectively implement a joint venture later on. On the one hand, precisely identifying needs and expectations, and specifying the details, is of immense value. They should be determined early on, so that each party knows what is important to the other. Conversely, one should maintain a certain flexibility in cooperation, as unforeseen circumstances can always arise.

6) Do we have comparable/similar working standards?

Similar working standards observed by all partners (e.g., with regard to quality, punctuality, respect for collaborators) can facilitate the project’s implementation, as well as its communication to different groups of stakeholders (in this case, e.g., musicians performing at cultural events). Special attention in this respect should be paid in the context of international cooperation, where cultural differences can often result in different perceptions of working standards. One ought to discuss them and proceed to work on the basis of common arrangements, understandable to all parties involved in the project.

7) What is the projected distribution of activities (the schedule)?

When implementing projects of a social nature, it is important to allocate sufficient time for their steady, well-planned implementation. The schedule should accurately determine the scope of activities and responsibilities of partners and all people involved in the project, stating who is responsible for what, introducing a clear division of responsibilities, and identifying all issues relevant to the implementation of the respective events. Such an approach helps reduce any unpleasant surprises in the partnership, while also facilitating the implementation of the project.

In ventures of a social nature, one sometimes works with partners who possess limited experience in the implementation of events and/or know little of how cultural institutions operate. One should therefore set aside some time to

share the pertinent knowledge and make specific arrangements to reduce randomness in any activities and ensure a professional implementation of the project based on the cooperation of all parties involved.



photo: Servis Sinfonia Varsovia

8) How are we going to communicate?

The more time and attention is spent on the proper organization of activities, the better the results achieved and the more effective the cooperation between partners. In the case of international projects, many arrangements are made remotely, through detailed discussions, finalizing all matters before the commencement of a given activity (e.g., a tour), and achieving clarity on the resources available on the ground; all of the above facilitate the implementation of the project (communication, not perceptions!).

One should establish the preferred channels of communication, the people responsible for communication on the part of each partner, periodic evaluation meetings, as well as the channels of communication and crisis response. It is also important to clarify how one is going to communicate with other people and entities involved in the project. In particular, projects featuring multiple events and involving a variety of creative activities require a narrative about the project

that is attractive for potential participants (e.g., musicians). It is important that information is disseminated well in advance and addresses any concerns from potential participants.

Another idea to consider is to determine the entity to whom one will turn for support if possible difficulties or conflicts arise during the implementation of the project (e.g. mediator, authority in the field): this offers a sense of security to all partners involved.

9) Where are we going to operate?

Projects of a social nature often involve non-standard needs with respect to the arrangement of space or the use of the infrastructure of a given site. Discussing them appropriately and gaining clarity on potential solutions at the preparation stage facilitates the implementation stage.

Therefore, during the preparation of the undertaking, due care should be taken to promptly get acquainted with the venues of the prospective events, and with the projected collaborators, such as technical staff (this can be done, for example, during a study visit before the start of the project, which should be factored in at the preparation stage and budgeted when applying for a grant (provided that the project is grant-eligible).

10) Who comprises our audience?

In projects of a social nature, it seems particularly valuable to pay attention to discussing our perceptions and experiences with the audience. Have we worked with this type of audience before? What do we know about their needs? Do we understand the contexts that they find essential? Do we have access to that audience? How can we communicate with them? How do we invite them to participate and what can we offer them? An important guideline for project partners is to learn more about the audience instead of relying on their own perceptions of the target group. Grant projects sometimes inspire us to work with audiences with special needs; in such cases, one should invest the time and attention to develop a genuine understanding of the needs of the audience projected as the beneficiaries of our partnership.

11) What are the results we seek to achieve? What do we want to contribute by implementing a given project?

Mutual clarity in terms of the projected goals of a given project is important. Sometimes, especially in grant projects, the application stage leaves insufficient time and space for clarifying details. In this regard, it is worthwhile

to pay attention to establishing specific goals and to check whether the partners who are to contribute to their implementation have acquired the necessary experience and knowledge to achieve them (e.g., if the project is to be accompanied by a publication, whether they have previously produced publications of a similar nature).

12) How are we going to take care of each other and stay comfortable in the project?

When planning a partnership, it is useful to discuss issues related to ensuring the comfort and sense of security for all partners, e.g. meeting deadlines to enable smooth cooperation, keeping occupational hygiene standards (e.g. rehearsals at specific times, breaks for food and rest), factoring in the aspects of importance to every party (e.g. preferred forms and hours of communication, limited availability for partners due to vacation breaks). Considering comfort together with the goals, ideas and results will streamline the project's implementation and make it a more pleasant experience for everyone involved.

The above checklist can serve as a basis for drafting a **scenario for a meeting of partners** who decide to implement a joint project. If the party initiating the project is a music institution, it can share this tool with the prospective partner and encourage discussion of the listed issues. Proposing a model solution for initiating partnerships and defining norms in partnerships is also part of the responsibility of an institution that seeks to implement projects of a social nature. With this type of tasks, it is better not to leave anything to chance, especially when working with people of different backgrounds is involved. One should ideally have a specific plan that facilitates the smooth implementation of the successive stages of the project and allows one to cater to the needs of all parties involved.

This tool can also be used to establish norms in already initiated projects. In particular, if partners feel that an ongoing project is starting to “take on a life of its own” and is spiraling out of control, they can use the above checklist to organize their activities, dispel any doubts and harmonize their communication.

While on the subject of initiating and implementing partnerships, it is also worth noting that another type of risk can emerge as a result of an imbalance of power between partners. If a project is initiated by a large institution with a solid background, sizable resources and years of experience, a temptation may occur to subordinate less experienced partners in the project and/or regard them as subcontractors. This issue is often raised during discussions on cooperation between NGOs and cultural institutions in Poland. It is worth emphasizing that an authentic partnership should be based on dialogue, mutual curiosity and the synergy that arises from combining the competencies of all parties involved in the project.

Examples/Case studies

In the “Interactions/Integrations” project, a number of ventures were carried out that can serve as a source of inspiration for music institutions seeking to implement projects of a social nature through partnerships. It is impossible to list all of them, but with reference to the checklist delineated above, it is worth mentioning a few notable examples.

All the case studies outlined below should, of course, be considered in the context of a larger whole, i.e., a project based on an international partnership of two entities. A glimpse at individual initiatives or events, however, can also inspire institutions willing to implement projects through partnerships on a somewhat smaller scale.

Case study: shared values

One of the highlights of the “Interactions/Integrations” project was the “In Exile - Wartime Stories of Norwegian and Polish Composers” event, held at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. The concert was accompanied by a lecture delivered by a “witness to memory.” The speaker, whose personal story was interwoven with wartime history, presented the fate of the composers in a convincing and poignant way. Consonant with the music, the lecture created, as it were, a “bridge” linking the present with the past, ensuring and highlighting, to the extent still possible, the continuity of human experience.

Connecting with history, remembering the past, presenting witnesses to memory can be one dimension of social responsibility, which, as demonstrated in the project, can be realized not only by entities such as the museum, but also by music institutions.

Implemented in the above format, the event acknowledged values that were relevant to all partners, including the integration of different environments, continuity of memory, building “bridges,” and transferring experience between individuals, countries, cultures and generations. It ensured the coexistence of music and narrative significant in the context of the partner venue (POLIN Museum) and afforded the opportunity to reach out to new audiences, mostly focused on museum events, through a message grounded in music.

Case study: expert support

The “Interactions/Integrations” project also included training sessions designed to professionalize the staff of a music institution. Representatives of the “Culture Without Barriers” Foundation—experts who deal with accessibility on a daily basis and educators in the field—were invited to conduct accessibility trainings.

In the context of social projects, this aspect is worth noting, as is the related issue of trust and professionalism of collaborating partners. Since NGO experts often have extensive know-how and experience in working with specific audiences (e.g., people with disabilities or minorities), one should take advantage of this potential. In the case of developing socially responsible institutions, the use of such expertise can significantly support the development of useful solutions, reduce the time needed for the process, and minimize the risks involved in its implementation.

Such cooperation can be considered a model solution to support the development of institutions and the development of social responsibility solutions, based on the partner’s expertise and their long-standing experience.

Case study: understanding needs

In the “Interactions/Integrations” project, many events were organized in venues and contexts that were uncommon for musicians. For example, in order for a project implemented in partnership between the orchestra and the school to proceed comfortably, it was important to take into account the musicians’ needs.

Extremely important in this context was the need to respect instruments, which are of substantial value to musicians, both financially and emotionally. Any



If you play in a hospital where there are patients who are in a really poor condition, it’s difficult to move them [to a different location]. So you have to go to them, because they are hooked to various technological apparatuses. You can’t create a stage there. But if they surround the musician, it’s a great experience, I think, because they can see them from anywhere [in the room]. Nowadays it’s very common, this kind of audience layout where the listeners surround the musician and everyone is at the same distance from the performer.

situation where instruments could potentially suffer is a breach of priority issues for musicians. When proposing activities, especially in non-standard settings, one must consider their sense of security in this regard.

