

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

## Creating a Positive Future for Music Advocacy

NASM Annual Meeting  
Seattle, Washington

Robert Gibson, University of Maryland  
Catherine Jarjisian, Cleveland Institute of Music  
Samuel Hope, National Association of Schools of Music

This paper was produced as a resource for professional discussion and development. It is not associated with the accreditation function of NASM, nor does it represent a policy position of the Association.

### I. Introduction

This executive briefing on advocacy is in five parts. After the introductory section, we address three basic questions—what do we need to know, what do we need to think about, and, what do we need to do? We then conclude with a summary that ties a number of elements together, and proposes a conceptual basis for next steps.

It is important to make clear at the outset that it is not our task to set out a centralized, top-down advocacy plan for NASM or its member institutions, or to promote any particular advocacy program, or to spend a lot of time on advocacy messages. We are speaking for ourselves, not for NASM. Our purpose is educational, to consider advocacy as a field by presenting a number of advocacy fundamentals and possibilities, and to propose a conceptual foundation for future action. Our premises are that advocacy for music and music study need to improve, that improvement starts with learning, and that we will benefit from learning together, today and over the next several years. Before addressing our big three questions, we mention seven introductory points that serve as themes.

#### **Advocacy is more than a game.**

Advocacy is necessary, like budgets and schedules. Done well, it can be fun, just like sports. Indeed, some see advocacy as a game. Winning means successful manipulation of public opinion. But, advocacy's effects are not confined in anything resembling a sports arena. Advocacy affects culture, and even produces its own culture.

Advocacy considerations can become pervasive and dominant. At the extreme, the result is a total advertising society. Two quotations illustrate:

*“You can fool all of the people all the time if the advertising is right and the budget is big enough.”*

— Joseph E. Levine

*“You are never so easily fooled as when you are trying to fool someone else.”*

— François de la Rochefoucauld

### **If advocacy is the answer, what message, what format, what delivery system?**

When a problem arises, someone usually suggests that the solution is more and better advocacy. Less usual is thorough consideration of exactly what kind of advocacy would best address the specific problem, or whether advocacy is the best or only primary response. However, these are just the kinds of questions we in this room need to be able to answer effectively. Indeed, we need to become virtuosos at answering these questions, especially at the local level.

### **Music executives have multiple advocacy roles.**

Such virtuosity is important, in part because music executives have numerous advocacy leadership roles. We must advocate for music and music study, our programs, our field, our institution, our faculties, our students, our concerts, and so on. We must tie advocacy to fundraising, to legislation—the laws passed by legislatures, and to regulations—the rules created by government bureaucracies under the framework of law.

And, we need to help students become better advocates for music and their work in it.

### **Advocacy is our servant, not our master.**

Even with all these responsibilities, advocacy is not the master but rather the servant of our primary effort. We dare not embrace advocacy that leads us to act as though we must deny or destroy who we are in order to make our advocacy successful. For each of us, success with advocacy depends on knowing what we do, who we are, and who we are not, and making decisions accordingly.

### **Enlarge the niche!**

Of course, we want more active engagement with music and music study. But we must remember that large numbers of people already support what we do.

### **Choose your advocacy carefully.**

Certain kinds of advocacy can help us increase that support without changing the essence of who we are as individuals and as a profession. Not all kinds of arts and arts education advocacy will do both of these things. Our job is to find and use advocacy that will.

### **We have advantages no one else has.**

The good news is that we in this room can work in the advocacy world with many more advantages than most of us realize. Let us now start reviewing the situation, see what some of these things are, and think about how we can best use them in the future.

## **II. What do we need to know?**

Some elements and attributes of advocacy in general.

*“I warn you against believing that advertising is a science.”*

— Bill Bernbach

## **A. Music and advocacy as fields**

To begin our review, we start with music, the field we know best, and take an example from it to make a point about advocacy.

To the millions of people who enjoy music, but do not have any formal training in the art, the tools for thinking about music as technique, history, and structure may not be available. Their experience is often centered on an emotional reaction to sounds and lyrics that create meaningful connections.

