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Paper

THE ART BIAS WITHIN THE ARTS: CREATIVITY IN THE FIELD OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT THEATRE MANAGEMENT (2015)

By Robert M. Wildman

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The Art Bias within the Arts: Creativity in the Field of Not-for-Profit Theatre Management

Robert M. Wildman
Long Island University, USA

In the not-for-profit arts industry in the United States, many organizations have separate artistic and managerial leaders. In the not-for-profit theatre field, personnel tend to discount managers as being a creative force because they are not artists. Creativity research on the “art bias” explains this tendency to equate creativity with artistic talent, and therefore to label as creative only individuals who specifically possess artistic talent. A dozen of our nation’s pre-eminent not-for-profit theatre managers, responding to a series of questions on this subject, acknowledge the existence of this misconception but dispute its validity. They cite specific examples of how their creativity manifests itself, and benefits their respective organizations in such areas as artistic decision-making, hiring of both administrative and artistic personnel, financial management, revenue generation through marketing and fundraising, and facilities acquisition and renovation.

“In many [arts management academic training] programs and in many organizations to be identified as an administrator means that you are not an artist – you’re not somebody who thinks of herself or himself as having an artistic sensibility. Worse, I think you are perceived as being not creative.”

-- Susan Medak, Berkeley Repertory Theatre
(quoted in Channick, 2007, p.133-134).

Not-for-profit arts institutions in the United States are generally staffed with both artists and managers. Museums are largely run by people from the curatorial ranks, specialists in the visual arts (Smith, 2014). Dance companies frequently emerge around the vision of a particular choreographer, and management is hired later to facilitate the company’s growth and need for increased administrative sophistication. Symphony orchestras have conductors that who are the public face of the organization even if the administrative leader, their equal at least on paper, also reports directly to the board.

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Robert M. Wildman, Long Island University, Post Campus, Department of Theatre, Dance and Arts Management, College of Arts, Communications and Design, 720 Northern Boulevard, Brookville, NY 11548-1300 USA. [E-mail: robert.wildman@liu.edu](mailto:robert.wildman@liu.edu).

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The majority of American not-for-profit theatres are “two-headed animals” from their inception, with artistic and administrative leaders serving as equals and reporting to the board. Some organizations are led by a single person functioning essentially as an artistic producer (e.g. Goodspeed Musicals, Roundabout Theatre Company) but these companies are generally exceptions to the rule. Through this bifurcated structure in the American not-for-profit theatre the image of “the artistic leader” (read: the creative person) and “the management leader” (read: the business person) has emerged, leading to the perception that theatre managers are unlikely to be creative.

A similar study on the notion of managerial creativity could be conducted in artistic disciplines other than theatre or in the commercial sector. However, in the commercial theatre, projects are largely producer-initiated and driven, with ultimate artistic and administrative responsibility residing in the producer or producing team. The not-for-profit theatre, with its unique “two-headed animal” structure, is therefore the exclusive focus of this paper.

A qualitative investigation of a dozen managers of American not-for-profit theatres yields valuable insights into how they came into the field, whether they self-identify as creative and how that creativity manifests itself both in their work and in their collaborations with their artistic partners.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROFESSION OF THEATRE MANAGEMENT

While individual theatrical producers and entrepreneurs have existed for many years, including the “actor/managers” of the 19th century, the profession of not-for-profit theatre management is generally perceived as having begun, or at least dramatically expanded, in the 1960s. This activity paralleled that decade’s “arts boom,” attributable primarily to three events: 1) The Kennedys’ high regard for the arts and the higher profile accorded the arts during that administration, leading to 2) the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, after Kennedy’s assassination, but initiated earlier, and 3) The Ford Foundation’s visionary grantmaking programs in the fields of theatre and dance, spearheaded by W. McNeil Lowry starting in 1961. (In the five years after the Ford Foundation launched that initiative, 26 major new theatre companies opened in the United States.) Those three events created the perfect storm that led to the dramatic growth in not-for-profit performing arts institutions since the 1960s.

