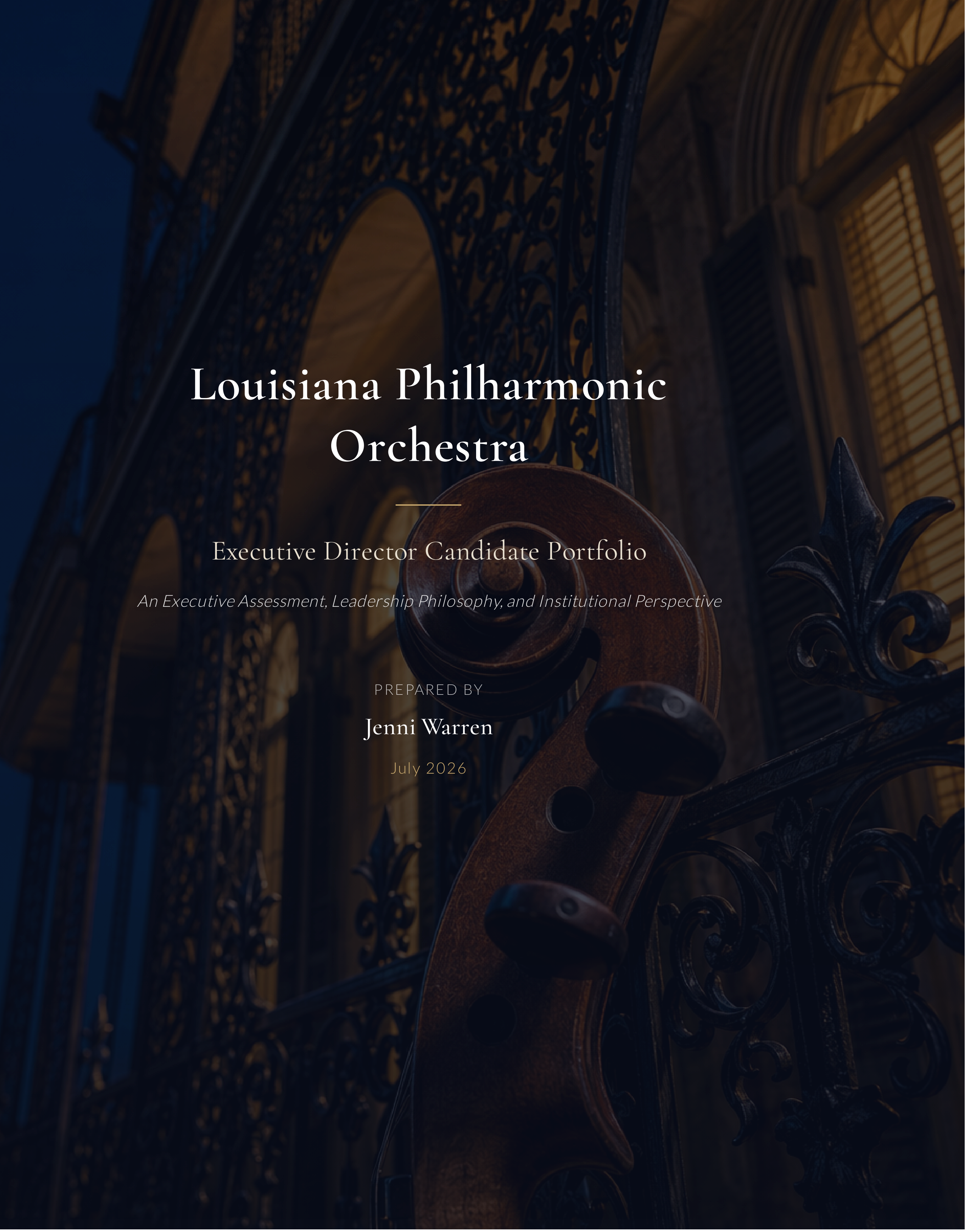

Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

Executive Director Candidate Portfolio

An Executive Assessment, Leadership Philosophy, and Institutional Perspective

PREPARED BY

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"Executive leadership is ultimately an act of stewardship. We are entrusted with institutions that existed before us and, if we lead well, will continue serving their communities long after we are gone."

Contents

Foreword

Leadership of a professional orchestra extends far beyond artistic programming, financial management, or organizational administration. At its best, it is the stewardship of an institution that enriches the cultural, educational, and civic life of its community.

This portfolio is not intended to present a strategic plan for the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra or to prescribe solutions before meaningful conversations have taken place. Rather, it reflects a disciplined effort to understand the organization through publicly available information while illustrating the leadership philosophy I would bring to the role of Executive Director.

Effective leadership begins with listening. Public information can illuminate an organization's finances, governance, programming, and priorities, but it cannot fully reveal its culture. That understanding is earned through relationships, careful observation, and thoughtful dialogue.

My career has reinforced a simple belief: sustainable success is built by strengthening the institution rather than elevating any one individual. Healthy organizations cultivate trust, communicate transparently, invest in people, steward resources responsibly, and remain deeply connected to the communities they serve.

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the most distinctive organizations in American orchestral music. Its musician-governed structure, artistic excellence, and deep civic roots present a remarkable opportunity. This portfolio is offered with respect for that history and genuine enthusiasm for the possibility of helping steward its future.

Leadership Philosophy

Stewardship as the Foundation of Executive Leadership

Every orchestra has its own history, culture, governance, and community. Effective executive leadership therefore begins not with predetermined solutions, but with careful observation, thoughtful analysis, and a commitment to listen before leading.

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra occupies a unique place in American orchestral music. Its musician-governed model, resilience following Hurricane Katrina, and enduring connection to the New Orleans community provide an exceptional foundation for future growth.

Like orchestras across the country, the LPO also operates within a changing environment. Philanthropy is evolving, audience expectations continue to shift, production costs are rising, and education and community engagement have become increasingly central to demonstrating public value. The Executive Director's responsibility is not simply to respond to these realities, but to help position the institution to thrive within them.

An Executive Perspective

Throughout my career, I have come to view executive leadership as stewardship rather than management.

