

**BRUCE COPPOCK: THE (DETROIT) COMMUNITY OF MUSICIANS AT  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra Annual Meeting, DEC. 9, 2010**

Bruce Coppock Keynote Speaker

Bruce Coppock was president and managing director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra from 1999 to 2008, when he retired from the orchestra due to metastatic cancer of the bile duct. Under Coppock's leadership the SPCO, the country's only full-time professional chamber orchestra, undertook several new initiatives, largely focused on developing the distinctive artistic profile of the SPCO as a chamber orchestra. In 2004 the SPCO announced a new artistic leadership model by eliminating the position of music director, and replacing it with a system of artistic partners, each of whom leads the orchestra three or four weeks each season over three year terms. The roster of Artistic Partners since 2004 includes the soprano Dawn Upshaw, violinists Joshua Bell and Thomas Zehetmair, pianists Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Steven Prutsman, as well as the conductors Douglas Boyd, Nicholas McGegan, Edo de Waart and Roberto Abbado. The SPCO has distinguished itself for its innovative commitment to musician engagement in the artistic leadership and governance of the organization. During Coppock's tenure, SPCO attendance increased by 40%, board giving quadrupled, and the SPCO's endowment grew to a 4:1 endowment to operating ratio. The SPCO is debt-free, has no accumulated deficit and has balanced its budget 16 of the past 17 seasons. Since 2004, the SPCO has been housed in SPCO Center, a 36,000 square foot "creativity lab" which provides space for rehearsals, concerts, teaching and practicing, as well as administrative and meeting spaces. His work at the SPCO was recently documented in *Fearless Journeys*, a collection of five case studies about innovation in American orchestras, published by the League of American Orchestras.

Coppock served as the founding director of the League of American Orchestras' Orchestra Leadership Academy during 1998-99, and in 1997-98, was Deputy Director of Carnegie Hall. From 1992 to 1997 he served as Executive Director of the Saint Louis Symphony, after joining the orchestra as Operation Manager in 1990. Under his leadership, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra became known nationally for its extensive community engagement programs, and was the first major orchestra to merge with a community music school, forming the Saint Louis Symphony Community School. In St. Louis, Coppock led the organization's efforts to engage musicians broadly in the long-term strategic planning and policy decision-making of the organization. In 1994, he negotiated significant changes to orchestra work rules, which were instrumental in fundamentally altering the Symphony's relationship to its community.

For 20 years prior to 1990 Coppock was active as a professional cellist in the Boston area, performing regularly in the Boston Symphony, the Boston Musica Viva and as principal cellist of the Handel & Haydn Society Orchestra and numerous other chamber orchestras. Coppock was the co-founder of the Boston Chamber Music Society, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2007-08, and of which Coppock served as executive director from 1982 through 1990. As a cellist, Coppock performed, toured and recorded extensively. He was also very active as a cello and chamber music teacher, having held

positions at the University of New Hampshire, Brown University, the Longy School of Music, the Boston Conservatory and the New England Conservatory of Music. Between 1985 and 1990, Coppock was the director of both the chamber music and orchestral studies programs of the New England Conservatory.

Coppock received both his Bachelor's and Master's degree in cello from the New England Conservatory of Music

Speech to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Annual Meeting  
December 9, 2010

Good Afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honor to be here with you today to talk about the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, one of the great orchestras of America. After listening and learning intensively about Detroit and the DSO during the past 12 months, I'm beginning to feel a growing sense of optimism about the future of the DSO; it's possible that a regular visitor can more easily imagine a clear path forward, being unencumbered by the accumulated frustrations so many of you have experienced over a long time.

It has been my pleasure to know and work with every DSO chief executive since Deborah Borda, and I've been coming to Detroit for over 20 years to hear the orchestra and visit conductors. During the 90's, Mark Volpe and I were in regular communication about the challenges of our two orchestras' cities - St. Louis and Detroit - and I watched with admiration as the plans for the Orchestra Place campus unfolded. It's great to work again with Leonard Slatkin - my key partner in St. Louis - and to work with Anne Parsons, whom I have known since my playing days in the Boston Symphony cello section in the 1980s. I've heard your orchestra live, in recordings, and on the radio zillions of times. It's a brilliant, strapping band and honestly takes its place among a group of remarkable American orchestras.