As the need for more sophisticated management for these organizations became clear, graduate-level academic programs began to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s to train those managers. Yale, New York University, and Brooklyn College, The City University of New York were among the first to offer such programs. Unlike such fields as law and medicine, in which most universities offer the same degrees for training in those fields (JD, MD), the universities offering arts management training award a wide-range of diverse degrees (MFA, MA, MBA), to some extent reflecting their programs’ differing emphases, particularly on the balance between “arts training” and “business training.” (Undergraduate arts management training programs began to be created about 20 years later and are also characterized by a broad range of degrees from BFA to BA to BS.)

PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY AMONG ARTISTS AND SCIENTISTS

The creativity divide that exists between the arts and sciences has been called “the two cultures” (Snow, 1959). People who work in the arts tend to self-identify as

creative whereas scientists generally do not and people who work in the arts are usually deemed by the world to be “creative,” whereas scientists typically are not (Kaufman, 2009). A number of studies, however, yield contradictory findings on this subject.

Furnham, Batey, Booth, Patel and Lozinskaya (2011) found that while students in the arts gave themselves credit for creative achievements more frequently than science students, and also self-reported more highly than science students on creativity, in fact, creativity measures discovered no actual differences. A follow-up study in the same paper by Furnham et al. created a finer distinction by separating science into natural sciences and social sciences, yet came up with the same findings: While arts students believed themselves to be more creative, no actual evidence backed up that assumption. Kaufman, Pumacchua and Holt (2013) found that while majors in both the fields of the arts and the sciences ranked themselves more highly on creativity than those who majored in other fields, it was only the science majors who actually scored higher on measured creativity. However an earlier study by Silvia, Winterstein, Willse, Barona, Cram, Hess, Martinez and Richard (2008), when comparing people who majored in the arts with people who majored in more “conventional” fields (their word choice), found that arts majors indeed scored more highly on measured creativity.

Glăveanu (2011) found that most people selected art-related symbols when asked to suggest or rate symbols that suggest creativity. Selectors justified their choices with reasons such as when people think of creativity, they think of art. Glăveanu (2014) argues that these associations are an example of an “art bias.” One might naturally assume that art bias would extend to managers in the arts as well; however, Runco noted, the art bias concerns “the misunderstanding of creativity that equates it with artistic talent. The result: only individuals with artistic talent are labeled creative” (2007, p. 384). This conclusion suggests that the tendency to perceive arts managers as non-creative because they may not be practicing artists themselves could be called “the art bias within the arts.”

THE CURRENT SAMPLE

In 1966, managers representing 26 of America’s not-for-profit theatres formed the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), for the purpose of collective bargaining (Calta, 1966a, 1966b). Initially LORT negotiated solely with Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers, but shortly thereafter created an agreement with the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and, more recently, with United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 IATSE, covering scenic, costume, lighting, projection and sound designers. Seventy-one of America’s largest not-for-profit theatres are currently LORT members (League of Resident Theatres, 2015).

For the purpose of this paper, the author distributed a series of questions to current (and in one case, emeritus) administrative leaders of 20 American not-for-profit theatre companies. Twelve of the 20 (60%) responded. Participants and the organizations at which they are currently employed are listed in Table One.

Nine of the 12 participants currently run theatres that are members of LORT. Two of them (Hannah Grannemann and Barbara Hodgen) are, at the moment, running organizations that are not LORT members, but previously ran theatres that operated under the LORT contract. The twelfth (Jessica L. Andrews) is recently retired after a long and distinguished tenure managing a number of LORT theatres.

