

## Professional-Amateur Engagement:



## A Balancing Act in Arts Organizations

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Our gratitude also goes to Richard Stein, Director of Arts Orange County, and Terry Wolverton, Arts Management Consulting Practicum Advisor, for overseeing the project from start to finish.

## PREFACE

*This research grew out of our involvement in a consulting project with Arts Orange County (ArtsOC) in fulfillment of the capstone requirement for the M.A. in Arts Management degree at Claremont Graduate University.*

*Arts Orange County is a leader in building appreciation, participation and support for the arts and arts education throughout Orange County, CA, serving as the official local arts agency of the County of Orange and state-local partner of the California Arts Council since 1995. The three largest programs provided by Arts OC are:*

- *Imagination Celebration –a month-long, county-wide festival of arts for children and families. In 2009, more than 100 organizations and 31 cities participated in Imagination Celebration.*
- *Spark OC—an online self-maintained database with information about arts events relating to OC arts organizations.*
- *Services—such as didactic forums throughout the year involving arts CEOs, Development Directors and Marketing Directors; periodic surveys of arts organizations; semi-monthly e-newsletter to artists and arts organizations providing information on grant opportunities, calls for artists, employment opportunities, etc.*

*Richard Stein, Executive Director of ArtsOC, is overseeing the project as our client, and he provided the premise of professional-amateur (Pro-Am) engagement as a possible tool for audience development and engagement within professional arts organizations. Stein has taken a special interest in this topic based on his 30-year history as a theatre producer. He is also interested in the particular challenges presented to professional arts organizations today in retaining existing audiences and attracting new ones.*

*This report, written from the viewpoint of professional/formal arts organizations, is a hybrid between an academic paper and a consulting report since the scope of work required both a practical and theoretical assessment. We hope this exploratory work will offer insights on professional-amateur and participatory programming as models to serve the larger interests of audience engagement.*

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Pro-Am Concept**

The Pro-Am concept, for the purposes of this research, was first determined as a premise presented by our client of professional-amateur (Pro-Am) engagement as a possible tool for audience development and engagement within professional arts organizations. In a larger context, Pro-Am in the arts can encompass any program that combines the talents, resources, and artistic processes of both professional and amateur artists in activity together (e.g., performances, workshops).

One model of the Pro-Am concept is side-by-side performances that include professionals and amateurs creating art on the same stage together. Richard Stein observed that in an effort to strengthen audience outreach/development strategies, in light of the national/international rise of participatory attitudes, some organizations adapted a Pro-Am approach. As examples, he provided Pacific Symphony, South Coast Repertory, Pacific Chorale, and the Royal Shakespeare Company. We took the challenge as consultants and researchers to test this observation through a literature review and case studies in order to explore the Pro-Am concept, identify organizations with Pro-Am programs, and understand the challenges and impact in operating Pro-Am within professional institutions.

### **Discoveries in Case Studies of Pro-Am Capacity Programs**

Through Pro-Am capacity programs organizations and/or individuals:

- practice the integration of *amateurs* and *professionals* at any phase of the production of a program that intends to create an artistic experience.
- shift the conventional focus on economic-transaction (the audience's role is to pay for an art service provided by an art organization) to one of relationship-building.
- build partnerships with community art organizations or people who practice any given art form.
- share organizations resources or adopt an open source mindset
- co-create or collaborate in curating an aesthetic or social experience.

Arts organizations, considered in this research, that produce Pro-Am capacity programs and use the term “amateur” in description include: Pacific Symphony, Royal Shakespeare Company, Southbank Center, and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Pacific Chorale uses the aforementioned concept, but does not use the term “amateur” to refer to participants mainly because participants are professionals, according Pacific Chorale. If participants were not professionals, Pacific Chorale would classify them as community members, not amateurs. Case studies with further details of these programs follow the literature review.

The following definitions for “amateur” and “professional” are compiled from the interviews with program leaders in arts organizations from the subsequent case studies and from the literature review.

- Professional: A person who makes their vocational living in the art form as an artist. Artists can also be considered professionals in the view of an organization if they are employed by that organization and are a part of their “core” residency of contracted artists.
- Amateur: A person who falls anywhere on the continuum from complete artistic unawareness to professional-caliber amateur artists. Generally, amateurs are passionate about their art form and participate for “the love” of it, but do not make a living by it.
- Other terms for amateur art-making: informal arts, amateur arts, side-by-side, folksonomies, open access.

### **Glitches with the Pro-Am Concept**

Pro-Am capacity programs can be developed but problems arise with the use of terms such as “amateur” when used to describe a section of the public, in this case the audience. The term “amateur” has the ability to polarize audiences, is not used in the “self-concept” of people participating in the arts, and is usually used to distinguish the degree of difference between one who is paid for the art production and one who is not. Organizations that did use the word “amateur” typically attempt to delineate a minimum level of skill required to participate in the specific program, but even so, further articulation of those specific skills is required because the

term does not have a definite meaning or quality/skills judgment. This conclusion was first expressed in most interviews we conducted during research. As research progressed, we discovered that the assertion had merit. If audience members self-select into a program, they will self-select out if they don't possess the right skill set to participate. Why not allow them to make that judgment instead of presupposing that judgment by using the word amateur, which has a meaning in their minds that an organization may or may not be aware of and cannot control. We believe that it is for every organization, if it so chooses, to define "amateur" based on its individual aesthetic viewpoint.

### **Discoveries in Literature Review of Pro-Am Frameworks**

The term "Pro-Am" is coined by Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller's, both Senior Research Associates at DEMOS, "Pro-Am Revolution: How enthusiasts are changing our economy and society." They defined Pro-Am as a noun to signify the "amateur[s] who works to professional standards [that] are knowledgeable, educated, committed and networked by new technology."<sup>1</sup> This report creates a dialogue around the significance of Pro-Am contribution in today's economic, social, cultural, and political environment—specifically within Great Britain.

Through the literature on review we did not find consensus on definitions of the terms such as "professional" or "amateurs." However, the roles for each group unveiled through the three frameworks considered: (1) Leadbeater and Miller's linear Pro-Am concept (2) Wali et al.'s interrelated continuum involving professional and amateurs (3) Garth Taylor's *total arts sector* that considers the relationship of arts to location and social context.

Roles for "amateurs" and "professionals" include, but are not limited to:

- Amateurs are self-organizing and have deep connections to networks, which they will use as they become ambassadors to programs of their preference.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller, "The Pro-Am Revolution: How Enthusiasts Are Changing Our Economy and Society," (UK: DEMOS, 2004), 12.

- Professionals develop the tools, manage projects, act as facilitators, and provide their network and the organization's resources.

Together, they co-create or collaborate in creating a participatory experience that can lead to innovative problem solving and content creation in an open source environment. Open source, within the arts sector, can manifest in a variety of applications, but the essential philosophy behind open source is the sharing of source material or content in the public sphere (usually for free). On the web, Wikipedia uses open source technology to allow users to access content for free, share content, and alter the content as long as the new content (or product) is then redistributed into the system for others to use and access. People invest time and creativity into Wikipedia creating content or contributing to existing content through their personal motivation. In the arts, participants can create content (or the art product), but the larger concept of allowing individuals to access resources or art to make their own meaning and experience from it is a key lesson learned from technology. Open source, by default, integrates diversity, crosses social, economic, racial boundaries, distributes skill and knowledge, and ultimately strengthens the *total arts sector*.

Other common threads running through the literature on review expresses the need for conventional arts organizations to connect with what anthropologist Dr. Pia Moriarty calls their “own cultural engines”<sup>2</sup> or surrounding cultural community. Conventional or traditional arts organizations can be defined as those that adhere to a post-industrial organization structure that separates the givers of arts (musicians in a symphony) and the receivers of arts (those who buy tickets to watch, passively, the art product).

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<sup>2</sup> Pia Moriarty, “Participatory Arts: The Stranger Brings a Gift,” (San Francisco, CA: The San Francisco Foundation, 2008), 8, accessed February 23, 2011, [http://www.sff.org/programs/arts-culture/documents-arts-and-culture/Moriarty\\_Participatory\\_Arts.pdf\\_](http://www.sff.org/programs/arts-culture/documents-arts-and-culture/Moriarty_Participatory_Arts.pdf_)

The studies of Wali et al., Brown et al., and Taylor reveal cultural participatory activities that occur outside the determined formal spaces of conventional nonprofit art organizations. Bruns' discussion on the formation of folksonomies uncover participatory activities as they occur in online communities, which opens the door to speculation on audiences and communities that are not within a 20 mile radius of a physical space but one or two mouse-clicks away. Benefits of participatory programs as described by Moriarty are: bridging generational, economic, racial, social, self-limiting, language, religious, and political boundaries through the focus on the experience.<sup>3</sup> This breaks down entrenched notions of “high arts” and “club-house” attitudes that can promote separation between those who can and cannot pay for art within particular, sometimes institutionalized, contexts.<sup>4</sup> The ability of these programs to bring new audiences and refresh the creative energy in programming by adding the spark of dialogue inside and outside the organization is highly important.

### **Pro-Am Considered in the Larger Context of Audience Participation**

For the purpose of our research, we use the terms “professional” and “amateur” not as a value of skill level or judgment of quality on those organizations or individuals we will place in specific categories, but to provide boundaries to conduct our research within case studies. Other parallel terms arise such as “informal” and “formal” arts, as used in the ethnographic research Alaka Wali et al. conducted in Chicago neighborhoods. In finding “descriptive terms” professional and amateur are best used to describe status of employment not quality of artistic work.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the terms formal and informal indicate the process and context of art making within professional organizational settings (or not), and does not reflect on the quality of

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<sup>3</sup> Moriarty, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>5</sup> Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson and Mario Longoni, “Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places,” (Chicago: Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College, 2002), xxvi.

creation by artists or their qualifications/skills.<sup>6</sup> We recognize that in reality, the lines between “professional” and “amateur” are much less clear than terms can imply; these terms do not necessarily serve a strong, impactful purpose due to definition and delineation issues. Wali et al. discuss that professional or amateur at times carry a pejorative meaning. It is best for organizations to consider Pro-Am programs as activities that allow audiences to participate, engage, interact, or co-create with the organization. Therefore, in thinking about participation, participatory programs offer a more applicable and impactful umbrella to consider for audience engagement.

Ian David Moss, Research Director for Fractured Atlas, pointed out that “much has been written about the increasingly blurred line between creator and consumer of art...[p]lummetering production and distribution costs, unprecedented levels of global interconnectedness... nearly 50% of the United States population engaged in some form of personal creation.”<sup>7</sup> This is sufficient evidence that people want to be involved in the artistic process. The question becomes how do professional arts organizations facilitate that desire?

### **Pro-Am and Audience Participation Models**

Pro-Am exists under the “participation umbrella,” and the main difference between the two concepts is the use of specific vocabulary and motivation to exclude certain participants (e.g., amateurs only) or express a skill level. Participation seeks to include as many as possible. Participatory programs use the same philosophy of co-creation, resource sharing, and relational transaction (versus economic transactions between audience and institution), but seeks to envelope all willing participants in interaction with the organization.

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<sup>6</sup> Wali et al., xxvi.

<sup>7</sup> Ian David Moss, “Supply is Not Going to Decrease (So It’s Time to Think About Curating),” (March 2011), accessed March 13, 2011, <http://www.arts.gov/artworks/?p=6239>.