In the context of social projects, attention should be paid to this aspect, and all activities involving audience interactions should be planned wisely, e.g., when inviting the audience to the stage or having the audience stay in a space that is usually reserved for musicians and instruments only. Being mindful of these issues and keeping the partners involved in the implementation of the events accountable made it possible for them to take place in a joyful atmosphere, while also ensuring opportunities for authentic encounters between musicians and event audiences, unencumbered by unnecessary stress.

Expanding the space

Social activities require space, physical and metaphorical one. This is especially true of music initiatives, which, in their physical/acoustic, as well as symbolic dimension, require adequate conditions for effective expression and perception of music.

One of the important prerequisites for the activities characterized by social responsibility is the provision of appropriate space. Ensuring it is the role of the music institution and the partners engaged to provide it. In the research and interviews with the musicians, conducted as part of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, the topic of space came up with remarkable frequency.

Projects of a social nature are an opportunity for a musician to appear in a new context and encounter a new audience. Such projects often involve a literal and metaphorical “breaking through the walls” of the music institution and those of one’s own habits. Memories of performing in places where classical music is not usually accessible, in front of people who rarely have the opportunity to experience it, have been cited by musicians as extremely moving experiences, prompting them to redefine their role in society (for more on this, see the chapter devoted the musician’s perspective).

For such activities to be possible, a music institution must be open to partnerships with various organizations and reach out to audiences that have no access to a concert hall. The musicians of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, of different nationalities and from different parts of the world, recalled with similar emotion the unusual experiences amassed in the course of their professional careers: concerts in hospitals, nursing homes or prisons, i.e., wherever they encountered an audience that they would not be exposed to at the philharmonic hall or music festivals. Accounts of these encounters were also

accompanied by testimonies on the powerful impact of music on listeners such as people with disabilities or persons who live solely thanks to being connected to medical equipment at all times. In such spaces, music takes on a completely different dimension, and musicians can experience a sense of purpose that they would seek in vain even in the finest concert halls. Importantly, each time the interviewed musicians emphasized the value of preparations involved in social projects, they stressed how important it was for them to offer each audience a top-notch performance.

The issue of audience proximity is also an important aspect when it comes to the notion of space. Musicians typically function at a great distance from the audience, which is ensured by the stage. In many venues for social projects, no such distance is granted, as it is often impossible to set up a stage at all. As a result, musicians experience a much closer contact with the audience, and for many this variety is a source of joy.

The reflection on music institutions consciously building social responsibility is closely related to expanding the field, i.e., seizing new spaces in which music can exist. This is most easily accomplished precisely when implementing projects in partnership. Also recurring in our interviews with the musicians was the issue of implementing musical projects in schools and other educational units. Many musicians are aware that their presence in such sites is conducive to building the audiences of music institutions over the next several years.

When talking about space in the context of social responsibility, it is also impossible to ignore the question of how a music institution functions in the local environment. Looking into building partnerships, one should not only consider large, international projects but also contemplate the social environment in which the institution functions on a daily basis.

For a socially responsible cultural institution, cooperation with the local community should be a natural part of the development and implementation of its institutional mission. Important in this context are collaborations with both educational entities (e.g., schools in a given neighborhood), childcare and educational institutions (e.g., orphanages, houses of correction), non-governmental organizations, entities supporting people recovering from difficult experiences (such as the “Żupnicza” Long-Term Residence Point), organizations and institutions implementing activities for people at risk of exclusion (e.g., social welfare homes) or medical institutions (e.g., hospitals). Wherever culture (music, art, theater, dance, etc.) can bring solace or entertainment, offer respite, awaken curiosity or inspire new activities, a space opens up for cooperation between institutions and other entities in the local environment. Such cooperation should verge beyond mere institutional partnerships, and include



photo: Sławomir Szturman / Sinfonia Varsovia

events addressed to audiences living, living and working in the immediate vicinity of the institution.

Music institutions often have the reputation of being hermetic, elitist, and designed for a select audience. The implementation of social projects with carefully selected partners can help challenge this stereotype and reach new audiences, especially since in such projects music often transcends a purely aesthetic function. Taking it off the philharmonic pedestal and setting it in completely new contexts allows one to experience the authentic, moving effect of music on people - regardless of their (dis)abilities, nationality, place of residence, education or age. Such an approach requires a slightly different sensitivity from the partners than the one they know from concert halls. The “Interactions/Integrations” project perfectly demonstrated how to develop such a new sensitivity in partnership projects, along with the major role it plays in creating successful relations.

A new sensitivity

The category of sensitivity does not often come to the fore when it comes to proposals, grants, collaborations or results. However, it is one that should command special attention when implementing projects based on consensus and collaboration.

Sensitivity in collaborative projects affects everyone: employees of partner institutions or organizations, decision-makers, recipients and other stakeholders. It is expressed in minor or major gestures based on the interest manifested towards the other party, the ability to listen attentively and tune into someone else’s perspective instead of pushing one’s own agenda. Sensitivity is a space for genuine dialogue, authentic exchange, the development of potentials and the blossoming of competencies. It involves making room “for the other,” checking one’s ego in favor of mutual understanding and reciprocity. It was in such a space that artists and organizers from different countries and cultures were brought together in the “Interactions/Integrations” project to work on solutions for community projects worth remembering and implementing in future initiatives.

Particularly noteworthy practices could be observed in the implementation of events addressed to refugees, both in Norway and Poland. Among the proposed activities was a comic book workshop attended by children and young people with refugee experience. The scenario of the workshop and the way it was carried out, i.e., with due care to provide the participants with both a creative space and a sense of security, deserves mention. Held at the Powszechny Theater in Warsaw, the two-day workshop brought together people from different backgrounds.

What steps are worth taking so that a complex project, implemented in partnership and intended for a sensitive audience, can be executed comfortably and successfully? What should one take care of? How to plan such encounters and what to emphasize during their realization? What might a model workshop scenario look like?

Pre-workshop introduction

As part of the comic book workshop, the artist worked with a group of young people with refugee experience. The substantive part of the workshop was preceded by an introduction, during which everyone was able to say how they felt on the day and what motivated them to attend the workshop. Speaking on comic books as a tool for self-expression, the instructor encouraged those taking part in the workshop to talk about themselves and co-create the workshop space in an atmosphere of openness. It was extremely important that she accepted every response and every mood (including fatigue, irritation or tension). Thus, people participating in the event were able to feel fully accepted and welcomed from the very beginning, which had an impact on creating a sense of security throughout the meeting.

Pre-workshop contract

Prior to the comic book workshop, continuing the threads started in the introduction and getting to know one another, the artist offered to strike a “contract” with the participants for the duration of the meeting: a set of rules that established a sense of security and a welcoming atmosphere. Among the most important of these were: giving only positive feedback, being polite to each other, not interrupting other people’s statements, genuine cooperation and responding to the current needs of the group (“I have a plan, but we do it together”), treating the meeting as a time to learn, experiment, explore (without “pressure to succeed”), being able to take a break at any time and take care of oneself in case of overstimulation, introducing a system of signs that ensured comfort and safety to the participants (e.g., touching the ear stood for “I am here and I am listening, but I do not want to speak,” while raising one’s hand indicated a call for everyone’s attention). Thanks to the aforementioned principles, it was possible to create a safe and supportive collaborative space, which was highly appreciated by those who participated in the workshop. It is likely that young people (especially those with refugee experience) are not always able to work in such conditions (the presenter was told that, “Schools should learn how to conduct classes from you”). The role of a socially responsible institution is to create such safe points of contact in order to create and showcase good practices related to cooperation.

Substantive value: blueprints and needs

The comic book workshop was very well prepared and conducted: its structure was well-thought-out, complete and attractive for young people, imparting specific knowledge, teaching skills, grading the difficulty of individual tasks, and accounting for the immediate needs of the participants all at the same time. The dynamic of the meeting included both lecture or presentation elements, as well as conversations and creative tasks. The instructor also made sure that there was enough time to exchange experiences, discuss and show the resulting works, so that young people could share their impressions. Importantly, the meeting was evaluated on an ongoing basis (e.g., a round of responses to the question, “What have you liked the most so far and what would you like to do more of?”), with the instructor incorporating the opinions of the participants in the workshop. This made it possible to simultaneously deliver on the original intentions and flexibly to react to the situation in the workshop room and the ongoing needs of everyone present therein.

Serenity and comfort

The atmosphere of a safe space, comfort and genuine encounter, created during the comic book workshop, paid dividends during creative activities. In such conducive conditions, young people, deprived of the tension that often accompanies educational processes, were able to tap into their talent, creativity, working in free and bold ways. Thus, in contrast to the traditional, hierarchical and (unfortunately) at times also violent behavior and school activities, cultural institutions have the opportunity to provide a safe space for creative processes for representatives of different age groups and backgrounds, with particular attention to those at risk of exclusion. This attitude apparently paid off on the second day of the workshop, when almost all the participants emphasized that the initial fears of attending the workshop and exposing their vulnerability gave way to a sense of serenity, comfort, curiosity and enjoyment of being part of a collective.