For those of us who have formal training in music, the tools provided by technique, historical context, and the language and skill for articulating musical structure allow for a substantially different experience; we are able to think *in* music. We are able to do and consider and analyze as well as react.

Advocacy is like music. Mere receivers experience the effects; the pros know how it is done. Like music, advocacy has a history, and a constantly growing body of technique. We will list a few of these advocacy techniques later. Our point at present is a simple one: to work effectively with advocacy, we need a level of understanding that helps us get well beyond how we feel.

## **B. Advocacy as purpose and technique**

Let's start with relationships among advocacy, advertising, and propaganda. Advocacy has a friendly sound, advertising less so, and the word propaganda usually has a negative connotation. To most people, my message is advocacy; my colleague's message is advertising; and my opponent's message is propaganda.

But advocacy, advertising, and propaganda share a common body of technique. In other words, the terms and techniques are virtually interchangeable.

Just as common practice harmony can be applied to an infinite variety of musical situations, likewise advocacy techniques can be applied to an infinite variety of promotional situations. The same techniques used to sell soap can be used to consolidate the power of dictatorial regimes. It is important to be able to separate the immediate surface impression or results from the techniques being used. The technique often reveals the underlying goal.

The purposes of advocacy, advertising, and propaganda are to shape opinion at times through straightforward invitation, but most often through the use of psychological action. To make our discussion easier, most of the time we will just use the single term 'advocacy' as a surrogate for all three terms.

In this section, the word advocacy denotes both a purpose and a body of technique. Remember, at the moment we are discussing advocacy, advertising, and propaganda as a field.

We have come now to one reason that people centered in education often are uncomfortable with advocacy. The purposes and goals of the two are fundamentally different. Liberal and professional education, at least as most of us conceive them and want to practice them, are about giving individuals the knowledge, skills, and tools to think for themselves.

Now, of course, educational settings have been and continue to be used as locations for advocacy, advertising, and propaganda. Indeed, it is almost impossible for opinion shaping to be avoided in education. But in principle, our usual educational goal is to enable and enrich the capabilities of

individual thought and action. This goal is not shared everywhere. Simon Montefiore writes in the August 24, 2008 edition of *The New York Times*:

*“When Vladimir Putin presented Russian teachers with their new text book last year, Stalin appeared as ‘the most successful Russian ruler of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’... And his killings were a tool necessary, if excessive [for] discipline.”*

In contrast to liberal and professional education as we pursue it, advocacy’s goal essentially is to bypass deep and rational thought. Of course rhetorical thought goes into creating advocacy, but most advocacy messages are not oriented to promoting considerations from various perspectives, the weighing of pros and cons, or examinations of ramifications, unintended consequences, and so forth. Advocacy technique often is used to gain more attention for one thing over all others, to obscure the reality of many factors and issues, and deny the prospect of multiple solutions. It is the opposite not only of liberal and professional education as traditionally conceived, but also of policy analysis and the scientific method.

Advocacy is about creating mass belief, and thus automatic support—it begins from the premise that complex issues associated with the subject have already been solved in favor of a particular point of view. Fundamentally, it seeks understanding only in the context of a particular belief. Three analysts shed light on this condition:

*“The goal of modern propaganda is no longer to transform opinion but to arouse an active and mythical belief.”*

— Jacques Ellul

*“In propaganda as in advertising, the important consideration is not whether information accurately describes an objective situation, but whether it sounds true.”*

— Christopher Lasch

*“Truthiness is ‘What I say is right and [nothing] anyone else says could possibly be true!’ It is not only that **I** feel it to be true, but that **I feel** it to be true. There’s not only an emotional quality, but there’s a selfish quality.”*

— Stephen Colbert

For reasons just presented and many others, when the subject of advocacy comes up in higher education, concerns are voiced about image over substance, failure to consider multiple elements in a situation, single issue politics, myopia, and so forth.

