

## Master of Arts in Arts Management E-Newsletter

### Welcome

Welcome back to all returning MAM students, and a special welcome to our new students. We are excited to start the new academic year with you and we wish you all a successful semester.

In this issue you will find articles from the MAM faculty and students. Hopefully, these articles will assist you during your time at Mason as well as when you are seeking employment.

We encourage your contributions. If you have an idea for an article to include in future newsletters, please contact Claire Sutherland at [csuther1@gmu.edu](mailto:csuther1@gmu.edu). This newsletter will be published three times per academic year. The next issues are scheduled for February and May 2007.

As always, please remember you can contact the office at 703-993-8926 if you have any questions.

### Questions Answer More Than Some Answers

by Richard Kamenitzer

There are no stupid questions, only stupid answers. Well, in this case, the questions can be stupid, too. And, revealing.

"I've always said that I can learn as much about a candidate from the questions that they ask as from the answers that they give to my questions," said founder and CEO of Commongood Careers, James Weinberg (<http://www.cgcareers.org>). Although he now heads the Boston, MA - based nonprofit search firm, Weinberg spent years on the other side of the table, as a hiring manager.

Weinberg recommended candidates go heavy on the research before embarking on the interview process. "The more you know about a particular organization, the better equipped you will be with pertinent, engaging and educated questions," he said. "This way you will have questions that cannot be answered just by looking on the organization's Web site." Specific and tailored questions regarding how the organization as a whole functions, how the organization's programs function, how its mission is realized within the community, and how its organizational structure is set up are ideal. "Most important," added Weinberg, "is that you delve deeper. Many organizations, especially nonprofits, take their organizational culture very seriously. They look for someone who's a good fit within that culture, sometimes even more so than someone who's a fit with the job criteria."

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Larry Slesinger, founder and CEO, Slesinger Management Services, a nonprofit executive search firm in Washington, D.C., offered the following sample of questions:

- What will be on my to-do list for the first 90 days?
- How will you evaluate my performance?
- What are some key challenges the organization will face in the next one to two years?
- What are the implications for this position?

Other questions include:

- What is the camaraderie in the office like?
- What is the pace of work?
- What are the normal hours that people keep?
- How are operational challenges dealt with at an organizational level?
- What programs are you looking to focus on or implement in the coming years?

Questions regarding the job itself should display that you have a strong understanding of the job and what it requires of you. For example, if you are applying for a fundraising position, Slesinger advised against posing broad questions ("So, how do we raise money around here?"). Instead, he recommended asking questions that show a hiring manager you understand the work that you're building yourself as a candidate to do, such as, "I've worked with many organizations where their donor base was heavily skewed toward major donors. What does the diversification of your funding base look like?"

On an almost final note, leave the subject of salary up to the hiring manager's discretion. "It can be a touchy issue if it is broached too early in the process," said Weinberg. "Another thing to be wary of," he added, "is posing questions that show you are ignorant of the organization and its processes."

The final note – anyone who has taken MAM 704 may recall that I strongly suggested asking for the organization's financial statements and independent audit (of course, you know where to get their 990 form, but that may be more than a year old). Look at the annual growth in revenue and from what sources; look at the net assets and compare how much of those assets are made up of inventory and fixed assets. If the net assets are less than the total of inventory and fixed assets, we are looking at an organization that may be experiencing extended financial difficulty. One MAM graduate recently did just this and when they discovered that the net assets did not cover the fixed assets and inventory, they looked elsewhere and found out the organization was borrowing money. Nothing wrong about mentioning that the "financial statements seem to indicate that the organization is being financially challenged. I would welcome an opportunity to truly dig in and be a part of turning this around – how might you suggest my position would allow me to do this?"

Richard Kamenitzer,  
Associate Professor Arts Management,  
Executive Director of the Center for Arts Management

## Dean's Corner

### Master Teachers

by William Reeder

In all management, the central task of the manager is the nurturing of "other people" and their success. One of the greatest management teachers of all time, William Oncken, Jr. (and if you haven't yet gotten his great book *Managing Management Time* PLEASE do so – it can be found used on both Amazon and Ebay) said there are three constructs at work: What people listen to; Who they listen to; and What they listen FOR.

What we listen too is captured in the job description. Who we listen to is outlined in the organizational chart. What we listen for are four things.