Appreciation and gratitude

At the end of the comic book workshop, all participants were encouraged to feel and express gratitude to themselves for choosing to take on the challenge of meeting others over the weekend and engaging the creative process. Encouragement also included respecting each other and appreciating the created works. The instructor provided the time and natural space for everyone present to express gratitude and mutual appreciation. Respecting the value of the act of artistic creation and self-expression can also constitute a good practice promoted by socially responsible institutions.



photo: Servis Sinfonia Warszawa

In a post-workshop conversation with the instructor, we were also able to compile some important best practices that can help institutions design events that are inclusive of human diversity and sensitive to different audiences, such as:

- *trigger warning* – a cautionary message before a film, talk or performance, regarding specific content and images (e.g., violence), language (e.g., vulgarities) or other issues that may trigger associations in audiences related to topics that are difficult for them; such warnings are worth incorporating into the program and publicity notes, as well as in prominent spots of the event venue prior to its commencement,
- looking after people who are sensitive to stimuli, e.g., by supplying earplugs (during events with high volume sounds), issuing notifications on strong/typical lighting,
- providing a space for conversation after the event (e.g., after a film or a performance during a festival), allowing the audience to discuss the issues raised without leaving them on their own with their impressions; such a space for conversation can also take the form, for example, of a moderated discussion with a psychologist, incorporating a series of questions and answers.

The above example indicates how socially responsible cultural institutions can learn sensitivity from the artists they work with. After all, the role of institutions is not limited to providing access to a chosen field of art. In today's reality, it is equally important for institutions (as part of building social responsibility) to challenge patterns notorious in organizational systems based on hierarchy, power, guidelines and control. Events organized in the spirit of social responsibility can help disseminate new ways of doing things: ones that are based on empathy, dialogue, reciprocity, understanding and respect for the needs of all parties involved. In this context, socially responsible institutions can become hubs for popularizing practices that offer hope for a better tomorrow.

Activities of this type allow people to participate in events with a sense of security, while also strengthening the institution's brand as an entity sensitive to the needs of different audiences. Depending on how it operates, the institution can actively seek out such practices and establish new norms in dialogue with its partners and audiences.

Music institutions will be particularly concerned with issues related to caring for sensitive audiences. If audiences with special sensitivities (e.g., people with disabilities) are going to a concert at the organization's venue, the organization should inquire about their needs well in advance and prepare for their presence at the event so as to ensure their comfort.

Cohesion

During the comic book workshop, the artist asked for vegan catering, preferably prepared by a person in a difficult life situation (such as a single mother). Skillful selection of partners and collaborators in a project, such as the use by cultural institutions and diplomatic entities (the long-standing example of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Warsaw) of catering services delivered by people with refugee experience or sites employing persons at risk of exclusion, can be an expression of social responsibility and solidarity. Instead of using run-of-the-mill commercial solutions, cultural institutions can, as part of their events, support vulnerable organizations and individuals, who usually prepare catering for services with utmost care.

The comic book workshop held as part of the “Interactions/Integrations” project showed how a collaboration of several entities (music institution, theater, organizations dealing with people with refugee experience) can produce events that simultaneously become not only a venue for culture, creativity and creativity, but also a space of mutual respect, curiosity and a sense of security. An extremely important inspiration in the process was the facilitator herself, who used her personal experiences to develop a sensitivity that she imparts on others as an artist and workshop instructor.



Emotional charge

In the context of sensitivity, another extremely important issue related to the responsibility of the music institution has repeatedly recurred in the research within the “Interactions/Integrations” project. Music is a tool that has a great power of influence: it unites, transcends nationalities and languages, and evokes strong, genuine emotions. In the evaluation studies, the aspect of emotions was emphasized by the audience on multiple occasions (“the participants experienced very positive emotions,” “the time spent allowed them to relax and get inspired,” “the event evoked warm feelings associated with nature,” “attending the concert was a unique experience, as it allowed me to calm down and gave me extra energy”).

In turn, caregivers whose wards have participated in school concerts noted that music, including classical music, plays a special role in children who struggle with various types of disabilities. Based on their observations, they found that the greater the degree of intellectual disability a child struggles with, the greater the impact of music on their experience and perception of the world. It provides a way to express emotions and articulate oneself through movement, facial expressions and gestures.

When inviting people to a concert—especially persons who have had difficult experiences (such as war)—or when holding a concert in a new environment (e.g., a nursing home, hospital), one should seek to consider the prospective audience’s lived experience with due deliberation and awareness. It is worth contemplating at the programming stage what one contributes to their world, while also anticipating how it might affect them, what impact it will have on them, what it will leave them with.

One could say that the limits of responsibility span not only the presentation of specific music (the selected repertoire), but also the potential impact that it has on the audience. Thus, when programming events, the repertoire, and the orchestra’s lineup, one should consider what is important in dealing with a specific audience, and be mindful of the fact that while music has the power to soothe, bring respite and a sense of serenity, it also has the power to leave the audience anxious, upset, annoyed and shaken out of their good mood.

During one of the “minor initiatives”—a concert at the “Żupnicza” Long-Term Residence Point—it was evident how the appropriate choice of repertoire allows the audience to immerse themselves in a musical world and, at least for a moment, forget the problems that trouble them, experience pleasure or transport themselves back to their beloved country through the compositions of their compatriots. Particularly when working with communities that have been exposed to difficult

Imagine you’re in a really difficult situation and suddenly you start feeling happy because you listen to beautiful music, or you start listening to a song that triggers different emotions in you. And that feeling stays with you for a few days. Before, you felt really upset because you were in a really bad place, you were thinking about your illness or whatever was bothering you. And then, all of a sudden, your mind is in a completely different state. To me, then, this means that what you do is, in a sense, a music-medicine.

experiences (e.g., war refugees, people recovering from serious illnesses), it is important to take into account the level of stress experienced, and select repertoire in such a way that it has a soothing, calming, and supportive effect on the audience.

It is also worth noting that certain types of sounds can prove to be too intense for people recovering from difficult circumstances. One musician recounted that during a visit to a psychiatric hospital, brass instruments were withdrawn from a concert because they would have provided too much of a stimulus for the audience.

The above measures demonstrate how a music institution can build social responsibility based on sensitivity, and implementing partnerships founded on dialogue and genuine understanding.

Interactions and integrations

Concluding the sensitivity thread, it is important to emphasize another aspect that fosters the implementation of partner events, associated with the core values of the project, i.e. integration and interaction.

In all of the project events, active involvement was of paramount importance, as it enabled the participants to join in the programmed activities, engage with the performers, interact after the events, talk and exchange experiences. Both during the concerts organized in Poland (“almost everyone reported that they wished there was an opportunity to get in touch with Bazylek the Dragon and take

a commemorative photo after the concert”) and in Norway (time allocated for conversations with composers and musicians was an integral part of the festival activities).

When creating projects of a social nature, one should provide a space where the audience has a chance to express themselves, engage in discussions with others (including the performers), confront their views and share the experience of listening to music or actively participating in a concert. What matters is not only experiencing the music, but also talking about it and the sensations that accompanied one when listening to the concert. It is all about the important extension of the musical experience to include social events, such as “refreshments” after or during the intermission, or the opportunity to talk and spend some time in the aura surrounding the event.

In projects of a social nature, it is worth shifting the emphasis from one-way communication (listening to a concert performed by artists in front of an audience) to mutual curiosity and/or collaboration (engaging in interaction, entering into a dialogue with the audience). Forms of active participation, authentic meetings and exchanges, appreciated by each party—the audience and the musicians alike—are a precious ingredient of partnership projects and help reshape the image of classical music practitioners as open-minded and interesting people with a lot to contribute to the audience.



photo: Servis Sinfonia Varsovia

To be continued

When implementing partnership ventures of a social nature, one should consider one’s responsibility for continuity. Undertaking cooperation in a specific environment raises certain expectations from the audience. In planning such activities, it is better to orient oneself towards cyclical projects rather than one-off events. In this context, it is also necessary to explicitly address the capabilities of one’s partners and the prospects for continuous collaboration.

In some cases, institutions undertake certain activities in a specific environment because they have been awarded a pertinent grant, and yet they fail to sustain said activities once a given project ends. Where, thanks to such activities, some hopes are raised (e.g., orphanages), it is necessary to strive for and ensure the sustainability of such activities, focusing on forging long-term partnerships between the institution and other entities (e.g., childcare centers). This dimension of responsibility creates an opportunity for a genuine, continuous presence of culture in the lives of various audiences, while also contributing to their development.