Table 1
Participants and the Organizations Currently Employed

NAME	TITLE	THEATRE COMPANY	CITY
Stephen J. Albert	Executive Director	Court Theatre	Chicago, IL
Jessica L. Andrews	Managing Director Emeritus	Arizona Theatre Company	Tucson and Phoenix, AZ
Joshua Borenstei	Managing Director	Long Wharf Theatre	New Haven, CT
Hannah Grannemann	Executive Director	Children's Theatre of Charlotte	Charlotte, NC
Barbara Hodgen	Executive Director	New Conservatory Theatre Center	San Francisco, CA
Chris Jennings	Managing Director	Shakespeare Theatre Company	Washington D.C.
Susie Medak	Managing Director	Berkeley Repertory Theatre	Berkeley, CA
Stephen Richard	Managing Director	Center Stage	Baltimore, MD
Philip J. Santora	Managing Director	TheatreWorks	Palo Alto, CA
Michael Stotts	Managing Director	Hartford Stage	Hartford, CT
Paula Tomei	Managing Director	South Coast Repertory	Costa Mesa, CA
Karen Wood	Executive Director	Laguna Playhouse	Laguna Beach, CA

Participants in the survey ranged in age from 40 to 71, and they entered the field between 1966 and 1997. Though not necessarily reflective of the larger LORT manager population, six of the 12 participants are male and six are female; all 12 participants are Caucasian. Eight of the 12 participants attended academic degree-granting graduate programs in theatre (or arts) management.

Artistic Backgrounds of Theatre Managers

Every theatre manager surveyed had at least some experience in the arts in their younger years, generally in school, and predominantly in theatre, though some in other disciplines. These early experiences, though in different forms and occurring at different points in the manager's lives, were seminal influences on their decisions to pursue careers in the theatre, and specifically in the area of management.

Long-time theatre manager Benjamin Mordecai (1945-2005) founded the Indiana Repertory Theatre with Gregory Poggi and Edward Stern in the early 1970s. On several occasions, the author heard Mordecai say the threesome founded the theatre because "no one would hire us to direct" and was prone to joking that he became the managing director because "we opened a checking account and I was the one that took the checkbook." In fact, Mordecai directed six plays at IRT in its early years until, as he

told the author directly, he observed Garland Wright in rehearsal and, struck by the young director's skill, realized "I knew, at that time, I would not direct again" (Mordecai, personal communication, 1982).

Similarly, many managers came to the realization that their greatest skill lays in the facilitation of the art rather than in its direct creation. Philip J. Santora (in fact, a former student of Mordecai's) noted that "*at some point, I realized the level of artistic achievement I wanted to work [at], and the role I could best play on the team at that level was a manager.*"¹ Some jokingly discussed having caught "the theatre bug" at a young age, and participating in college theatre groups as directors and/or actors, while also serving those productions as an "organizer" (e.g. Michael Stotts). Those individuals eventually came to feel they could have greater impact and/or success as an administrator "*rather than as a moderately talented actor*" (Medak).

While many managers had a good deal of artistic experience, some of them made light of theirs. Andrews notes, "*I came into arts management in my early 20s without any prior artistic experience except performing, directing, and stage managing in elementary, high school, and summer stock as a teenager.*" Some were accomplished in artistic fields other than theatre, as Grannemann was an accomplished pianist and Joshua Borenstein was an instrumentalist and composer.

Some managers pursued artistic ambitions after college and realized, through their "day job," that their real interest lay in arts management. Chris Jennings created and managed arts education programs at a municipal arts center while directing and acting at "SPTs" (small professional theatres, under the Actors' Equity Association contract) in Texas. Stephen J. Albert, while doing community theatre and writing in Central California, also designed and organized a system of care for alcoholics and alcohol abusers, work that helped him begin to understand his skills and talents. Stephen Richard, originally a PhD candidate in history and an aspiring playwright, began as a volunteer, and later an employee and program manager at Los Angeles Actors' Theatre, through which he came to realize "*my managerial strengths were greater than my playwriting skills... I realized I received more joy from creating an environment where artists could do their work than I did pursuing my own artistic endeavors.*" For 12 years, Santora was a freelance scenic designer at small theatres while serving as the managing or development director of larger institutions, though he is quick to point out "*I am not a manager who is a frustrated scenic designer. I am first and foremost a manager.*" Indeed, the importance of the creative environment is also noted within the creativity literature (Amabile & Gyskiewicz, 1989).