1. A chance to contribute something to the success of the enterprise that I myself value.
2. The recognition from others, especially my boss, that what I contribute is valuable.
3. Predictability – that what I am experiencing today will mainly be in tact tomorrow (this is also a factor of compensation – reliability is more critical than amount – and it's part of the reason that change is hard to implement).
4. That when I tell someone I am part of the organization, I receive his or her admiring approval.

Assuring the practice of these elements are central tasks of management! Clarifying what it is that staff members, committee members, co-workers, etc. are contributing that in their own eyes is valuable is as simple as having a conversation. And, it's really important that we do so. Clairvoyance simply won't provide!

A pat on the back – in public – that is sincere and thoughtful is – well, think of those times it's been afforded to you! Powerful.

Predictability means that as we go through the changes of every organization that we openly let folks know what's going on. And that we have a rational system in place (good strategic planning)

that routinely identifies institutional issues and trajectories. Remember, people don't really mind changing, but they do not like "being changed" by surprise.

Finally, if I tell everyone I meet that I am in an organization that YOU are also part of, and how much I admire the effectiveness of your work, and how proud I am to be affiliated with you – and you do the same – pretty soon the snowball effect will usher in that sense of collective pride, esteem, and yes – prestige.

Pretty simple stuff. But easily overlooked in the busy lives of executives.



Bill Reeder, Dean  
College of Visual and Performing Arts  
Professor of Arts Management

## Student Spotlight

### **Partnering to Increase Organizational Capacity Case Study for the Strategic Restructuring of Three Symphonies by Michael Markley and Claire Sutherland**

During the 2006 summer session, a group of students in the Master of Arts Management (MAM) program developed a proposal for the strategic restructuring of three symphonies: Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, and Prince William Symphony Orchestra. The proposal served as the team project for the MAM 780, Consultancy in the Arts, class. The MAM 599, Board of Director Management, class, hereafter referred to as the Board Class, partnered in this effort by simulating the roles and responsibilities of individual members representing the Board of Directors for each symphony.

The three symphonies were chosen because of their close proximity to one another as well as their similarities. It was the responsibility of the Board Class to research and understand the orchestra they were to represent prior to the first joint class on June 3, 2006. It was assumed that the three boards contacted each other because they thought it might be possible to work together in a more formal and efficient manner. The boards then contacted the MAM 780 Consulting Class to assist them in learning about the options that existed and possibly help them to move forward with one or more of those options.

For the MAM 780 consulting team project to be considered successful, representatives of at least two of the symphonies represented by the Board Class would need to support adoption of the team proposal, in part or in whole, for their respective symphonies to work together in a manner recommended by the consultants. The second measure of success would be the expressed desire for the symphonies to retain the MAM 780 consulting team to assist in implementing the strategic restructuring proposal. The MAM 780 consulting team named their entity Windrose Arts Consulting.

For the Board Class to be considered successful, each of the symphonies would need to find value in the Windrose strategic restructuring analysis such that the recommendations, if adopted, would increase their organizational capacity to better achieve their mission, goals and objectives by achieving more and costing less.

On June 3, 2006, Windrose met with the Board Class to discuss the draft contract and to develop agreement on communication and coordination for implementing the contract. The Board Class approved the proposed contract. Windrose conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for each symphony. Windrose also developed a structured proprietary methodology to evaluate all of the possible options for aligning the symphonies. The methodology enabled the consultants to offer a proposal on how the symphonies could fit together, in part or in whole, in a manner that optimizes innovation (change) while effectively managing risk (uncertainty).

Windrose proposed a three-step graded approach. The first step proposed more formal collaboration of all three organizations and a recommendation to begin immediately. In this phase, all three organizations would develop an understanding of ground rules for working together. They would hold regular meetings for both staff and board and agree to work together on similar tasks such as coordinating concert dates, marketing, etc. The second step proposed an administrative consolidation, a form of strategic alliance, of specific administrative functions of all three organizations. No corporate restructuring would be required for administrative consolidation and Windrose recommended that this step be accomplished in 6-12 months. The third step recommended the creation of a management service organization (MSO) as the framework for the eventual organization structure for the symphonies. An MSO would require a corporate restructuring and creation of a new 501(c)(3). Windrose proposed creation of an MSO in parallel with administrative consolidation and that transition to the MSO be accomplished within 12-18 months.