The continuation of partnership activities is also fostered by a positive conclusion of the first stage of cooperation (e.g. the first edition of the project, the first series of workshops). Projects should be evaluated on an ongoing basis, including regular follow-up discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of cooperation, reflections on the lessons learned, and planning the possible scenarios for the future. This allows one to implement future editions at a lower cost and with greater ease, without stumbling over the same obstacles again and again. Open dialogue, focused on solutions and the future, is also conducive to building lasting bonds between partners.

One extremely important element, partly related to evaluation and worth cultivating in partnership projects, is mutual appreciation and expression of gratitude. In the “Interactions/Integrations” project, it was prominently visible during all events that the project was implemented in partnership with the Norwegian side: the collaborative nature of the project was emphasized, and the partner’s representative was always officially introduced and honored. Such an approach is especially important in situations when the partner in the project is experiencing stress related to, for example, study visits or some aspects of implementation: an accepting, supportive and appreciative approach is important for cooperation, partner-like relations and the overall atmosphere of the project.

In turn, the musicians involved in the activities stressed that importance of kind, interpersonal atmosphere accompanying joint work. They emphasized the hospitality, openness and cordiality that they had encountered in Poland, as well as



photo: Sennis Sinfonia Varsovia

efficient communication and the joy derived from creative collaboration. The time spent together after the concerts, the opportunity to experience a different culture, the optimal schedule, allowing one to work in a comfortable mode (rest breaks), or taking care of quality meals: all these details constitute a vital part of the project and have a great impact on the condition of the people participating therein. For some artists, work-life balance was also important (e.g., being able to be with family while engaged in and working on the project in the case of those who travel on a regular basis).

It is worth remembering and emphasizing that, although partnerships are established by institutions and organizations, they always comprise particular people, their super-powers and weaknesses. Even the best performers, the most proficient producers, the most predictive organizers and the best-prepared partners can use some empathy, understanding and support in difficult moments; one should not forget this when implementing a project.

E



the institution's perspective

Reflecting on a socially responsible music institution, one should note that this responsibility is shaped in two dimensions: on the one hand, outside the institution (e.g., by implementing social projects, working with the public, establishing partnerships, consciously functioning in the local environment), and on the other hand, inside the institution (by consciously shaping the organizational culture, caring for the well-being of employees, leadership).

The social responsibility of an art institution is about more than (pro)social and charitable activities. The adoption of such a premise led us to a series of questions that we asked both to the employees of the institution (musicians, administrative staff, technical staff), as well as representatives of the musical audience and people and entities cooperating with the music institution, whose purpose is to support activities of a social nature (non-governmental organizations, representatives of local government, public entities and people from the public administration working within and for the benefit of the local communities in which the music institution operates, and, last but not least, non-formal entities pursuing social activities).

We have addressed issues related to external functioning of the institution in the chapters devoted to audience and partnership perspectives. In this section, instead, our focus is on the inside of the organization, as we contemplate how a socially responsible institution is built, what characterizes it, what mechanisms underpin its operations? What organizational cultures do we need in music and cultural institutions today in order to operate efficiently in the area of social responsibility? What is a socially responsible organization, and what are the scopes of this responsibility? What steps can be taken in this direction?

In compiling this chapter, we drew on the experiences and research conducted as part of the “Interactions/Integrations” project. We also considered insights from other projects and collaborations, which we gained from the participants and experts involved in the initiative.

The status of an “arts institution” is a major question today, as the rapidly changing reality poses challenges to institutions that almost no one thought about just a few years ago. Developing the “institution’s perspective,” we were oriented “towards the future,” i.e., towards model solutions and practices that will enable their sustainability and growth in the context of contemporary conditions, accompanied by changes that will enable dialogue (with audiences, partners and other stakeholders, as well as between different institutions). We were guided by the thought that an arts institution (or, more broadly, a cultural institution) is not a “lonesome island” and it is high time we undertook proactive reflection and measures to include this type of organization in the dynamic current of change that determines the modern world.

photo: Semwis Sinfonia Varsovia; Patrick Doherty Productions

Pillars of the institution, pillars of responsibility

As an element of the organizational culture of a music institution, social responsibility circulates at the formal (official) and informal (unofficial) levels; fixed in writing, but also present in oral or nonverbal communication only.

These circulation cycles have their concrete manifestations. Therefore, we were interested in how “social responsibility” is recorded and fixed in the form of an obligation or recommendation. We asked whether characteristic elements of “social responsibility” are present in the institution’s charter, labor regulations, employment contracts, its official mission, and the premises and goals behind its projects. Another important issue was the extent to which the activities performed by orchestra and institution employees are formalized.

Among other things, when perceived and established at the formal level, social responsibility concerns program arrangements, decisions concerning the location of concerts and other activities, the institution’s accessibility, transportation planning, space and working time planning, decisions concerning the establishment of the new seat (its location in the community, common space, the function of the space planned therein), recruitment (how to hire employees, plan the institution’s expenditure, ensure the welfare of its employees and consider the environmental consequences of decisions made in the course of operations conducted by the institution). Long as it may seem, this list does not exhaust all manifestations of social responsibility.



For a musician participating in a project, top-notch organizational quality is of paramount importance, as they can enrich it with top-notch artistic quality, because it is only through superior artistic quality that a social project can succeed at this rate. It is no barnstorming, mind you, but something much more intricate.

From the rich experience of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, we selected those examples that are most inspiring. In analyzing them, we started with the fundamentals (mission, vision, values, strategy) that one ought to secure and that constitute the cornerstone of the institution, since without them it is difficult to imagine its proper functioning. We then examined aspects such as communication, management or employment issues.

The following analysis can serve as a checklist of inspiration for a socially responsible cultural institution. It may provide a useful framework for reflection on the organization’s activities, while also helping one verify its operations in each of the discussed areas.

With each of the scopes presented, we have further suggested which priorities to consider, how to address social responsibility in a given area, and what actions to take in order to enhance its impact

The mission, vision and values of the music institution

Defining the mission, vision and values of the music institution is a key task, enabling efficient management of the institution, implementation of its current activities and strategic planning for the future. Articulating these issues helps one make decisions and communicate the goals adopted by the institution. It empowers employees to both understand the direction being taken, as well as to contribute their own ideas to the institution’s programming and development.

The participants in the “Interactions/Integrations” project considered the following values as particularly important in the context of a socially responsible cultural institution:

Transparency

Applying transparency in operations is crucial to both how an organization operates internally and how it is perceived externally. A public institution should openly communicate its practices, financial management and decision-making processes. Clear, transparent and simple procedures sustain the functioning of the organization: they prevent conflicts, positively affect internal relations, save time when implementing activities, and protect the institution from chaos. They also have a positive impact on teamwork, promoting cooperation- instead of competition-based approaches.

Accessibility and inclusiveness

A socially responsible cultural institution should be accessible to diverse audiences with different backgrounds, views, linguistic, financial, physical abilities

and special needs. It is important to both provide adequate infrastructure and design events that are inclusive and represent different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives. The institution's program, but also its staff, should mirror the diverse community that surrounds them. It is important that inclusive activities are not just offered to individual communities, but are accessible to a broader audience. The institution should be a space that is welcoming, safe and accessible to all visitors.

In the context of inclusiveness and accessibility, it is also worth examining how an institution can nurture standards and values relevant to its staff. Here, inspiration can come from a cluster of ethical values known as ADEI (Antiracism/ Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) (Cuyler 2021).

Responsibility

In a social cultural institution, responsibility is a multifaceted value; its different facets include conscious leadership; responsible creation of an engaged team; decision-making; active involvement of employees in the implementation of both artistic and social activities; openness to dialogue with audiences and a due consideration of their feedback, which can advance the social dimension of the institution.

1) Strategy of the music institution

The institution should develop a comprehensive strategic plan that defines its long-term goals and objectives, as well as the milestones necessary to achieve them. If our goal is to create a socially responsible institution, it is worthwhile for the social responsibility goals to be clearly articulated and consistent with the institution's vision and mission. These may include, for example, promoting inclusivity and diversity inside and outside the institution, supporting local communities, and establishing goals related to the implementation of sustainable development.

One extremely important issue that needs to be factored in when devising a strategy is the question of building a positive image of social projects inside an art institution. One should consider whether and how such projects fit into the mission of the institution, how they can be incorporated into the institution and how to facilitate their introduction, what fosters an understanding and perception of such projects as a valuable part of the institution's operations, and what place they should occupy in an arts institution.

The idea of building a socially responsible cultural institution, especially in institutions that have operated for many years in a conservative manner, focusing solely on the realization of artistic endeavors, may at first raise objections from an artistic ensemble. Accusations may arise over turning the orchestra/theater/museum, etc., into a "community center," "kindergarten" or "senior citizen's home."