Both the Pro-Am models and the participatory framework do not entirely suit the conventional infrastructure of non-profit arts organizations. The non-profit model has a conventional organizational structure broken down into function focus departments such as marketing, development, education, curatorial, etc. These also exist as conventional means of presenting the arts in this country—museums, theaters, concert halls, record labels etc.<sup>8</sup> The participatory framework calls for a cultural transformation in arts organizations as it challenges the formal presentation and structure of arts production. For example, the Pacific Symphony created the position of Director of Audience Engagement and the Hammer Museum created the position of Curatorial Associate for Public Engagement to support Pro-Am capacity and participatory programs, respectively.

A variety of opinions will arise regarding the Pro-Am model as some arts leaders believe amateur involvement has no place in the professional organization now or ever—this is an example of fierce mission protection and aesthetic preservation. There is apprehension because organizations feel that by adopting the Pro-Am model or participatory framework, they will need to branch out to embrace amateur involvement. However, some believe that amateur involvement can find a place if you create an appropriate space within the organization to house the program—a conservative balancing approach to aesthetic broadening.

The balance of aesthetic broadening and mission creep, or the expansion of an organization's activities beyond its stated mission, has a significant role in the adoption of a Pro-Am model as it moves away from conservative approaches to audience development and engagement, which has emerged from an administrative and organizational concern under marketing initiatives. Marketing initiatives focus on division and segmentation of audiences and using technology to deliver more information towards those groups. McLennan states that this

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<sup>8</sup> Mary Schmidt Campbell and David White, "Creating a Public Space for the Arts," (presentation, Art and Commitment Convergence, Minneapolis, MN, December 2-5, 2004), accessed February 6, 2011, <http://artandcommitment.umn.edu/campbellwhite.html>.

approach does not seize the opportunity technology presents: development of a dialogue with audiences and engagement in content creation. As previously stated, market segmentation calls for division and differentiation of programs to suit the targeted audience's assumed preferences. However, when an organization brings new art experiences that can be classified as participatory, innovative, or Pro-Am capacity, audiences have an opportunity to create meaning both individually and collectively. Russell Willis Taylor, President and CEO of the NAS, said, "collaboration is the new competition."<sup>9</sup> There is tension in broadening programming for fear of mission creep and alienating loyal constituents who support the mission; broadening aesthetic experience while maintaining your traditional supporters is a balancing act for professional arts organizations.

### **Adaptations made to Research Methodology**

Our methodology was adapted to reflect our findings by looking into organizations that developed Participatory programs such as: The Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles Music Center, and STREB. Our research began by considering Pro-Am approaches in order to understand how organizations find solutions to the challenge of new audience development as proposed by our client. Under the larger umbrella of participatory activities, we propose Pro-Am programming as one of many answers to the question of how to respond to new audiences that demand a more interactive, participatory, and learning experience. The Director of Organizational Learning at EmcArts explains, this audience "is drawn to being active co-creators, not passive audience members, and are unconsciously multidisciplinary."<sup>10</sup> This audience already has the desire and capacity to learn. The bigger

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<sup>9</sup> Russell Willis Taylor, "National Arts Strategies," presentation at the Bolz Center Collegium at the Wisconsin School of Business, Madison, WI, September 16, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> John Shibley, "Lessons from the Field: Reflections from the Front Lines of Innovation in the Arts." New York, NY: Emc Arts Inc , 5.

umbrella of participation is automatically more inclusive as different terms and rules are applied to integrate the audience. It begins with the question: what can “we” make together?

Pro-Am concept remains one piece of a larger puzzle that is participation; it is more impactful and beneficial for organizations to use the participation concept to think about audience engagement and development.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Our methodology is based on theory and practice to understand how organizations find solutions to the challenge of new audience development. The literature review looks at Pro-Am frameworks through a theoretical lens and the case studies look at how organizations practice audience engagement. For the former, we turned to sources from market analysis, ethnographic studies, reports on cultural participation and vitality, discussions of Pro-Am in the media, and organizational management. For the latter, we conducted interviews and discussions with international, national, and local arts leaders and qualitative research experts to expand on the sources of information. A systems perspective approach allowed us to integrate studies of innovative participatory programs. To describe the systems perspective, we use the contrasting example of looking at program evaluation and its impact on the organization versus looking at the paradigm of participation and its impact on the arts sector.

## Literature Review

### *Historical Context*

In 2008 the NEA released findings on the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts with the results that “nearly 35 percent of U.S. adults—or an estimated 78 million—attended an art museum or an arts performance in the 2008 survey period, compared with about 40 percent in 1982, 1992, and 2002.”<sup>11</sup> Decreasing attendance is affirmed by other studies often made available by local or state government agencies or independent groups concerned with cultural policy or market research. In these studies, declining audiences are attributed to factors such as the economy—decreased spending on non-essential products/activities—aging of more traditional audiences, and upcoming generations that have lower levels of knowledge of and interest in the arts due to discontinuous arts education in public schools. When survey results are released the more sensational highlights make headlines, such as the aforementioned findings, and other important and vital highlights about arts participation and cultural vitality are overlooked. For example, when the NEA looked at informal arts participation—“such as playing a musical instrument, attending an art event at a place of worship, or visiting a craft fair” in Urban and Rural Communities—one of their findings uncovered that “disparities in urban and rural participation largely recede when the informal arts are considered: metro and non-metro residents enjoy most of these activities at the same rates.”<sup>12</sup> In light of audience engagement goals, if we focus on the first finding then it is important for art organizations to ask—How can we increase visitor attendance? If we focus on the latter finding, then it is important to ask—

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<sup>11</sup> National Endowment for the Arts, “Long-term patterns of decline and new data on media use noted in national survey,” (June 2009), accessed February 24, 2011, <http://arts.endow.gov/news/news09/SPPA-highlights.html>.

<sup>12</sup> National Endowment for the Arts, “Come as You Are: Informal Arts Participation in Urban and Rural Communities,” NEA Research Note #100 (March 2010), 3, accessed March 3, 2011, [http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/100.pdf\\_](http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/100.pdf_).

How do we engage participatory audiences; people who are already practicing an art activity or who want to practice?<sup>13</sup>

Both of these questions and findings belong to greater historical context that takes both the role of the audience and the role of the organization into consideration. In this historical context we observe how tensions arise in the following areas:

- Power relationships between audience and institution.
- The breakdown of the cultural production model in a post-industrial era.

To frame the areas we used a systems perspective for critical analysis. In a systems perspective, external and internal relationships of cause and effect are considered. Through this perspective we can understand how “today’s problems come from yesterday’s solutions” and how “cause and effect are not closely related in time and space.”<sup>14</sup> To apply the aforementioned remarks of Peter Senge, as written in *The Fifth Discipline*, it was imperative to study the history and environment that set the context of our research.

### **Power relationships between audience and institution**

In relation to their audiences, media and entertainment are analogous spheres to the visual and performing arts, and this relationship is vital to analyze. Dr. Bennett McClellan, Management Consulting Ph.D., comments on how disruptive technologies in the western world continuously shape art production and audiences. He specifically identifies the root of declining art audiences to the advent of home entertainment in the Second Industrial Revolution 1870-1914, during which audiences were made passive as entertainment was captured and access restricted by technology, education, and expertise.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Peter M. Senge, “The Laws of the Fifth Discipline” in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Peter M. Senge (New York: Currency DoubleDay, 2006) 57, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Bennet McClellan, interview by Maria Paredes and Heather Pittman during CGU’s 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference, March 26, 2011.

To expand this discussion further, we looked to Richard Butsch, who writes chronologically about the changing relationship between media and its audience in his book, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television*. The research focuses specifically on the public sphere, collective action, mass culture, and the effects of television on audience. Butsch discusses audience by way of a theory of cultural resistance and examines the way in which the audience is perceived as passive and the media is perceived as powerful. He concludes that “active consumers [are] engaged in power struggles over meanings with purveyors of mass culture.”<sup>16</sup> This act of cultural resistance is collective, and it reveals the culture of a subordinate group. Thus, the idea in the 1980s of the “active audience” in the United States was framed around notions of power; at times the audience decides to engage with the media or remain passive, entertained by the source, which is gratifying their needs, while at other times, the audience uses the media to construct “fields of meaning.”<sup>17</sup> This theory offers insight into the change toward audience participation in its own entertainment, which, in the areas described by Butsch (performing arts, drama, theatre, radio, and television), fluctuates from active to passive. Currently, audiences are active participants. In this process of fluctuation, the audience is empowered, and there is a shift in the locus of power. Arts participation is therefore construed as a political power struggle. As identified by Butch, this power struggle is between “purveyors of mass culture” (the producers of art) and the “consumers,” who in the 1980s became active. This leads us to look at the post-industrial environment.

### **The breakdown of the cultural production model in a post-industrial era**

Axel Bruns, Senior Lecturer in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology, discusses how Web 2.0 has given rise to folksonomies, which are online

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1990*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge, 2000), 283.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 282.

communities creating content and shifting production to *produsage* in a post-industrial world. Produsage is the term coined by Axel to describe the breakdown in the division between producer and consumer, as today consumers are active participants in the production of content and experiences. In a post-industrial era, participatory attitudes are encouraged. As a society, we acknowledge that creativity is an inherent trait in humans, as discussed by Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D. “If you are a human being, you have creative capacity.”<sup>18</sup> People are inherently creative and want to shape their own experiences with meaning. This behavior and attitude is further facilitated by Web 2.0.

Further exploration shows how this gives rise to open-source models and new means of production. Before this discussion, it is necessary to explore the implications of Web 2.0 on organizations.

### ***Organizations and Culture***

The aforementioned authors give careful consideration to the role of the audience in a historical context and it is of equal importance to give attention to the authors that discuss the organization in a historical context. Jean Lipman-Blumen, Professor at the Drucker Business School of Management, identified that organizational culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is affected by a global economy, technology, and social networks. This era, termed the Connectivity Era by Lipman-Blumen, is defined by interdependence—reflected through collaborations, alliances, networks, and teams. Organizational cultural indicators include diverse ethnic, demographics, and new organizational models—that are less hierarchical and bureaucratic and more integrated.<sup>19</sup> Lipman-Blumen asserts that contemporary organizational practices are focused on

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<sup>18</sup> Sir Ken Robinson, “Launch a Creative Revolution,” at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Center for the Arts (March 30, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> These thoughts were shared within a class discussion and can be found in Jean Lipman-Blumen, “A Pox on Charisma: Why Connective Leadership and Character Count,” in *The Drucker Difference: What the World’s*

temporary joint ventures, networks, and partnerships. According to Douglas McLennan, founder and editor of ArtsJournal, people are not only connected to everyone as explained by Lipman-Blumen, but people are also connected to everything. Consumers face “an explosion of choice and accessibility” that is transforming the cultural landscape. To respond, he calls for a “reconsideration of institutional process, resources and relationship with community” in which “transparency, building a culture of tolerance for failure, and rebalancing control of how the community functions are all essential.”<sup>20</sup> From both of these discussions it becomes evident that organizations in all sectors should re-consider relationships in all aspects of the production process and balance community collaborations with the organization’s individuality.

Frances Hesselbein, President and CEO of the Leader to Leader Institute, suggests that to respond to the challenges of enterprises like non-profits, there is a need to “build richly diverse organizations that reflect their communities with representation throughout the enterprise at every level.”<sup>21</sup> The arts organization’s audience, and more importantly, the surrounding community need to see themselves reflected throughout the organization. She also identifies the importance of collaborating with groups outside of traditional partnerships and integrating members of the community into the organization’s decision-making schema. Paul Van Deventer, Executive Director of Community Partners, considers integration in an organization and collaboration at the governance level for the purpose of building instrumental networks. In his article, “Increasing Civic Reach,” he explains that “nonprofits need deep civic roots to thrive. To scale up operations, they need strong relationships with leaders in business, government agencies, and elective office. The sum of every board member’s civic reach is the soil in which

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*Greatest Management Thinker Means to Today’s Business Leaders*, eds. Craig L. Pearce, Joseph A. Maciariello, Hideki Yamawaki (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010) 155-162.

