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Follow the Leader? A study of leadership behaviours amongst orchestral musicians

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Follow the Leader?
A study of leadership behaviours amongst orchestral musicians

By Simon Webb

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What behaviours are found in orchestras, beyond the generally accepted leadership positions, which enhance the ensemble and the quality of performance? How can these behaviours be understood to fit with accepted theories of leadership?

Introduction

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world[1]

Chaos Umpire sits,…..
…..Chance governs all[2]

God's *not* in his heaven
All's *wrong* with the world[3]

The question of authority and leadership has been asked since Adam and Eve took their first anarchic decision in the Garden of Eden[4]. Do we need to be led by individual leaders? If leadership is challenged, does chaos necessarily follow? Milton's definition of hell includes the lack of leadership; the absence of an authority figure equates to the protestant hell. Browning takes comfort in the presence of an omnipotent, omniscient God, a sentiment reinforced by Thomas Hardy by reversing Browning's statement to suggest a reason for the calamities that befall Tess Durbeyfield; without a single leader will the world necessarily unravel? But in fact Eve, in the opening chapters of Genesis, was demonstrating good leadership, albeit applied with disastrous consequences, with her awareness of self and her ability to use that awareness to persuade others to follow; would we not be living in a rather different world if Adam had shown similarly strong leadership qualities and persuaded Eve to leave the apple well alone?

The popular perception of the orchestra as a musical garden of Eden, with beautiful music being created in an atmosphere of harmonious mutual respect as the orchestral musicians naturally and comfortably follow the lead offered by conductor or management, is often poorly replicated in the real world where suspicion of authority, whether the authority of the conductor, section leader or management, is commonplace and frustration at the lack of respect for the individual contribution is a common complaint. This natural questioning of authority shows that the musicians are not natural followers, the often anarchic atmosphere of a rehearsal may even suggest evidence of a room full of frustrated leaders looking for a way to express their voice.

This study outlines the nature of orchestras and orchestral musicians through an analysis of literature on these topics and a number of case studies and interviews conducted with individual musicians and organisations. A survey of the literature on leadership supplies a context within which to comment on the qualities exhibited by orchestral musicians and how they fit into the world of professional orchestras. On this basis the standard assumptions of how an orchestra should operate are challenged and an alternative approach explored.

An introduction to Orchestras

Orchestras are remarkable organisations; with the minimum of verbal communication extraordinary levels of team work and co-operation are achieved. It is often noted that orchestras could provide case study material for leadership in other spheres, exploring the creativity and communication skills that are essential to orchestral performance. But the reality is that the inner workings of an orchestra, the way that the ensemble works and the interactions

between the musicians that create the remarkable ensemble work of the group, is not generally understood. For most musicians, the activity of playing in an ensemble is instinctive rather than studied and the underlying behaviours are not clearly articulated. Leadership positions are accepted and the rest are assumed to follow. When there has been discussion of leadership within orchestras it is usually from the perspective of the conductor and with little emphasis given to the individual artists that form the orchestra; most notably Ben Zander[5] and Roger Nierenberg[6], both conductors in their own right, have studied leadership from the conductor's perspective and taken their musical skills into the business environment to great effect. But Zander himself, when asked whether the conductor/orchestra relationship was the best possible business model, said "It's the worst! The conductor is the last bastion of totalitarianism in the world -- the one person whose authority never gets questioned. There's a saying: Every dictator aspires to be a conductor."

This study takes a different perspective, investigating and articulating the behaviours of the individual musicians within an orchestra, with a particular focus on those musicians who are not in acknowledged positions of responsibility.

One of the most notable features of the orchestral world is the lack of opportunities for the career development of orchestral musicians. In particular there is little opportunity, or possibly a lack of inclination on the part of the musicians themselves, to take on positions of leadership. There are several notable exceptions, examples of orchestral musicians who have chosen to fulfil their capacity for leadership, but always by separating their skills as an instrumentalist from those of the leader; conductors Sir John Barbirolli, Zubin Mehta, Klaus Tennsdedt and Andris Nelsons; and organisational leaders Clive Gillinson (formerly Chief Executive of the London Symphony Orchestra and now running the Carnegie Hall in New York), Simon Clugston (founder of the Birmingham Contermporary Music Group and now in charge of the Northern Sinfonia at Sage Gatesdhead) and John Summers (CEO of the Hallé orchestra in Manchester). In many careers it would be assumed that the most able and ambitious employees would follow a logical career path to the highest leadership positions. However, the fact that the examples given here are notable exceptions, suggests that this is not the route followed by most musicians. And yet in my 15 years as an orchestral musician my colleagues often observed that the members of the orchestra with whom we were privileged to work were no less able to lead the ensemble than many of the conductors that stood before us. Whilst there may be some obstacles, for example the need for retraining and the challenges of the orchestral culture that often puts the instrumentalists and both management and conductor as opposing enemies in the workplace, these are never insurmountable and the rewards of overcoming them so great, rising above them cannot be seen as anything more than rites of passage for the natural leader.

Perhaps even less comprehensible is that the majority of orchestral musicians do not pursue leadership positions within the orchestra, pursuing roles as section leaders and thereby contributing more to the musical outcomes of the ensemble. With no avenue for practising the strong leadership abilities that are so often an inherent attribute of an excellent musician, alternative ways of expressing the need to lead are often found by musicians, giving rise to tensions and frustrations in the ensemble; the observation from within is that, whilst in theory orchestras provide excellent case studies for business leadership, in reality the tensions and frustrations that are common amongst the musicians would make an uncomfortable case study for most businesses.

If strong leadership abilities really are an inherent attribute of an excellent musician, are these attributes at best dormant, at worse crushed? Is it possible that many orchestral musicians are simply not aware of their own capacity to lead, and if they were encouraged to become more aware, what difference would that make to the workings of an orchestra?

The Culture of Orchestras

Already, in outlining the background to this study, several observations have emerged that may be surprising to the reader who has no direct knowledge of the orchestra sector, but which will be entirely familiar to those who have worked with orchestras. A few words about the culture of orchestras;

There is a long tradition of suspicion towards authority amongst orchestral musicians. This emerges as creative friction between conductor and orchestra in the greatest ensembles, and has been exploited to great effect by some of the most lauded conductors of the last hundred years from Gustav Mahler, in his day as famous for his conducting as for his composing and now credited with having created the myth of the great maestro, to Kurt Masur, still inspiring both terror and respect in equal measure from his musicians. Amongst orchestral musicians the likes of Toscanini, Karajan, Szell, Solti and Reiner are remembered as much for their antagonistic approach to their orchestras as for their musical leadership; musicians who have stood up to these great Maestros have entered folk lore as orchestral heroes whilst those who have wilted under the pressure have left secure and well-paid positions to escape the stress of working in such an atmosphere.

Even when conductor and orchestra feel a deep respect for each other antagonism can rise to the surface. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) was founded by its musicians in 1986 and prides itself on its democratic founding principles and the strong relationship it forges with its conductors, amongst them Sir Simon Rattle. In the book written to celebrate their twentieth anniversary, *Spirit of the Orchestra*[7]*,* the mutual respect between Rattle and the OAE is clearly evident, making the description of the creative tensions between the players and conductor whilst working on Bach's St John Passion particularly striking, an occasion on which the string players 'recoiled from the conductor's dramatic, even operatic approach'. The story is taken up in the book by Jan Schlapp, principal viola;

'The work is a seminal one for us and we have always put it in a spiritual context, so the style felt wrong. There were many in the Orchestra who were interested in and positive about this emotional approach but some of us felt that in some way it questioned our whole raison d'être. I don't know why we couldn't make that jump to Simon's viewpoint but we didn't and that shocked us almost as much as it shocked him.'