Introducing the idea of a socially responsible institution often begins with implementing educational programs or activities that target marginalized audiences. Such activities should be adequately justified at the level of strategy, including the substantiation of their value. This allows one to "tame" an artistic ensemble with new phenomena and may encourage them to co-create similar events. According educational programs a proper rank at the strategic level prevents them from being perceived as temporary or second-rate; instead, they become an integral part of the institution's operations and provide an important space for artists to pursue their activities.

Highlighted in a discussion of strategic aspects should be another extremely important issue, related to the continuity of music institutions, not only in terms of social responsibility. A well-developed, well-considered, properly adopted and official strategy, tailored to the needs of the audience, is a document that ensures continuity of operations. Even in the face of sudden and unforeseen changes (e.g., departure of the director), it facilitates



photo: Serwis Sinfonia Varsovia

consistent implementation of activities inside and outside the institution. It is important to build long-term strategies that extend beyond the director's term in office; on the one hand, this ensures a sense of stability, while on the other, it allows for flexible adjustments in a rapidly changing reality.

Continuity of activities also plays an extremely important role in the context of fostering the social responsibility of institutions. Today, it is common for institutions to change their strategy of cooperation with artists or other partners (e.g., NGOs), as well as the scope of implemented projects of a social nature whenever changes are made at managerial positions. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to develop consistent activities for specific audiences (e.g., people with disabilities, minorities, children). One should take this aspect into account in the institution's programming, knowing that the initiation of activities in a given area (e.g., for people with disabilities) helps grow a new audience that has expectations of its own. Continuity and follow-through, therefore, are an expression of the institution's responsibility towards newly acquired audiences, and should not depend on changes and personnel preferences.

The last factor worth mentioning when writing about a socially responsible strategy for a cultural institution is the identification of potential risks, including legal, financial and reputational risks, which is vital for the proper functioning of the institution. The development of contingency plans to mitigate the occurrence of risks renders the institution resilient to undesirable internal and external developments. Each cultural institution should adopt risk management methods tailored to its operations and the specific goals, resources and challenges facing the organization. Their regular and conscious evaluation, and, if necessary, adaptation to changing conditions, contribute to minimizing the impact of risks.

2) Recruitment and hiring

One important aspect of social responsibility exercised inside any music institution involves recruitment and hiring concerns. When putting together an artistic ensemble at a music institution, one should account for, on the one hand, artistic competence, on the other, the musicians' ability to fit in and contribute to the ensemble. In this regard, Sinfonia Varsovia implements a model system of auditions for the ensemble: a several-stage, transparent process, whose last part is a one-year adaptation period of the new musician in the orchestra. In the end, admission to the ensemble is determined by both artistic skills and the way a person builds relationships with other orchestra members.

In the context of social responsibility of a music institution, one should also address the reflections related to the employment of artists, emerging from the interviews with the participants in the "Interactions/Integrations" project, which can be used in designing model processes and procedures for other institutions. Assigning musicians for such projects, along with the voluntariness of their participation, may prove to be an issue to consider, especially for institutions that are only beginning to build a program of social responsibility activities.

Most musicians and artists stressed that such projects are implemented with a sense of mission and that no one should be forced into participation. Recurrent in the interviews was also the construct of an "ideal world," in which, following an introduction concerning a new project and an invitation to collaborate, the musicians who are not convinced to partake of the projected activities may opt out ("a full-time musician should have the right to opt out"), with the possibility of being replaced by someone who genuinely feels like participating in the project.

The above approach allows one to examine the process of hiring artists for projects from a broader perspective and to raise questions about whether, when engaging them, one should immediately include the implementation of community projects in the conversation, along with the projected scope of their responsibilities. It is worth considering the kind of impact this might have on the musicians' disposition towards the implementation of these projects, their potential involvement therein, and the quality of artistic events per se.

The experience of the "Interactions/Integrations" project demonstrates that clearly defined rules, functions and competencies of the institution's staff and the activities that engage artists are an important topic to be addressed in a music institution, both at the level of strategy and in the implementation of individual activities. Musicians must be offered a chance to understand the project, why they are doing it, and what value they will gain as a result of their involvement in activities of a social nature.

3) Remuneration

Implementing sound and transparent financial practices is key to safeguarding the institution's operations. These include budgeting and approving plans with sufficient foresight, setting strategies when raising funds, and applying for national and international grants to ensure stability and liquidity.



photo: Sermis Sinfonia Warszawa

The category of financial security also refers to clearly established rules for the remuneration of employees, including overtime, weekend and night-time work, the payment of financial rewards and various types of gratification from social funds. In the case of music institutions, transparency and clarity are also required in practices related to compensation for concerts, rehearsals and other events featuring the participation of artists.

Another issue worth mentioning concerns remuneration in social and development projects, which musicians not infrequently and stereotypically associate with charity work, sacrificing their free time, and engaging in artistic activities that prevent them from fully tapping into their potential. Remuneration for one's participation in the project can be seen as a strong argument in favor of one's involvement in activities of a social nature.

Thus, within the institution, it is important to foster a positive image of social impact projects as “wholesome” projects that are fairly remunerated and meaningful (“If I get paid for something, it must be of value”).

One should also note the following disparity: in some instances, outsiders employed in a project of a social nature earn more than the employees of the institution who contribute as much, if not more, to the project. This disproportion often follows from the way such projects are financed, often involving various types of grants that allow for a different kind of remuneration than full-time employment in a cultural institution. One should be aware of the fact that one's employees are sometimes familiar with those rates, which can have a disheartening effect on some among them.

In this context, therefore, it is worth considering the factors that drive employees to participate in social projects and ensure that they are not relegated to another form of undercompensated “horizontal promotion” duties.

4) Internal communication

Effective internal communication in an institution is one of the most important factors affecting relationship building, effective teamwork, employee involvement and commitment to cooperate in various types of projects. The more is known about a given project, the clearer the conditions for participation therein, the more space for conversations, dispelling possible doubts, and working out details, the greater the sense of security and, consequently, the greater the willingness of artists to participate in projects of a social nature.

Thus, when preparing for an implementation, it is of considerable value, on the one hand, to clearly define the needs of all parties involved and iron out even the smallest details, and, on the other, to be flexible in cooperation, because unforeseen situations can always arise.

In the context of initiating cooperation between a music institution and artists, a theme that came up in conversations around the “Interactions/Integrations” project was that of space for dialogue prior to project implementation. The more details established at this stage, the smoother the implementation of the project and the better the artists’ response to the needs of the institution and the audience. It is important to articulate specific expectations, guidelines, needs, and to ensure the opportunity to clarify them before the decision to implement the project is made (“most importantly, expectations should be clearly laid out”; “I ask a lot of questions so that I don’t have to ask them later when I can’t deliver something anymore”). A clear presentation of needs is an important factor in collaborations featuring artists (“I always like to know more than I need to early on: it makes it easier to act and I don’t need to bother people later on, after work”).

It is also vital to communicate one’s plans well in advance, informing others about the possible changes, and imparting clarity at all stages of the project. It is worth noting that tasks of a social nature, especially at the beginning of their implementation in an institution, often differ from those that are part of the job description for a symphony orchestra, theater company or museum. Developing adequate ways of communicating in these new situations facilitates the undertaken activities and enables the similar projects in the future.

Importantly, internal communication within the institution has a direct impact on external communication. It is essential that those who undertake activities of a social nature, whether in terms of substance, arts or production, are genuinely committed to the task. This is because audiences can perfectly sense whether the artists they have come to meet are performing “on sufferance,” or whether they are enjoying the meeting and demonstrating curiosity towards a new audience.

Every task carried out in a cultural institution: artistic, educational, developmental or investigative, should be properly communicated so that the public has a chance to learn more about it. Accounting for diverse activities, accessibility and inclusiveness allows one to identify new forms and channels of communication, and offers an opportunity to reach the widest possible target group.

5) Management

The management of cultural institutions in Poland is a topic that deserves a separate study; however, it is worth emphasizing that ensuring effectiveness in this regard, including through the creation of managerial staff that contributes a variety of competencies, skills and expertise, should be part of every institution’s reflection today. The role of managers is to develop one common direction and make consistent decisions while respecting each other, and to support and motivate team members (including fellow members of managerial staff). Encouraging visionary actions, both inside and outside the institution, can have a critical bearing on its operations and development.

Managing a socially responsible cultural institution involves integrating ethical practices, community engagement and sustainability into the institution’s mission. Combining these activities can be central to successfully developing a modern organization.



The climate is ripe to start telling musicians: listen, you’re safe with the quality you represent, you’re in demand with the quality you’ve developed, and we’ll never give up on that quality. Quality is part of Sinfonia Varsovia’s brand and its wonderful heritage. On the other hand, our heritage also must be sustained in the sense that new things are happening, and they’re happening so that you have someone to play for.

It should be stressed that the presence of managers at social events was a constant practice in the “Interactions/Integrations” project. This approach proved particularly valuable for several reasons.