<sup>20</sup> Douglas McLennan, “The Community Formerly Known as the Audience I: Adapting arts organizations in an era of infinite choice.” (discussion, Claremont, CA, April 11, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Frances Hesselbein, “Future Challenges for Nonprofit Organizations,” in *Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*, eds. Sarah Smith-Orr and Ronald E. Riggio (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2003), 5-7.

those roots grow.”<sup>22</sup> He identifies four qualities of board members that enable civic reach: (1) exercise shrewd environmental sensing, (2) advance and defend a nonprofit’s organizational mission, (3) reach the broader public, and (4) have access to power. Hesselbein’s and Van Deventer’s thoughts are important in describing ways organizations can adapt to the changing environment and remain relevant to their community at the organization’s structural level. Concurrently, these aspects are vital for arts organizations in order to receive funding from funders who are increasingly interested in the impact of their grants/gifts on communities and the ways arts organizations relevantly engage audiences beyond surface marketing tools.<sup>23</sup>

The goal of observing these changes in culture and organizational processes is to awaken organizations to the importance of relationship development and assist them to translate this lesson into artistic programming that curates art experiences rather than focuses on the traditional/conventional production model of economic transactions. The traditional or conventional production and presenting model divides the givers and receivers of art into professionals who create art for art organizations or cultural institutions and the audience who watches a performance or views the art. Programming that focuses on building relationships challenges the economic transaction mindset that is predominant in art institutions. Forming relationships further opens the door to co-creation and aesthetic development in building feedback loops between organization and audiences. Ubiquity of information has changed the way new generations create and interact with culture. There is a rise in participatory attitudes, which leads to reevaluating the term “audiences,” and warns organizations to be mindful of their assumptions about who they are and what they value. Organizations should begin to address

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Vandeventer, *Increasing civic reach*, *Stanford social innovation review*, accessed March 15, 2011, retrieved from <http://www.ssireview.org>.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Botts, Muriel Johnson, John McGuirk, “Making the Cultural Investment: A talk with arts and culture funders,” (panel discussion, National Arts Marketing Project Conference, San Jose, CA, November 12-15, 2010).

people as individuals, not as institutions.<sup>24</sup> This challenge creates tension in the Connectivity Era, as Lipman-Blummen describes, because it calls for the integration of diversity and interdependence as well as respect for individuality.

Web 2.0 is not only affecting how people organize but also how knowledge is produced and culture is created. An example that relates to this research is Axel Bruns' discussion of Wikipedia and the Google search algorithm as heterarchical—closer to a flat structure and moving away from top-down source of authority. His discussion provides a segue into our discussion of professional-amateur engagement in society, or what he calls the “expert” and “folks.” In 2008, Bruns' analyzed the emergence of “folksonomies,” which are a result of the “mass amateurization of the media” that occurs as the public gains “access to the means of individual and collaborative content creation and distribution” within a society “entering a postindustrial, networked age where knowledge is irretrievably distributed, decentralized, and plural, where multiple alternative sources of information offer diverse and conflicting representations of knowledge.”<sup>25</sup> Folksonomies are groups of participants that are heterarchical as opposed to hierarchical in structure as seen in Taxonomies, the traditional systematization and classification of knowledge (See *Figure 1* for a comparison of Folksonomies and Taxonomies). These folksonomies are driven by content creation of participants who have access to the necessary tools to co-create with experts in a wider global community. The adapted organization is “effective and meaningful” to their users because the result is a “shared object of produsage.”<sup>26</sup> Motivation to engage in folksonomies is found in the experience of a “communicative exchange,

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<sup>24</sup> McLennan.

<sup>25</sup> Axel Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 117.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

of feedback and socialization,” and the inherent competition that arises from participation.<sup>27</sup> The content created in folksonomies will be unfinished and continuing since the “collective intelligence” is continually emergent and shifting.<sup>28</sup> Bruns discusses how this mass amateurization does not result in reduced quality of content production. As groups organize in online communities, the structure allows for the aggregate to evaluate content, and “the quality of the collective intellect increases as there is more diverse eyeballs.”<sup>29</sup> Looking at the example of mass amateurization of media allows an understanding of possible implications of a Pro-Am or participatory model in the arts.

**Figure 1: Summary of Folksonomies and Taxonomies, from Axel Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 187-192.**

Folksonomies	Taxonomies
<b>Heterarchical organization of <i>produser</i> communities</b>	Hierarchical structures of traditional expertise
<b>Knowledge is a set of terms with which a group of users tagged content, the tags are not predetermined sets of classification terms or labels</b>	There are multiple...explicit relationships between terms and tags used
<b>Systems of categorization and boundaries are less clear due to the vast amounts of content being produced and used</b>	Systems of classification have disciplinary boundaries such as library book catalogs which classify under a field of knowledge
<b>Ease of use is more cost effective because there is no significant cost for a user or for the system to add new terms to the folksonomy</b>	Requires rigorous work to maintain
<b>e.g., Google</b>	e.g., Altavista
<b>Best suited for mass intimate networks</b>	Best suited to finite knowledge space
<b><i>Ad-hoc</i> nature makes it responsive to the substantial and rapid changes in the range, depth, and topical makeup of available knowledge which have characterized the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries</b>	Cannot easily classify interdisciplinary subjects
<b>Organic growth, has the capability to adapt very quickly to user vocabulary changes and needs</b>	Cannot adapt to change quickly since there is a vetted order of decision making
<b>The knowledge structures created through folksonomic systems remain themselves only temporary artifacts of an ongoing process, and do not solidify into permanent products</b>	Classification systems built on taxonomic knowledge structures that establish unified and fixed paradigms for the organization of knowledge

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 182-183.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>29</sup> Bruns, 214-215.

### *Professional-Amateur (Pro-Am) Frameworks and the Arts Continuum*

Our client requested best practices and modeling techniques we observed in the Pro-Am model within local, national, and international arts organizations and their respective programs. To begin, it is important to consider Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller, both Senior Research Associates at DEMOS, a UK independent think tank and research institute. Their concept, outlined in the 2004 “Pro-Am Revolution: How enthusiasts are changing our economy and society,” assessed the influence of a “new breed of amateurs” as they arose in the last two decades. This report created a dialogue around the significance of Pro-Am contribution in today’s economic, social, cultural, and political environment—specifically within Great Britain. They defined Pro-Am as a noun to signify the “amateur[s] who works to professional standards [that] are knowledgeable, educated, committed and networked by new technology.”<sup>30</sup> Their contributions are noticeable in the sciences, journalism, social enterprises and media spheres, and their motivation begins with the spirit of using tools to collaborate and create content for the respective community. These “Pro-Ams” also developed a model of organization that is “distributed, low-cost, adaptive, and innovative” and open source as technology gives them access to tools and information and offers opportunities to create global networks.<sup>31</sup> They define Pro-Am activity as professional and amateurs coming together to work in tandem on projects resulting in the affect of “constantly train[ing] one another” while creating innovative solutions to complex problems.<sup>32</sup> Another way in which Pro-Am activity is analyzed by Leadbeater and Miller is through activities that people pursue “as an amateur, mainly for the love of it, but [set] a professional standard,” and this occurs during “serious leisure time” that is not “passive” but

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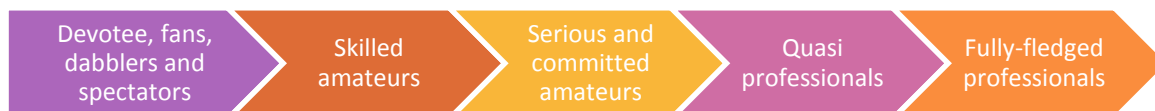
<sup>30</sup> Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller, “The Pro-Am Revolution: How Enthusiasts Are Changing Our Economy and Society,” (UK: DEMOS, 2004), 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 16.

“active” as an outcome; the Pro-Am lifestyle is costly and requires great sacrifice.<sup>33</sup> These “Pro-Ams” are aspiring professionals, but do not classify themselves at such, thus, their hybrid situation as professional-amateur is difficult to define. To this aim, Leadbeater and Miller see “professionals” and “amateurs” along a horizontal continuum (*Figure 2*). “Pro-Ams” are located in the third and fourth segment of this continuum, which is divided into three categories: (1) pre-professionals (apprentices and trainees), (2) semi-professionals (who earn a significant part of their income from an activity), and (3) post-professionals (former professionals who continue to perform or play once their professional career is over). This continuum defines Pro-Am as a forward succession of skill. From survey results, Leadbeater and Miller discovered that “participation in Pro-Am activities is heavily slanted towards well-educated, middle class people with incomes above £30,000 per year.”<sup>34</sup> Some examples of Pro-Am activity include: gardening, writing, photography, playing musical instruments, volunteering, campaigning, and organizing sports and social clubs (See *Figure 3* for a complete list). This study occurred in Britain of 2,189 adults in 2004 who were asked to identify the activities in which they participated and what skill level they had achieved for that particular activity.

**Figure 2: Professional-Amateur vertical continuum, from Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller, “The Pro-Am Revolution: How Enthusiasts Are Changing Our Economy and Society,” (UK: DEMOS, 2004), 23.**



<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 20-22.

<sup>34</sup> Leadbeater and Miller, 33.

**Figure 3: Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller’s selected amateur activities, from Charles Leadbeater and Paul Miller, “The Pro-Am Revolution: How Enthusiasts Are Changing Our Economy and Society,” (UK: DEMOS, 2004), 31.**

<i>Activities</i>	Gardening, DIY, Member of sports team, Arts (painting/drawing) and Crafts (pottery/carpentry), Photography, Playing music instrument, voluntary work for a local group/local organization, Writing, Being a mechanic, Fishing, Helping run a sports team, Local/family history, Nature conservation, Therapies, Training/breeding pets, Amateur dramatics, choir singing, Maintaining a website, Political campaigning
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The term “amateur” is derived from Old French and means ‘lover of’ and, rightly so, Leadbeater and Miller decided to use this term to describe people who perform an activity “for the love of it,” but who had/have professional aspirations. This term has more currency with Britain’s regional community theatre companies, and it is reasonable for Leadbeater and Miller to use the term Pro-Am to describe a hybrid group of people, who they identified as difficult to measure. Through further organizational and academic research on Pro-Am frameworks, we discovered the view of Pro-Am is too narrow, especially because this definition describes the more affluent citizens of the U.K. with expendable income that can become Pro-Ams. What is important in Leadbeater and Miller’s study is the concept that it is not so much an “issue of acquiring the skills but access and participation in the first place. If more working class people were able to participate more would become Pro-Ams.”<sup>35</sup> In this discussion we see participatory attitudes emerging in relation to Pro-Am frameworks.

Through the use of a systems perspective, we analyzed relevant studies in the United States that uncover arts participation outside of the traditional, non-profit arts presentation model. In 2000, the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College (CCAP) began a two-year ethnographical study in the Chicago metropolitan region to mine data on adult participation in

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<sup>35</sup> Leadbeater and Miller, 36.

the informal arts through 12 case studies. The data found that in Chicago, “informal arts are an important reservoir of social capital, significant for life-long learning, building civic engagement and strengthening communities”<sup>36</sup> “These activities tap people’s creative potential,” and it is significant to note that many studies overlook audiences as people with potential and ability (capacity) to create—under the belief that creativity is inherent in all people, the motivation that gives rise to participation is explained.<sup>37</sup> A highlight from this study is the inter-relatedness between informal arts and formal arts. The authors—Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson and Mario Longoni—see this as a continuum exemplified by an infinity symbol as opposed to a straight line, which connotes advancement rather than interrelatedness (See *Figure 4*). This study suggests a framework to conceive arts of participation as an inter-related continuum instead of nodes on a linear, forward-moving path.