This was a defining moment for the OAE as they were forced to weigh up their own desire to take the lead with their need to work with conductors who themselves had a strong musical will. Even in the most democratic of orchestras, where mutual respect is an essential quality both amongst the musicians and between musicians and conductor, friction can soon emerge.

Although the relationship between players and management is rarely as visceral as some relationships with conductors have been, there is an expectation of tension that is best demonstrated by the structures of player representatives frequently built up by players in order to hold management to account. In the 1930s the members of the newly formed London Philharmonic Orchestra reacted to the departure of their founding conductor and benefactor Sir Thomas Beecham by establishing themselves as a self-governing ensemble with all

governance responsibility held by the playing members of the orchestra. This model has subsequently been replicated by the other three major independent London orchestras; whoever is conducting or managing, the players are ultimately in control. Similarly, the Vienna Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras are built on player power with the management and conductors entirely held to account by the musicians of the orchestra. Where there are more traditional business structures the players have generally built up systems to hold their management to account; The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is not untypical in this regard with the players creating a system of representatives that has a significant number of the orchestra membership regularly expecting to scrutinise the management of the company through three all-player committees, and representation on a further six staff committees, as well as having three players on the Board of Trustees. When this level of scrutiny imposed on the management of the company has been questioned the explanation given by members of the orchestra is that, in addition to ensuring excellent communication between players and staff, such intense scrutiny is embedded in a habit of distrust for authority as represented by their management.

Ben Zander offers his perspective from his book *The Art of Possibility*[5];

'….vanity and tyranny are prevalent in the music world even in these enlightened times, and the picture of orchestral musicians as infantile and submissive, caught between wilful conductor, insensitive management, and hypervigilant unions, is not as rare as one would hope. Perhaps that is part of the reason why a recent study of various professions reveals that orchestral players, while not the most *disaffected in the survey, experience a job satisfaction level just below that of prison guards.'*

This suspicion of, and sometimes antagonism towards, any form of authority is symptomatic of a frustration that stems from a lack of opportunity to express natural, and often highly developed, leadership skills. Leadership can take many forms, some of which can offer insights into the nature and behaviours of orchestral musicians.

Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership offered in the general literature on the subject, and that literature is so vast and varied that this essay makes no attempt to offer an exhaustive survey. What is offered here is an outline of some of the published ideas on leadership that relate to the behaviours of orchestral musicians and an analysis of some of the literature that has come directly from studies and experience of orchestras.

Traditionally ideas of leadership have focussed on the dichotomy between Charismatic Leadership, where one individual carries all before them, and Consensus Leadership, where the leading person or persons works with their colleagues to find way of working which is acceptable to the majority. Such is the depth of work on the subject these two polar points in the scale have been joined by innumerable theories and concepts of leadership; Situational leadership, Transactional leadership, Transformational leadership, Complexity Leadership, Shared Leadership and many more.

In the orchestral environment the conductor is assumed to fulfil the role of the Charismatic Leader, the powerful individual who will be followed due to their captivating personality as well as any notable professional skills that they may have to offer. The conductor who cannot command the rehearsal room from the moment they arrive will have a very difficult job maintaining any kind of discipline in the orchestra, let alone influence on the artistic outcome.

Charismatic leadership may be found within orchestras, but generally in accepted leadership roles; concert-masters are often charismatic, which is why the relationship between concert-master and conductor is such a pivotal one. A handful of charismatic leaders in key positions in an orchestra can be a very valuable thing; too many will lead to a confusion over the musical direction of the ensemble. Okko Kamu, the Finnish conductor and violinist, is forming an octet for a single performance at a festival in Finland. Whilst much smaller than an orchestra, the example is instructive; his greatest fear is that the ensemble, whilst made up of eight undoubtedly fine string players, may fail to gel and consequently descend into a confusion of incompatible artistic visions. His reason for this fear is that his octet is formed of eight conductors, amongst them Okko himself, Sakari Oramo, Jukka Pekka Saraste and Suzanne Malkki. This opportunity was devised by Okko Kamu as an entertaining spectacle; not even Okko Kamu himself would suggest that such an ensemble is a serious attempt at reaching artistic greatness; any ensemble can only sustain a limited number of charismatic leaders.

In the late 1990s a new concept was introduced to the leadership debate; Transformational Leadership. Transformational Leadership 'consists of three facets: charisma, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation' (Bruce J. Avolio, Fred O. Walumbwa, and Todd J. Weber[8]). The element of charismatic leadership is crucial; 'The charismatic leader provides vision and a sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust, and increases optimism' (Dickson, Den Hartog and Mitchelson as quoted by Avolio, Walumba and Todd)[9]. However, the concept of Transformational Leadership suggests that being a charismatic leader is important but in itself is not enough. If the leader can add an element of intellectual stimulation they will, it is suggested, engender a deeper-rooted respect and enhance their own leadership capacity. The crucial element of the Transformational Leader though is inspirational motivation, which is concerned with 'the capacity of the leader to act as a model for subordinates, the communication of a vision and the use of symbols to focus efforts' (Dickson, Den Hartog and Mitchelson as quoted by Avolio, Walumba and Todd)[9]. An excellent example of the charismatic leader in an orchestral context is Sir Mark Elder; he has a powerful intellectual curiosity and an ability to communicate that both verbally and musically, an ability to motivate through his inspiring musical insights and inclusive approach to his musicians, and a captivating charismatic personality. Such conductors inspire great loyalty amongst their musicians and audience. However, is such leadership appropriate in the general membership of an orchestra?

Transformational leaders are by nature people who identify the need for change and find a way to implement that change, transforming their environment through their leadership. An orchestra is by its very nature a conservative organisation with strong and enduring patterns of behaviour. There is undoubtedly room for Transformational Leaders in the orchestral world, but not often within the playing membership. Conductors as Transformational Leaders are very sought after; Vassily Petrenko currently at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Simon Rattle in his time at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; Sir John Barbirolli at the Hallé in the 1940s and 1950s and Sir Mark Elder, currently at the Hallé. Also in organisational leadership the Transformational Leader has a place; Clive Gillinson rescuing the London Symphony Orchestra in the 1980s; Michael Kaiser at Covent Garden and now at the Kennedy Centre in Washington. These people are miracle workers who will transform both the organisation and often the people associated with it either through their musical or management leadership ability. In all the examples above they are also distinguished for the humility and personal commitment they have each exhibited, often in an apparently hopeless situation. Whilst individual orchestra sections might occasionally benefit from this kind of leadership, in reality transformational leadership and orchestral ensemble playing do not make a comfortable combination for the same reason that an orchestra cannot contain too many

purely charismatic leaders; the truly transformational leader must communicate a single vision for their team and this responsibility cannot be spread throughout the ensemble.

Leadership by consensus is also hard to achieve in an orchestra. Early in my career I was a member of the London-based Kreisler String Orchestra. In this 17 piece orchestra everyone had an equal voice, every opinion was heard and every musical idea explored in a tireless effort to achieve consensus. Except rehearsals were anything but tireless; four solid hours would be spent discussing a couple of lines of a familiar work as we all contributed to this absolute democracy with the inevitable consequence that performances were often almost entirely unrehearsed. The concerts were often of a very high standard though, with every player totally committed and feeling absolute ownership of the performance. This is an outcome also achieved by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in New York as explained by their Executive Director, Graham Parker in *Leadership Ensemble*[10] the book the Orpheus Orchestra have published to explain their methodology;

"If you ask any musician in the orchestra why they love playing with Orpheus it's because they feel empowered. They don't have anyone telling them what to do. They walk into a rehearsal and it's their opportunity to influence the change to shape music, to make music, with all their experience, all their training coming together."