Firstly, it instills a sense of “team spirit” across the organization, i.e., joint commitment to a specific goal, which transcends the hierarchical (and, fortunately, increasingly archaic) principal/manager-performer/employee scheme. Secondly, the management keeps track of the practical implementation of events, and can recognize the commitment of those on the institution’s team, and learn about the audience’s experience. Thirdly, the institution develops an awareness that all projects carried out (artistic, educational, social, developmental) have their own value and vitally contribute to its mission, and are therefore worth getting involved in. Fourthly, managerial presence at events adds to the institution’s image and plays a major role in building its brand.

Thus, one is reminded that, especially when an institution begins to implement activities of a social nature, the presence of its managerial staff at events that may not be the organization’s priority for reasons strictly related to repertoire, but which nonetheless help the institution connect with new audiences and establish itself as a household name in the local community, can be of great importance to the success of the implemented project.

6) Development

Any institution should put the welfare of its employees at the top of its agenda. It should ensure a healthy working environment and the observance of labor laws and health and safety regulations. Each employee should be provided with an appropriate workplace and conditions to do the job for which they have been hired (in the case of office workers: a desk, a chair, a computer, access to appropriate software and systems and the Internet, and in the case of musicians: the provision of rehearsal space, instruments, etc.). Their work should be adequately remunerated, in accordance with the arrangements drafted in the form of a civil law contract. It is also important to develop and implement intelligible systems of evaluation and incentivization.

Employees are the smallest group that a socially responsible institution takes care of first and foremost. Without a satisfied, respectful and motivated staff that derives pleasure from the performed tasks, the institution will be unable to act and make a social impact on its environment.

Investing in employee development and training is also of paramount importance. Communicating the latest solutions, technologies and practices

and encouraging employees to participate in therein is crucial to expanding their competencies and improving their skills, which in turn contribute to strengthening the institution as a whole. The institution should be open to employees’ suggestions, encourage them to seek their own development paths, and support them in implementing projects conducive to their growth. The opportunity to participate in training courses concerning very different scopes of the institution’s functioning, can also be seen as a social responsibility activity.

The “Interactions/Integrations” project abounded in opportunities for the development of the music institution’s staff, from unusual social events that in various ways prompted musicians to reflect on the role of artists in society, to numerous training sessions for the institution’s personnel (administrative team, musicians, external collaborators).

Accessibility trainings featured representatives of various departments: the marketing and audience department, the production department (technical team), as well as the architect responsible for working with the institution on the construction of its new headquarters. Such a “panoramic” approach to trainings in the fields of crucial importance to the creation of a socially responsible institution allows one to foster understanding concerning accessibility-related activities throughout the institution, while also supporting the cooperation of departments in this regard and potentially mitigating any conflicts or misunderstandings that could arise if only a single unit (e.g., the marketing department) underwent the training. It also accounts for suggestions and concerns from different levels when developing new accessibility solutions.

An exquisite example of such activities came with a series of trainings on musician physiology. Providing musicians with opportunities for self-development with respect to physical and mental well-being is another expression of the social responsibility of the music institution, whose direct beneficiaries are its employees (whose health becomes the institution’s concern), while its indirect beneficiaries include, among others, the families of those employees.

Both during the accessibility trainings and the physiology trainings, a high level of involvement of the institution’s team members was evident. During the meetings, participants asked a lot of questions, as the employees were looking for answers and sought to dispel their doubts, while also demonstrating a great deal of openness, readily recalling specific situations from the institution’s daily life or referring to their own experience of working with the body. Throughout the trainings, participants were active and it was

noticeable that they were keen to apply the newly gained knowledge, both for the purposes of audience-building and those related to their own well-being. All trainings included active contributions from the institution's team.

7) Teamwork

Trust, accountability, execution of official duties, respect and adherence to procedures in the institution are invaluable bases for cooperation in the implementation of activities. The willingness to engage in respectful dialogue between managers and employees, as well as between employees themselves, streamlines the establishment a safe space to which external actors may be invited.

Socially responsible cultural institutions understand the value of teamwork. They depart from categories such as hierarchy, power and rivalry in favor of cooperation, dialogue and partnership. Thus, they create safe working environments where people can develop their potential; function with a sense of satisfaction derived from the optimal use of their competencies; and tangibly contribute to the institution by proposing solutions, introducing changes, and embracing the new.

Contributing to the successive events realized as part of the "Interactions/Integrations" project were representative of various departments of the institution, from producers and artists, to management and marketing representatives. Teamwork was evident, founded on knowledge of responsibilities, personal responsibility, freedom to make decisions, and the ability to ask for support when necessary. Mutual attentiveness and working together on projects of a social nature promote the achievement of institutional goals. They also help build its positive image in the eyes of the institution's partners.

Such practices can also bear fruit with the public; consciously involving local communities in decision-making processes can serve as an interesting experience for a socially responsible institution and its prospective development. In turn, the resulting collaborations and partnerships can help expand shared resources, improve visibility, increase influence and implement joint project activities.

8) Monitoring and evaluation

Establishing metrics for activities in a cultural institution enables regular evaluation of success in achieving the adopted objectives. It provides a framework for communication with employees concerning their activities,

while also supporting creativity and fostering the institution's development. Therefore, it is worth setting achievable goals and monitoring their implementation in projects on an ongoing basis.

One typical best practice of socially responsible institutions is to gather knowledge by conducting surveys, both internally (e.g., employee satisfaction surveys) and with respect to the undertaken projects (e.g., audience research, peer evaluation of partnership activities).

When properly conducted, such surveys paint a clear picture of the needs inside and outside the institution, allowing to rectify any errors in projects and plan a diligent implementation of successive initiatives. An institution that is managed on the basis of data, and not just hunches, "whims" or unchecked egos of its leaders, is more likely to succeed in building social responsibility.

In this regard, it is also worth noting the day-to-day mechanisms related to the feedback loop within the institution: good practices in this regard serve the purpose of continuous monitoring and "keeping a finger on the pulse" during the implementation of activities. They also facilitate a creative dissemination of the knowledge gathered by employees of various ranks in the planning of successive undertakings.



photo: Serwis Sirtionia Varsovia

We should further add that project monitoring and evaluation practices require time, and finding it amidst numerous intensive activities can be challenging for some institutions.

Having said that, it is worth taking a pause to analyze the past implementations. This is especially true in projects of a social nature, where one works with new audiences, and where considerable value is generated in “uploading” the knowledge of new audiences in the institution after each completed realization, as well as learning about them and creating solutions tailored to their needs and expectations, and reflecting on how conducting such projects affects the institution’s staff (e.g., musicians) and what type of value it contributes to the organization. This is an ongoing process that calls for commitment, adaptability, genuine adherence to ethical values, and openness to diversity.

9) A dialogue-oriented approach

A socially responsible cultural institution orients itself towards dialogue—internal and external—by listening to the people who comprise it, and by responding to their voices. The conditions for such quality dialogue include: time, space, empathy and sensitivity, taking one another seriously, and the ability to reflect on, respond, and react to feedback.

An institution should allocate time and space for conversation, despite its ongoing commitments (e.g., cyclical meetings), ensuring its proper prominence and nurturing it without getting caught up in new projects and a flurry of tasks. It is difficult to fathom any progress without making room for an authentic exchange of ideas. It is also important to listen sympathetically to all parties involved in the conversation (e.g., employees at every level of the organization): it is essential that everyone feels important and wanted in the conversation. From the organization’s point of view, no voice in a music institution is unimportant or less important than any other; it is the consonance of different contributions and positions (e.g., musician, producer, management, technical or administrative personnel) that offers a more complete picture and facilitates the effective implementation of successive activities. Each of these perspectives is significant. Taking them into account, in all their diversity, remains one of the necessary conditions for creating a socially responsible institution. So does a serious approach to the issues raised during the conversation: refusing to belittle anyone’s voice, taking into account different positions, consciously and actively considering a variety of viewpoints. Such an approach enables reflection, response and adequate reaction, e.g. implementing changes, seeking innovations, correcting the existing presuppositions.

Thus, one could say that the ability to listen and engage in dialogue with what happens inside and what surrounds the organization on the outside is an immanent feature of a socially responsible music institution.

Skillfully conducted dialogue within the institution provides a solid foundation to forge a lasting understanding with audiences. It allows one to understand and connect with audiences and to create a program in the spirit of dialogue. Engaging audiences, educating each other (audiences and institutions), actively seeking and analyzing feedback allow, on the one hand, to improve the cultural offer and, on the other, to attract new, uncharacteristic audience.

To conclude the reflections in the chapter on the institution’s perspective, we should emphasize that best practices related to the implementation of social responsibility add real, measurable and perceptible value to the music institution. They inject the institution with qualities that can be sought in vain in places that function as “temples of fine arts and culture” cut off from society. They make the work of people in music institutions more interesting, healthier and more balanced, and thus contribute to improving the quality of their lives.

