

# Resurrecting the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra

## Or, Music History & Entrepreneurship 101

**Stage 1:** Watch the short news clip about the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra from April 20, 2011, and answer the questions below in preparation for Friday's class. You can find the news clip on on [youtube](#).

### *Questions*

- 1.) What are the stated and unstated, yet probable, reasons for the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra's bankruptcy?
- 2.) What, if anything, can we take from the Churchill quote as recalled by the bass trombonist? Does it really still apply today?
- 3.) Consider the news commentator's last remark about the irony of the situation. Assuming what he says is true, what does it tell us? Economy aside, what might be done to fix the situation?

## **Stage 2: Scenario & Target Audience**

You team has been hired by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors to advertise and promote a short series of concerts, each of which is designed to appeal to a specific target audience that is representative of a portion of New Mexico's population. The primary objective of the series is to cultivate an expanded audience consisting of concert-goers who will be likely to return to the symphony for future performances and, ultimately, become regular patrons of the arts. It is hoped that, through this series, the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra will expand its patron base enough so that it will be able to reorganize under Chapter 11 Bankruptcy laws instead of liquidating and going out of business, as required by Chapter 7 Bankruptcy laws.

The Board of Directors has selected four works that will be performed three times, each time in front of a different target audience. It is hoped that the orchestra will perform for a full house (approx. 500 people) at each concert. Each team working with the Board of Directors has been assigned a specific target audience. The target audiences and dates of each performance are as follow:

- **Target Audience:** University students currently enrolled at the University of New Mexico who will, hopefully, become regular attendees of the NMSO

### **Scheduled Performance Dates:**

*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* – September 28, 2017

*Rite of Spring* – October 20, 2017

*Petrushka* – November 11, 2017

*Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, "Gaelic"* – December 3, 2017

*(Time, venue, and any accompanying activities or special performance-related events are to be determined by your team. Be creative, but remember, you have quite a small budget to work with!)*

- **Target Audience:** Adults between the ages of 25-40 drawn from across all cultural demographics who will, hopefully, become regular attendees of the NMSO and, if able, take part in the newly developing "Young Friends of the NMSO" organization

### **Scheduled Performance Dates:**

*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* – September 30, 2017

*Rite of Spring* – October 21, 2017

*Petrushka* – November 10, 2017

*Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, "Gaelic"* – December 8, 2017

*(Time, venue, and any accompanying activities or special performance-related events are to be determined by your team. Be creative, but remember, you have quite a small budget to work with!)*

- **Target Audience:** Families with children under the age of 15, drawn from across all cultural demographics who will, hopefully, become regular attendees of the NMSO and, if able, take part in the newly developing “Young Friends of the NMSO” organization

**Scheduled Performance Dates:**

*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun – September 30, 2017*

*Rite of Spring – October 22, 2017*

*Petrushka – November 18, 2017*

*Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, “Gaelic” – December 10, 2017*

*(Time, venue, and any accompanying activities or special performance-related events are to be determined by your team. Be creative, but remember, you have quite a small budget to work with!)*

**Scope of Problem:**

Given the severe financial situation of the NMSO, the Board of Directors has asked that you promote your concerts on a limited budget. What is more, they have decided that they want your team to create publicity for these events in the form of a short 3 minute video that engages the audience, appropriately reflects the nature of the event, and provides relevant contextual information that will interest, inform, and elicit a positive response from the members of your target audience. It is expected that your publicity will successfully achieve the following:

- Include the logistics of the concert (date, time, place, etc.)
- Inform potential audience members of any accompanying activities, performance related events, or special performance considerations
- Provide a general context for the work so that the target audience has some specifics prior to arriving at the concert.
- Pitch the concert in such a way that it inspires enthusiasm and gets people to attend!

***Questions to get you started:***

- 1.) What are your initial thoughts and questions about this problem?
- 2.) What do you know/ need to know about your target audience?
- 3.) What do you know/ need to know about the piece that is scheduled to be performed at the concert you are promoting?
- 4.) What concerns need to be considered when searching for a venue?
- 5.) Where might you go to find this information?

***Stage 2a Questions***

- 1.) What musical and/or historical factors have you considered as you've planned your concerts and publicity?
- 2.) What additional musical and/or historical factors should be taken into consideration?
- 3.) What objectives do you still need to achieve?
- 4.) What steps are necessary to meet these objectives?

***Reflection Questions (to be distributed at the very end, after teams have shared their videos with the class):***

- 1.) How did the way that the concerts were presented in the videos change as a result of to the intended target audience?
- 2.) To what extent did the venues and types of performances change as a result of to the intended target audience?
- 3.) In what ways did the information provided in the historical contexts for each concert change according to the intended target audience?
  - What was included for each audience?
  - What was omitted for some audiences and not for others?

***"Pulling It All Together Questions (for large group discussion)***

- 1.) To what extent can the details of history be manipulated into a usable narrative?
- 2.) What does this project tell us about the act of constructing (and re-constructing) historical narratives?