In effect, orchestras such as Kreisler and Orpheus treat every orchestra member as an artist in their own right and as such the musicians are able to demonstrate many of the accepted qualities of leadership; self awareness, strong decision-making, a clear vision (for their own playing, the artistic needs of the ensemble as a whole and the individual work being played), an ability to listen and respond to the needs of their colleagues.

J Richard Hackman has worked with Orpheus, advising them as they refine their working methodologies, and has also written about the social and organisational dynamics in orchestras in his essay *Learning more by crossing levels: evidence from airplanes, hospitals, and orchestras*[11]. Hackman studied a wide range of orchestras internationally, investigating the reasons behind the variation in quality of performance relative to the standard of individual players. He found that there is a phenomenon 'over performance' in the orchestras that are not considered to be of the highest calibre, and conversely a phenomenon of under performance in those that are considered to be the very best. His conclusion is that the reason for this lies with the amount of time spent by the music director with the orchestra. However, within this it is the coaching of the individual musician by the music director that really makes the difference;

'Our findings showed that the music directors of over-performing orchestras spend more time with them, provide clearer artistic direction, and engage in more hands-on coaching of players than do the music directors of under-performing orchestras. Music director behavior did not distinguish between excellent and poor orchestras overall; indeed, we found that orchestras that are dominated by their music directors tend to get into trouble financially. But it is the behavior of the music director, more than any other factor, that determines how fully and well an orchestra uses its pool of player talent to create excellent ensemble performances.'

This distinction, that it is not merely the presence of the music director but the attention that they give to the individual musicians in the ensemble, is important in understanding the relevance of the individual identity of every musician within the orchestra; Hackman's research shows that there is a clear improvement in the quality of an orchestra when each musician is encouraged to develop their own artistic contribution.

Ben Zander is highly regarded for his work in demonstrating the power of music in the business world. Frequently invited to speak and demonstrate his techniques Zander is a well-known figure internationally. As a musician he is an influential teacher, conductor and cellist who has worked with some of the world's greatest orchestras. His techniques are unorthodox to many orchestral musicians; he offers every member of an orchestra that he is conducting a blank piece of paper on which to record their thoughts during rehearsal in order to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, a process that has met with varying degrees of success. In *The Art of Possibility*[5] Zander expounds his ideas on leadership and the power of music. The content is largely the standard leadership techniques found in many other books on the subject within the business literature, based around the principles of positive thinking and re-framing the world. In his opening paragraph Zander says

'Our premise is that many of the circumstances that seem to block us in our daily lives may only appear to do so based on a framework of assumptions we carry with us. Draw a different frame around the same set of circumstances and new pathways come into view. Find the right framework and extraordinary accomplishment becomes an everyday experience.'

This is certainly made more interesting and memorable for being presented through the eyes of a musician dealing with musicians. And whilst much of the book is seen from the perspective of the conductor Zander has some powerful insights into the concept of leadership from within the orchestral ensemble;

'A monumental question for leaders in any organization to consider is: How much greatness are we willing to grant people? Because it makes all the difference at every level who it is we decide we are leading. The activity of leadership is not limited to conductors, presidents, and CEOs, of course – the player who energizes the orchestra by communicating his newfound appreciation for the tasks of the conductor, or a parent who fashions in her own mind that her children desire to contribute, is exercising leadership of the most profound kind.'

Many of the ideas outlined in these leadership models are frequently found within orchestras and are exhibited by the musicians who make up the group of artists that is an orchestra. Inspirational Motivation is often found by orchestral musicians amongst the colleagues with whom they regularly work; musicians are often charismatic and find that they must contain their natural charisma within the orchestra for the good of the ensemble; every musician has a clear vision for the music that they are playing, and any frustration they may show at work may be traced to their inability to articulate that vision within the orchestral context; many orchestral musicians have an understanding of the music that is intellectually inspiring; self awareness is an essential characteristic of all musicians as they understand their place in the context of a large ensemble. The question emerges of whether this rich diversity of leadership qualities can be encouraged and developed within orchestras. The recently emerging theory of Complexity Leadership provides a way to approach this;

'One of the core propositions of complexity leadership theory is that "much of leadership thinking has failed to recognize that leadership is not merely the influential act of an individual or individuals but rather is embedded in a complex interplay of numerous interacting forces"' (Uhl-Bien et al. 2007, p. 302)[13].

Taking this view allows us to acknowledge the many and varied leadership behaviours within a symphony orchestra. This idea has been further developed to explore not just the behaviours of

the individuals but the relationship between those people who exhibit these behaviours, leading to the concept of Shared Leadership;

*'Shared leadership: an emergent state where team members collectively lead each other a "simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process within a team that is characterized by 'serial emergence' of official as well as unofficial leaders" (*Pearce as quoted by Avolio, Walumba and Todd*)[14]. Similar to what we've described with respect to complexity leadership, when shared leadership can be "viewed as a property of the whole system, as opposed to solely the property of individuals, effectiveness in leadership becomes more a product of those connections or relationships among the parts than the result of any one part of that system (such as the leader)" (*O'Connor & Quinn as quoted by Avolio, Walumba and Todd*)[15].'*

Could this concept explain the inner workings of an orchestra, and why the truly great orchestras allow, and even expect, every member to operate as an artist in their own right? The thread that runs through every element of the discussion above of an orchestral musician's leadership capacity and behaviours is the concept of self-awareness. Through an exploration of cognitive science this has been identified as the single central element within any leader's make-up;

*'One of the emerging areas of interest in leadership research concerns the linkages between cognitive science and how leaders perceive, decide, behave, and take action……to develop leadership, it is imperative that we examine how a leader's self-concept and/or identity is formed. (*Swann, Chang-Schneider and McClarty as quoted by Avolio, Walumba and Todd*)[16].'*

Shared leadership, with self-awareness at its core, can therefore be held to be the central concept that explains how an orchestra could maximise the leadership qualities of its members. Where an orchestra is founded on principles that allow these behaviours to flourish this can certainly be the case; the examples of the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras, the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra have all found ways to accommodate musicians who flourish in an environment built on Shared Leadership. Is this something that could happen in all orchestras; do orchestral musicians by definition have the capacity to work in this way?

The paradox – becoming an orchestral musician

There is a common path followed by most orchestral musicians from childhood to the profession. Every musician has their own story to tell, but most will follow this path, or something close; throughout their childhood, through years of music lessons, individual practice and study, commitment and devotion to their art, the individuality of the young musician is constantly praised and encouraged. In school, at home, in local music festivals, talented young musicians are encouraged to express themselves and find their own musical voice. The young artist then spends time intensively studying their instrument at a specialist music school, music college or at university where, in a more competitive environment, the young musicians hone their skills and develop their own individual artistry, often forming strong musical bonds with fellow students through chamber music and ensemble playing. Expectations will be high; on the website of the Royal College of Music in London[17] the following is offered to prospective students;

'In addition to carefully structured programmes of study and performance, there are many opportunities to deepen your knowledge, widen your experience, extend your skills and build networks of contacts – all of which ultimately enhance your employability.