Whatever you think about this assertion of contrast between education and advocacy, here is one condition that brings great credence to the distinction we have made. Advocacy does not set goals for its success in terms of art making or learning or quality, but rather in terms of sales or agreement or belief, or willingness to take a certain action. The correct idea or action already has been decided in advance. The goal is to raise support, or to manage images, not to debate issues. This is why a total advocacy environment makes negotiation and cooperation virtually impossible. In such an environment, public and private discussion is nothing but an exchange of advocacies. Polarization and gridlock are the result. Mutual trust simply evaporates. This is one critical reason that in our situation, advocacy must be our servant, not our master. This is difficult because, as Nicholas Jackson O’Shaughnessy reminds us, *“The universe of postmodernism is the universe of propaganda.”*

### C. Why advocacy techniques work

Why do advocacy, advertising, and propaganda techniques and messages work so well? One reason is that people are busy. No one has the time to learn deeply about the many issues that affect them, but they need information about those issues. Another reason is that human beings have certain predictable reactions to certain stimuli. Mass psychological action is possible. Erich Hoffer notes that “*Propaganda does not deceive people; it merely helps them deceive themselves.*” Mass psychological techniques are knowable. People *can be* moved by symbols and argument, often to do extremely foolish things.

For example, certain advocacy techniques invite people to work against their own interests, while making them feel that they are working for their own interests. The tragic histories of Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia are obvious examples. But we ourselves are not immune. Confusions about interests can be created among those committed to the arts and arts education here in the United States. The desire to use or reap benefits from the fad of the moment can lead us to advocate in ways that reduce public understanding of what our field is about and what it can do. We all must learn more about how to be careful in this regard.

### D. Advocacy techniques and the ways they work

Language matters. Out of hundreds of advocacy techniques, here are a few that, once mentioned, should strike chords of familiarity.

#### 1. The Grand Faloon

Let’s start with the grand faloon, a constant favorite. It works like this: one person or organization pretends to speak for a huge aggregation of people or other organizations without consultation or any empirical knowledge of what those people believe or want, or how they voted on a specific set of issues. This is done by talking about the people—students, college presidents, the military, arts advocates, music faculty, etc.—as though everyone in the group believes or would act in exactly the same way. You cannot listen to public discourse in the United States for very long without running into the grand faloon. It is a regular feature of we/they distinctions and arguments. Repetitive use of the grand faloon can create public confusion about positions on issues and about representation. It often is used to do both.

#### 2. Conflation

Conflation is a time-trusted advocacy technique. We are all familiar with the tragic conflation of audience development with P–12 arts education—a substitute that confuses selling more seats in concert halls with success in music teaching and learning. This particular conflation has been an advocacy staple since the mid 60’s.

When employed strategically or tactically, conflation enables B to weaken or eventually replace A by sustaining the fiction that B is the same as A, that it *is* A, thus A doesn’t really matter.

#### 3. Run up the flag

Another technique is creating agitation, fear, and publicity by running outrageous proposals up the flagpole to see who salutes and to gauge opposition. Even if there is total rejection and the concept is withdrawn, a residue remains. The opposition has shown how advocacy for the position was ineffective, and thus where further work is needed. By reviewing what happened and evaluating the effectiveness of messages and argument, a better advocacy campaign can be planned for the next round. Many activities of the Spellings Commission exemplified use of this technique.

#### 4. Tyranny of prophecy

A final technique we will discuss today is the “tyranny of prophecy.” Here is how it works: select specific conditions in a current situation, project growth of that condition in perpetuity as though there are no opposing influences, claim the result is inevitable, and then advocate by saying “The only way to avoid or take advantage of this inevitability is to move in the direction that we are requiring or suggesting.”

Most of us here remember many such prophecies that simply did not come to pass, but that shaped common belief for a time. Soviet Russia did not gain technological superiority over the United States. The Japanese economy did not come to dominate the world. The dot-com and housing booms did not go on forever, and so forth. However, such prophecies can produce bandwagons that produce bubbles. And, policies resulting from such prophecies often remain to produce extremely difficult conditions for years to come.