> *Management focuses on processes.*
> *Leadership focuses on purpose.*

Budgets, fundraising, governance, operations, and strategic planning are essential responsibilities, but they are ultimately tools in service of a larger goal: leaving the institution stronger than it was found.

Healthy organizations are financially resilient, governed effectively, supported by engaged communities, and sustained by cultures of trust. That philosophy has shaped my career and provides the framework through which I have approached this study of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

Observations from Initial Research

Based on publicly available information, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra appears to enter its next chapter from a position of considerable strength.

Key observations include:

- A distinctive musician-governed structure that encourages shared institutional stewardship.
- A respected artistic reputation supported by decades of community engagement.
- Diversified revenue sources that contribute to financial stability.
- Education and community programs that extend the orchestra's public value beyond the concert hall.
- A unique position within one of America's most culturally vibrant cities.

Like many performing arts organizations, the LPO also faces opportunities to strengthen philanthropy, expand audiences, invest in organizational capacity, and deepen community relevance.

These observations are intentionally preliminary. Effective leadership requires validating assumptions through conversations with the musicians, board, staff, donors, volunteers, and community partners who know the organization best.

Purpose of This Portfolio

This portfolio has three objectives:

- Demonstrate a thoughtful understanding of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra based on publicly available information.
- Articulate the leadership philosophy that has guided my career.
- Provide a foundation for meaningful conversation should I have the privilege of continuing in the search process.

It is intended to be analytical rather than promotional. Rather than offering predetermined answers, it reflects an approach to executive leadership grounded in stewardship, collaboration, evidence-based decision-making, and long-term institutional health.

BRIEFING I

Understanding the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra occupies a distinctive position within the American orchestral landscape. Few professional orchestras combine a nationally respected artistic reputation, an innovative musician-governed structure, and a history so closely intertwined with the resilience of the community they serve.
>
> My review of publicly available information suggests an institution entering its next chapter from a position of strength. Disciplined financial stewardship, a collaborative governance model, and a strong public identity provide a solid foundation for the future. At the same time, the orchestra operates within the same evolving environment facing cultural organizations across the country: changing audience expectations, rising costs, increased competition for philanthropic support, and the ongoing need to demonstrate community impact.
>
> These observations are intended not as conclusions, but as a framework for the conversations that effective leadership requires. Public information can illuminate an organization's performance; only listening can reveal its culture.

A Remarkable Institutional Story

Every orchestra has a history.

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra has an identity.

That distinction matters.

The LPO is more than a regional orchestra. Its origins, musician-governed structure, and extraordinary resilience following Hurricane Katrina have made it a cultural institution whose story is inseparable from that of New Orleans itself. Its continued success reflects not only artistic excellence, but the collective commitment of musicians, board members, staff, donors, and the community to preserving an essential civic asset.

For an Executive Director, that history is more than context. It establishes a culture of resilience, shared responsibility, and community engagement that should inform every future decision.

Governance: Shared Stewardship as a Strategic Asset

The Louisiana Philharmonic's governance model is among its greatest institutional strengths.

Unlike most American orchestras, the LPO's musicians are active participants in the governance of the organization, reflecting a philosophy of shared stewardship rather than traditional hierarchical management.

Such a model depends upon trust, transparency, and clear communication. When those elements are present, artistic and administrative leadership become partners in advancing a common mission rather than representatives of competing interests.

Throughout my career, I have found that organizations perform best when musicians, staff, and board members understand themselves as stewards of the same institution. The LPO's governance structure appears uniquely positioned to support that philosophy.

Financial Position

Publicly available financial statements and IRS filings suggest a financially stable organization supported by diversified revenue, disciplined oversight, and responsible stewardship.

The orchestra benefits from multiple sources of support—including earned income, individual philanthropy, foundation and corporate giving, government funding, and investment income—reducing dependence on any single revenue stream while strengthening long-term resilience.

Like every orchestra, continued success will depend upon sustained investment in unrestricted philanthropy, operating reserves, liquidity, and careful management of inflationary pressures. These are not signs of institutional weakness, but the ongoing responsibilities of healthy nonprofit leadership.

Philanthropy and Development

New Orleans offers a vibrant philanthropic community alongside significant competition for charitable investment.

Within that environment, successful fundraising is built less on campaigns than on enduring relationships. The Louisiana Philharmonic appears well positioned to deepen donor engagement through thoughtful stewardship, active board participation, compelling impact storytelling, expanded planned giving, and the cultivation of transformational gifts.

Its longstanding role within the community provides a strong platform for continued philanthropic growth.

Education and Community Impact

One of the strongest themes emerging from my research is the orchestra's commitment to education and community engagement.

These initiatives are not peripheral to the mission—they are expressions of it. They cultivate future audiences, strengthen donor confidence, expand access to the arts, and demonstrate measurable community impact. Increasingly, these outcomes influence philanthropic investment as much as artistic excellence itself.

For that reason, education and community engagement should remain central to the orchestra's long-term strategy.

The New Orleans Context

Leading an orchestra in New Orleans requires an appreciation for one of America's most distinctive cultural communities.

Music is woven into the city's identity, economy, educational institutions, and neighborhood traditions. The Louisiana Philharmonic therefore operates within an exceptionally rich artistic ecosystem that offers extraordinary opportunities for collaboration while continually challenging every cultural organization to articulate its unique contribution.

The opportunity is not to compete with New Orleans' musical heritage, but to strengthen it through symphonic performance, education, and civic partnership.

Strategic Opportunities

Based on publicly available information, several long-term opportunities stand out.

Strengthen the LPO's statewide identity.
Continue expanding relationships across Louisiana while preserving the orchestra's deep connection to New Orleans.

Invest in organizational capacity.
Strengthen staff, technology, operational systems, and internal processes that support long-term resilience.

Deepen philanthropic leadership.
Build transformational relationships while continuing to steward the orchestra's loyal base of supporters.

Expand strategic partnerships.
Strengthen collaboration with schools, universities, civic organizations, and cultural institutions to increase both mission impact and organizational visibility.