'At the Royal College of Music, we want to ensure you are fully prepared for the ever-evolving profession which you have chosen. Challenges await you, but if you're prepared, there's never been a better time to be a musician. First-rate musical skills are of primary importance but, to achieve your goals, you need to be truly dynamic, making opportunities for yourself, becoming proactive rather than reactive. You need determination, passion and great imagination to make a lasting impression with future employers and potential audiences. Developing these skills and values is intrinsic to our training at the Royal College of Music - encouraging you to use your initiative, creativity and flexibility to achieve your full potential.'

Through all of this the student cannot help but be acutely aware of their own musical identity and their place in the musical environment that they inhabit; that crucial leadership quality of self-awareness is firmly in place as the individual musicality of the student is held to be of paramount importance.

As they consider their future, a very small number of students may hope to pursue a career as a soloist; a small number will play in chamber ensembles; a notable proportion will take their skills into the teaching profession where they will work to develop the next generation of artists; and for many the pinnacle of achievement will be to join a professional orchestra. The selection process is rigorous and many do not make the grade but for those that do, a lifetime of performance at the highest level awaits.

In the audition one of the most highly valued qualities is the musical personality of the individual; their ability to perform both their chosen solo work and a selection of orchestral excerpts demonstrating a musical intelligence and ability to communicate their understanding of the music. In some countries this will be the end of the process. A job will be awarded on the basis of the auditions alone. In the UK and in some other countries a number of trials will be offered to the most promising candidates and they will work with the orchestra for a period of time, sometimes up to two years, before a final choice is made.

The qualities that will be expected of the candidate will be the same the world over; excellence in their ability to play their instrument; rhythmic integrity; a distinctive and adaptable sound and excellent intonation; discipline in rehearsal and performance as they work with their new colleagues; a musical personality that contributes to the whole; a level of self awareness that enables them to take responsibility within the group whilst never causing any individual voice to stand out above the others. The musician who is invited to join the orchestra after this gruelling and often lengthy selection process has truly earned their place.

At every stage of this long journey the young musician must show the attributes of the natural leader, making decisions that will have lasting consequences both for themselves and often for those around them; the colleagues and fellow artists with whom they have grown and developed as musicians. These decisions will be many and varied; musical and technical, relating to how the instrument is played; career orientated, choosing a career path to pursue; they will be professional, establishing important relationships with other musicians; they will be personal, choosing where in the world to work and what level of personal commitment to devote to the profession. Self awareness, the musician understanding the value of what they have to offer and developing the confidence and humility to make a positive contribution to an ensemble, lies at the heart of every musician's training from a very early age and it is this crucial quality that informs and underpins all the other elements that are sought after through the selection process for new appointments to orchestras.

This quality of self-awareness, together with a confidence in their hard-earned ability combined with a humility learnt through close collaboration with their fellow artists, is fundamental to being a good leader. In an orchestra it is an essential quality for the musicians in every position in the ensemble.

However, according to the musicians who have established careers working in orchestras, the most valued attributes of an orchestral musician, assuming the technical mastery of their instrument, are generally held to be receptiveness to others' ideas and following the leadership of a small number of designated individuals; an ability to listen and respond to those around them. This is clearly evident in the case studies in this research. The self-awareness of the individual artistry that was such an essential part of their early years and subsequent training is largely allowed (or even encouraged) to be forgotten; section leaders and soloists within the orchestra are offered greater opportunities to express themselves but even they find themselves largely subsumed into the whole. Orchestras are often structured in such a way as to take an individual's awareness of their own identity away, most clearly demonstrated in the way that decision making is not required from the majority of the members; the conductor makes the major decisions, and then the section leader takes the lead from there, with the section obediently following. In *Leadership Ensemble*[10] the behaviour of orchestral musicians is explained;

'……it's not surprising that orchestral musicians tend to keep their most original and creative impulses to themselves, rather than risk the fury of a conductor who neither wants nor expects input. The inevitable result is that the musicians are detached from their product, the music they create with their instruments. Says jazz guitarist Mark Worrell, "In a symphonic context, you find 'workers' with fabulous talents, formal training, and an abundance of theoretical knowledge, and yet strangely enough these musicians are forced to separate their capacity for conceptualization from the moment of execution. This is an incredibly authoritarian and antidemocratic model of musical production. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the symphony itself is a mass celebration of authoritarianism -- perhaps even charismatic dictatorship.'"

It is a fact that is difficult to accept; many musicians willingly give up their awareness of their own artistic identity, handing over any leadership responsibilities on joining an orchestra, submerging the individual artistry that they have spent so many years fine-tuning, to the greater whole of the ensemble. Is it an inevitable consequence of our orchestral structures? Are orchestral musicians natural leaders working in an oppressive environment or are they actually naturally followers who are only too pleased to escape the pressures of maintaining their own artistic identity and the constant leadership responsibilities that are an inescapable part of that, willingly handing over all decision making to others?

Methodology

In order to investigate these ideas of leadership within orchestras a number of case studies were studied with players from a range of different orchestras. In addition, several musicians with experience and understanding of performing in large ensembles whose roots are in non-western music were interviewed to gain a view of leadership in large ensembles from a non-orchestral perspective. Some organisations were also studied in order to get a clear sense of the leadership roes of musicians beyond the performance of music. The outcomes of these processes were then measured against the research presented above in order to reach the conclusion as presented in the final paragraphs.

Summary of Orchestral Case Studies

To explore these ideas further a number of individual interviews with orchestral musicians from a variety of different orchestras were carried out. The same set of questions were asked of each interviewee and these questions form Appendix 1. The questions were designed to allow the interviewee to explore freely their ideas on leadership whilst ensuring that they addressed certain key points relating to where they look for leadership in the orchestra.

Although the range of orchestras in which the interviewees play is quite broad, and their positions in those orchestra cover the major orchestral sections, there was a high level of consistency in their responses.

On being asked directly where they look to for leadership they all responded that the conductor and their section leader were their leaders. This in itself is not surprising, as there is a strong tradition within which leadership is expected from certain positions, and this has evolved because of the musical results that emerge when everyone is following the established model;

'There is a very clear musical rationale and structure within which to operate.'

But on being encouraged to explore this further they either declined to do so or simply said that most of those in leadership positions were inadequate in some respect;

'Those in leadership roles do not generally acknowledge the full scope of the job, and some positively run away from it.'

There was also a high level of consistency when the interviewees were invited to discuss what they expected from their leaders and what leadership might look like'

'A clear and demonstrable sense of what to do – someone who is unapologetic about leading.'

'You suddenly realise what it is when it is there. A great leader makes you want to emulate them, be drawn in by their playing, to play like them. They make you feel that you can play well.'

'They lead by example and raise your own playing standard. Bad leaders drag your own standard down.'

'It is physical leadership, clear decision making that can be seen through body language and confident actions, particularly in a bigger section. Instinctive communicating.'

'The ability to make a good decision. Being a great musician with charisma makes that easier. The reverse – indecision- leads to a lack of respect from colleagues.'

'A respect for colleagues both as human beings and as musicians – offered this we will eat out of their hands. Mutual respect can be fragile but is very important.'

'A willingness to engage and talk – it all goes wrong when communication stops.'

'The quality of the player is very important.'

'Natural leaders show leadership even when playing a scale in a practice room.'

These responses support the anecdotal evidence of the western orchestras being part of a disciplined and well-schooled tradition. The responses when invited to talk about when leadership was lacking or ineffective offered a wider variety of insights from the defeatist;

'*We are in trouble if the leader is not leading.'*

To the pragmatic;

'The performance does not always suffer if the players instinctively know what is expected of them.'