**Figure 4: The Arts Continuum, from Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson and Mario Longoni, “Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places,” (Chicago: Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College, 2002), ix.**



The study of informal arts uncovers the rich social capital these relationships present to communities: “the common interest and intrinsic passion that people have for making art; the metaphorical space of informality that permits participants to engage with the arts in a non-intimidating manner; the greater ease of access to physical spaces where informal arts practice

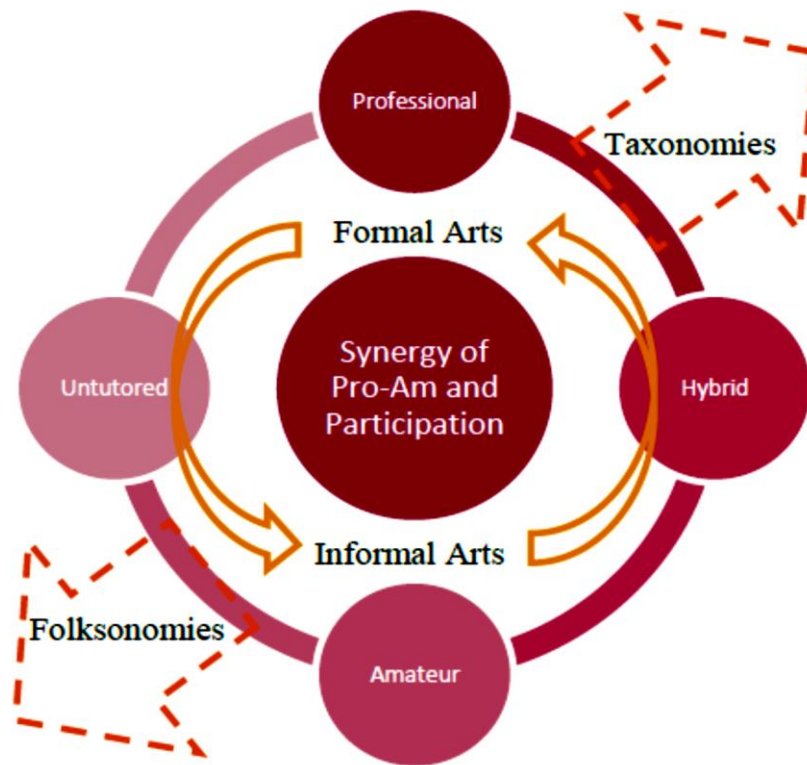
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<sup>36</sup> Wali et al., ix.

<sup>37</sup> Wali et al., viii.

occurs; and the types of strategies used to recruit new participants.”<sup>38</sup> To integrate the three frameworks—(1) Leadbeater and Miller’s linear Pro-Am concept (2) Wali et al.’s interrelated continuum involving professional and amateurs (3) Garth Taylor’s *total arts sector* that considers the relationship of arts to location and social context—discussed thus far, we developed a diagram that emphasizes the fluidity that exists amidst the frameworks (See *Figure 5*). The arrows indicate the structure of knowledge and culture that result from the modes of arts participation as related to their social context and orientation of the arts participant. At the center is the optimal location for participatory programming and synergy of the Pro-Am or participatory models.

**Figure 5: The Integrated Pro-Am Frameworks**



<sup>38</sup> Wali et al., xvi.

### ***Pro-Am and Audience Participation***

The Pro-Am and Participatory framework compel the examination of the *total arts ecology*. Often, studies of arts organizations focus on the publicly labeled spaces for arts such as museums, performing arts halls, and dance studios; in these discussions, the middle and amateur art sectors are not represented. These communities are essential in sustaining the arts ecology, or what Garth Taylor, Senior Research Fellow at the Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC), terms the *Total Arts Industry* (See *Figure 6*).<sup>39</sup> Recently, Wolf Brown and the James Irvine Foundation published an exploratory report to study cultural engagement in the San Joaquin Valley and Inland Empire titled “Cultural Engagement In California’s Inland Regions: With Implications for Cultural Services Providers and Funders.” This report includes the findings of 6,000 households and residents of the regions. A key finding is that 1/3 of the participants expressed their interest in learning an art form, but this need goes unmet.<sup>40</sup> Arts participation or cultural participation is also prevalent in communities, and the study “concludes that cultural providers and funders should look deeper into the fabric of their communities for new partners, new settings and innovative approaches to drawing residents into cultural experiences” and to facilitate the learning citizens desire.<sup>41</sup> Both of these studies, Wali et al. and Brown et al., highlight the importance of looking for partnerships in the community to build relationships that will develop cultural/arts participation.

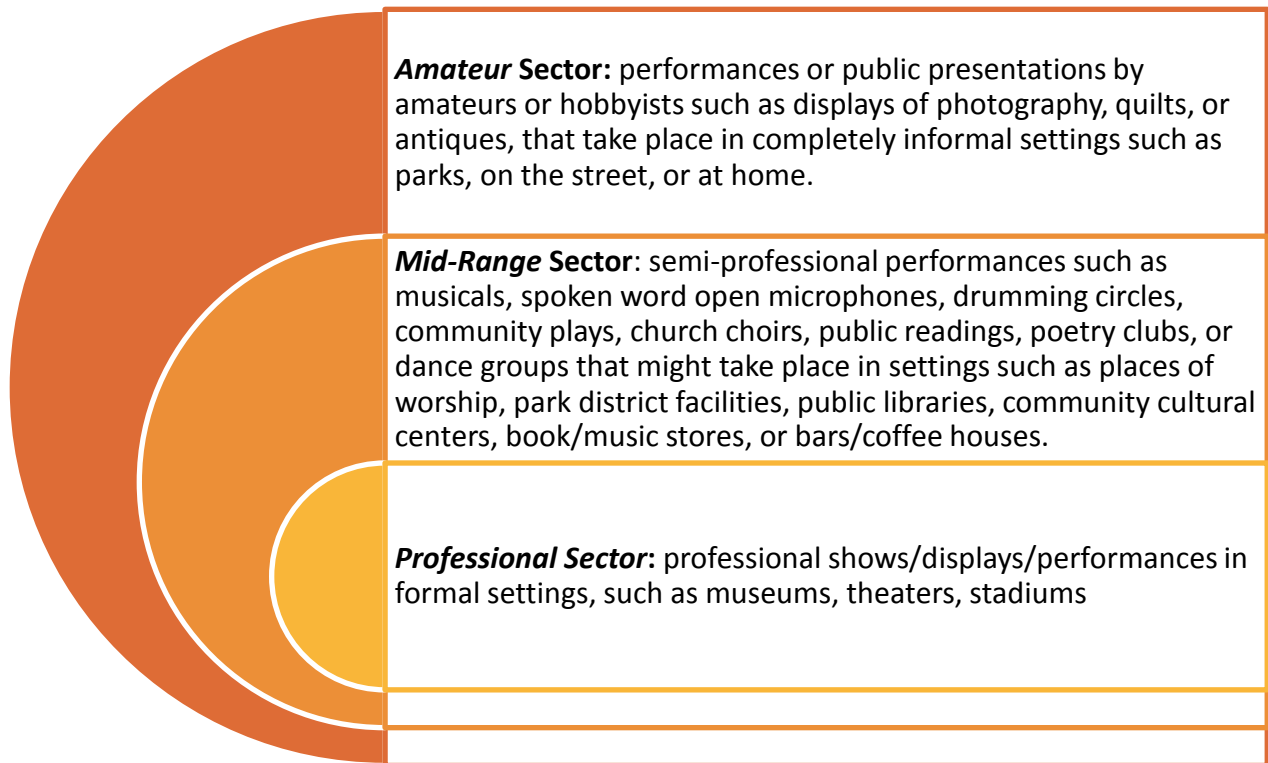
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<sup>39</sup> Garth Taylor, “Magnetizing Neighborhoods through Amateur Arts Performance,” (Chicago: Metro Chicago Information Center, 2008), 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak and Amy Kitchener, “Cultural Engagement In California’s Inland Regions: With Implications for Cultural Services Providers and Funders,” (San Francisco: Wolf Brown and James Irvine Foundation, 2008), 3, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.advancethearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/wb-culturalengage.pdf>.

**Figure 6: The Total Arts Industry, from Garth Taylor, “Magnetizing Neighborhoods through Amateur Arts Performance,” (Chicago: Metro Chicago Information Center, 2008), 5.**



Wolf Brown’s report also asks compelling questions to develop a thoughtful discussion on programming strategies that increase cultural vitality in communities through two participatory frameworks taken from *The Five Modes of Arts Participation* described in 2004 in *The Values Study* (See Figure 7 and 8). The frameworks consider the levels of control a participant has in activity and the settings of engagement. The questions proposed by Brown et al. use a problem framing approach to encourage programming strategies that can be applied to the challenges faced in the Connectivity Era and to facilitate learning experiences within communities.

**Figure 7: Modes & Vectors of Engagement, from Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak and Amy Kitchener, “Cultural Engagement In California’s Inland Regions: With Implications for Cultural Services Providers and Funders,” (San Francisco: Wolf Brown and James Irvine Foundation, 2008), 4.**

#### **Modes of Engagement**

Arts activities are grouped by level of creative control exercised by the participant.

- 1. Inventive Participation** engages the mind, body and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic, regardless of skill level (e.g., composing music, writing original poetry, painting).
- 2. Interpretive Participation** is a creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing works of art, either individually or collaboratively, or engages one in arts learning (e.g., playing in a band, learning to dance).
- 3. Curatorial Participation** is the creative act of purposefully selecting, organizing and collecting art to the satisfaction of one’s own artistic sensibility (e.g., collecting art, downloading music and burning CDs).
- 4. Observational Participation** encompasses arts experiences that the participant selects or consents to have, which involve viewing or watching art created or performed by others (e.g., attending live performances, visiting art museums).
- 5. Ambient Participation** (not investigated in this study) includes encounters with art that the participant does not select (e.g., seeing architecture, hearing music in an elevator).

#### **Vectors of Engagement**

Cross-cutting the modes of engagement are vectors of engagement defined in terms of setting and social or cultural context.

- 1. Family-Based Engagement** provides a measure of arts activity occurring in a family social context.
- 2. Faith-Based Engagement** provides a measure of arts activity that occurs on the context of faith or in a place of worship.
- 3. Heritage-Based Engagement** provides a measure of arts activity that serves to celebrate or sustain a cultural heritage or ethnic identity.
- 4. Engagement in Arts Learning** captures the level at which a respondent is actively acquiring skills, either formally or informally.
- 5. Engagement at Arts Venues** serves as an aggregate measure of use of purpose-built arts venues for activities in all disciplines.
- 6. Engagement at Community Venues** serves as an aggregate measure of use of parks and outdoor settings, restaurants, bars and coffee shops, and community centers as venues for activities in each discipline. Vectors 5 and 6 permit comparison of users of conventional versus unconventional venues for arts activities.

**Figure 8: Questions for Service Providers, from Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak and Amy Kitchener, “Cultural Engagement In California’s Inland Regions: With Implications for Cultural Services Providers and Funders,” (San Francisco: Wolf Brown and James Irvine Foundation, 2008).**

**Connecting to the cultural ecology.** Do your programs address cultural literacy, participatory cultural practice, or consumption of professional cultural products? If you operate at one of these levels, how might you support activity at the other levels in order to strengthen the overall system? What other cultural programs and providers should you nurture and support because they help to build a constituency for your programs?