Concluding Assessment

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra appears to be an institution distinguished by thoughtful governance, artistic credibility, disciplined financial stewardship, and a deep commitment to the community it serves.

Its future challenges are not unique. They are the continuing responsibilities of leading a major cultural institution in a rapidly changing environment. Financial sustainability, audience development, philanthropy, organizational capacity, and community relevance will remain enduring priorities—not because the organization is deficient in these areas, but because institutional stewardship is never complete.

The responsibility of an Executive Director is not to redefine an institution of this caliber.

It is to understand it deeply enough to strengthen what already makes it exceptional.

BRIEFING II

Institutional Stewardship in the Twenty-First Century

> EXECUTIVE INSIGHT
>
> The role of the Executive Director has evolved significantly over the past generation. While artistic excellence remains an orchestra's central purpose, today's leaders must also navigate increasingly complex expectations surrounding governance, philanthropy, finance, education, technology, community engagement, and organizational culture.
>
> These responsibilities are diverse, but they are unified by a single principle.
>
> *Executive leadership is stewardship.*
>
> Every decision should strengthen the institution's ability to fulfill its mission—not only today, but for decades to come.

The Purpose of an Orchestra

An orchestra exists to enrich the life of its community through extraordinary artistic experiences.

Concerts remain central to that mission, but they are no longer its only expression. Today's orchestras educate students, strengthen neighborhoods, partner with schools and community organizations, contribute to civic identity, and create shared cultural experiences that extend far beyond the concert hall.

Executive leadership should therefore evaluate success through both artistic excellence and public impact.

Stewardship Rather Than Management

> *Management ensures that an organization functions effectively.*
> *Stewardship ensures that it remains worthy of its mission.*

> *Managers focus on today's operations.*
> *Stewards protect tomorrow's institution.*

That perspective shapes every executive responsibility. Financial decisions preserve future flexibility. Governance builds trust. Fundraising strengthens relationships. Personnel decisions invest in organizational capacity. Strategic planning becomes a continual discipline rather than an occasional exercise.

The Executive Director's responsibility is not to become the institution's central figure, but one of its principal caretakers.

Governance as Partnership

Healthy governance is built on trust, clarity, and shared purpose.

> *Boards govern.*
> *Music Directors provide artistic leadership.*
> *Musicians create artistic excellence.*
> *Staff members translate vision into daily practice.*

The Executive Director serves the institution by aligning these perspectives around a common mission. That work requires transparency, consistency, thoughtful communication, and patience.

Strong governance is rarely accidental. It is cultivated over time.

Financial Stewardship

Financial stability protects artistic freedom.

Organizations with diversified revenue, disciplined budgeting, healthy reserves, and strong philanthropic support possess greater capacity to pursue ambitious programming, invest in education, and respond confidently to changing circumstances.

> *Budgets are more than financial documents.*
> *They are expressions of institutional priorities.*

Healthy organizations ensure those priorities reflect mission rather than necessity.

Philanthropy as Partnership

Fundraising is ultimately about trust.

Donors invest in organizations they believe strengthen their communities. Successful philanthropy therefore depends upon authentic relationships, transparency, and consistent stewardship.

The Executive Director serves as the organization's chief ambassador, cultivating confidence that inspires long-term investment in the institution's future.

Audience, Education, and Community

Audience development, education, and community engagement are often discussed as separate initiatives.

I believe they are inseparable.

> *Educational programs cultivate future audiences.*
> *Community engagement demonstrates public value.*
> *Meaningful audience experiences encourage long-term participation and philanthropic support.*

Together, these efforts strengthen the orchestra's relevance while advancing its mission.

Organizational Culture

Culture is created through leadership behaviors rather than written policies.

> *Trust.*
> *Respect.*
> *Accountability.*
> *Curiosity.*
> *Transparent communication.*
> *Shared ownership.*

These qualities influence every aspect of organizational performance. They shape decision-making, strengthen collaboration, and create environments where people are empowered to do their best work.

The Executive Director establishes culture less through authority than through example.

Innovation with Purpose

Innovation should strengthen an institution's mission rather than distract from it.

Technology, data, and artificial intelligence will continue reshaping nonprofit management, but they should enhance relationships—not replace them.

Successful organizations preserve what defines them while adapting thoughtfully to changing circumstances.

Leadership Begins with Listening

One of the greatest misconceptions about executive leadership is that new leaders arrive with answers.

Experience suggests otherwise.

The strongest leaders begin by asking thoughtful questions.

Listening builds trust, uncovers institutional knowledge, reveals cultural dynamics, and demonstrates respect for those already serving the organization.

For a new Executive Director, listening is not a pause before leadership.

It is leadership.

Concluding Perspective

The future of American orchestras will be shaped not only by artistic excellence, but by the strength of the institutions that support it.

> *Financial resilience.*
> *Effective governance.*
> *Meaningful community engagement.*
> *Educational impact.*
> *Healthy organizational culture.*

These are not administrative objectives.

They are the work of stewardship.

Ultimately, I believe an Executive Director's legacy should be measured by a single question:

Did the institution become stronger under my care?

If the answer is yes, then the leader has fulfilled the responsibility entrusted to them.

BRIEFING III

Executive Leadership Alignment

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

Executive leadership is shaped over time through experience, responsibility, and reflection. Every organization presents different circumstances, but the competencies required to lead them successfully remain remarkably consistent: strategic thinking, financial stewardship, governance, philanthropy, organizational development, and the ability to build trust.

Over more than sixteen years in professional orchestras, I have served organizations of different sizes, histories, and communities. Each experience has reinforced the same lesson:

Leadership is less about directing an institution than strengthening it.

The following reflections illustrate how that philosophy has been shaped throughout my career and why I believe it aligns well with the opportunity at the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

Strategy Begins with Listening

Every organization arrives with its own culture, history, strengths, and aspirations.

For that reason, I have never believed that strategic leadership begins with having the right answers. It begins with asking the right questions.

Throughout my career I have helped organizations clarify priorities, align resources with mission, and translate long-term vision into practical action. Strategic planning is valuable only when it influences everyday decisions, and that requires listening before leading.