The DSO has played an important role in my learning over the years, and I eagerly await the chance to get to know the musicians of the DSO in the course of this work. Years performing in a great orchestra, and in leading two other great orchestras, have informed a point of view I'll admit is biased - that as a way of life, musicians, board members, and management must all be and must learn how to be deeply, continually engaged in candid, constructive, and civil dialogue. My bias also tells me that unending quest for artistic excellence, is essential to design the uniquely local solutions institutions must find in order to thrive. Failure to thrive is the ultimate threat to artistic excellence. I'd also like to say up front that I don't believe your current labor dispute is in any way a conflict between those who would protect artistic quality and those who would destroy it. Everyone here cares deeply about artistic quality. The dispute is rather between different philosophies, each passionately and fervently believed in, about how to achieve artistic excellence and how, concurrently, to rebuild and broaden your patron base. This

is not an "either/or choice," and should not be positioned as one. Your dispute is about coming to grips with the increasing limitations of half-century-old traditional concepts in a world that has changed dramatically in those 50 years. It's about opening up possible new artistic pathways for the DSO and its current and future musicians, and about creating multiple pathways for the many more people who must become involved and engaged in the life of the DSO.

There is a simple, axiomatic progression: exposure to great music leads to involvement; involvement to engagement; engagement to passion; passion to philanthropy. And philanthropy leads to all kinds of good things. But it's a progression that has no shortcuts. The work to generate sustainable support is as much the responsibility of everyone at the DSO as is our jointly shared responsibility to put great concerts on stage. This dispute is about building a ramp out of a very deep hole, and driving to a better place.

It may seem slightly odd to spend our time today imagining a bright future for the DSO, given how precarious things feel right now, but that is exactly what we're going to do. I am reminded of the tale of two English shoe salesmen shuttled off to South Africa 100 years ago. The one cabled back "disaster, no one wears shoes;" the other cabled "fantastic opportunity here, no one wears shoes!" I fall unabashedly in the latter man's camp, for I believe opportunity abounds for the DSO, and that this is your Carpe Diem moment.

I've told the story of what could possibly happen here as an extended but imaginary New York Times article on Sunday, October 20, 2019 - four days prior to a huge community gathering on Woodward Avenue, celebrating both Orchestra Hall's 100th anniversary and Leonard Slatkin's 75th birthday. I truly believe that the achievement of these ideas, or others like them is completely within the grasp of the DSO.

n The dispute is rather between different philosophies, each passionately and fervently believed in, about how to achieve artistic excellence and how, concurrently, to rebuild and broaden your patron base.

n ...exposure to great music leads to involvement; involvement to engagement; engagement to passion; passion to philanthropy.

n ...I believe opportunity abounds for the DSO, and that this is your Carpe Diem moment.

Before reading the article, I'd like to add one more personal note. I've known Anne Parsons for over 25 years. Her calm, focused, and determined leadership has always been uncommonly effective and deeply inspiring. Anne is a leader in whom we can unequivocally place our confidence, and we can only hope that she will be here in 2019 to be part of the celebration this article relates.

Headline: Detroit Symphony, Phoenix-like, Rises from the Ashes.

DETROIT, MI, October 20, 2019

This coming week, Detroit's spanking new light-rail system will have two terminuses, each two blocks on either side of Orchestra Hall, as the City celebrates the 100th anniversary of Detroit's acoustic gem of a concert hall. As the light rail has brought new life to Detroit's Woodward Corridor, so too has the Detroit Symphony given itself new life and a new role in the communities throughout the Detroit metropolitan area.

On Wednesday evening, Music Director Leonard Slatkin, who celebrated his 75th birthday just over a month ago, will lead a celebratory concert not just for the 2,000 dignitaries and supporters in the hall, but on jumbo screens for an estimated 40,000 Detroiters who will gather on the temporary plaza the City has created on Woodward Avenue in front of the Max M. Fischer Music Center. Wednesday through Sunday, all of Southeastern Michigan will celebrate inside and outside of Orchestra Hall with parades, street fairs, and non-stop music of all stripes and colors. Every concert will be broadcast in HD audio and video to music lovers worldwide through their 3D plasma screens, netbooks, and mobile devices.

On Saturday, U.S. President and Mrs. Obama will award the National Medal of Arts to the DSO, the only time an American orchestra has received this prestigious award. In prepared remarks, President Obama cited "the DSO's extraordinary leadership in Detroit's urban comeback, having set aside long-standing enmities, and demonstrating the will to serve its many communities with commitment, imagination, and unquestioned excellence." Music Director Leonard Slatkin, DSO President Anne Parsons, six living DSO board chairmen, the entire Michigan Congressional delegation, Detroit's corporate leadership, and 25 Mayors from Southeastern Michigan will share the stage with 130 current and former members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as they stand together on the stage of Orchestra Hall to receive the award from the President.