From the optimistic;

'Trust – you learn to trust your colleagues through experience of regularly playing together. This is not necessarily like leadership, more a pulling together through mutual trust.'

To the pessimistic

'Strength of personality (though not necessarily character) starts to dominate – those that shout loudest will be followed, although they are often not the best musicians. This is why a recognised leadership structure is so important – you must know where the lighthouses are because you will need to turn to them.'

Only one respondent suggested the possibility of leadership emerging from within the ensemble;

'You must have good working relationships with your immediate colleagues and agree on musical decision-making. Someone always emerges as the leader in a close-knit team, and so you all know what to do.'

In all of these responses, even when there is a variety of response, the basic underpinning characteristic is conservatism; even when encouraged to do so orchestral musicians find it hard, counter-intuitive even, to break out of the established way of approaching orchestral ensemble playing. During the interviews each musician was encouraged to consider whether they themselves, or those immediately around them, could or should accept leadership responsibilities of some kind, especially if there was an absence of leadership shown in the key positions of responsibility. The only times when such an approach was considered the suggestion was that this would be a negative behaviour;

'You internalise and get on with the job in hand – head down.'

'You endeavour to meet your own personal expectations and disregard the chaos around you.'

'There are people who will take on a leadership role from within the orchestra but this leads to the section not knowing what to do. It is disruptive. The section is disrupted if leadership is shown when it is not part of their job.'

Some respondents even found themselves unable to contemplate the possibility of individuals taking responsibility beyond their position;

'Each and every orchestra member has a personal responsibility to respect the leader, or to ensure their colleagues respect the leader. But a lot of people do not take this responsibility (of respecting the leader) and expect the management to deal with any problems.'

The musicians interviewed come from a wide range of UK orchestras where this conservatism and inability to contemplate a more responsible role within an orchestra is clearly the norm. This does not have to be the case though, a fact that is supported through research into other types of orchestra. Is it possible for the individuality of a musician to flourish in an orchestral context, is there a type of orchestra where the individual musicians are able to express themselves and demonstrate their innate leadership qualities as artists in their own right?

Types of Orchestra

In his study of transformational leadership in the context of conductors' roles with orchestras[18], Christian Freiherr von Streit suggests that the suppression of the musician's individuality is a necessary pre-condition of orchestral membership;

'Even if there may be a range of more or less directive conductors, the musicians in a big symphony orchestra usually do not have much freedom to develop and realize their own interpretations. Generally, musicians do not participate in developing the orchestra's conception for the interpretation of the composition and they don't have much freedom in following this adaptation. Instead, they mainly have to realize the conductor's ideas for interpretation as he controls and immediately criticizes them. Individualistic decisions are basically restricted to technical aspects.'

Hunt, Stelluto and Hooijber[19] as quoted by von Streit, do acknowledge the need for creativity, but clearly in the context of technically implementing the artistic vision of the conductor;

'As an orchestral musician, they must solve creatively the individual technical issues in the music individually while remaining flexible and motivated enough to change artistic direction at the request of a conductor and coordinated enough to perform simultaneously in seamless tandem with 100 or more of their colleagues.'

What is of particular interest to this study is that von Streit clearly found that the successful leadership of a conductor is entirely dependent on the co-operation of the orchestra;

'*Our results support the notion that a conductor's transformational leadership style in an orchestra does not generally increase the artistic quality of a symphony orchestra. In particular, results show that the conductor's transformational leadership style is positively related with the artistic quality of the orchestra only if it is accompanied by highly cooperative group climate in the orchestra.'*

The qualities required amongst the musicians to create this co-operative group climate are exactly those qualities that the developing musician most values as outlined in the opening sections of this research, and which are so often lost in the orchestral context.

Roger Nierenberg describes this in his book *The Music Paradigm* when he relates how an orchestra performed when he, as its conductor, stepped off the podium and left them to play without him*;*

'Many people think of leaders as those who give commands or directions. But in a dynamic piece of music the roles are constantly shifting. One moment you may be playing a solo, the next you may be accompanying someone else. Then you rest for a while, and then you play what we call a 'tutti', a passage for the entire orchestra, which features the ensemble as a whole. A musician displays leadership by playing all of those roles superbly. So the capacity to provide flexible, sensitive, alert support is a vital aspect of being a great musician, and leaders perform that function with the same care and energy as any solo. When the team dynamic has awakened leadership at all levels, not only can they survive an unexpected absence (referring to the absence of the conductor), but its performance level skyrockets. And I believe you heard some of that kind of playing today.'

Two examples of orchestras that clearly have cultivated and benefited from a 'highly cooperative group climate' and 'awakened leadership at all levels' are the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment (OAE) in London and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in New York. These two ensembles were founded on a set of principles that marks them out from most other world-class orchestras. Whilst most orchestras were founded by entrepreneurial conductors, for example Sir Thomas Beecham who founded both the London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, or visionary businessmen who saw a need for orchestral music, for example Thomas Halle who founded his eponymous orchestra in Manchester, and Walter Legge who founded the Philharmonia Orchestra in London as a vehicle for his own remarkable record producing career. In contrast to these examples, the OAE and Orpheus were both founded by their members with a clear vision for how the ensemble should work. There are fundamental differences between those two visions, but both have stayed true to their own vision, a vision that is rooted in the individual artistic identity and self-awareness of their members.

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra members are so sure that their model brings out the best in their membership, and also so confident that their principles are transferable into the business community, that they have published a book articulating their way of working and offering it as a business methodology. *Leadership Ensemble*[10] offers a clear and simple analysis of how to get the best out of your musicians;

'What is now known as The Orpheus Process is the very zenith of democratic artistic collaboration. In the absence of a conductor, the individual musicians of Orpheus must rely on one another for repertoire and programming choices, interpretive decisions and ultimately the responsibility of successful performing and recording.

'Central to the collaborative personality of Orpheus is its unusual process of sharing and rotating leadership roles. For each and every work, an elected committee of musicians determines the concertmaster and principal players of each section. These players in turn constitute the 'core group', whose role is to develop an overall concept of the music. The 'core' then presents their interpretations to the whole of the orchestra for consideration and rehearsal. In the final rehearsals all members of the orchestra participate in refining the interpretation and execution. Members take turns listening from the auditorium for balance, blend, articulation, dynamic range and clarity of expression. In recording sessions the orchestra crowds the production booth, listening to the playbacks. This unique process unleashes the talent, vision, creativity and leadership of each member of the group.'

It is clear that the Orpheus model works, with spectacularly successful concerts, tours and recordings, and adds evidence to the assertion that orchestral musicians will thrive if allowed to

lead; that this way of working really does 'unleash the talent, vision, creativity and leadership of each member of the group'. The leadership is however still held by designated individuals in any given rehearsal or performance situation; by moving the leadership responsibility around the ensemble the individual musicians are undoubtedly given a greater sense of ownership of their orchestra and its artistic identity. J Richard Hackman, quoted in "*Leadership Ensemble*[10]*'* explains how the shared leadership works, contrasting it to the usual workings of a symphony orchestra;

'This kind of environment makes the traditional symphony orchestra a prime example of the tension that exists between traditional hierarchy's command-and-control structures and the knowledge worker's inherent bias toward self-management. Since it is the knowledge workers who provide the intellectual and creative capital that drive all information-based organizations, alternative management models that succeed in transforming the orchestra can have potentially wide-ranging applicability.

'Orpheus Chamber Orchestra has developed just such an alternative model. Our approach to orchestral leadership -- eliminating the role of the conductor and dividing those responsibilities among the twenty-seven members of the orchestra -- is radically different from that employed by any other orchestra in the world.