**Offering a variety of ways to engage.** Do you offer inventive, interpretive, curatorial or observational programs? Do you provide family-based or heritage-based engagement opportunities? What are the needs within your community for these different types of engagement? What does your mission say about the types of programs you can offer? How can your programs evolve to respond to the desire for personal creative expression?

**Delivering and packaging the program.** If you accept that different segments of the public prefer to engage with culture in different ways, in different languages, at different times, at different places, with different social expectations, how might you re-format or repackage your programs to appeal to a broader and more diverse crosssection of the public? What might you do to further differentiate your programs, or to develop “product lines” geared to distinct audiences?

**Motivating cultural role models.** What can your organization do to encourage and reward your constituents for introducing and involving their friends and family in creative and cultural activities? What efforts might be undertaken at the community level to identify, support and recognize cultural role models?

**Partnering for greater reach.** With what other organizations (e.g., businesses, social service agencies, academic programs) might you partner to reach a broader cross-section of the public?

**Representing the broad community.** What board and staff leadership do you need to be able to effectively program for diverse cultural communities? How can you tap into existing leadership networks within your community?

**Selecting the location.** How do your choices about venue and setting affect your likelihood of attracting different constituencies? What other community venues and settings might you use to reach a more diverse public? How might you engage your constituents in their homes? How can you leverage the content delivery systems in people’s homes (e.g., the radio, the CD player) to achieve a larger scale of impact among constituents that you do not currently serve? How can people without financial resources or mobility engage with your organization?

## Case Studies

### ***“Pro-Am” Capacity***

Pro-Am capacity, or the capacity to produce amateur-involved programming within a professional arts organization, exists in some of the organizations we researched. However, these organizations may or may not use the term amateur nor do they necessarily agree with the use of “amateur” as an identifier on the principle that it creates a specific label for audience members that creates exclusivity from the program. Rather, it is more inclusive to observe the use of the word “community” for example. Just as Cornerstone Theater uses the word “community” to describe the non-professional involvement in productions, so do certain organizations in this case study section.

### **Pacific Symphony and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra**

*“Orchestras need to learn to operate in an environment in which participatory audiences are up and ticket sales are down.”*

In Orange County, California, Pacific Symphony is reaching out to participatory audiences in new ways during their “Year of the Piano” 2010-2011 season. Pacific Symphony’s core purpose is to “enrich the human spirit through superior performances of symphonic music and community engagement.”<sup>42</sup> As their 33<sup>rd</sup> season approaches, the Symphony is proud of its relatively short history, packed with recognition and celebration from the surrounding community. The Symphony is one of the largest orchestras founded in the last 40 years, bringing an essential piece of cultural wealth to the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Orange County. The ensemble presents more than 100 concerts per year, along with educational and community programs that serve almost 300,000 people annually. Through artist commissions and innovative

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<sup>42</sup> “Core Purpose & History,” *About Us*, Pacific Symphony, accessed February 17, 2011, <http://www.pacificsymphony.org/main.taf?p=7>, 1.

contextual programming, Pacific Symphony continues to push the envelope of orchestral programming while navigating a shifting, widely diverse local community.

In keeping with innovative programming, Pacific Symphony launched the “All We Do Is Play” initiative in January 2011, involving a three-program approach to audience engagement and participation: “OC Can You Play?,” a public art/music program, “OC Can You Sing?,” an amateur singing competition, and “OC Can You Play With Us?,” an amateur side-by-side program. “OC Can You Play?” placed 20 donated pianos in public spaces throughout Orange County. Each piano was painted by local artists and will be auctioned to benefit the orchestra once the program concludes. The program is an adaptation of Sing for Hope’s “Play Me, I’m Yours” program, which installed 60 pianos in public spaces around New York City with the mission of community service and facilitating a mass music festival that gave music access to all. Pacific Symphony approached the idea with a social entrepreneur mindset in addition to community enrichment. Because they were in the midst of celebrating the “Year of the Piano,” it was a great opportunity to integrate the program into the ensemble’s awareness campaign. Pacific Symphony partnered with Yamaha and Kuwai to receive donated pianos. Participants, all ages and skill levels, were invited to come play the pianos or watch scheduled free performances at the piano sites. They were also given the online tools necessary to create their own events/performances, upload personal video and pictures, participate in scavenger hunts, visit all 20 pianos for ticket discounts, and vote for favorite content—all activities centered on public pianos placed by the organization.

Kelly Dylla, Director of Audience Engagement, explains that Pacific Symphony is “curating participatory experiences that become public art.” The idea that the orchestra is not creating the music involved in the experience but rather facilitating the creative art experience of

audience members is a radical challenge to traditional presenting structures in formal arts. Dylla also believes that in order for organizations to survive, they need to learn to operate in an environment in which participatory audiences are up and ticket sales are down—another challenging idea for institutionalized art makers.<sup>43</sup> One component necessary for success is goal alignment with marketing as well as public good and community service.

For example, the Baltimore Symphony orchestra hosts an annual “side-by-side” opportunity for amateur musicians, the Rusty Musicians at Strathmore program, much like the one Pacific Symphony will produce in May 2011 called “OC Can You Play With Us?”<sup>44</sup> A “side-by-side” performance usually involves an open call for “amateur” musicians to rehearse and perform a concert program with the professional orchestra. “Amateur” can and usually indicates non-professional musicians of a certain skill level, which can be indicated by the chosen concert repertoire, and who play an instrument called for in the concert program, which may or may not be part of the standard orchestral instrumentation. Again, because the word “amateur” does not have definitive meaning, quality, or skills judgments, the ensemble must articulate the parameters surrounding who may be eligible to participate in the side-by-side experience. In this type of participatory program, the musician can act as an instrumental agent and facilitator to the art experience for the amateurs.

The BSO requires amateurs apply and pay a participation fee upon acceptance. Subsequently, audiences flock to see their loved ones and friends perform a free, twenty-minute program on stage with the BSO. Currently, Pacific Symphony charges a \$50 participation fee to cover costs such as booking the performance space and paying the professional musicians. The fact that ensemble musicians are unionized means there is a strict, definite limit to what time and

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<sup>43</sup> Kelly Dylla, interview by Maria Paredes & Heather Pittman, Costa Mesa, CA, February, 17 2011.

<sup>44</sup> “Rusty Musicians,” Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, accessed February 26, 2011, <http://www.bsomusic.org/main.taf?p=3,34,6,1>.

services can be donated, which means Pacific Symphony will have to be creative in how they choose to make “OC Can You Play With Us?” sustainable. Additionally, participants are placed on a first-come, first-served basis and are required to provide their own instruments, except for large percussion. Pacific Symphony also uses this program as an opportunity to partner with and draw attention to the many community orchestras that can provide a space for amateur musicians to create music, which makes a valuable investment in the music community as a whole.

The idea that arts organizations are facilitators of artistic experiences and investment-makers can be difficult to quantify if one is attempting to convince a group (board members, executive team, etc.) of its merit. Dylla explains that it is essential that the idea has organizational buy-in. Because Dylla’s position as Director of Audience Engagement falls into  $\frac{1}{3}$  artistic production,  $\frac{1}{3}$  education, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  marketing, her position (and ideas) need access, buy-in, and strategic communication with all three departments. Without these elements, long-term sustainability and freedom for innovation might falter. It is tempting for organizations to place Audience Engagement positions under the Marketing department, but this creates a problem in that the placement diminishes the necessary focus on artistic curation and the audience experience. The program must have buy-in and sustainability accompanied with autonomy for survival. “I’m an advocate for having a full-time person within the organization that can steward new ideas about audience engagement,” explains Dylla, “I feel very lucky to have my job at the Pacific Symphony, and I hope there will be more positions like mine in the future. Ideally this person should have an excellent understanding of the art form, experience in arts education, and be well-versed or have some experience in marketing, particularly social media.”

Evaluation is another imperative component for innovative programming. Pacific Symphony tracked social media metrics, utilized qualitative responses from Facebook

participation, and anecdotal information. Reports of quantitative data were also compiled with numbers of people who participated in the video and ‘visit all 20 pianos’ contests. Because of the OC Can You Play? program, Pacific Symphony more than doubled Facebook post views, and 79 people created their own events online. More than 3500 viewers accessed the winner announcement video for OC Can You Sing?

Additionally, innovative programming needs room to “breathe” or grow, including space and allowance for risk. The arts industry is not generally recognized for innovative business practices because there is little room for risk—organizations survive on tight budgets based on multiple revenue streams stemming from contributions, grants, and generated income. However, Douglas McLennan, Founder and Editor of ArtsJournal, points out that the arts industry will have to allow room for failure and risk in order to test programming to reach participatory audiences.<sup>45</sup>

If one can relate these ideas to the visual art theory, Relational Aesthetics, first advanced by Nicolas Bourriaud, one understands that “the present-day social context restricts the possibilities of inter-human relations all the more because it creates spaces planned to this end.”<sup>46</sup> The traditional organizational structure separates the givers and receivers of art, therefore limiting who can make art and who is forced to sit back and receive it. The point Bourriaud makes it that “art is a state of encounter,”<sup>47</sup> and our research makes the point that professional arts organizations like Pacific Symphony can successfully facilitate that encounter.

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<sup>45</sup> McLennan.

<sup>46</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, “Relational Aesthetics” (France: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 16.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 15.

## **Southbank Centre and South Coast Repertory**

*“Collaboration is the new competition.”*

One goal underneath the participatory umbrella includes resource sharing. While most participatory programs focus on providing an experience, certain programs can focus relationships. The relationship among arts organizations can often seem competitive or isolated. But, as Russell Willis, President and CEO of the NAS, points out, “collaboration is the new competition.”<sup>48</sup> Two organizations are experimenting successfully with this relational idea of participation—how do other organizations participate and interact with yours?

Southbank Centre is one of the world’s largest arts centers resting on 21 acres in London’s cultural quarter along the River Thames. The site houses the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the Saison Poetry Library. They host programs and productions of all artistic genres and lodge the resident artists, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE).

This year, the Centre is participating in a celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Festival of Britain, a four-month celebration of British culture and creativity. Their programming surrounding this celebration features many opportunities for the public to be directly involved in the experience. Southbank’s Voicelab Director Mary King is heading the organization and production of the Massive Messiah—a production of Handel’s work featuring professional soloists and the early music choral group, The Sixteen, as well as the public. In various sections of the piece, 750 chosen community members will also perform with the choir. Community members can be individual singers or choirs that have applied to participate. Additionally,

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<sup>48</sup> Russell Willis Taylor, “National Arts Strategies,” presentation at the Bolz Center Collegium at the Wisconsin School of Business, Madison, WI, September 16, 2010.

participants have the opportunity to join rehearsals leading up to the performance. Southbank will place community a capella groups in various positions around campus in scheduled performance slots during the Festival as well; groups are welcome to apply for a slot.

Another component of the festival celebration is a 1951 Festival exhibition. Southbank is inviting community members to share their personal photos, memorabilia, video, letters, and other belongings relating to the 1951 Festival of Britain, which will go into a public exhibition, archive or publication. The goal is to involve the experiences and meaning the 1951 Festival evoked in the public with the current Festival. Those experiences will, in turn, be shared with all who come to visit.