Most of the managers who responded attended high school from the late 1960s through the 80s, when the budgets for arts programs in schools had not yet experienced the significant cuts of more recent years. Paula Tomei credits a high school drama teacher who actively involved her students not only in performing, but also in the administrative responsibilities of their productions, for "*opening my eyes to the business of theatre.*"

Transitions into Management

Working in some capacity within the arts, be it through an internship or a job, fueled some people's transition into management. Grannemann was struck, through her job at

¹ All italicized quotes come from the participants interviewed for this paper.

a casting agency, by “50-year-old actors desperate for an \$800/week job in Buffalo in January” because, as Hodgen explains, “Overall, actors have the least amount of control over the process.”

For some managers, the move away from artistic endeavors and into management was a very conscious choice. Others fell into it. As Medak explains, although at that time theatre administration was not considered “a profession,” she credits the opportunity she had to “work at one of the country's great theatre companies in the early years of the burgeoning non profit regional theatre movement.” Albert “didn't realize at the time that I could have a career in the arts... you were either an artist or not.” For some, financial necessity dictated the choice – two were young, single mothers. While all learned a good deal on the job, several benefited by attending academic programs in arts management at such schools such as UCLA, Columbia and Yale.

The tendency to pigeonhole managers begins even when they are in those academic programs. Steven Chaikelson, the director of the MFA program in Theatre Management and Producing at Columbia University School of the Arts, noted: “Most of these people who are coming in [to academic training programs in the field of arts management] who want to have these ongoing careers in theatre as managers and producers have been acting or directing for years – they've gone back and forth between acting and directing and maybe writing as well. They get into these programs and, once they are compartmentalized in a management program or a producing program, they are somehow seen by the directors and actors they're in school with, and especially when they get out into the world and are working, as simply the paper-pushers and the check-writers. That has a really negative impact on their development” (as quoted in Channick, 2007, p. 133).

It is also interesting to note, although no surveyed individual participated, that in the early days of LORT, some new managers gained valuable experience through a Ford Foundation fellowship program specifically designed to groom theatre managers, as well as similar programs at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Theatre Communications Group (TCG). The Ford Foundation and TCG programs were defunct by the 1970s while the NEA administrative fellowship ended in 1995 due to an agency-wide reduction in force. In more recent years, a Doris Duke and Mellon Foundation-funded program at TCG funded “New Generations” fellowships for emerging artistic and administrative leaders, often awarded to women and people of color.

CREATIVITY IN THEATRE MANAGEMENT

Creativity in theatre management falls into two broadly-definable areas: The extent to which the manager is involved in the artistic decision-making process and the use of creativity in managerial decision-making.

Medak believes that creativity in administrative leadership is as important to organizational success as artistic creativity: “*The theatres that thrive over time all have strong, creative administrative leadership as well as strong artistic leadership. Very few theatres have been able to thrive, over time, purely on the basis of fine artistry. Creative administrative leadership, just like creative artistic leadership, implies an ability to see what isn't yet apparent, to develop new strategies for addressing problems and an element of risk-taking. All parallel artistic risk-taking.*”

Participation in Artistic Decision-Making Process

The extent of managerial involvement in their organization's artistic decision-making processes varies, beginning with active participation in the selection of the producing season. Several managers put forth artists whose work interested them with the aim of involving those artists in the theatre's work at a future date. Albert cites specific playwrights and scripts he has championed that have resulted in full productions in various organizations he has led, as well as directors he has brought into the mix, adding that *"The key is not trying to be credited with the influence, but rather being satisfied with the outcome."* Creativity research emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation (Hennessey, 2010) underscores and supports Albert's point.