To readers who have followed the saga of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra over the past 50 years since the debilitating strike of 1969, these celebrations have special resonance. In a city deeply proud of its stature in American culture, the orchestra's fortunes and misfortunes, as much as GM, Ford and Chrysler's, have symbolized the vexing convulsions of this great American city.

For the DSO, as for the auto industry, the moment of truth came in the Great Recession of 2008 when years of management-labor dysfunction, visionary but sometimes contradictory plans, and the economic collapse converged on the DSO - an institution already beset with steeply declining audiences and foundational financial challenges.

A long, bitter strike ensued, pitting two seemingly irreconcilable views against each other. While the ideas animating this debate were echoed nationally, the circumstances that forced them to the fore were intensely local, and very specific to the DSO. In Detroit, the debate about these ideas wasn't theoretical or rhetorical, it was a very real debate about do or die strategies whose outcomes would determine whether Detroit would emerge from the Great Recession with an orchestra at all.

On one hand, the so-called "Carnegie Hall Imperative" was a worldview shared and created by orchestra managers and musicians alike who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s. In this ideology, success - indeed viability - was measured far more by pay scale, length of season, and stature in the international media and touring markets than by artistic distinctiveness and ongoing service commitment to home communities. This concept presumed that an orchestra benefited from an independent and luxurious ecology of reliable, pre-existing music education and advocacy. The Carnegie Hall Imperative insisted that the primary, if not sole determiners of excellence were ensemble size, nearly exclusive focus on orchestral rehearsal and performance, and year-round pay and benefits at a top echelon. Self-esteem was derived from one's place in the national salary and budget rankings, for managers and musicians alike.

The other world view, first espoused by the late orchestra impresario Ernest Fleischmann in 1987, and dubbed "the community of musicians," envisioned communities as hosts to a diverse group of highly skilled musicians, whose glue was their coming together 100-150 times a year to rehearse and perform the great orchestral repertoire. In this philosophy, championed with equal passion by many musicians and managers who came of age in the 90s, the orchestra provides the platform - indeed the core infrastructure - for the community's musical ecology.

Here, the orchestra's very nature and structure depends on its local circumstances. Self-esteem and artistic excellence alike are derived from the opportunity for individual self-expression, artistic growth, and deep community engagement in the community as it does from the satisfaction and pride of playing in a great orchestra.

At some point in the 80s, there were approximately 25 American orchestras designed on the Carnegie Hall premise. Their aspiration was to replicate some version of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in their mid-sized American cities. And in truth, several of them, on certain nights, with certain conductors, in certain repertoire indeed played at least on a par with the old Big Five orchestras.

But as we look back from 2019, the orchestras in Boston, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco broke off like a great iceberg and floated away as America's only 52-week professional orchestras, the only ones able to sustain the Carnegie Hall model that 25 orchestras spent 40 years trying to emulate. That said, those five orchestras, along with every major orchestra still operating, have incorporated most, if not all of the "Community of Musicians" concepts into their organizations. Their good fortune to be based in large and vibrant, densely populated, sophisticated urban areas has proven to be an essential and primary commonality.

One orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, faced with the most extreme juxtapositions of world-class artistic aspirations and dire urban and financial circumstances, has emerged from this morass into a class of its own during this second decade of the 21st century, following its nearly complete meltdown in 2008-2010. The DSO looked deep inside itself, confronted its realities, preserved its best assets, and found a way to move forward. The DSO musicians wrestled mightily with their deep, emotional

attachment to that ephemeral shining city on the hill, "The Carnegie Hall Imperative." The inevitable strike in 2010 resulted from a four-way collision amongst powerful forces: forty years of accumulated rhetoric and rancor about a narrow definition of "excellence;" the vision and audaciousness of the DSO's plans; the overwhelming economic reality of Detroit in 2010; and the compelling artistic possibilities inherent in creating some version of the "Community of Musicians" tailored to Detroit.