Amateur orchestras are selected and invited to perform at Southbank in a free event. Southbank is highly invested in fostering community talent, and this concert allows exposure opportunities for up-and-coming artists. Similarly, the London Saxophone Choir performs at Southbank as a community ensemble composed of enthusiastic community or “amateur” musicians. Both groups bring a level of enthusiasm and repertoire versatility to Southbank’s program roster. The OAE is launching The Works, a new series of events that provide an “informal guided tour” of a well-known piece of music, followed by a full performance of the piece. The concert is approximately 80 minutes, but OAE facilitates a social aspect to their programs with live music in a bar before the concert and a meet-the-musicians opportunity after. Each of these music programs focus on inviting audiences in to create experiences in different ways through creation, learning or socializing. Art on Poetry accomplishes a similar idea in the visual arena: Peter Hellicar and Joel Gethin Lewis are installation artists who present visual/aural exhibitions that combine innovative open source software with three-dimensional interactive

experiences for attendees.<sup>49</sup> When attendees enter the exhibition, they are immersed in an experiential world that immediately creates a two-way relationship between viewer and artwork.

While amateur relationships and “non-traditional” partnerships are observably more widely accepted in the U.K., it is worth giving a brief overview of what that may look like for any organization. The traditional presenting structure of professional institutions generally rests on the economic transaction between organizational art product (concert) and audience (ticket buyers) with a community/educational program arm. The participatory concept looks to expand institutional interaction not only within diverse audiences, but outwardly with different types of organizations. Southbank is an excellent example of organizational commitment to outwardly-focused relationship building. Amateur orchestras, community jazz bands, general public, interactive visual arts are a small sampling of the non-traditional programming and relationships Southbank fosters.

What makes Southbank unique? It is an unwavering dedication to ensure that all people have an all-access pass to their programs. Many programs invite other organizations to utilize their resources and skills in the production or experience of art. The focus is dual: audience experience and organizational relationships. The health of those two emphases helps define success for the Southbank Centre.

South Coast Repertory will finish its 46<sup>th</sup> season this summer in the cradle of the Orange County, California cultural center, Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Like its resident counterparts, SCR is a relatively young but wildly successful company producing classic and new works that connect with the community. SCR states they rest on three organizational pillars: “artistic vision, a dynamic audience and exemplary community leadership.” As part of the dedication to audience and community leadership, SCR launched its Studio Series, a program “designed to create

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<sup>49</sup> Southbank Centre, accessed March 3, 2011, <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/>.

stronger ties between arts organizations” and create artistic exposure and access to new audiences. A company’s production, like Chance Theater, would be produced on SCR’s stage giving SCR’s audience exposure to new work and artistic ideas that would not usually find a way onto mainstage while allowing Chance the opportunity to connect with SCR’s “family” or audience.

The mutually-beneficial resource sharing is rooted in SCR’s history. “In 1964, "South Coast Repertory" was a band of untested former theatre students launching an artistic odyssey on little more than raw talent and enthusiasm.”<sup>50</sup> This entrepreneurial attitude is still evidenced by SCR willingness to open their minds and resources to other artists or companies, professional or not, although that is not how David Emmes, SCR Founder and Artistic Director, would make the distinction. “We do not think of our audience as professional or amateurs,” explains Emmes, “South Coast Repertory is wholly professional theatre and we do bring in non-union actors, however, they do want to be professional actors, they are professionally oriented, their goal is a professional goal.” The audience is not divided into professional or amateurs, rather the audience is upper-middle class and educated, a demographic SCR is continuously attempting to expand. There is a continuum and wide range in audience. SCR is learning how to reach out to new groups within the audience or community including theater neophytes.

Emmes recommends that organizations leave behind distinctions between professional and amateur when exploring new audiences. “Declining audience has nothing to do with professional or amateurs, there is no divide, there is a continuum—[professional and amateur] are not at all useful to deal with marketing issues,” he explained. Instead of lamenting aging subscribers and declining audiences, Emmes has a positive outlook after the financial meltdown:

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<sup>50</sup> “The South Coast Repertory Story,” South Coast Repertory, accessed February 9, 2011, <http://www.scr.org/about/scrstory.aspx>.

“There are new people that are coming to theatre,”<sup>51</sup> and SCR will continue to provide creative and provocative artistic excellence while welcoming newcomers.

### **Royal Shakespeare Company**

*"We are in a constant mission to push 'the RSC is for everyone.'"*

In Stratford-upon-Avon, the Royal Shakespeare Company is working on innovative participatory programming that attempts to extend its mission and work into the amateur theater realm. They describe their mission: “Our job is to connect and help others connect with Shakespeare and produce bold, ambitious work with living writers, actors and artists.” More importantly, though they hold this philosophy to be true and essential to their programming: “We believe in taking risks and pushing creative boundaries - finding new ways of doing things and learning through action. Our audiences are at the heart of all we do and we want to challenge, inspire and involve them.” These two imperatives guide the professional company in reaching out to all groups to provide co-creation and resource-sharing opportunities. Furthermore, RSC reaches approximately 65,000 students through educational programs and sells almost 600,000 tickets each year. The company celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2011 and will lead a World Shakespeare Festival as part of the Cultural Olympiad in 2012.

The thriving amateur theater community is unique to the U.K. Those companies are often excluded from professional interaction to the detriment of the professional company. In Scotland, since there is a greater geographical spread, community theatres are visited often and are regarded with greater respect than professional theatres. Prior to the 1960s, repertory theatre had an amateur side company that would help subsidize the main theatre. Professionals were not as “professional,” and the line between professional and amateur was often unclear and shifting.

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<sup>51</sup> David Emmes, interviewed by Maria Paredes & Heather Pittman, Costa Mesa, CA, February 10, 2011.

When the government created Art Council to subsidize the arts, theatre became more ambitious and it was able to assume risks because the work was subsidized rather than subject to the mercy of the box office. These subsidized production theatres pushed away amateurs. However, amateur practices give new, innovative ways of producing work as it is created for and by those on the peripheries of society, such as immigrants and low-income groups. Currently, there is a big push to work with groups that are hard to reach.

RSC recognized the disconnect between the two classifications of theater and Mike Boyd, RSC Artistic Director, created his “brainchild,” Open Stages. The impetus behind the program is rooted in the public’s support of RSC. Based on the nonprofit funding structure in the U.K., RSC uses taxpayers’ money to fund or subsidize activities, thus creating a strong obligation to be as open and inclusive to the public as possible. Ian Wainwright, Producer at Royal Shakespeare Company, said “we are in a constant mission to push the RSC is for everyone,”<sup>52</sup> especially since everyone funds it. Open Stages seeks to change the traditional, post-1960 process and share with amateurs their “modern methods to create theatre.” Through Open Stages, RSC wants to share technical skills, performance equipment, information and knowledge, and the stage itself. Open Stages “aims to embrace, develop and celebrate amateur theatre, re-forging the bond with the world of professional theatre.”<sup>53</sup> The program falls under Wainwright’s direction in conjunction with Geraldine Collinge, Director of Events and Exhibitions, in the Events and Exhibitions Department. Michael Boyd is one of the biggest advocates of Open Stages and the World Shakespeare Festival—the concept of essential buy-in at work.

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<sup>52</sup> Ian Wainwright, interviewed by Maria Paredes & Heather Pittman, via phone, February, 24 2011.

<sup>53</sup> “RSC Open Stages,” Royal Shakespeare Company, accessed February 28, 2011, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/projects/open-stages/>.

RSC seeks to capitalize on directors such as Ian McKellan who recall their own past work with amateurs as well as actors who transitional from amateurs to professionals. Britain is a great training ground for actors. The education system breeds actors in their 20s and it is part of mainstream education. Thus, when someone in their 30s wants to act, they feel they've "missed the boat." However, amateur theatre allows for actors or people in their 30s to develop the skills necessary to become an actor or transition to professionalism.

Open Stages will allow ten amateur regional companies to host amateur performances on RSC's stage. The companies will also participate in a Skills Exchange Event. RSC will host workshops and skills development for amateurs. Wainwright explained, "we learn that amateurs experiment with new ideas and we like to meet them at their knowledge of production," thus RSC can offer direction and inject new ideas and technology into their productions. "Amateurs make theatre happen in middle of nowhere and with no subsidies," Wainwright said. That level of flexibility and innovation is valuable to RSC. It's a two-way, mutually beneficial relationship. In the case of audiences that only visit professional or amateur productions, the connection provides each 'side' with access to their audiences. The shared value between RSC and the amateur community is to make theatre "as good" as it can be in all areas.

One challenge to that goal is mutual understanding. RSC had to focus on communication with amateur theaters to reach a level of understanding about how amateurs function and create work in their communities. The two 'sides' of theater had become so alienated since the time of Winston Churchill that a concept of "high art" developed based on accessibility and money. Wainwright points out that the music scene in North East Gateshead is less defined by amateur versus professional and more focused on the production of art for all to access. RSC is looking to bridge the divide between professional theater and that segment of the public called amateur.

“Theatre is collaborative, needs encouragement, and place to do that,” said Wainwright, “our purpose is not to fundraise.” Purpose originates from RSC’s responsibility to make their work available to all.

RSC has not yet determined how they will measure impact or conduct self-assessment of new programs like Open Stages. They also struggle with questions of the definition of good art and how an organization assesses good art. The more people RSC involves in producing theatre, the more advocacy is generated for theater. Open Stages “is a really good advocacy project” and benefits the entire industry.

Because Open Stages is not yet in production, RSC can only observe and respond to the community’s interest in the program. Wainwright said, “We knew it was a useful idea—people are very keen to be involved in RSC.” The company is receiving highly positive responses from the amateur community. RSC demonstrates that regardless of how an organization labels or defines their audience at large, a dedication to inclusiveness and sharing can produce mutually beneficial relationships as well as positive effects industry-wide.

### **Pacific Chorale**

*“You made it so easy for all of us to participate!”*

Another Orange County organization, Pacific Chorale, is practicing interactivity with community members. Pacific Chorale is also a relatively young ensemble performing at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. They produce approximately 20 concerts per year, and won the ASCAP Chorus America "Alice Parker Award for Adventurous Programming" in 2005. They are one of the top 10 budgeted American choruses. Their mission statement reads, “Pacific Chorale enriches and educates the community by demonstrating outstanding leadership in the

performance, creation and preservation of choral music,”<sup>54</sup> which compels them to reach out to all constituents and involve as many community members in the organization as possible.

The Chorale is composed of a “paid core” of approximately 30 singers and a “non-paid” core of 150 singers, all of which are professionals. The non-paid core members are considered volunteer and dedicate significant time to rehearse and perform with the Chorale. Kelly Ruggirello, President of Pacific Chorale, is very careful not to use the word amateur in describing any volunteer singer from the non-paid core or community simply because it would be a false indicator. The organization’s standard and mission of artistic excellence is maintained in all performances because volunteer and community singers are considered professional as they make a living singing with other groups or maintain a professional level of skill and musicianship. This is important to note as the Festival Chorus program is discussed. Additionally, the organization’s volunteers constitute a large percentage of ticket buyers.

The Pacific Chorale Festival Chorus expands the core chorus of 180 to approximately 300 members by adding additional community singers. Community singers are singers who join Pacific Chorale for solely this program. Usually, they are professional singers with other organizations in Southern California, vocal teachers, and others with professional training—the main difference between Pacific Chorale and community singers is community singers do hold a vocational position with Pacific Chorale. However, if the singers need additional preparation for the Festival Chorus, Pacific Chorale offers musicianship courses for a small fee throughout the year. These courses have become a source of connectivity between the community singers and the organization because it provides an opportunity for singers to interact over the long-term so

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<sup>54</sup> “Mission,” Pacific Chorale, accessed February 19, 2011, [http://www.pacificchorale.org/about\\_us/mission.php](http://www.pacificchorale.org/about_us/mission.php).

that the festival is not simply the one and only interaction—a relationship begins to develop ahead of the festival. The 300-strong chorus convenes every August to give a performance in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. The program originated from a \$100,000 NEA grant promoting community festival programming. Despite a program cost of \$50,000, it remains fully funded every year with the idea of corporate sponsorship on reserve. Interestingly, it does not cannibalize other Chorale programs, and donors tend to increase giving to include the Festival Chorus program rather than diverting from their original contribution.