Not-for-profit theatres generally offer a season of plays that their organization "produced." The theatre selects these scripts, assembles their creative teams, rehearses them and creates their physical productions in-house, thereby establishing the core of the theatre's annual work. Some theatres also have a parallel season of "presented" work, productions created elsewhere that have toured to (and hence been "presented" at, rather than "produced" by) those theatres. Chris Jennings prospects and offers recommendations for their theatre's international presenting series *"which seeks to broaden offerings beyond our core produced work."* He specifically seeks work *"that strategically supports our core work – either through accessibility, unique artists or broader artistic language."* In tandem with their produced work, *"presenting has also led to a nice cross pollination of artists working within our core season."*

Some managing directors are actively involved in their organization's artistic programs that exist outside of the produced season. In Baltimore, Richard serves as the artistic lead on Center Stage's "School to Prison Pipeline Project" with actress/playwright Anna Deavere Smith, a three-city initiative in partnership with Philadelphia and Berkeley.

Managing directors sometimes serve as conduits to their theatres for externally-initiated artistic projects (Stotts) or in seeking artistic partners for collaborative ventures (Jennings). Outside producers pitch projects to Stotts for Hartford Stage, which he brings forth to the artistic director and staff. *"As ideas start to gel, I am very involved in final decisions, which are influenced by budget, schedule, and numerous other factors."* He notes that two or three "anchor" projects are generally set first, and the availability of specific artists often dictates when those plays need to be scheduled. The theatre selects other projects for a variety of further reasons, with final decisions made by the artistic director and Stotts after a thorough evaluation process that also includes their general manager. Jennings often identifies potential co-production partners and initiates those relationships.

The process of working with an artistic partner can take shape in various ways. Borenstein and Long Wharf Theatre Artistic Director Gordon Edelstein discuss as many as 30-40 plays in determining their season. They *"talk about the work through several frames: the artistic experience, the relation of the shows to each other in a subscription, sales and fundraising potential, expense budget impact, and education and community engagement opportunities"* (Borenstein). Andrews tries to *"encourage the artistic director to 'dream' before having to get realistic or practical from a budgetary standpoint."* When asked by her artistic director or a guest director to give her opinions on a production, Andrews offers them privately, and only when asked.

Santora's theatre has a season selection team and finding "*plays or musicals that will reach our audience*" is a priority for him.

Some managing directors take more of a back seat in the artistic decision-making process. This acquiescence could be by choice or, though not specifically cited by any of the survey participants, due to the potential for clashing with their artistic partner. Medak feels that, because she and her artistic partner have worked together for many years, and they can "*anticipate each other's points of view,*" she is less involved in artistic decision-making than she used to be, and that "*some of my creative muscles are put in service of accomplishing our artistic goals, some to other institutional goals that are broader than artistry.*" Hodgen acknowledges that she infrequently influences the play selection at her theatre, as scripts and performers she has "*brought to his attention [Ed Decker, Founder/Artistic Director] have not resonated with him.*" That said, she cites a specific script under consideration that she felt "*was all wrong for the company, and we agreed to drop the project.*" In Grannemann's organization, where the Artistic Director reports to her, "*I really want him to be leading the artistic process, so we have lots of conversations where we settle on common, overarching philosophies and values for the company and the role the productions serve in the company.*" She then takes on "*a sounding board and steering role.*"

Creativity Manifested Through Management

The parallels between artistic creativity and managerial creativity were immediately apparent to several managers, with Albert thinking of them as "*on the same continuum. While I don't think I can go on a stage and create some of the performances that have amazed me, I believe that without the creativity that surrounds arts management, these artists would not be able to achieve, flourish or grow.*" Indeed, personality research on artists indicates that most could never do what Albert and others have achieved with setting up a structure for productions and the organization (Feist, 1998).

Borenstein says "*I feel that I am creative every day,*" while musing that feeling "artistic" and feeling "creative" are not necessarily the same thing. The issue of creativity comprising more than simply the artistic domain is a hot topic within creativity research (Kaufman, 2015; Kaufman & Baer, 2002, 2004a).

Hodgen points out that both forms of creativity "*need vision and a willingness to collaborate in order to bring projects to life.*" Karen Wood concurs, stating that "*The will of passion and intent can be the same, however distinct sets of skills are required and will be naturally honed by the discipline selected. Perhaps the Artistic Director doesn't require a background in entertainment law. Perhaps the Executive Director will never perfect her 'buck and wing' [a dance move]. Perhaps the actor will never write a play. Perhaps the writer will never direct one.*" It is interesting to note that the managers' insights are paralleled by the Amusement Park Theoretical model, a popular theory in creativity research (Baer & Kaufman, 2005; Kaufman & Baer, 2004b).