Financial Stewardship

> *Budgets are expressions of organizational priorities.*

Throughout my career I have managed budgets ranging from smaller regional organizations to multimillion-dollar institutions, overseeing budgeting, forecasting, grants, cash flow, contributed revenue, and long-term planning.

Those experiences have reinforced an important principle: financial stewardship exists to protect artistic excellence. Strong finances create the flexibility to invest in programming, education, people, and future opportunities.

Philanthropy

I have never viewed fundraising as a series of campaigns.

I view it as relationship-building.

The strongest philanthropic partnerships are built on trust, transparency, and confidence in an organization's mission. Over the course of my career, I have worked with individual donors, foundations, corporations, government agencies, and community leaders to support both annual operations and long-term organizational growth.

Successful fundraising begins long before an ask is made.

Governance

One of the most rewarding aspects of executive leadership is working alongside engaged boards.

Every board possesses its own culture, but the strongest partnerships share common characteristics: clearly defined roles, transparent communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to mission.

I have learned that healthy governance does not require constant agreement. It requires thoughtful dialogue and the ability to help diverse perspectives reach informed decisions in the best interest of the institution.

Leading Through Change

Every organization experiences periods of transition.

> *Leadership changes.*
> *Economic conditions evolve.*
> *Unexpected challenges emerge.*

During those moments, people look for clarity more than certainty.

Throughout my career I have learned that successful change depends upon honest communication, disciplined planning, and helping people understand not only what is changing, but why.

Building Teams

The most successful organizations are built by talented people working toward a shared purpose.

Whether working with musicians, administrative staff, volunteers, or board members, I have sought to create environments characterized by trust, accountability, and mutual respect.

Leadership is not about having every answer.

It is about creating conditions in which others can do their best work.

Community

Professional orchestras thrive when they become indispensable to the communities they serve.

Throughout my career I have prioritized relationships with schools, civic organizations, government agencies, businesses, and fellow nonprofit leaders because those partnerships strengthen both mission and organizational resilience.

Community engagement is not a department.

It is a way of thinking about the institution's role within civic life.

Communication

One lesson has remained consistent throughout my career.

Trust follows communication.

People are more willing to support difficult decisions when they understand how those decisions were made and believe they were communicated honestly.

Transparency strengthens governance, improves staff engagement, deepens donor confidence, and builds lasting credibility throughout an organization.

A Leadership Philosophy Shaped by Experience

Every organization I have served has been different.

The philosophy that guides my work has remained remarkably consistent.

I believe Executive Directors should:

— strengthen institutions rather than elevate themselves;

— build trust before pursuing change;

— invest in organizational capacity alongside artistic excellence;

— approach philanthropy as relationship-building;

— view governance as partnership;

— communicate with transparency;

— and leave organizations stronger than they found them.

These principles were not developed in theory.

They were earned through experience.

Why the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra reflects many of the values that have shaped my own approach to leadership.

Its collaborative governance model, commitment to community engagement, and tradition of artistic excellence supported by disciplined administration align closely with my understanding of institutional stewardship.

Most importantly, the orchestra's history demonstrates that resilience, collaboration, and community trust are not aspirations.

They are institutional strengths.

That is precisely the kind of organization I would be honored to serve.

Concluding Perspective

Experience does not provide every answer.

It develops judgment.

Judgment is formed through success, challenge, reflection, and the privilege of serving institutions whose missions extend beyond any individual leader.

As I consider the opportunity to serve the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, I do so with confidence in the strength of its foundation and genuine enthusiasm for contributing to its next chapter.

Leadership is ultimately measured not by what a leader accomplishes personally, but by what an institution becomes under thoughtful stewardship.

BRIEFING IV

Leadership Philosophy

> EXECUTIVE INSIGHT
>
> Leadership philosophies are rarely developed in classrooms.
>
> They are shaped through experience—through success and failure, difficult decisions, organizational change, and the privilege of serving missions larger than oneself.
>
> Over more than sixteen years in working with orchestras, my own philosophy has become remarkably simple. While every organization requires different strategies, effective leadership rests on enduring principles.
>
> Those principles guide every decision I make.

Stewardship

I believe executive leadership is an act of stewardship.

Every Executive Director inherits an institution built by musicians, board members, staff, volunteers, donors, and audiences who invested their time, talent, and trust long before our arrival.

The responsibility is not to leave a personal imprint.

It is to leave the institution stronger.

Whenever I face a significant decision, I return to a simple question:

Will this strengthen the organization for those who come next?

Trust

Trust is the foundation of every successful organization.

Strategy, fundraising, governance, and change all depend upon it.

People support difficult decisions when they believe they have been heard, understand the reasoning behind those decisions, and trust the integrity of those making them.

Trust cannot be demanded.

It is earned through consistency, honesty, transparency, and follow-through.

People

Organizations are built through people.

Healthy cultures emerge when talented individuals are respected, challenged appropriately, and empowered to contribute their expertise.

I have never believed that leadership is measured by how indispensable an Executive Director becomes.

It is measured by how effectively others are enabled to succeed.

Financial Stewardship

Financial discipline is not an administrative exercise.

It protects artistic freedom.

Healthy finances provide organizations with the flexibility to invest in programming, education, innovation, and community partnerships while navigating inevitable periods of uncertainty.

Financial stewardship exists to expand possibility rather than limit it.

Governance

Healthy governance depends upon partnership.

> *Boards govern.*
> *Executive Directors lead operations.*
> *Music Directors provide artistic leadership.*
> *Musicians, staff, and volunteers each contribute perspectives that strengthen institutional decision-making.*

The Executive Director's role is to align those perspectives around a shared mission with humility, clarity, and mutual respect.

Transparency

People rarely expect leaders to have perfect answers.

They do expect honesty.

Transparent communication builds confidence, particularly during periods of uncertainty. It allows stakeholders to understand not only what decisions have been made, but why.

> *Confidence strengthens trust.*
> *Trust strengthens institutions.*

Community

Orchestras exist because communities believe they matter.

Every rehearsal, performance, educational initiative, donor conversation, and strategic decision ultimately serves that purpose.