The strike was harrowing for all concerned. After a settlement that still left the DSO with very tall mountains to climb, it took dedicated time and work to forge the required path toward reconciliation. Settling the strike was merely one of the DSO's many challenges. But DSO musicians, board and management were left with one

#### n Carnegie Hall Imperative

In this ideology, success - indeed viability - was measured far more by payscale, length of season, and stature in the international media and touring markets than by artistic distinctiveness and ongoing service commitment to home communities

#### n The Community of Musicians

In this philosophy, the orchestra provides the platform - indeed the core infrastructure - for the community's musical ecology.

fundamental truth: no one but they could solve the DSO's intractable problems, and whoever designed the paths forward, they would all have to go down those roads together. Slowly, cautiously, a small number of musicians, management, and board members began to coalesce around a group of ideas that presented "both/and" possibilities instead of "either/or" choices. The Carnegie Hall Imperative and the Community of Musicians began to be seen as embodying synergistic and overlapping ideas.

In scope, reach, and self-redefinition, the DSO has now burst through traditional barriers and accomplished a miraculous turnaround in nine short years, with just enough progress to justify fully next week's celebrations. This has happened because a group of people passionately believed that there was a different path for Detroit, that those "either/or choices" which fueled the ferocious strike -

i.e. change in the job description equals decline in quality -could be replaced with several "both/and" possibilities: i.e. broadening the DSO job description could attract even better musicians to the DSO; that broader community engagement might enhance artistic quality; that imagination and versatility might work synergistically to fuel the quest for excellence. Most of all, this group came to believe that a sustainable, great institution demands intellectually honest debate about real issues in real time - with real facts as starting points, not assertions about things as one might wish they be. They threw out traditional orchestra-think on any number of issues. First, they rejected the idea that an

orchestra's excellence could be measured solely by pay scale and year round employment; second, they embraced the belief that an orchestra in Detroit exists primarily to serve Detroit, not the other way around; third, they asserted that the DSO's rightful role in Detroit is to be the infrastructure for music and music education in the entire metropolitan area because it could not benefit from an imaginary one. Finally, they let musicians exert far greater control over their lives, by individually opting in for a healthy diet of new music concerts, chamber music, teaching and working in the schools, being DSO ambassadors in the community, or opting out and doing none of the above. Those who wished solely to play orchestral music could choose to do that exclusively. They came to understand that to be shackled to a single job description was just plain stultifying. Choice, creativity, and versatility emerged as the new watchwords.

The past ten years have seen enormous generational change at the DSO, as nearly 50% of the Musicians who endured the strike of 2010 have retired, completing their careers on more or less the same artistic terms as when they were hired. For the newer generation of DSO musicians, mostly trained in the 21st century, Detroit's trailblazing efforts have made orchestra careers more attractive. With a nine-month season, a solid base salary, an enormous palette of artistic choices at work, and summers off for inspiration and renewal, the Detroit Symphony is a destination job. By dint of training and temperament the new generation of musicians views an evening playing chamber music at Le Poisson Rouge - the hip nightclub in Greenwich Village - as being equally satisfying as playing a Mahler symphony at Carnegie Hall.

From the community's perspective, the ultimate arbiter of success, the new DSO has maintained its vaunted international stature as Detroit's shining symbol of excellence. The concert season still includes regular live and virtual performances with great notices in New York, Europe or Asia. On the London Tube, Shanghai Metro, Chicago "L," and Woodward Avenue Light Rail, commuters watch the previous night's DSO performance in 3D on their handheld mobile devices.

Since 2012, the DSO has annually presented nearly 100 symphonic, chamber orchestra, new music, and chamber music concerts at twenty metro locations, in addition to its full season of concerts at Orchestra Hall. It devotes 10% of its season to performing free concerts in outdoor venues. At mayoral inaugurations, playoff games, and other civic ceremonies, DSO always plays the national anthem. These metropolitan initiatives have added dozens of community connections in churches, libraries, synagogues, schools, and retirement centers throughout the region. This has been the engine for rebuilding the DSO's classical audience from a precariously low 3,100 classical subscribers to 12,000 - over 60% of whom proudly contribute to Detroit's annual sustaining fund.

Ironically, the success in the metro neighborhoods stimulated an increase in attendance at Orchestra Hall downtown, driven by lower prices and greater awareness. Through an utterly novel invitation, any resident of the City of Detroit sits in the best seat available in the house for \$10, and the first 50 people who arrive at the hall on any concert night get in free.

The Max itself is not just the epicenter of the DSO's web of activities throughout Southeastern Michigan. It is a true community center - a coveted rental destination, home to important civic and political gatherings, an anchor on the fabled Woodward Corridor, and a home for artists and art alike.