Orpheus has many leaders. Individual musicians constantly rotate formal leadership roles, while others spontaneously take on ad hoc leadership responsibilities in response to organizational needs and the specific demands of each piece of music. In fact, everyone in Orpheus is expected to become a leader at some time, ensuring that we sustain a unique multi-leadered organization that fully engages and flexibly deploys the creative abilities and energies of each member. Time and again in my years with Orpheus, I have seen this reservoir of leadership give the group an unparalleled range and depth of talent to draw upon in performance.'

The Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment (OAE) have also remained impressively close to their founding principles of artistic control remaining with the playing membership. Conductors and repertoire are chosen by the playing membership through the Artistic Direction Committee, a group of four elected orchestral members. The orchestra was set up in 1986, at the height of the period instrument revolution in the orchestral world, as a deliberate reaction against those ensembles, such as Christopher Hogwood's Academy of Ancient Music and John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, ensembles that were built around the leadership of one brilliant and charismatic individual leader. The OAE would be player founded, player run and player led, 'a multi-leadered organisation'. The Intellectual Stimulation characteristic identified as an element in Transformational Leadership is abundantly in evidence in an ensemble that defines itself through its rigorously researched and articulated attitude to performance; in contrast to almost any other orchestra, the conductors who work with OAE attend rehearsals with an entirely collaborative attitude and expect to learn from the musicians of the orchestra rather than to direct.

In conversation with management and players of the OAE I took the opportunity to explore the way in which the players manage to lead the ensemble in such a powerful and all-encompassing way, working with conductors who would never normally accept the bold approach described in the example of Simon Rattle's St John Passion above.

Members of the orchestra gave some powerful insights into the orchestra's culture. Their observation on conductors is that 'they trust us and use an enabling, not dominating, type of leadership'. Clearly there is no option with this orchestra, and conductors willingly accept this approach. There is still a sense that section players can feel disenfranchised, a point that they were keen to make alongside the parallel point that this was an area that the OAE are addressing; the disenfranchising of any member is not acceptable to this remarkable group so they now have sectional rehearsals where every member of the section is offered a part of the rehearsal to present their ideas and make a contribution from their own insight and vision of the music being prepared. Ownership matters and therefore every musician must contribute beyond purely playing.

In this conversation it started to become evident that the membership of the OAE is particularly articulate, committed and that they all bring a high level of intellectual to their work in the orchestra. On being challenged about whether there was a particular OAE 'type' which defined the orchestra rather than purely its founding principles, they explained that there is definitely an OAE 'type', but maybe not along the lines that I had anticipated; OAE are fundamentally an anarchic group with a clear sense of their identity as reactionaries against the conductor-driven period instrument orchestras and the general symphonic model. This difference is rooted in a clarity of vision which is maintained and perpetuated through a continually evolving membership. This player led vision is constantly tested against some of the most powerfully charismatic and controlling conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle and Vladimir Jurowski, but the vision held by the players always remains, even if it means precipitating a crisis such as that experienced with Rattle and his approach to the St John Passion; Rattle, the most sought after conductor in the world with a frequently and openly stated commitment to the OAE, seemed seriously to reconsider his involvement after that episode but kept his relationship with the orchestra alive once he understood that their behaviour was firmly rooted in their revolutionary approach to music making. Marshal Marcus, founder member of the OAE and now Head of Music at the South Bank Centre in London, explains;

'…he (Rattle) came along to some concerts, and I felt he was asking the question, "Are you prepared to move on and grow or are you becoming English dilettantes" And I felt it was the right question.'

And clearly Rattle felt he heard the right answer in their music making; the anarchic approach that was so essential at the outset remains, being articulated in the determinedly independent approach to every piece of repertoire, every conductor or soloist; this period instrument orchestra plays 20th and 21st century music, tackles the great romantic masterpieces and discovers long lost orchestral works from the early baroque, constantly reviving the essentially iconoclastic approach to music making that makes this model of orchestral ensemble function. There is no single driving artistic force making the bold decisions, simply the same group of musicians that make every musical decision as well as holding and articulating the vision of the company.

Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of the OAE is that they will never rest; not only are they exploring was to ensure that every musician has a voice, but they also always challenge their own ideas of how the orchestra should be. The players described how they would never have a section of players who play in the same way but would always involve players who are powerful characters; 'entirely different players who all contribute'. And yet even as they explained this philosophy they were questioning whether this sometimes led to individual sections not quite gelling. This level of self criticism – self awareness – is at the heart of their

concept of the orchestra; the leaders of the OAE (they have four, each a markedly different style of violinist) have all, in their own words, 'had leadership thrust upon them', none of them seeking this role but all accepting it as the will of the group.

There are inevitably members of the OAE who find that their leadership skills are not so relevant to the concert platform, but these musicians will often find leadership roles elsewhere in the organisation, for instance, leading the education programme; this is a common model in many orchestras. At the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra the education programme has been largely devised and run by the musicians for 25 years; however, at the OAE there is a clear sense that the internal benefit to the orchestra of giving members this leadership outlet is as valuable as the roles taken by other musicians in rehearsal and performance. The study days run each season by the OAE are as eagerly attended by members of the orchestra as by members of the public.

There are other orchestras who have their members as major stakeholders, not least the four self-governing London orchestras (London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras), which are owned and governed by their playing members, and most orchestras will now have playing members on their governance bodies and having some say in their management. However, in none of these is the artistic identity of the individual musician held to be the fundamental asset on which all else it built. The Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras do offer a much greater voice to the individual members, but even in these great ensembles in performance it is the conductor who makes all the major decisions. What they do gain through this greater sense of ownership is a heightened sense of responsibility for the musical performance; there is no room for complacency when the final responsibility is held by the players.

Defining an Orchestra

So far the discussion has been limited to the traditional concept of the Western Classical Orchestra. Ben Zander briefly describes an orchestral cultural exchange, an occasion on which his Youth Philharmonic Orchestra from Boston, USA, visited Havana to play a joint concert with the National Youth Orchestra of Cuba. They formed an orchestra half Cuban and half American to perform a colourful and brilliant work that contained many complicated Cuban rhythms, written by Guido Lopez Gavillan, the conductor of the Cuban orchestra, and Bernstein's Candide Overture. Neither orchestra had prepared the other's piece;

'*it soon seemed evident that the complex Cuban rhythms were so unfamiliar to the American kids that the piece was beyond them. The conductor became concerned, frustrated, and then resigned himself to failure'*

The solution was to find leadership elsewhere;

'The focus shifted away from the maestro, toward the stand partners. Already more expressive than most young players I had seen, the Cubans became fantastically energised, exuberantly conducting with their instruments, each leading along his American stand partner enthusiastically. The American kids, basking in the lavish attention, gave themselves over to the process and began to play the rhythms the way they were intended to be played.'

Zander concludes

'A leader does not need a podium; she can be sitting quietly on the edge of any chair, listening passionately and with commitment, fully prepared to take up the baton.'