Organizations become indispensable when they contribute meaningfully to civic life rather than simply presenting performances.

Community is not a program.

It is the reason the institution exists.

Curiosity

Experience should produce judgment—not certainty.

Every organization possesses its own culture, traditions, strengths, and aspirations.

For that reason, I believe leadership begins with curiosity.

> *Listening precedes planning.*
> *Observation precedes recommendation.*
> *Relationships precede meaningful change.*

The strongest leaders I have known were distinguished less by the answers they carried than by the questions they asked.

Excellence

Institutional excellence is never accidental.

> *Strong governance.*
> *Financial resilience.*
> *Engaged donors.*
> *Collaborative staff.*
> *Outstanding artistic quality.*
> *Healthy culture.*

These are the result of countless intentional decisions accumulated over time.

The Executive Director's responsibility is to ensure those decisions continue moving the institution forward.

Legacy

People often ask what legacy a leader hopes to leave.

I prefer a different question.

What will the institution become because I served?

> *If musicians feel better supported…*
> *If staff members become stronger leaders…*
> *If governance becomes more effective…*
> *If philanthropy deepens…*
> *If communities experience greater access…*
> *If the organization is healthier than it was before…*

Then the Executive Director has fulfilled the responsibility entrusted to them.

The institution—not the individual—is the legacy.

Concluding Perspective

Leadership philosophy matters only if it shapes everyday decisions.

> *Budgets.*
> *Governance.*
> *Hiring.*
> *Fundraising.*
> *Strategic planning.*
> *Community engagement.*

Each presents an opportunity to choose between short-term convenience and long-term institutional health.

Throughout my career, stewardship has remained the principle that guides those choices.

It is the same principle I would bring to the privilege of serving as Executive Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

BRIEFING V

Listening Before Leading

> EXECUTIVE INSIGHT
>
> Every leadership transition creates both opportunity and uncertainty.
>
> A new Executive Director arrives with experience, perspective, and ideas shaped by previous organizations. At the same time, every institution possesses its own history, culture, traditions, relationships, and aspirations that cannot be understood through financial statements or strategic plans alone.
>
> Experience has taught me that effective leadership begins with listening.
>
> Not because leaders lack direction, but because they respect the knowledge already present within the organization.
>
> Listening is not the absence of leadership.
>
> It is one of its earliest and most important expressions.

Every Organization Has an Internal Story

Public documents reveal how an organization is structured.

They do not reveal how it truly functions.

They cannot explain why certain traditions matter, how decisions are made, where communication flows naturally, or what challenges quietly occupy the minds of those closest to the work.

Every organization has an internal story.

That story lives in the experience of musicians, staff, board members, volunteers, donors, audience members, and community partners.

An Executive Director cannot lead wisely without first understanding that story.

Listening Is an Act of Respect

Accepting responsibility for an organization does not immediately confer understanding.

Leadership appointments provide authority.

Wisdom is earned.

Every orchestra contains years—often decades—of institutional knowledge. The people already serving the organization understand not only what has worked, but why.

Listening acknowledges that expertise.

It communicates that existing knowledge is valued rather than replaced.

In doing so, it begins building one of an Executive Director's greatest assets:

Credibility.

Questions Before Answers

My earliest conversations are rarely centered on recommendations.

They are centered on questions.

— What makes this organization special?

— What traditions should never be lost?

— What concerns you most about the future?

— Where do you see the greatest opportunity?

— What do you hope never changes?

Questions like these accomplish more than gathering information.

They uncover values.

They reveal recurring themes.

They help distinguish isolated concerns from institutional priorities.

Most importantly, they demonstrate that leadership begins with understanding rather than assumption.

Listening Across the Organization

An orchestra is an ecosystem.

> *Musicians understand artistic culture.*
> *Staff understand operational realities.*
> *Board members understand governance.*
> *Donors explain why they invest.*
> *Subscribers describe the audience experience.*
> *Community partners reveal how the organization is perceived beyond the concert hall.*

No individual possesses the complete picture.

Together, they provide something much closer to institutional truth.

For that reason, I believe a new Executive Director's earliest weeks should be intentionally devoted to conversations across every part of the organization.

Listening for Strengths

Listening should identify strengths as readily as challenges.

Every successful orchestra is already doing many things exceptionally well.

Understanding those strengths allows a leader to build upon existing momentum rather than unintentionally disrupting it.

Organizations rarely become healthier by replacing what already works.

They become healthier by strengthening it while thoughtfully addressing areas that need attention.

Discernment

Listening does not require accepting every opinion equally.

Leadership requires discernment.

Some concerns represent broad organizational realities.

Others reflect individual experiences.

The Executive Director's responsibility is to recognize the difference by listening patiently, looking for recurring patterns, and testing observations against evidence rather than reacting to the loudest voice.

> *Listening without discernment becomes reactive.*
> *Discernment without listening becomes detached.*

Healthy leadership requires both.

Leadership Begins Before the First Decision

Many people assume leadership begins with a strategic initiative or a major announcement.

I believe it begins much earlier.

It begins with the first conversation.

The first thoughtful question.

The first promise kept.

Those moments establish trust long before significant decisions are made.

Approaching a transition with humility and curiosity communicates confidence without arrogance and preparation without presumption.

That foundation makes every future conversation stronger.

Concluding Perspective

Every organization possesses knowledge that cannot be found in reports, budgets, or strategic plans.

It exists in the lived experience of the people who have devoted themselves to the institution.

The privilege of becoming Executive Director carries with it the responsibility to learn from that experience before attempting to shape what comes next.

For that reason, I do not view listening as preparation for leadership.

I view listening as leadership itself.

Only after that foundation has been established is it appropriate to ask the question that matters most:

Where can we go together from here?

BRIEFING VI

The First Ninety Days

A Framework for Executive Transition

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> The first ninety days should not be defined by visible change.
>
> They should be defined by disciplined observation, relationship-building, and thoughtful preparation.
>
> Every new Executive Director arrives with experience and perspective. Every organization arrives with its own history, culture, relationships, and institutional knowledge.
>
> The purpose of a successful transition is to bring those together before significant decisions are made.
>
> My objective during the first three months would be simple:
>
> *Listen deeply. Learn thoroughly. Lead thoughtfully.*

Phase One (Days 1–30): Learn the Institution

The first month is devoted almost entirely to understanding the organization.