Frame of reference

According to participants in the “Interactions/Integrations” project, some of the most important and desirable qualities of socially responsible institutions include the following:

Dehermetizing the institution

The implementation of social projects provides an opportunity to “dehermetize” the music institution. In such projects, the exchange of experiences is not only related to artistic issues, but also stimulates reflections on the functioning of communities, cultures and circumstances other than those with which musicians work on a daily basis. Processes related to workshops, residencies, artistic events, participation in international festivals, which provide an opportunity to meet with unusual audiences, have substantial cognitive value, as well as the potential to build and develop social sensitivity among project participants, which can subsequently be harnessed in planning and implementing activities and building social sensitivity in their home organization/institution.

A safe work environment

Clearly delineated norms and rules, along with opportunities for growth and participation in various types of projects—artistic, educational, social

or developmental—allow one to function in a safe but not hermetic work environment. Accountability-based institutions eliminate hierarchical pathologies and strive to operate in a spirit of dialogue. Before one addresses social responsibility directed outward, one should first create a responsible and safe place at one's home institution.

Identity

The act of co-creating the music institution as “a place of one's own,” so that each person associated with the organization can identify with it and bring in outsiders without unnecessary concerns.

Subjectivity

Treating the musician as a professional, recognizing and empowering the professional nature of their work, and securing the conditions they require to do their job effectively according to the standards and quality that render their efforts meaningful; treating all people working in the institution, as well as partners, other stakeholders and diverse audiences in an empowering way.

Occupational hygiene

High standards related to the planning of activities and occupational hygiene are an area of great importance for musicians (planning their free time and setting aside time for learning new works), producers and others at the institution. Occupational hygiene refers to responsible planning of working time, especially in the creative process, and adherence to arrangements for already developed plans. This gives employees a sense of comfort and allows them to work with enjoyment.

Quality

Implementation of social projects with utmost attention to artistic quality and performance broadens the scope of qualitative activities in the institution; “social” does not mean “inferior,” since “music belongs to everyone.”

Education and development

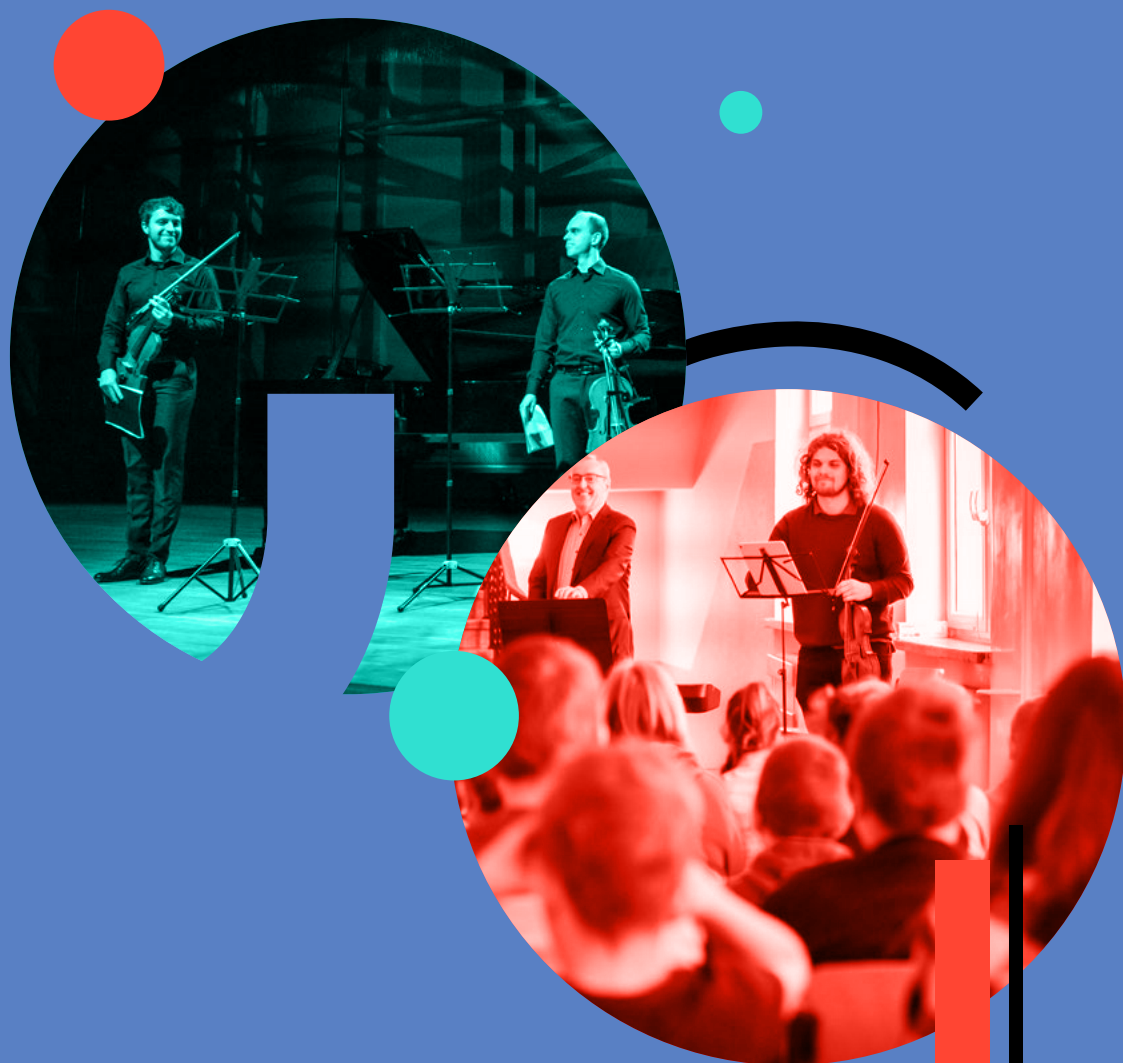
Opportunities for education and development, both in the context of the individual (development of artists and other staff), team (team development), partnership (development of relations with partners and other stakeholders) and the expansion of the institution's area of operation (development of relations with the public).

Building and expanding social responsibility in a music institution, or, more broadly, in a cultural institution, can be an opportunity, starting at the level of mission, vision, values and strategy, in order to set a new operational standards, ones that are open to innovation, active reflection on employee issues and organizational culture, while also introducing a code of conduct that promotes the well-being of people and the overall development of the organization.

It seems that this direction of development is becoming increasingly more clear: in a rapidly changing reality, only those institutions will survive and thrive that commit themselves to not only artistic quality, but above all to people, both inside their structures (employees) and outside of their confines (audiences).



The plan is for us as Sinfonia Varsovia to create a cultural center here, which is a direction I really like. Sinfonia Varsovia is heading towards integration. It's a cool idea to get a concert hall built, but at the same time to keep the venue open and accessible to people. We want to grow into the fabric of Praga, without necessarily separating ourselves from it. It's good that we're not building a wall, and we don't want to interact exclusively with people who have the right educational background and aptitude for music reception. I hope there'll be more just such events that won't deter people from coming here. Maybe some free concerts would also be useful, if someone struggles with financial barriers or is otherwise afraid to attend these events.



conclusion and acknowledgements

The material collected in this publication, which emerged from the research conducted under the “Interactions/Integrations” project, can provide valuable inspiration for both music institutions embarking on the path of social responsibility and those expanding their scope of activity in this direction.

Although we worked mostly in the music environment, we are convinced that many of the observations and solutions described can be successfully adopted by institutions and organizations in the cultural sector, operating in fields other than music.

Our ambition was for the models and scenarios drafted to serve Sinfonia Varsovia at a vital juncture in its development, but also to serve as an inspiration for the broadest possible range of institutions, finding their practical realization and becoming part of the daily reality of Polish and foreign cultural institutions and arts organizations, including the ensembles they create, the audiences they invite to engage in dialogue, and their partners in social responsibility, recruited from diverse backgrounds.

The development of this publication would have been impossible had it not been for the tremendous generosity of those who participated in the “Interactions/Integrations” project. Thanks to them, our involvement in the project resulted in dozens of hours of fascinating, sincere and inspiring conversations, an opportunity to peek into the rehearsals and behind the scenes of the musicians’ lives at every stage of the project, participation in valuable trainings, exchange of inspirations with the Norwegian partner, cooperation with the project organizers who continually provided for our comfort, as well as priceless interactions with the audience.

Our thanks go out to the following entities and individuals for sharing their know-how and expertise:

- the organizers of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, Sinfonia Varsovia and its partner, the Norwegian Youth Chamber Music Festival (K&MFEST) of Stavanger,
- the musicians of Sinfonia Varsovia and foreign musicians participating in “Interactions/Integrations” and other projects, for allowing us to draw on their experience,
- the audience: active, engaged, curious and willing to answer our questions,
- the partners engaged in the implementation of the various activities undertaken as part of the project,

- the directors, managers, producers and other contributors to music institutions, who kindly shared their insights,
- the artists who enriched the project with insights from other artistic disciplines and social ventures carried out in non-musical areas,
- the experts and academics who assisted our research explorations,
- the contributors to the publication, including its proofreader, translator and graphic designers.