The key in Detroit is the scope, zeal, and vigor with which audience growth and patron development were pursued. Indeed, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra seems virtually alone in its capacity to differentiate between its mission - to provide Detroit with exemplary musical service at high levels of artistic excellence- and what drives its economics - the unrelenting development of community support through systematic, persistent engagement over time. The DSO understands the vital concept that creating true community value is the financial lifeblood of the organization. It also learned that developing a powerful patron base demands as much attention to detail, commitment of resources, and quality of execution as does putting great performances on stage.

The most vital lesson learned over the past decade is that that telling the community how important and famous you are is very different from inspiring the community to support you because of how invaluable you are.

In building the political, organizational, and personal partnerships that fueled this turnaround, the DSO was fearless in asking for help. Every major funder, corporation, educational, and religious institution in the metropolitan area was asked to play their part, and they did.

As powerful and comprehensive as the DSO's reimagining of its performance role in the community was, however, the true engine of its renaissance is the breath-taking scope of education programs. The centerpiece of the DSO's educational initiative is the Detroit Symphony Community Music School. With its hub at the Pinchus Education wing of the Max M. Fisher Music Center, and with 10 branch locations throughout the metro area, the Community Music School annually now touches 12,000 students and their families. Asked what provoked such a headlong leap, DSO Education Chair, Clyde Wu, was emphatic: "without exposing kids regularly to classical music and putting instruments in their hand, there is no future audience. We had a simple choice: we could stand on the sidelines and bemoan the tragic loss of music in the schools, or we could create our own weather by altering the environment. Twin imperatives of community benefit and our long-term audience development made for an easy decision."

What distinguishes Detroit from the rest of its colleague orchestras is that it has accomplished so much in a short ten years, and that it showed the courage, against all odds, to stay the course through thick and thin. Nine years ago, the orchestra took a deep plunge into

n The most vital lesson learned over the past decade is that that telling the community how important and famous you are is very different from inspiring the community to support you because of how invaluable you are.

new territory, in the face of vehement opposition, but it has paid rich dividends in audiences, annual revenue stream, and most of all, palpably heightened community ownership of the orchestra.

In 2011, debt was significantly and favorably renegotiated and the building emerged debt free; labor contracts in 2013 and 2016 were negotiated in increasingly collaborative ways. The accumulated vitriol from the prior 40 years of labor dysfunction eventually slackened as things coalesced, and new internal partnerships began to bear fruit. These partnerships began to produce success after skilled and determined facilitators nurtured open and honest dialogue which produced an unexpected benefit: a kind of peace dividend. Looking back, players, board members, and managers interviewed for this article are stunned by the amount of energy they recall devoting to conflict, and have come to understand that redirecting that energy was job number one.

By 2014, the DSO's budget was balanced, its operating debt retired, and its endowment campaign had begun to produce significant results.

What made the difference were two critical shifts in the DSO's outlook, each reducible to "both/and" instead of "either/or" choices. First, rather than insisting that Orchestra Hall be the sanctified place to which Detroiters had to make pilgrimage to hear their DSO, now the Max is widely understood to be both the magnet and the source of musical energy. By using the hall as a springboard for musical events in every suburban area of metro-Detroit, Orchestra Hall's community-wide standing as the musical Mecca on Woodward Avenue was only strengthened. Second, the DSO enacted programs undergirded by the belief that citizenship and educational service to the community on the one hand, and excellence in performance on the other - far from being mutually exclusive ideas - are inextricable partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is no pipe dream. It can happen. But let me make a personal analogy. In 1989, my left hand was completely smashed up in a car accident. When I asked the surgeon whether I could expect to play the cello again, he said something that cut to the core: he said, "Bruce, I can't promise you that you'll ever be able to play again; but, if you don't do the hard work to rebuild your hand, I can guarantee you never will."

The DSO's predicament is not dissimilar. Everyone knows it's deeply broken right now. You can and you must rebuild this great institution. But, it is pointless to rebuild it for a different moment in time. If we were to use this building as a metaphor for the orchestra as a whole, the vision for this amazing place had as its foundational belief, the belief that Orchestra Hall had to be preserved but also had to be expanded and spectacularly modernized into the space we're in right now to serve and capture the imagination of this community. So too with the Orchestra itself. Let's keep our eyes on the prize: a modern, vibrant DSO - expanded and spectacularly modernized - to provide metro Detroit with musical service at the highest international levels of artistic excellence.

Thank you.

n ...it is pointless to rebuild it for a different moment in time.

n ...the prize: a modern, vibrant DSO - expanded and spectacularly modernized - to provide metro Detroit with musical service at the highest international levels of artistic excellence.