Managerial creativity manifests itself in various ways. "*Even though I am not an artist,*" notes Stotts, "*I think I have innate artistic instincts. I think creatively. I have an appreciation for, and understanding of the creation of art. These characteristics manifest themselves when problem solving, planning, designing or writing, structuring deals, building consensus around ideas, [and] motivating and mentoring staff.*" Grannemann feels that the only difference is "*that the creativity of performing, visual and design artists is much more acknowledged in the larger society [than the creativity*

of managers].” Tomei feels “most creative when I’m problem solving; whether it is balancing an ambitious budget plan, developing strategy for a key donor prospect or reacting to an unforeseen production issue. Creativity manifests itself best when I remain flexible and open.”

Several managers felt that their artistic experience or innate understanding of the artistic process fed their ability to be creative managers. Jennings notes that thanks to his earlier artistic experience, *“I have an equal understanding of arts performance/direction – but with the added insight in how to support and achieve that work.”* Andrews believes that *“having an understanding of what goes into the artistic and production process (rehearsal, design collaboration, production support, etc.)... allowed me to create an appropriate support system of marketing, development, Board and community relations.... My creativity is used to bring together each separate management activity of the organization and blend them into an overall management approach. It is important for the management leader to create a culture that each “expert” can do their best work and understand that they are collaborating under the umbrella of the artistic mission and focus of the organization.”*

The ever-increasing pressure to maximize revenue offers some managers an outlet for their creativity. Jennings notes that *“in areas like marketing and fundraising, the problems are more complex with paths that are less defined – thus requiring extremely creative solutions with no clear and successful outcomes.”* He continues, *“I am process oriented – therefore the first step for me is defining the problem. I often find divergent ideas come from lack of clarity around the problem. Then, I believe like the art – it is collaborative process with one leader like a director making the final assessment of the proposed path forward. But divergent perspectives are ideal and then must be assessed by the leader. And like a play, you hopefully have cast your supporting players correctly to insure proper implementation.”* Jennings’ approach is consistent with creativity theory that problem identification is a key part of the process (Reiter-Palmon & Robinson, 2009).

Santora concurs, explaining that *“Arts management is all about finding resources and using them in creative ways to achieve a programmatic goal. Our aspirations always exceed our resources. Whether it’s finding a way to engage staff, storytelling to a donor or Board member, encouraging development to infuse events with a theatrical flair, or making sure the creative energy that we create on the mainstage finds its way through our marketing and development materials, managing a not-for-profit theatre is all about creativity. Not to mention the creativity often required around topics like cash flow.”*

Examples of Creativity in Theatre Management

The managers who took part in this study cited a broad array of examples where their ability to think creatively has benefited their organizations. These included envisioning new buildings and programs that could be housed in new space, new directions in fundraising and staffing, and conflict resolution.

Seeing an empty building while looking for a new home for Berkeley Rep’s scene shop, Medak *“imagined the potential, against much opposition, in having our own, all-inclusive campus [in which to centralize Berkeley Rep’s administrative and production operations]. Having purchased it, I saw that there was the potential to open the doors to more artists by offering residencies to artists within our campus and planted that seed with*

[our artistic director]. He and the artistic staff turned that idea into an even better idea by designing our Ground Floor summer residency lab."

Albert wanted to find a way for Court Theatre, based at the University of Chicago, to increase the size of donor gifts by moving more modest givers into the ranks of major donors (\$2,500+), a process referred to in development parlance as "moves management." He explains "By creating a donor society that focused on the intersection of the artist with the scholars that are available in amazing numbers at the University of Chicago, a concept was formed. Three times a year, table cloth dinners are hosted that focus on the upcoming work of the theatre and bring the artist creating that work to the same tables as the patrons supporting that work. The program for the evening brings in scholars who are experts in the territory of the production, and the creative team engages the scholars in intellectually exciting dialogue." By creating this donor society and organizing these stimulating events, Court more than doubled its major gifts over four years.