This example of how new ways of leading can be found through cultural exchange can be explored much more deeply by allowing a broader definition of an orchestra than the one generally assumed. The western classical symphony orchestra is a well-established model that can be found in most major western cities and throughout the world. However, it is far from being the only orchestral model. Bhupinder Singh Chaggar, a tabla player based at South Asian Arts UK in Leeds feels no reason to restrict the definition to the standard Western Classical model. South Asian Arts UK runs a youth orchestra in which every instrument is firmly rooted in the South Asian tradition, even if the ensemble deliberately imitates a western orchestra. Sitars, Sarod, Santoor, Tabla and other traditional South Asian instruments form an ensemble of the same scale and scope of a traditional western orchestra but with markedly different repertoire. In 2006 Sheffield City Hall commissioned Bhupinder to compose a 30 minute work for members of the Hallé alongside a South Asian orchestra and a choir of school children from one of the most culturally and racially diverse areas of the city. *Freedom of the Soul* was built on the harmonic and melodic structures of Stravinsky's *Firebird* and was performed in the first half of a concert in which *Firebird* formed the second, with the full Hallé conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

In developing this work Bhupinder found himself exploring the different ways of communicating between musicians in orchestras from different cultures. For Bhupinder and his ensemble of South Asian artists the idea of a conductor was totally alien, and yet the rhythmic complexities and complicated ensemble interactions were impossible for the Hallé musicians to comprehend without the guiding hand of a conductor. Amongst the South Asian artists it was immediately clear where to look and who to listen to at every point in the work, as they each took full responsibility for the whole. Within their ensemble they also included two jazz musicians who similarly seamlessy followed and lead as required. The wonder amongst the orchestral musicians amazed the South Asian musicians who could not comprehend of the possibility of making music without this shared leadership, just as the orchestral musicians, all at the very top of their game, could not comprehend playing such a piece without the leadership being held by one single person. The mutual respect between the musicians from such different cultures was as rewarding an outcome as the work itself, but the question that was left unanswered, or even unasked by some, was how much greater would the traditional Western orchestra be if they could adopt the same level of awareness and shared leadership as the South Asian ensemble, and how could that be achieved?

The development of the South Asian orchestral model is based on listening and learning; a form of apprenticeship where from the youngest age musicians develop their skills and musical understanding through association with their guru. In West Yorkshire this has been facilitated through South Asian Arts for nearly 20 years leading to a thriving music scene that, whilst closely linked to the musical life of India, has a clear identity of its own. Part of this identity is found through collaborative work with artists from other musical cultures, for example Bhupinder's work *Freedom of the Soul* was devised and performed in collaboration with jazz saxophonist Jesse Bannister. This cross-fertilisation of musical cultures allows not only the purely musical ideas but also crucially the cultural practices of artist development to cross between cultures. This concept of cross-fertilisation is commonplace outside the Western Classical tradition, and championed within it by artists such as cellist Matthew Barley, but the idea is not so common in orchestras, as shown by the amazement of the Hallé musicians at their first exposure to local South Asian musicians after many years in the music business.

Other musical cultures draw on western orchestral ideas and offer an insight into how orchestras could develop the leadership capacities of their members. Mary Venetia Genis runs RASPO, the Reading All Steel Pan Orchestra, out of a Tudor gatehouse in Reading which was previously the school room attended by Jane Austen; this unlikely collision of cultures is indicative of the open mindedness and inspirational approach of Mary to her work. Passionate about Steel Pans Mary both leads her own orchestra and performs with Mangrove, one of the world's leading steel pan orchestras, based in London. She took time out from rehearsals for the National UK Panorama Championship with Mangrove Steel Pan Orchestra to explain the culture and methods of a steel pan orchestra.

The structure of a Steel Pan Orchestra has parallels with the Western Classical orchestra, being divided into sections, each fulfilling a distinct role. ;

Bass	6 and 9 drum bass pans and 4 drum tenor pans
Cellos and Guitars	Treble and Double Guitars and 3 Pan cello drums
Front Line	Tenors, Double Tenors, Double Seconds
Engine Room	Drums and Percussion, including Irons (steel wheel rims played with steel rods) and Scratchers (a metal guiro)

This layout is regulated by the Pantrinbago, the world governing body for steel pans. From this point though the parallels with an orchestra evaporate and the apparently rigid structure gives way to an organised chaos, which when it works can create the most extraordinarily powerful rhythmically complex disciplined ensemble playing. How this level of performance is reached demonstrates the power of truly shared leadership.

The entire workings of the Steel Pan Orchestra is underpinned by the principal

'Each One Teach One'

This simple vision for how to operate a complex ensemble operates throughout the Steel Pan World. Steel Pan orchestras can vary in size from 6 players to 120. Mangrove will be fielding an orchestra of 75 players from all over the world and, as with all steel pan orchestras, will work without any printed music. Taking a tune that may or may not be familiar an appointed *Arranger* starts to play a fragment and the assembled orchestra members imitate. A hierarchy exists which is based entirely on speed of learning and can constantly change; the *Crack Shots* are the first pan players to pick up the note patterns of the *Arranger; the Crack Shots* immediately teach the pan players around them the notes that they have learnt; *the Arranger* then moves on to the next note pattern; *the Crack Shots* are again the players who learn the new patterns the quickest; meanwhile the next group of players have learnt the first notes and teach these to the next tier, and so on until the entire ensemble has learnt each section. A ten-minute work can take up to a month to learn in this way for a 75 piece orchestra. This method of learning is based entirely on the ability to teach and learn through listening and observing. Every member of the orchestra can rise to become a *Crack Shot* simply by becoming the quickest to pick up the note patterns from the arranger, and the atmosphere can become fiercely competitive as players vie for the position of *Crack Shot*. This basic hierarchy, based on speed of learning, is underpinned by a more established hierarchy that is based on respect built up over years; the *Elders and Tuners* are the most respected musicians, often with a track record of competition winning arrangements. Even if they are not actively playing in the orchestra the other pan players will defer to the *Elders and Tuners* to resolve any disputes within the ensemble. Next in the hierarchy is the *Manager*, responsible for the external relationships of the orchestra,

including booking the *Arranger*, and below the *Manager* is the *Captain*, often though not always a *Crack Shot* and responsible for the smooth internal operations of the orchestra, including stage layout and rehearsal schedule.

Everything about this structure is flexible and can change with no notice; anyone can become a *Crack Shot* simply by being the fastest at learning from the *Arranger*, or become sufficiently respected to become an *Elder and Tuner, Manager or Captain*. The development of individual musicians is an inherent part of the structure of every Steel Pan Orchestra and aspiration an essential quality of every member. It is assumed that musicians will set up their own orchestras and continue the evolution of this orchestral form and culture. Competitions, such as the National UK Panorama Championships, which is replicated the world over, encourage collaboration and competition as ten 75-piece orchestras compete to be crowned the UK champions.

The evolutionary nature of the Steel Pan Orchestral world is not unique, though very distant from the culture of the Western Classical Orchestra. Mary Venetia Genis cited two examples of other ensembles that work on the same principles. RASPO collaborated with the Milton Margai School Choir of Sierra Leone. This children's choir is formed of young people who have lost their sight through atrocity or conflict in this war-ravaged country. With no possibility of using notated music everything is learnt through listening and teaching throughout the ensemble; every singer holds a responsibility for their immediate colleagues to ensure that everyone knows the music that is being rehearsed or performed. As with Steel Pan Orchestras the culture is built on strong and trusting relationships with every member holding leadership responsibilities as they learn from and teach those around them.

Mary's second example was the *Yle de Egba* in Brazil, an Afro-Brazilian percussion group that is predicated on children from as young as two years old starting to learn complex rhythms through apprenticeship to older children and ultimately through playing with established members of percussion groups. This is a deeply spiritually motivated and family orientated form of apprenticeship that insists on the individual musician understanding their own ability in the context of the other members of the group and thus their appropriate contribution to the ensemble. This equates to the self-awareness that is pivotal to all leadership behaviours and supports the concept of shared leadership previously outlined; every member of the group holds an individual responsibility to their colleagues for their contribution to the group, and that contribution is clearly defined according to their ability and potential.