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On June 17, 2006, Windrose presented its final strategic restructuring analysis report and associated conclusions and recommendations to the Board Class. The Board Class broke into their respective symphony groups to deliberate the proposal and to develop their organization's preliminary feedback. After deliberation, all agreed to formal collaboration. The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra was very interested in considering all three steps of the graded approach and the eventual MSO option. The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra was more interested in administrative consolidation but expressed willingness to consider an MSO after some demonstrated success with administrative consolidation. The Prince William Symphony Orchestra had reservations about administrative consolidation and MSO, and expressed the desire to pursue a more formal level of collaboration. Each symphony expressed the desire to maintain their local identity. The Fairfax and Alexandria Symphony Orchestras agreed to retain Windrose to pursue administrative consolidation and later consideration of a possible MSO.

The final strategic restructuring analysis report has been forwarded to the symphonies, American Symphony Orchestra League, and Fairfax Arts Council for their information and consideration. This report is available upon request.

Thomas Markley and Claire Sutherland

## Student Column

### **The Santa Fe Opera Celebrates 50 years of Desert Song in 2006, And I was there!**

by Deborah Paez

Santa Fe, New Mexico, also known as the land of enchantment, averages 300 sunny days a year. I arrived in Santa Fe on May 13th and in my efforts to become acquainted with the area as quickly as possible, I was out and about often. My first observation was how every "Santafean" I met informed me of the severe drought condition and how east coasters don't typically understand water conservation. I instinctively became defensive to this sort of commentary; but as the summer went on, I began to adopt simple water conservation practices and went on to adopt a few other "nature friendly" practices. The beauty of the area truly inspired me and following "its rules" of conservation became my way of acknowledging my deep respect to a region whose memory will forever nurture me.

On May 15th I attended my first day of work as the Annual Fund/Stewardship intern in the Development office at The Santa Fe Opera. That evening, as I walked from the ranch (where the administrative offices are located) up the hill towards the Crosby Theatre, was the first time I saw the sun setting over the Jemez Mountains. As a multitude of orange shades of colors formed in the sky, the orchestra tuned its instruments in preparation for the first run-thru of Carmen. By the time the singers came out to sing their first note, the moon was hanging low, illuminating the peaks in the mountains and glamorously serving as a backdrop to the outdoor covered stage. As a lifetime east coast resident, I stood there in sensory overload of the unfamiliar beauty my eyes were seeing and the perfection my ears were experiencing.

I share this experience with you to encourage anyone who hasn't completed their external internship requirement to consider The Santa Fe Opera. The SFO plays a significant role in the opera community at large and yet is able to act autonomously due to its geographical location. It is truly a unique organization to see in action and a great case study as future arts managers.

Similarly, the SFO has a competitive compensation package for interns. The SFO receives local support from individuals that allows them to place their interns and principal artists in a house (owned by individuals in the Santa Fe area) at a minimal cost to the intern. In addition to the housing subsidy, interns earn a weekly stipend and travel re-imbusement.

Summer 2006 was a complete success both professionally and personally. I am available and happy to discuss particulars with anyone interested in pursuing an opportunity at the SFO. Again, special thanks to Professor Kamenitzer, Professor Hill, and the entire MAM team who assisted me in making this experience possible.

Deborah Paez

## Alumni Column

### Alumni Corner

by John Elliott

I finished my coursework in the MAM program in Fall 2005, and formally graduated in Spring 2006. Starting in December 2005, I put my degree to work as Assistant Managing Director of The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

I recently accepted the position of Managing Director of Sycamore Rouge, Inc., a brand new theater, multimedia arts facility, and cabaret-style venue. Sycamore Rouge is located about 15 miles south of Richmond, in historic Old Town Petersburg. It's a 19th century hotel that has been converted into a modern American equivalent of the Moulin Rouge; it features an art gallery, ample rehearsal and office space, and a full service bar offering light dining--all wrapped around a 250 seat, reconfigurable theater space. The facility opened in early 2006, and has its sights set on six nights of performances a week, 48 weeks a year; the schedule currently includes touring cabaret and jazz performers, a stage circus, film festivals/themed movie nights, a multi-tier educational arts program in cooperation with local schools and universities, a burlesque troupe (!), and five full theatrical productions a year, each receiving a three-week run. It's a wild, lively, idealistic place in a community on the verge of renewal that seems full of promise, ingenuity, and talent.

When I come on board in late August, I'll be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility, finance management, marketing, daily interactions with the board, and spearheading the annual campaign. I'm looking forward to it. Whereas my position at CATF was mostly clerical and bookkeeping in nature, this is a real opportunity to put my experiences and education to work in an environment that really needs it.