Stotts cites the creativity he exhibited leading Hartford Stage "through a multiphase, multi-million dollar renovation of the theatre facility... Though an architect has designed the facility, he [the architect] has done it through discussion with me and others on the management side (in addition to the artistic director)."

Several managers exercise creativity in staffing their theatres, a process they described as analogous to casting a play. In seeking a new Director of Development for Long Wharf, Borenstein "thought about the right combination of characteristics to succeed in this 'role.' I also talked with a number of colleagues both inside and outside of the organization. I then did a first round of interviews, or 'auditions,' with the applicants who I thought might best meet our needs on paper. Those who seemed to be the best fit received 'callbacks,' e.g., second interviews, and met a larger group of candidates. I then 'cast' the person who seemed to fit the role the best." Santora describes arriving at one job "to find a talented and dedicated staff. But almost everyone was in the wrong job... By looking at the skills we had in house, and the needs we had to fill, we were able to re-cast the team in roles better defined for their skills, and most rose to the occasion and were successful."

Hodgen describes her creativity in hiring someone for the demanding and potentially thankless job of understudying the sole actor in a one-man show. By scheduling additional performances to guarantee that the understudy would perform on a number of occasions, she was able to attract a higher-quality actor as understudy, hence ensuring the theatre was never at risk of having a mediocre performer on stage in a one-man show, while also successfully meeting ticket demand. Hodgen also uses actors to train non-artist trustees in effective delivery of "elevator speeches" to use as they represent her organization in the community.

Grannemann cites creative problem solving in simultaneously juggling conflicting production, marketing, and financial needs in an attempt to determine a new season structure. Her theatre seeks to produce fewer plays to improve operations and sales productivity, but is saddled with a financial model and a level of audience demand that depends on maintaining the same level of production. She explains, "The creative solutions come in the form of how we plan to close the financial gap, make most efficient use of our financial, physical and human resources and in choosing seasons with fewer shows that will still provide enough programming for each age group we reach."

Reporting Structures

Almost all the managers surveyed advocated artistic and managerial leaders be “*co-equals reporting to one board*” (Tomei), a structure that has been in place and widely emulated since the early days of LORT.

“While in Europe there might be more of a blended model or a single leader,” Richard theorizes that the bifurcated model evolved in the United States due to *“the extent of fundraising in the American not-for-profit theatre.”* He elaborates: *“I believe there are very few leaders who are able to do both roles at the highest level of accomplishment. It requires not only a broad skill set, it also requires extraordinary delegation abilities. It also, in my view, depends on the nature of the artistic head of the organization. If that person is a director or other practicing artist and wants to spend a substantial part of their time creating their own work, then I think that effectively rules out an artist-led institution at least it rules it out as an effective structure. Conversely, I believe we have trained our boards and communities to look for artistic leadership at the head of these institutions and to have a ‘management’-led organization will always be suspect. [Therefore]...a majority of the time I think that the co-leadership model is the best available.”*

Several leaders noted that an understanding and appreciation by each partner of the responsibilities that fall, predominantly, to the other partner, contributes to the success of the co-equal structure. Stotts explains that the success of the partnership *“is largely dependent on the artistic director being savvy about budgets, finance, fundraising and other management skills, and the managing director having a great understanding of artists and the artistic process.”* Meanwhile, Andrews cites an old aphorism that, *“There are no artistic decisions without financial ramifications and no financial decisions without artistic ramifications.”*