The event draws the organization's most diverse audience and "sells out" consistently—Pacific Chorale does not charge for admission. Despite free admission, the Festival Chorus has turned out to be a revenue-generating program because it generates single-ticket buyers, new subscriptions, new donors, and increased giving throughout the year for Pacific Chorale beyond the festival program. In fact, 49 new subscriptions were initialized immediately after the 2010 Festival. So far, the Festival Chorus is the biggest and most successful audience development initiative launched by Pacific Chorale. It draws singers from 83 cities and seven states. To participate, singers must register on a first-come, first-served basis. Within hours of opening registration for the event, Pacific Chorale is inundated with requests and interest in participation. They observed rave reception almost immediately when program was first introduced. Pacific Chorale is careful to keep its finger on the community pulse in regards to attitudes surrounding the program—this observable data is important in assessing program success. Singers ultimately involve their family and friends who, in turn, get brought into the "fold" over the long term through this festival program as a point of introduction. As the festival ages, participants are generally trending younger and more diverse.

Because community singers must be professionally oriented to participate, this is not a true “side-by-side” experience; however, the attitude of inclusion and participation is still prevalent. The participatory program does not dilute Pacific Chorale’s core product, but, through a new space under the organizational umbrella, new opportunities for art experiences and co-creation arise. As a leader or facilitator, Ruggirello explains that an organization must be conservative in the resources and money devoted to non-core programs. Additionally, when launching a participatory initiative, proactive planning for community betterment rather than financial gain is essential. Following Kelly Dylla’s explanation of goal alignment, Ruggirello emphasizes that initiatives like this one should always have a primary goal of community betterment. Festival Chorus was launched purely as an “altruistic” education/community program, which left Pacific Chorale unprepared at first for the overwhelming positive response in terms of audience development. The expectation never included revenue generation.

In the future, Ruggirello predicts that the Festival Chorus will have to expand to meet demand. Approximately 30% of the 2010 Festival singers were first-time participants. The ensemble could grow to 350-450 singers with the possibility of adding another performance/Festival Chorus. This presents new questions of sustainability and funding concerns, but a rapid growth rate and strong community interest is “great problem to have,” says Ruggirello. “The Chorale actually grew during the recession”<sup>55</sup> thanks to thoughtful and conservative planning and strategic guidance, which allows the Festival Chorus to expand.

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<sup>55</sup> Kelly Ruggirello, interview by Heather Pittman, via phone, February, 10 2011.

## ***Participatory***

*“Art is no longer a spectator sport, and the game’s only just begun.”<sup>56</sup>*

Under the umbrella of participatory art we explored a variety of art forms as supported by their respective institutions and programs. Three of the organizations are grantees of the James Irvine Foundation’s Artistic Innovation Fund: The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Armand Hammer Museum of Art (Hammer), and the Los Angeles Music Center (Music Center). The James Irvine Foundation’s working definition of innovation is “instances of change that provide new pathways to fulfilling the mission, are discontinuous from previous practice, and result from a shift in underlying organizational assumptions.”<sup>57</sup> The grantees are asked to evaluate the organization on a rubric scale to assess the ability for the organization as a whole to experiment in developing innovative programs and the institutional capacity to integrate practices of these innovative programs to adapt to the existing environment. Continual assessment throughout the process of developing and implementing the programs is vital.

As stated in the literature review, participatory and Pro-Am capacity programs do not entirely suit the conventional arts non-profit model practices. We can use the James Irvine Foundation’s definition of innovation and apply it to both the participatory framework and Pro-Am model as the synergy of these programs need (1)“new pathways to fulfill the mission,” (2) can “be discontinuous from previous practice,” (3) and not only result but require “a shift in underlying organizational assumptions.”<sup>58</sup> The latter will result in a transformation of the organizational culture since it challenges the formal presentation and structure of arts production.

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<sup>56</sup> Meg Floryan, “Interactive and Participatory Art,” Art:21 Blog (June 3, 2010), accessed April 23, 2011, <http://blog.art21.org/2010/06/03/interactive-and-participatory-art/>.

<sup>57</sup> A report with lessons learned from the implementation of innovative programming will be released in 2011. James Irvine Foundation, “Artistic InnovationFund” Extract from working paper by EmcArts on innovation in the arts (October 2006), 3, accessed April 23, 2011, <http://irvine.org/assets/pdf/evaluation/AIFemcArtsDefiningInnovation.pdf>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

In the visual arts there is a shift to participatory arts as artists begin creating works that are non-object based and focus on the experience beyond the encounter of a viewer and an artwork. This has been going on since the 1930s, with Dada, and the 1950s with conceptual art/Fluxus. This participatory art practice is known as relational aesthetics, as coined by Bourriaud in 1998, which focuses on “inter-human relations” prompted by artworks in which relational art becomes “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”<sup>59</sup> People become a community or an audience that has agency to co-create meaning with the artist’s work. This is not passive private consumption, such as watching TV, but active and participatory engagement. The models of action are conceived by the artist as the game for the audience to play in. As Bourriaud states, in this game there is no “end to art;” it is “forever re-enacted, in relation to its function, in other words, in relation to the players and the system which they construct and criticize.”<sup>60</sup> One result of participatory arts and co-creation may be a work that is unfinished or is ongoing as it engages both organizations and their communities beyond an object based work and brings them into a social and public context that constantly changes. Some of the elements of relational art arise in the innovative participatory models integrated in programs at MOCA, the Hammer, the Music Center, and STREB.

### **MOCA—Museum of Contemporary Art**

Engagement Party at MOCA is funded by a two-year grant from the James Irvine Foundation’s Arts Innovation Fund. The pilot year launched in 2008 and will continue with free social events on every first Thursday of the month from 7:00pm-10:00pm throughout 2012. The aim of Engagement Party is to present “new artworks in the form of social events and

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<sup>59</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, “Relational Aesthetics” (France: Les Presses du Réel, 2002) 112-113.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 18.

performances by LA-Based Artist Collectives.”<sup>61</sup> This innovative way to engage participatory audiences and the arts community has at its core,

“MOCA’s interest in challenging the conventions of a collecting institution and more fully addressing the role of non-object based work throughout the cultural landscape. The program gives a high-profile platform to local artist collectives who do not produce marketable objects but are nonetheless conducting original research and dialogue, and creating dynamic multi-disciplinary projects.”<sup>62</sup>

Nine artistic collectives have served in MOCA’s three month residency program for Engagement Party, including: Neighborhood Public Radio, Finishing School, Knife and Fork, OJO, Slanguage, My Barbarian, Lucky Dragons, Ryan Heffington and the East-Siders, and The League of Imaginary Scientists. An oversight committee composed of non-senior MOCA staff from across departments gives organizational support to this initiative. They are called the “Think Tank;” currently the thirteen members are led by Senior Education Program Manager, Aandrea Stang. Their responsibilities include developing “goals and parameter” and selecting the artistic collectives.<sup>63</sup> Blogs are kept by the artistic collective in residence and are used as a platform for dialogue among the public, MOCA, and the artists.

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<sup>61</sup> MOCA, online video, “In Your Ear: Neighborhood Public Radio,” accessed April 30, 2011, <http://vimeo.com/23014886>.

<sup>62</sup> “Launches Engagement Party,” MOCA, accessed April 24, 2011, [http://www.moca.org/pdf/press/Engagement\\_Party\\_release\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.moca.org/pdf/press/Engagement_Party_release_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>63</sup> “Engagement Party: Finishing School,” MOCA, accessed April 24, 2011, [http://www.moca.org/party/finishingschool/?page\\_id=2](http://www.moca.org/party/finishingschool/?page_id=2).

## Armand Hammer Museum of Art

*“The Hammer Museum’s Public Engagement program seeks to create a new kind of interactive museum: an artist-driven visitor engagement program that encourages contact among visitors, artists, and museum staff, and activates spaces in imaginative ways.”<sup>64</sup>*

In a conversation with Elizabeth Cline, Curatorial Associate of Public Engagement, she explained how the Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) and Public Engagement programs resulted from the ideas of the Artist Council. This council is an “advisory board of internationally recognized artists who work closely with Hammer staff and advice on all aspects of the museum’s operations.”<sup>65</sup> In 2009 the Hammer received the Arts Innovation Fund grant from the James Irvine Foundation to launch Public Engagement to explore the visitor experience so as to deepen relationships with its guests. A.I.R. has a research and development component that studies how a museum, through the artist’s lens, can develop onsite engagement and how space in a museum can be engaged through participatory works. This residency looks into social relational practice inside the museum. Specific goals include: (1) to have an artist lens focus on and innovate with existing programs at the Hammer, (2) fulfill the museum’s responsibility to support artists in residency, (3) adapt innovative practices within the institution.

In the first year of the artist in residency program, Machine Project, a Los Angeles artistic collective led by Mark Allen, collaborated with Public Engagement to create a year of programming. Allen made the proposals, which had to go through a vetting process involving staff, from curators to legal personnel, since these programs affected all parts of the museum. In this process Cline made sure the projects remained scalable and Allen had to maintain flexibility

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<sup>64</sup> “A.I.R. Public Engagement,” Hammer, accessed March 23, 2011, <http://hammer.ucla.edu/programs/programs/cat/17>.

<sup>65</sup> “About the Residency Program,” Hammer, March 24, 2011, <http://hammer.ucla.edu/residencies/about.html>.

with his proposals. The results of this collaboration and co-creation were 80 performances that integrated 200 artists, and 1,000 visitors. Machine Project and its collaborators created installation works that used non-traditional spaces to engage a variety of audiences—“from intimate, focused performances for one or two audience members, to dispersed, ambient spatial pieces without formal audiences at all.”<sup>66</sup> For example, Visitors Dream-In at the Hammer invited “dreamers” to make a \$25 campsite reservation to “camp out in the Hammer courtyard and collect any dreams that occur during their stay.”<sup>67</sup> The campers were treated to experimental dreaming workshops, bedtime stories and a morning waking concert; on the next day dreams were reenacted by Gawdafful Theater.

Cline expressed that Machine Project taught Hammer how to look at unused spaces in the museum and to activate these as a way to engage audiences. The unannounced performances allowed Hammer to recognize that art can be spontaneous; the artist can show up, and that museums do not have to create containers for it. According to Cline, challenges with Public Engagement programs include the fact that “some audiences do not want to engage with us.”<sup>68</sup> She then asks, “How do we get people to participate or pay attention? How do we present these programs?” Further problems arise when programs, such as Machine Project’s, need to be worked around the “containers” in the museum. As an institution that uses a taxonomical structure to organize knowledge it has to catalogue and categorize everything. Thus, the spontaneous and at times non-object based programs present a challenge to classify in its taxonomical system.

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<sup>66</sup> “A.I.R. Machine Project, Artist in Residency,” Hammer, accessed March 24, 2011, [http://hammer.ucla.edu/residencies/detail/residency\\_id/14](http://hammer.ucla.edu/residencies/detail/residency_id/14).

<sup>67</sup> “A Hammer Dream-In,” Hammer, accessed April 24, 2011, [http://hammer.ucla.edu/programs/detail/program\\_id/496](http://hammer.ucla.edu/programs/detail/program_id/496).

<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth Cline, interview by Maria Paredes, Los Angeles, CA, March 29, 2011.