Special thanks go to Natalia Dacy, coordinator of the “Interactions/Integrations” project, who supported us in all interactions with the persons participating in the project and helped integrate the world of researchers with that of the music institution.

We hope that our joint publication will contribute an important voice to the conversation about the social responsibility of music institutions and other cultural organizations in Poland and abroad.

If upon reading this publication you would like to share your voice and engage in dialogue with us, feel free to contact us at your convenience: www.nufoundation.pl

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The ambition of the Interactions/Integrations project, conducted between 2022 and 2024 by Sinfonia Varsovia together with its partner the Norwegian Youth Chamber Music Festival in Stavanger, was to use the art in social integration processes as well as to work out specific, model solutions in this regard. The project included a series of concerts, workshops, local initiatives and research studies in Poland and Norway, involving various artists and managers of cultural institutions.

The *Interactions/Integrations* title includes two components. The first one is the **Interactions** series, which aims to help artists and organizers of cultural life to develop their communication and organizational skills in the field of social integration activities. This need stems from a belief that music and classical musicians play a key role in shaping social reality. As the renowned conductor Riccardo Muti said, “Music is not just a profession, but a mission. We should consider culture as one of the fundamental elements for building a better society in the future.”

The aforementioned activities were completed by the tasks of the **Integrations** series that puts the acquired knowledge into practice – at concerts and other initiatives which are held not only in concert halls, but also in local educational, cultural, and social welfare centers. The aim of the project was to reach new audiences, with particular emphasis on groups at risk of cultural, social, and economic exclusion. In this sense, the Interactions/Integrations series complemented the activities already carried out by Sinfonia Varsovia, which serve the institution’s mission in accordance with the motto “music belongs to everyone.”

This was an interdisciplinary project involving instrumentalists (not only guest artists, but also young musicians of Sinfonia Varsovia and participants of the Sinfonia Varsovia Academy), composers, conductors, visual artists (painting, graphics, comic books), as well as managers of cultural institutions, methodologists and university lecturers. Its interdisciplinary and international nature allowed for a broad exchange of skill and experience between artists (mainly classical musicians) and employees of cultural institutions. In addition to musicians and employees of Sinfonia Varsovia and the Norwegian Youth Chamber Music Festival, participants in the project included Jeanine El Khawand, Mona Levin, Grzegorz Mart, Kjell Pahr-Iversen, Piotr Peszat, Żaneta Rydzewska, Anne Shih, Gunnar Stubseid and Jean-Pierre Wallez.

The *Interactions/Integrations* project was divided into a few stages – each of them enabled creators and organizers of cultural activities to develop a distinct set of skills and offered activities aimed at different audiences, including children, national minorities, refugees, the elderly, and the disabled. The activities included concerts (i.e. chamber and symphonic concerts intended for selected groups of listeners and open to the general public), local initiatives, workshops, seminars, and dances featuring classical, traditional (folk), and contemporary music.

The project was co-financed by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for 2014–2021 within the “Culture” programme.

EEA GRANTS

The Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism, i.e. the EEA and Norway Grants are a form of foreign aid granted by Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein to new EU member states. The funds are connected with the Poland’s accession to the European Union and the simultaneous accession to the European Economic Area (which covers the EU member states and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). In exchange for the financial contribution granted to the beneficiary states, the donor countries benefit from an access to the internal market of the European Union despite the fact that they are non-EU members.

The main objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants are: to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen the bilateral relations between the donor states and the beneficiary states.

Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway aim at contributing to, among other things, growth and jobs, tackle climate change and energy dependency, and reduce poverty and social exclusion.

SINFONIA VARSOVIA

Sinfonia Varsovia has been an ambassador of Polish musical culture since its inception. For over 40 years, the Orchestra has been a regular guest on foreign and domestic stages. Its foreign travels include thousands of meetings with conductors, composers, soloists, and finally – audiences.

The ensemble continues the tradition of Jerzy Maksymiuk’s Polish Chamber Orchestra, founded in 1972, from which it emerged as a result of its enlargement. The impulse to expand the ensemble was provided in 1984 by the arrival of the legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who soon took over as the first guest conductor at the invitation of directors

Franciszek Wybrańczyk and Waldemar Dąbrowski. “Working with no other orchestra gave me as much satisfaction as my work, as soloist and conductor, with the Sinfonia Varsovia Orchestra” – he said in interviews.

Over the years, Sinfonia Varsovia has played more than 4,000 concerts, performing in some of the world’s most prestigious concert halls under conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Emmanuel Krivine, Witold Lutosławski, Lorin Maazel, Jerzy Maksymiuk and Krzysztof Penderecki (who in 1997 became the music director, and in June 2003 the artistic director of the ensemble), and alongside such soloists as Piotr Anderszewski, Martha Argerich, Alfred Brendel, Gidon Kremer, Nikolai Lugansky, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Maria João Pires and Mstislav Rostropovich.

Sinfonia Varsovia has made more than 300 records, including for Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, Sony, and Warner. The recorded repertoire includes works from the 18th century to the present day. A special place in the Orchestra’s concert program is occupied by the works of Polish composers; it has premiered numerous works by composers such as Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Paweł Mykietyn and Krzysztof Penderecki.

Sinfonia Varsovia has initiated a competition for the architectural design of a music center with the largest concert hall in Poland. The investment is being made with financial support of the Capital City of Warsaw.

Since 2004, the director’s duties have been performed by Janusz Marynowski.

NOTES ON EDITORS

dr Marcin Poprawski

works at the Humak University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki (School of Arts and Cultural Management). His academic interests include arts organizations, ethical dimensions of managing cultural institutions, cultural policy, audience development, aesthetics in management theory, festivals as organizations, urban cultural ecosystems, and creative sectors.

Marcin coordinates the COSM initiative for education (cosm.humak.fi), and serves as the Finnish team leader in the Horizon Europe EKIP - European Cultural and Creative Industries Policy Platform project led by Lund University.

He also contributes as expert to the Association of Polish Cities and the NU Foundation in Poznań. Since 2023, he has been a member of the scientific council at the National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic.

He previously worked at the Institute of Cultural Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He was also a guest lecturer at the European University Viadrina, the University of the Arts in Helsinki, the University of Salento in Lecce, the Academy of Theater (DAMU) in Prague, the ZHAW in Zurich, the Academy of Music (JAMU) in Brno and the Heritage Academy of the International Cultural Center in Cracow. He has worked as a cultural manager in private, public and civic organizations for seventeen years, including eight years as director of a music festival.

2023 saw the release of Marcin Poprawski and Waldemar Kuligowski's book *Festivals and Values: Music, Community Engagement and Organizational Symbolism*.

dr Agata Wittchen-Barełkowska

is a communication expert, business trainer, business owner, CEO of the NU Foundation (nufoundation.pl). She studies organizations and creates training strategies and programs to support the development of humanistic organizational cultures.

For over fifteen years, she has been working in the field of communication, production and promotion of culture. She has collaborated with cultural institutions in Poland and abroad, such as the Dramatic Theatre of the Capital City of Warsaw, Malta Festival Poznań, Art Stations Foundation by Grażyna Kulczyk, Nowy Theatre in Poznań, International Cochran Piano Competition, Jaracz Theatre in Łódź, and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich.

Agata studied at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology) and Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. A graduate of the Dramaturgical Forum and the Theatre Educators's School at the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute in Warsaw, she completed postgraduate studies in Empathy-based communication in organizations at the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Poznań.

As a lecturer, Agata has cooperated with the Adam Mickiewicz University, among others as part of the postgraduate program of audience development studies, and with the School of Social Skills in Poznań, where she majored in culture management. She also co-founded the "Connecting Audiences Poland" magazine.

She is interested in the purposeful implementation of change in institutions, building socially responsible organizational cultures and supporting the development of cultural personnel in Poland.

Marta Szymańska

is an organizer of international festivals, theater and music events. A Belarusian philologist, Central and Eastern European cultural studies scholar, she is a graduate of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warsaw.

From 2010 to 2019, she worked with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, where between 2011 and 2015 she was the producer of the I, CULTURE Orchestra, a youth symphony ensemble, while between 2015 and 2019 she was the coordinator of the East European Performing Arts Platform, an international forum for independent performers, theater and dance artists from eighteen Central and Eastern European countries.

As the co-founder of the Julian Cochran Foundation, and a subsequent member of the Foundation's Board (to this day), Marta is dedicated to supporting young classical musicians and promoting classical music. She is also the co-founder of the International Cochran Piano Competition (2015), the world's first online piano competition for adult pianists.

Since June 2021, she has worked at the National Museum in Warsaw in the Cultural Projects Department, of which she has been head since March 2022.

In 2022, she coordinated activities implemented as part of the newly launched recruitment platform for the 2nd edition of the Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition in Katowice, held by the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

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