Primary priorities

— Meet individually with every board member.

— Meet individually with musicians, staff, and the Music Director.

— Introduce myself to major donors and key community partners.

— Review financial systems, budgets, development activities, marketing, education, and operations.

— Attend rehearsals, performances, committee meetings, and community events.

— Observe how information flows throughout the organization.

Questions that guide every conversation

— What makes the Louisiana Philharmonic special?

— What should never change?

— What concerns you most?

— Where do you see the greatest opportunity?

— What would you like a new Executive Director to understand?

The objective is not to collect opinions.

It is to identify patterns.

Phase Two (Days 31–60): Confirm Understanding

By the second month, recurring themes typically begin to emerge.

Rather than introducing solutions, I would continue testing those observations through additional conversations while sharing what I am learning with organizational leadership.

This period focuses on:

— validating recurring themes;

— identifying organizational strengths;

— clarifying challenges;

— strengthening relationships;

— and establishing transparent communication practices.

The goal is to ensure that future priorities emerge from shared understanding rather than personal assumptions.

Phase Three (Days 61–90): Establish Direction

Only after developing a thorough understanding of the organization would I begin discussing longer-term priorities.

If recurring themes suggest opportunities to strengthen philanthropy, governance, education, financial planning, organizational systems, or community partnerships, those priorities should emerge naturally from the listening process.

My preference is always to build organizational ownership rather than announce personal initiatives.

The strongest strategic plans belong to the institution—not to the Executive Director.

Throughout the First Ninety Days

Certain commitments remain constant regardless of the phase.

I would strive to:

- communicate openly and consistently;
- follow through on every commitment;
- prepare thoroughly for meetings;
- return calls promptly;
- acknowledge uncertainty when appropriate;
- treat every individual with equal respect;
- and make no significant assumptions before sufficient understanding has been developed.

Trust is built through consistency long before it is strengthened through major decisions.

What I Would Intentionally Avoid

Absent extraordinary circumstances, I would intentionally avoid:

- major organizational restructuring;
- significant personnel changes;
- dramatic shifts in strategic direction;
- solving problems before fully understanding them;
- or creating unnecessary urgency simply to demonstrate action.

Patience during a leadership transition should not be mistaken for hesitation.

It reflects respect for the complexity of the institution.

Success After Ninety Days

If the first ninety days have been successful, the organization should not necessarily see dramatic change.

Instead, I would hope they would experience something more valuable:

> *stronger relationships;*
> *greater trust;*
> *clearer communication;*
> *shared understanding of institutional priorities;*
> *and confidence that future decisions will be thoughtful, collaborative, and mission-driven.*

Those outcomes provide the foundation upon which every lasting accomplishment is built.

Concluding Perspective

The first ninety days establish far more than priorities.

They establish credibility.

Successful transitions are remembered not because leaders moved quickly, but because they first took the time to understand the institution they had been entrusted to serve.

Only then is it appropriate to ask the question that guides every executive transition:

Where do we go from here—together?

BRIEFING VII

The Executive Playbook

An Operating Philosophy for Institutional Leadership

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> Leadership is expressed less through occasional strategic decisions than through consistent daily practice.
>
> > *Budgets are approved once a year.*
> > *Strategic plans are revisited every few years.*
> > *Culture, however, is shaped every day.*
>
> How meetings are conducted. How decisions are made. How people are treated. How information is shared. How commitments are honored.
>
> These seemingly ordinary practices become the habits that define an organization.
>
> Over time, I have developed an operating philosophy that guides those daily habits. While every institution requires a different strategy, I have found that effective execution follows remarkably consistent principles.

Govern Through Partnership

The Board should never feel like an audience.

Nor should the Executive Director function simply as a reporter.

Healthy governance is an ongoing conversation.

My responsibility is to provide context—not merely information—so the Board can govern strategically rather than react tactically.

Strong committees, thoughtful preparation, and open communication create better board meetings and better governance.

Let Financial Information Drive Decisions

Financial reports should answer more than the question:

"How are we doing?"

They should help answer:

"Where are we headed?"

> *Budgets communicate priorities.*
> *Forecasts identify emerging opportunities.*
> *Cash flow protects flexibility.*
> *Operating reserves create resilience.*

The Executive Director's role is to help others understand the story the numbers are telling before they become tomorrow's problem.

Make Development Everyone's Responsibility

Successful philanthropy is not owned by the development office.

It belongs to the entire organization.

> *Every performance.*
> *Every interaction.*
> *Every educational program.*
> *Every board member.*
> *Every staff member.*

Each contributes to donor confidence.

As Executive Director, I view myself as the organization's chief relationship builder, ensuring that stewardship is continuous rather than campaign-driven.

Build Leaders

An Executive Director should not become the organization's most indispensable employee.

The goal is exactly the opposite.

I believe in delegating ownership, investing in professional development, encouraging thoughtful decision-making, and preparing others for greater responsibility.

Healthy organizations intentionally develop their next generation of leadership.

Partner with the Music Director

The relationship between the Executive Director and Music Director sets the tone for the entire organization.

The Music Director provides artistic vision.

The Executive Director creates the organizational capacity that allows that vision to flourish.

The strongest partnerships are built on mutual trust, honest communication, and a shared commitment to the institution rather than individual priorities.

Communicate Early and Often

Communication should never be reserved for moments of crisis.

> *Board members should receive information before meetings.*
> *Staff should understand organizational priorities.*
> *Musicians should receive timely communication.*
> *Donors should hear from the organization even when they are not being asked to give.*

Consistency creates confidence.

Confidence strengthens trust.

Make Decisions Thoughtfully

Not every decision deserves the same process.

Some require broad consultation.

Others require timely executive judgment.

My approach is to invite others into understanding the problem while accepting personal responsibility for the final decision.

Good consultation improves judgment.

It does not eliminate accountability.