London-based South African percussionist Eugene Skeef explores the idea of shared leadership within non-Western classical orchestras. Eugene brings a unique perspective having grown up as a percussionist in a South African township, moved to London and started leading workshops with the musicians of the London Sinfonietta and has been involved with orchestras in London now for twenty years, as a performer, composer, animateur and now as a trustee of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Eugene's recent work has been with Ogen/Udu ensembles in Nigeria. In one of the most remote regions of Nigeria there are musicians who have had no contact with Western musicians. Their methods and musical culture are as pure as is likely to be found in the modern world. Eugene visited these musicians to observe and learn and emerged with some startling insights. The parallels with the Afro-Brazilian percussion groups described by Mary Venetia Genis are inescapable.

The core group of the Ogen/Udu ensemble contains five players; two Ogene, one Udu and two Calabash Shekere. The Ogene is a small, double-headed metal bell, the two bells joined by a curved piece of metal; the Udu is a large covered clay pot with a small whole in its top; the Calabash Shekere is a Gourd with strings of bead attached around the outside. Each instrument has a clearly identified role within a strict hierarchy. The two Ogene players are the Leader and Co-Leader. Whenever the group plays the Leader starts alone and demonstrates the patterns that will form the basis of the music, the tempo is maintained by a near-inaudible clicking of the tongue by the Leader. Having listened to his leader with total concentration the Co-Leader then first praises the Leader with a sung incantation and then brings his Ogene into the musical mix; this element of praise is an essential part of the musical process with the vocalisation of respect an integral element in the music. From the point of joining the two perform with total synergy; there is no discernable hierarchy to the observer who will often be unable to distinguish who is playing what. This process continues with each of the Calabash Shekere joining next in turn, and finally the bass sound of the Udu underpinning the whole.

This clearly defined hierarchy is the structure within which a system of apprenticeship operates. In a similar way to the South Asian musical culture outlined above, each musician understands where they belong in the hierarchy and will learn from those above with humility and respect. This is in contrast to the Steel Pan system, where the hierarchy in performance can fluctuate depending entirely on speed of learning.

Eugene explained how this hierarchy and system of apprenticeship works with two simple examples from his observations of the group at work. He described the Leader as a benevolent dictator; on one occasion one of the Calabash Shekere players tired to show off his skill in what the Leader considered to be an inappropriate manner; nothing was said and the performance continued in an apparently seamless continuum, but to the keen observer the Leader's displeasure was clear in one withering glance at the junior musician, followed by a gesture of acknowledgement by that musician, who then dropped out of the group, only to be allowed back in to the performance once the Leader considered that they had learnt their lesson. The maintenance of the hierarchy is essential to the effective working of the group, and it can only be maintained if the junior performers, however brilliant they may be, accept it. The second example demonstrated how junior players can progress and grow from the most humble positions; the most junior member of the group does not play but instead collects the money from any by-standers, this money being the only income the musicians will receive. On one occasion the young man with the money bag was offered the chance to play a Calabash Shekere, the most junior musical position in the group; they passed the money bag to a young man in the group that was listening and accepted his place in the group. The difference in performance level was instantly apparent as this most junior group member accepted their opportunity, but the door had been opened and they were accepted in the group.

This formula works, and has worked for millennia, because it is so integrated into its community. The group of musicians will be called on to play and any social gathering of any significance such as births, weddings, funerals. As an audience gathers they will all join in the performance with singing, dancing and, when invited, playing within the core group. The group itself can be multiplied as many times as is appropriate, allowing for organic growth as people join as explained above. The Leadership and hierarchy are clearly defined, though never articulated, and anybody joining the group adheres to this; if they do not they are frozen out, even if temporarily, as in the example above. However, within this structure there is no impediment to anyone becoming a Leader; the apprenticeship system is so deeply imbedded

that the development of each member of the group is understood to be one of the main priorities of every member.

These examples of non-western ensembles give a powerful insight into how musical ensembles can work, and how blinkered the general western model of orchestral ensemble and musical development has become. From these observations of the ensemble cultures that exist and flourish beyond the world of the Western Classical Orchestral it is clear that a parallel musical evolution has happened which for many years Western classical orchestras have ignored. And yet there is so much that can be learned from the various orchestral cultures outlined here; every member of each group has the capacity and ability to lead; the structure of the group assumes that all musicians will aspire to fulfil their own leadership abilities and this possibility is enshrined in the culture of the music making. In traditions much older and also in more recent cultures, though ones that can trace their roots directly back to the oldest musical cultures mankind has known, the concept of shared leadership is not only accepted, but also assumed to be a fundamental principle within the orchestral culture. Where these principles have been followed in Western Classical Orchestras, for example in the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the musicians have found their way not through study but through a visceral reaction to the orchestral culture and a return to what they instinctively feel to be their most natural way to make music; learning and teaching in a collaborative environment over years.

Conclusion

The orchestra is a remarkable organisation. The level of co-operation and communication that is displayed in orchestral performance is rarely replicated in any other environment, and reflects the dedication and skill of the musicians involved.

The common experience of the orchestral musician rarely reflects this ideal. The musical skills of listening and responding are generally highly valued and clearly in evidence in all orchestras. However, this often does not translate into the members of the orchestra being valued for their individual contribution to the whole. This paradox is clearly evident in the pattern of musical development of most orchestral musicians; throughout their musically formative years musicians are encouraged to be acutely aware of their own individual creativity and develop their own distinctive artistic voice. This research has investigated to what extent this individual artistic identity is encouraged, or even permitted, in an orchestral environment. By researching orchestras that do encourage and allow the individual artist to flourish, and by investigating how large non-orchestral ensembles in a range of contrasting cultures function, the conclusion must be drawn that the individual artist can and should flourish in a large ensemble. Although the evidence from the case studies suggests that this is not the common experience of most orchestral musicians, the self awareness of the individual artist, that crucial quality amongst leaders in any sphere, if allowed to express itself can be a powerful element in a large ensemble.

Orchestras can and should learn from the remarkable way in which other non-orchestral cultures have developed large ensembles, as well as building on the success of orchestras such as Orpheus and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, where the leadership capabilities of every musician are valued and given space to develop and inform every decision, both artistic and administrative, that the orchestra makes. The greatest orchestras will be a community of artists each legitimately and powerfully expressing their creative individuality, contributing to the shared leadership dynamic that will generate the finest performances.

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Appendix Questionnaire

1. Who do you look to for leadership when playing in an orchestra?
    - Can be, and probably will be, more than one person and could be self.

1.a. What sort of leadership are you looking for?
    - Decision making
    - Charisma/presence
    - Musical direction
    - Physical leadership (e.g. where in the bow to play/when to breath etc)

1.b. What key qualities or characteristics do you look for?
    - Manner
    - Attitude
    - Level of playing
    - Confidence
    - Communication
    - Charisma

1.c. Is it obvious? Do you recognise it when you see it, even if it may be hard to articulate?
    - Can you learn it?
    - Is it a set of skills or behaviours that can be taught?

2. If the leader is not there, or there but not leading, where do you look to for leadership then?
    - This may already have been answered in 1

2.a. What do you get from this person/these people?
    - Refer back to bullet points under 1.a.
    - Why do you find yourself following them?

2.b. What key qualities or characteristic do they show that you feel make you follow them?

3. Are you able to describe the behaviours or personality types that you would like to see in an ideal section or orchestra?