I feel there's something that bears noting about the MAM program. When I began my studies, Dr. Brindle made a point of accentuating the differences between "arts management" and "arts administration." As trifling as I thought the terminology was two years ago, I have to admit there's a firm difference between the two.

I'm thankful for the MAM program's commitment to forging the next generation of arts leaders; the tutelage and guidance I received under my professors has proven invaluable. Yet more valuable, however, are the interactions and bonds forged with my classmates. While in the program, I had good fortune to discuss the principles of arts leadership with individuals whose passions for the symphony, opera, poetry, choral arts, dance, and gallery management matched my own for theater. I count many of these individuals among my colleagues and close friends. And, in my interactions with these folks, I learned an essential truth about the arts: despite a wide range of talents, media, and interests, our goals are the same. For the American arts landscape to remain intact and continue to thrive, we need to be in constant dialogue across our various media. We need to develop an understanding of, and appreciation for one another's art forms, and the common tactics we can all employ toward furthering our goals while celebrating the individuality of our chosen media.

Simply put, we need to talk to one another about why we love what we do, and how we can learn from one another's approach to arts leadership. If I had to point to one cardinal skill which the MAM program instilled, it's that: the nigh-unquantifiable understanding that we're all in this together, and that, even after graduation, we have a wealth of information to share with each other.

Check out what I'm up to at <http://www.sycamoreroige.org>. If you're ever in southern Virginia, feel free to drop me a line at [jonathanlelliott@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanlelliott@gmail.com).

john elliott

## Announcements

### Arts at Mason Scholarship - Calling all MAM Volunteers!

On Saturday, September 30th, the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) will have its inaugural, all-college fundraising event, Arts, by George! All net proceeds will go to student scholarships in all the CVPA departments and programs, including MAM. Our goal is to net \$50,000 for student scholarships.

Since this is CVPA, the evening will be like no other. No black tie galas for us. Our 300 guests will get a chance to experience first hand the extraordinary talent of our students and faculty with AVT, Dance, Music and Theater performances and exhibits in the Performing Arts Building (along with amazing food). The evening also includes a Michael Feinstein performance in the Concert Hall followed by a dessert reception on stage with Mr. Feinstein.

It all begins at 5:30 p.m. with the concert at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$200 per person with sponsors at \$5,000, \$2,500 and \$1,000. I'm pleased to say we have 44 sponsors signed up. Sponsors have the option of directing their support to a specific department or program in CVPA and one \$5,000 sponsor has designated MAM as the recipient.

Arts, by George! will require a large number of volunteers to join the staff and committee members to make the evening a great success. For anyone interested in development, marketing or special events, this will be a chance to see a major event up close.

PLEASE EMAIL [ntrochim@gmu.edu](mailto:ntrochim@gmu.edu) OR CALL NORA TROCHIM at 3-8877 to sign up.

We do not yet know what the ticket situation will be for the Michael Feinstein concert. Once we get closer to the date, MAM students who volunteer will be given first call on comp. tickets to the concert. Thank you, in advance, for being a part of the first *Arts, by George!*

### News from the Student Advisory Board

Dear MAM Students:

The Student Advisory Board held its first meeting with Professor Kamenitzer on Sunday, September 10th. We discussed issues ranging from student admissions to student events. We believe that, as a student body, we should meet at least once a semester in order to communicate our thoughts and more importantly, to build long-lasting friendships.

We will be meeting every second Sunday of the month, so if you have any suggestions, concerns or complaints please (please!) contact us.

Thank you,

Christina Schnoor - [cschnool@gmu.edu](mailto:cschnool@gmu.edu)

Nora Trochim - [ntrochim@gmu.edu](mailto:ntrochim@gmu.edu)

Karim Seikaly - [kseikaly@gmu.edu](mailto:kseikaly@gmu.edu)



## Master of Arts in Arts Management

Program Director:  
Richard Kamenitzer

Editors:  
Mathilde Speier  
Claire Sutherland

Design by:  
Giuseppe Carabelli

Master of Arts in Arts Management  
College of Visual and Performing Arts  
George Mason University  
4260 Chain Bridge Road, MS 1C8  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Email: [mspeier@gmu.edu](mailto:mspeier@gmu.edu)  
Phone: 703-993-8926  
Fax: 703-993-4113

<http://artsmanagement.gmu.edu>