Lead Calmly During Crisis

Every Executive Director eventually encounters circumstances that no strategic plan anticipated.

In those moments, people look first for steadiness.

Then clarity.

Then direction.

The responsibility of leadership is not to possess every answer immediately.

It is to communicate honestly, reduce uncertainty where possible, and preserve confidence throughout the organization.

Build Culture Intentionally

Culture is not created through mission statements.

It is created through repeated leadership behaviors.

> *Keeping commitments.*
> *Sharing credit.*
> *Addressing problems directly.*
> *Treating people with respect.*
> *Learning from mistakes.*

Over time, those behaviors become expectations.

Those expectations become culture.

Measure What Matters

Financial performance is important.

It is not sufficient.

I believe organizational health should also be measured through:

> *Board engagement.*
> *Staff development.*
> *Musician confidence.*
> *Donor loyalty.*
> *Community partnerships.*
> *Educational impact.*
> *Artistic excellence.*
> *Public trust.*

Healthy organizations improve across all of these dimensions because each strengthens the others.

Concluding Perspective

Executive leadership is often described through separate responsibilities—finance, governance, fundraising, operations, communication, and strategy.

In practice, they are inseparable.

> *Strong governance strengthens philanthropy.*
> *Healthy finances enable artistic ambition.*
> *Investments in people improve organizational capacity.*
> *Community partnerships reinforce public relevance.*
> *Thoughtful communication strengthens trust.*

The Executive Director's responsibility is not to manage these functions independently.

It is to help them reinforce one another in service of a shared mission.

That is the operating philosophy I have sought to practice throughout my career, and the one I would bring to the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

BRIEFING VIII

A Vision for the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

Stewarding an Extraordinary Institution into Its Next Chapter

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> Great institutions are not reinvented.
>
> They are renewed.
>
> The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra already possesses the qualities that define exceptional organizations: artistic excellence, an innovative governance model, a resilient history, and deep roots within one of America's most culturally significant cities.
>
> The opportunity before the orchestra is not to become something different.
>
> It is to become even more fully what it is capable of being.
>
> The thoughts that follow are not intended as a strategic plan. They represent a vision for how the Louisiana Philharmonic might continue strengthening its artistic impact, civic leadership, and long-term sustainability.

Louisiana's Orchestra

The Louisiana Philharmonic already belongs to New Orleans.

I believe its future opportunity is to belong to all of Louisiana.

That does not require diminishing its identity as New Orleans' orchestra.

It means extending that identity across the state through thoughtful performances, educational partnerships, community residencies, digital engagement, and collaborations with schools, universities, and regional arts organizations.

When people throughout Louisiana begin saying, "That's our orchestra," the institution's public value grows immeasurably.

Artistic Excellence First

Everything begins with artistic excellence.

> *Not finance.*
> *Not marketing.*
> *Not development.*

The Executive Director does not define artistic vision.

The Executive Director creates the organizational conditions that allow artistic excellence to flourish.

> *Healthy governance.*
> *Financial stability.*
> *Operational effectiveness.*
> *Strong partnerships.*
> *A culture of trust.*

These are not separate from artistic success.

They make artistic success possible.

Becoming Indispensable

The strongest cultural organizations become indispensable to the communities they serve.

They are recognized not only for performances, but for their contribution to education, civic life, economic vitality, and quality of life.

I envision a Louisiana Philharmonic that is an active partner with schools, universities, hospitals, neighborhood organizations, tourism leaders, businesses, and civic institutions.

An orchestra whose value is recognized even by people who may never purchase a concert ticket.

That is the kind of relevance that creates lasting sustainability.

Investing in the Next Generation

Every orchestra must think beyond its next performance.

Education is how an institution invests in its next audience, its next donors, its next volunteers, and perhaps even its next musicians.

For that reason, I believe educational programming should remain central to the orchestra's mission—not because it builds future ticket buyers, but because it fulfills the orchestra's responsibility to future generations.

Philanthropy Through Confidence

The future of American orchestras will increasingly depend upon philanthropy.

Confidence precedes philanthropy.

People invest in organizations they trust.

Organizations that demonstrate thoughtful leadership, responsible stewardship, measurable community impact, and artistic excellence naturally inspire deeper relationships with donors, foundations, corporations, and public partners.

The goal is not simply to raise more money.

It is to earn greater confidence.

Investing in the Institution

Healthy organizations continually invest in themselves.

> *Technology.*
> *Leadership development.*
> *Administrative systems.*
> *Professional growth.*
> *Knowledge transfer.*
> *Evaluation.*
> *Succession planning.*

These investments are largely invisible to audiences, yet they determine an organization's ability to respond confidently to both opportunity and challenge.

Organizational capacity is one of the Executive Director's most important responsibilities because it allows artistic ambition to remain sustainable.

Looking Ahead

Ten years from now, I can imagine a Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra that is recognized not only for artistic excellence, but for the completeness of its impact.

> *An orchestra whose performances inspire.*
> *Whose educational programs shape lives.*
> *Whose governance model is studied nationally.*
> *Whose financial strength expands artistic possibility.*
> *Whose partnerships enrich communities throughout Louisiana.*
> *Whose musicians remain its greatest ambassadors.*
> *Whose reputation extends far beyond the state while remaining deeply rooted in the culture that gave it life.*

That future is not built through one initiative.

It is built through years of thoughtful stewardship.

Concluding Perspective

Every Executive Director eventually asks what success should look like.

For me, the answer has never been larger budgets, larger audiences, or greater visibility alone.

Success is an institution that becomes more trusted.

More resilient.

More relevant.

More deeply connected to the community it serves.

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra already possesses an extraordinary foundation.

The privilege of executive leadership would be helping steward its next chapter—working alongside musicians, board members, staff, donors, volunteers, and the community to ensure that one of Louisiana's greatest cultural institutions continues to flourish for generations to come.