The division of labor is also practical in terms of workload and can succeed when the partners’ differing areas of expertise successfully help eliminate, rather than exacerbate, the fundamental tension that exists between artistic ambitions and financial realities. Medak elaborates, *“our theatre would have accomplished half of what we presently accomplish if we didn’t have both of us, dividing the work load, challenging each other, ensuring that all aspects of our theatre are operating at the highest level.”* She adds, *“If I were solely at the helm our work would not be as interesting and we would therefore have less impact. If Tony Taccone [artistic director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre] was the sole leader, our work might be even more interesting but we would have a fraction of our capacity (audience, financial, physical) and would therefore be less impactful.”* Santora agrees, noting that a coequal partnership *“perfectly balances the tension between artistic impulse and economic reality. If one person structurally has supremacy over the other, it seems to send a poor message... While I can’t always say ‘yes,’ if I’m not here in service to the art, what is my purpose?”*

That said, some managers noted the pragmatic impossibility of two people being completely co-equals because *“as management was there to support the art, the artistic director was a little more equal.”* (Andrews) Further, as it is all ultimately about the art, Jennings notes that *“while both report to the Board, my work is in support and in service to the art and artistic director.”* While acknowledging that *“co-equals is the most accepted,”* Albert echoes that *“no one is a co-equal, the successful teams understand what each player brings and honors that contribution.”*

Stotts agrees as *“Each individual brings different strengths (and weaknesses) to the partnership. Ideally the individuals complement and trust each other. And as important, the board must trust the artistic director and managing director, and have faith in their co-leadership of the organization.”* Andrews concurs that *“Good partnerships understand compromise and the work it takes to make the partnership a productive one.”*

Andrews also noted that the structure needs to *“respond to the kind of organization it is... it is important to create a model that will work to support the mission and the artistic process of the theatre.”* In Wood's organization, she, as Executive Director, reports to the Board, and the Artistic Director reports to her, although she believes *“both reporting to the Board is the way to go.”* In that circumstance, continues Wood *“we simply decided between us those formal reporting lines would not affect our working relationship – and it doesn't. We collaborate, each having our own role and responsibilities, but in harmony and toward an agreed-upon goal.”* [It bears noting that, in that particular situation, Wood is the organization's longer-term employee, responsible, in part, for bringing in the new Artistic Director with whom she had worked successfully, and for many years, at an earlier organization.]

Grannemann was a dissenting voice in advocating for a one-headed animal. *“I've seen it work both ways, but I do think it's clearest for everyone when there is just one person reporting to the Board or Chair or whoever has ultimate oversight of the company. That person will inevitably be stronger in 'art' or 'management,' but it's crucial that they have a deep understanding of the other area, and have a strong partner who they respect in a direct report whose expertise lies in the other area. Shared values is the key.”*

Perhaps the greatest testament to creativity is in making the organization with two heads work successfully. It appears that each respondent approaches the situation differently, but always with creativity.

CONCLUSION

Grannemann laments the fact *“that the creativity in work life is not widely recognized. ... people in all professions are creative, but they don't think of themselves that way. Lawyers, bankers, administrative professionals, scientists – everyone is creative in their work. But people (friends, audience members, Board members, volunteers) say to me all the time ‘Oh, I'm not creative. I could never do what the actors or directors or designers do.’ And I want to say, ‘Yes, you are!’ ... I wish more people knew that they are indeed creative individuals.”* This refrain is common among creativity researchers as well (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2013).

Though Grannemann is correct that society does not always recognize creativity in non-artistic positions, and many people do not self-identify as creative (Kaufman & Baer, 2004a), the managers surveyed unanimously perceived that they are creative and that creativity regularly manifests itself in their work.

It is easy to forget that theatrical management is creative in its own right. When asked whether they continue to practice an art (e.g. paint on the weekends), the dozen managers replies ranged from dance, drumming, photography, playing the piano, and sketching and building set models to such less-traditionally recognized art forms as gardening, cooking and decorating, as well as the art of parenting. One manager simply replied, *“No”* and another, echoing Downton Abbey's wry Dowager Countess,

commented “*What’s a weekend?*” Like many creative jobs in the arts, theatre management is time consuming in its own right. Artists, board members, funders and society at large need to recognize that these hard-working managers in artistic fields do not necessarily need weekend creative outlets because their jobs, in fact, serve as their creative outlets.

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