Regardless of A.I.R. programs' newness, Hammer received positive feedback from the results of 274 exit interviews. From these respondents 76% felt welcomed at Hammer and 57% thought the educational experience through A.I.R. was excellent. From further discussions with visitors, Cline learned their want of different modes of engagement—"other ways to interact or think around the exhibitions."<sup>69</sup> Hammer will keep supporting and integrating practices that take into consideration what they practice through A.I.R. that is a conceptual space of engagement.

### **Los Angeles Music Center**

At the Music Center the commitment to "building civic vitality by strengthening community through the arts" is unwavering. Josephine Ramirez, who researched informal nonprofessional art making and its relationship to individual and community vitality as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, was brought to work with the educational staff at the Music Center to look at how the institution could increase its connection to community artists. With this aim, in July 2004 Ramirez and her Music Center team helped launch Active Arts to foster civic engagement through the participation of Los Angeles communities in the arts.

Through Active Arts "[r]ecreational artists of all skill levels sing, dance, play music and tell their stories at year-round, low-cost or free events... Active Arts events pulse with social interchange and everyday creative muscle, bringing together the diverse communities of Los Angeles by engaging them in meaningful, joyful participatory arts experiences."<sup>70</sup> To achieve this, a space that is welcoming and made about "all of us" enjoying the arts is created using the Music Center's open spaces. These experiences demystify the purpose of professional art organizations by breaking down notions or perceptions of access. Ramirez discusses this

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<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Cline, email conversation by Maria Paredes, April 29, 2011.

<sup>70</sup> "Music Center At-a-Glance," Music Center, accessed March 22, 2011, <http://www.musiccenter.org/about/background.html>.

program's capacity to "give people a sense that the Music Center is their music center, a civic center" where creative expression is ignited—there is social interchange and cultural boundaries are crossed.<sup>71</sup>

In a conversation with Ming Ng, Director of Active Arts at the Music Center, she described the "activators" to be the heart of the program. Activators facilitate the Active Arts programs; these are dedicated volunteers who are "involved in developing and shaping the program. They are not instructors, but they are the brain power, the ones who play music at home, the ones singing at church, they are the experts."<sup>72</sup> In participating as activators these community artists also take on the role of ambassadors for the program in their communities. During the events they are the buzz of the show, as they encourage "doers" to join in dancing, singing, storytelling, and in experiencing the co-creation of art through a social exchange. It is through Active Arts that the Music Center can offer a full spectrum of art experiences. The institution still presents the highest art at the best skill level through its regular programming, but through Active Arts it makes performing arts not just about watching but about people engaging in Do-it-Yourself programs at low or no cost.

The biggest challenge faced by the program is the attitudes involved with the commodification of the arts in the United States. Ms. Ng shared that "people are so tiered into the professional presentation of the arts, buying a CD or going to see a ballet... we leave it to the professionals, we commodity art experiences." These attitudes can define art as a product for purchase. In participatory arts, which most of the time are non-object based, these notions can prohibit the audience from participating in activity or defining the experience as art. In this

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<sup>71</sup> Music Center, video, "Active Arts At The Music Center: Changing the way a performing arts center relates to its city," accessed March 24, 2011, <http://www.musiccenter.org/events/activearts.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Ming Ng, phone interview by Maria Paredes, March 24, 2011.

manner Active Arts challenges these attitudes by integrating community artists and “doers” into the co-creation of an art experience.

### **STREB—Ringside, INC.**

STREB is an example of a small size organization that is dedicated to re-writing audience behavior in order to develop a new cultural paradigm focused on art as action through an open-access mindset. Elizabeth Streb, choreographer and “once called the Evel Knievel of dance,” founded in 2003 S.L.A.M. (STREB Lab for Action Mechanics) in Brooklyn, NY.<sup>73</sup> It has as its purpose to

*provide necessary resources for the creation, performance and preservation of original dance works and enrich general public in areas of culture and art.*

This is informed by Streb’s artistic vision and creative approach. The S.L.A.M. physical space, a former loading facility for the Dutch Mustard Company that has 30 foot ceilings, is open to people who want to interact and engage with the art process or observe the company’s rehearsals. It is the aim of an open-access philosophy to “demystify the process of making art by bridging the once private creative activity into the traffic of everyday experience.”<sup>74</sup> Performances are also shown as work in progress to allow for innovation, creativity, and risk taking by the Action Heroes, Streb’s company dancers, and people involved from the neighborhood.

Cathy Einhorn, Co-Managing Director at STREB, indicated that the programs and classes offered to the public are not directed at training professional future company members. They are intended for “people [to] partake in action and achieve their best.” This follows Elizabeth Streb’s

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<sup>73</sup> “Choreographer Elizabeth Streb joins EmcArts Board of Directors,” EmcArts, accessed April 24, 2011, <http://www.emcart.org/index.cfm?returnid=17415&newsid=1643&pagepath=News&id=17425>.

<sup>74</sup> STREB, emailed document, “Emerging Artist Commissioning Program,” 1.

operating principle—“everyone has the potential to be a mover,” which is very different from principles found in art forms, like ballet.<sup>75</sup>

Works and programs at S.L.A.M. are designed through a collaborative process between STREB staff and community organizations. An example of this is the organization’s POP Action School, which has formed partnerships with Greenpoint YMCA’s “Kids in Control” program for at-risk youth. It is noted that “since the school’s opening, weekly classes have doubled while enrollment has tripled and ongoing community partnerships have formed.”<sup>76</sup> Through the AOP (Action Opportunity Program) people have the opportunity to work side-by-side with company dancers, Extreme Action Heroes, in all areas of STREB. The Emerging Arts Commissioning Program, funded by a Gerome Foundation grant, allows for five emerging artists to receive access to S.L.A.M. during hours that work with their schedule, and to receive money through the re-granting of funds. Resources found at S.L.A.M. include the 30 foot ceiling, a trapeze, scaffolding, and low/high wire. Emerging artists use these resources to create their own works or collaborate with STREB’s Action Heroes, who are trained in ballet, gymnastics and, most importantly, are “bold movers who have a good sense of their bodies.”<sup>77</sup> Through these opportunities, Streb aims at engaging audiences through co-creation and to inspire the creation of art action experiments.

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<sup>75</sup> Cathy Einhorn, phone interview by Maria Paredes, March 22, 2011.

<sup>76</sup> STREB, emailed document, “Emerging Artist Commissioning Program,” 1.

<sup>77</sup> Einhorn.

## CONCLUSION

Pacific Chorale was able to tap into a stream of relationship building that accidentally transformed into a stream of revenue with its Choral Festivals. The goal was to give community singers an experience with the Chorale on stage at the Segerstrom. The response has been overwhelming year after year. Pacific Symphony is making their foray into participatory programs with the All We Do Is Play initiative. Participants, all ages and skill levels, were invited to create their own piano experience with OC Can You Play? Twenty pianos around Orange County became hubs of audience-driven content and experience that Pacific Symphony facilitated through public awareness and social media. Questions for the future might entail evaluation and measurement of program impact as Brown, et al discuss in their research. But, for now, it is important to observe how the public assimilates the program into their lives. Participatory programs begin with the question, “what can we make together?” Arts organizations can strategically choose programs that have aesthetic purpose and advance the mission.

Southbank, South Coast Repertory, and the Royal Shakespeare Company are three varied examples of how relationship building can be translated into resource sharing. How do other organizations participate and interact with yours? Additionally, how can your resources serve to creative positive impact in others? The Southbank Centre fosters open and invitational relationships that can give smaller organizations a more public and vast platform on which to work. Similarly, South Coast Repertory shares new artistic ideas and works with their audience by inviting diverse theater companies to produce on their stages. RSC demonstrates that regardless of how an organization labels or defines their audience or organizational relationships at large, a commitment to inclusiveness and resource circulation can produce mutually beneficial relationships as well as positive effects industry-wide.

One trend observed in innovative programming within these case studies is a tolerance for risk and exploration without quantitative results as an end goal. Bill Ivey makes the point that nonprofits avoid risk-taking for three main reasons: undercapitalization, “tyranny of results,” and limited resources competing with a huge mission. Because arts organizations devote extra resources to expanding current activities, often nothing is reserved for future programming or innovation.<sup>78</sup> Each of these organizations has been able to extend beyond the comfort zone and try new ideas with the flexibility to allow users to define how their offering is best used in experience and meaning. They also demonstrate a low financial risk in programming through creative low-cost resources and goal alignment with funding sources.

The 2009 A.I.R. programs with Machine Project allowed Hammer to assess its organizational and physical capacity to present and provide art experiences. For the 2011 A.I.R. residency program, curators chose five artist programs to implement to allow for “a more prescriptive approach to the program...projects that were more aligned to the grant, and also for the museum to know exactly what to expect for the year, instead of constantly vetting ideas and projects.”<sup>79</sup> Since Hammer’s experience with Machine Project was new, along with a new Public Engagement position, they learned the importance of flexible collaboration and the integration/involvement of staff from an array of departments. Cline states that, “we had to learn to be aware of and work with every department to address their concerns which were mostly space in the museum (storage or event space), time, and staffing hours.” Audience engagement needs constant internal and external assessment of the organizations capacity to take innovative participatory programs.

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<sup>78</sup> Bill Ivey, “Is There a Better Case for the Arts? A Public Conversation Among People Who Care,” Artsjournal.com., accessed March 16, 2011, [http://www.artsjournal.com/muse/2005/03/the\\_nonprofit\\_d.php](http://www.artsjournal.com/muse/2005/03/the_nonprofit_d.php).

<sup>79</sup> Cline.

Both Hammer and MOCA built organizational capacity by using existing human resources to integrate their respective programs into organizational structure. MOCA used staff from various departments to create the oversight committee, and Hammer developed the position of Public Engagement to manage the programs under A.I.R. These organizations also collaborated with local artistic collectives who utilized their networks to create awareness. This engages the local arts community, but the fallback of this, as experienced by Hammer, is a limited audience, usually museum-goers and those previously familiar with Machine Project, attended the pertinent events. Cline concludes that this could be ameliorated through more extensive marketing.

Hammer focused on collaborating with artists to engage space in order to engage people in ambient participation, while MOCA focused on collaborating with artists to challenge institutional assumptions. Through this partnership, MOCA, wanted to represent the broader Los Angeles artistic community to connect to its cultural engine. These artistic collectives, who create art experiences through alternative mediums—at times non-object based—challenged the conventions of the collecting museum as they did not produce an object that the organization could add to its permanent collection. Instead, artists created a social experience for museum visitors by offering a variety of ways to engage. These programs were delivered to the audience at an unconventional time—Thursday nights from 7-10pm—and marketed as social events to draw in a younger crowd.

The Music Center frames participatory arts through civic engagement as it attempts to demystify the organization by emphasizing access and participation in the arts. Here, one observes an example of partnerships between an organization and members of the community's cultural engine. The activators are the ambassadors to the program—collaborating with the

music center staff to create participatory events for Los Angeles residents. In this case study we also observe the use of terms that are not polarizing or exclusive, such as: “activators,” “doers,” “observers,” “participants,” and “do-it-yourself.”

STREB uses the model of inventive participation to integrate their neighborhood and visitors—regardless of skill level—to add value in the areas of culture at a local and global scale. STREB’s philosophy is rooted in participation as it calls everyone a “mover.” The Music Center seeks to demystify their organization while STREB seeks to demystify the process of making art. For this vision, STREB applies an open source mindset to supplement the participatory philosophy, which makes this an innovative organization allowing access to participants and their full engagement in the art processes at S.L.A.M.

Each organization studied has valuable lessons to offer as guidance and advice for those contemplating innovative programming involving participation. It is for each organization to digest these ideas and apply a level of individuality and openness.

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