BRIEFING IX

Executive Case Studies

Leadership in Practice

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> Leadership philosophy matters.
>
> Vision matters.
>
> Results matter.
>
> Ultimately, however, executive leadership is judged by how organizations navigate real challenges.
>
> Every institution presents different circumstances, yet throughout my career certain themes have remained remarkably consistent: strengthening financial confidence, leading through change, developing exceptional teams, and building meaningful community partnerships.
>
> The following case studies are not intended as formulas to be replicated. Rather, they illustrate how the leadership principles described throughout this portfolio have been applied in practice across different organizations and circumstances.
>
> Experience has reinforced one lesson above all others:
>
> *Leadership is not about having all the answers. It is about creating the conditions in which organizations can discover the right ones together.*

CASE STUDY ONE

Restoring Financial Confidence Through Strategic Stewardship

Symphony Tacoma

Challenge

When I joined Symphony Tacoma in 2024, the organization faced many of the same pressures affecting orchestras across the country: changing audience behavior, rising operating costs, and an increasingly competitive philanthropic environment.

The challenge was not simply balancing a budget—it was strengthening the financial confidence necessary to support the orchestra's artistic mission over the long term.

Approach

Working alongside the Board and staff, I emphasized disciplined financial stewardship, transparent reporting, and relationship-centered fundraising. Financial reporting became a strategic management tool rather than a compliance exercise, while development efforts focused on cultivating long-term confidence among donors, foundations, and corporate partners.

Results

— Secured a three-year $75,000 corporate commitment from Columbia Bank/Umpqua Bank.

— Facilitated a $220,000 estate gift from the William W. Reid Estate.

— Maintained significant public support through Tacoma Creates and ArtsFund.

— Annual gala generated approximately $132,500.

— Shifted organizational conversations from short-term financial concerns toward long-term planning.

Leadership Lesson

Financial stewardship is fundamentally about trust. Budgets communicate priorities, fundraising reflects relationships, and transparent financial leadership gives organizations the confidence to pursue ambitious artistic goals.

CASE STUDY TWO

Leading Through Organizational Change

Symphony Tacoma

Challenge

During my tenure, Symphony Tacoma navigated multiple leadership transitions simultaneously, including changes in board leadership, the launch of a Music Director search, evolving post-pandemic audience behavior, and ongoing fundraising and operational adjustments.

Maintaining momentum during periods of uncertainty became just as important as managing individual initiatives.

Approach

I focused on providing stability through communication, preparation, and consistency. Board members, staff, and community stakeholders remained informed throughout each transition, while strategic priorities continued moving forward without allowing uncertainty to become organizational distraction.

Results

— Major fundraising initiatives remained successful.

— Educational programming continued expanding.

— Community partnerships strengthened.

— Strategic planning continued without interrupting day-to-day operations.

Leadership Lesson

Organizations rarely expect leaders to eliminate uncertainty.

They do expect leaders to provide steadiness, clarity, and confidence while navigating it.

CASE STUDY THREE

Building High-Performing Teams

Multiple Organizations

Challenge

Throughout my career I have inherited teams with varying levels of experience, organizational structure, and professional development.

The challenge has never been filling positions.

It has been creating an environment where talented people can grow, lead, and take ownership of the organization's success.

Approach

My leadership philosophy emphasizes empowerment over micromanagement. I invest intentionally in professional development, clear expectations, coaching, and delegation that transfers ownership—not simply tasks.

Rather than positioning myself as the center of every decision, I seek to build teams capable of leading confidently within their own areas of responsibility.

Results

Across multiple organizations this approach has consistently produced:

— stronger collaboration;

— greater staff ownership;

— increased organizational capacity;

— improved cross-functional communication; and

— healthier workplace culture.

Leadership Lesson

The measure of an Executive Director is not how indispensable they become.

It is how effectively they develop the people around them.

Strong organizations are built by leaders who invest in other leaders.

CASE STUDY FOUR

Building Community Through Partnership

Multiple Organizations

Challenge

Arts organizations often think of community engagement as a program.

I have consistently viewed it as a leadership responsibility.

The challenge has been strengthening organizational relevance by building authentic partnerships that extend well beyond the concert hall.

Approach

Whether working with schools, civic organizations, businesses, volunteers, or community leaders, I have focused on listening first and identifying opportunities where both organizations benefit through shared purpose.

Partnerships succeed when they create lasting value rather than one-time events.

Results

Across multiple organizations this philosophy contributed to:

- stronger community relationships;
- expanded educational opportunities;
- increased organizational visibility;
- deeper audience engagement; and
- enhanced fundraising through demonstrated community impact.

Leadership Lesson

An orchestra's greatest contribution extends beyond performance.

When an organization becomes an indispensable civic partner, it strengthens audiences, philanthropy, advocacy, and long-term sustainability simultaneously.

Concluding Perspective

Every organization is different.

Every leadership challenge presents unique circumstances.

Yet throughout my career, the same principles have remained constant.

> *Strengthen financial confidence.*
> *Lead with transparency.*
> *Develop people.*
> *Build partnerships.*
> *Leave the institution healthier than it was before.*

Those principles have shaped my leadership across organizations of different sizes, communities, and stages of development.

They are also the principles I would bring to the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra—not as a predetermined formula, but as a disciplined approach to stewardship, thoughtful leadership, and long-term institutional success.

Closing Reflections

Preparing this portfolio has been an unusual privilege.

While it began as preparation for an interview, it quickly became something more meaningful: an opportunity to study the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra with the same curiosity and diligence I would bring to the role itself.

Over the course of this work, one conviction has only grown stronger.

The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra is not an organization in need of reinvention.

It is an extraordinary institution with a remarkable history, an innovative governance model, exceptional musicians, and a community that clearly believes in its mission.

Organizations like this deserve thoughtful stewardship.

If given the opportunity to serve as Executive Director, my first responsibility would not be to arrive with a predetermined agenda. It would be to listen, to learn, and to earn the trust of the musicians, Board, staff, donors, volunteers, and community partners who have built this institution over many years.

Only then would we begin asking the questions that shape the future—not *my* future for the Louisiana Philharmonic, but *our* future.

Thank you for considering my candidacy and for the time you have invested in reviewing these reflections.

I look forward to the opportunity to continue the conversation.

With appreciation,
Jenni Warren