Equally serious, constant use of tyranny-of-prophecy technique is dangerous because the public becomes cynical and may fail to heed warnings when real crises occur.

#### E. How to deal positively with the reality of advocacy saturation

With just the information provided so far, it is clear that all of us live surrounded by applications of advocacy technique. We are all subject to saturation marketing almost every waking moment. Like it or not, we are manipulated constantly.

Keith Harding expresses one typical reaction: *“I don’t think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination, and encourages people to go further. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.”*

##### 1. Face the permanent tension foresquarely.

We arrive now at a huge source of tension. We must advocate effectively, but we don’t want to manipulate—we want to invite, present, reveal, and teach.

Our field needs to build long-term understanding and trust. We sense correctly that manipulation is not the basis for reaching these goals.

##### 2. Remember: advocacy is like fire—essential, but to be used with care.

To deal with the present overall advocacy saturation and the tension it causes, it helps to remember that advocacy and the ability to shape opinion are critical parts of life and work. Advocacy is essential, vital to our future. But for us, advocacy is not all, not first, not the center. Advocacy alone is never really enough—it is just part of the whole.

Advocacy does not grow our food, or cure the sick, or write a composition. It does not produce a concert, or indeed anything in many vital areas. However, it does influence the context, the environment.

##### 3. Keep two questions in mind —

- a. What kind of environment do we want for music and music study?
- b. How do we create a context that is positive, healthy, uplifting, and honest, and at the same time compete with other kinds of advocacy?

These are difficult, but not impossible, challenges. Remember that our advocacy does not have to be totally effective to be very effective. For example, reaching just one percent of the U.S. population means reaching over 3 million people, or the population of Iowa. Two percent is larger than the population of Finland.

#### **F. Two clarifying facts**

Before we leave this section about advocacy as a field, two more important facts must be noted. First, advocacy, advertising, and propaganda are aspects of lobbying, of policy development and negotiation, and of creating and passing legislation. But lobbying, policy, and legislation are much larger than advocacy. Much larger. If not, the results usually are dysfunctional or tragic. It is extremely important to understand this point if one is to be effective in policy, lobbying, or legislative action.

Second, the times are changing.

We will have more to say about policy and changing conditions.

### **III. What do we need to think about?**

Conditions specific to us and the issues they raise.

*“Almost half of those who described themselves as loyal to a brand didn’t feel that way even one year later.”*

—James Surowiecki  
Wired, November 2004

As we gain and apply advocacy knowledge and skills, there are many things that we need to think about. We can only address a few this morning.

#### **A. Sources of advocacy—what they are**

We begin by reviewing several sources of advocacy, and then consider the status of each source with regard to music and music study.

Our first source is presence. The physical presence of an institution is advocacy in and of itself. The presence of a field and its work also advocates for that field.

Performance, especially when expressed in terms of success is also a natural source of advocacy. An easy example is the reputation of investment firms or ensembles based on actual performance over time.

Another source of advocacy is participation. If many people are interested in something, or are participating in something, it sends an automatic advocacy message, especially if the numbers are known.

It is common knowledge that word-of-mouth promotion to friends is the best advocacy of all.

Next, there is simple promotion, or what we may call information advertising. The notice of an antique show, a concert poster, or a letter of invitation to a particular event are familiar examples.

The last source of advocacy we will discuss today is complex applications of promotional technique that involve combinations of advocacy, advertising, merchandising, and propaganda. Here, many techniques are employed in a concerted effort to drive opinion in a certain predetermined direction.

Polls, focus groups, coordinated grant-making, orchestrated events, and many other techniques are chosen and used together.

## **B. Sources of advocacy—where we are**

Let us look now at what we in music already have with regard to these advocacy sources.

We have a real strength in terms of presence because we have institutions and highly trained people spread geographically throughout the United States. What's more, music is a highly present commodity and force. Our buildings, our concerts, our presentations in various media, our daily educational efforts, and the work of our graduates all contribute to presence. Our work in almost every sector of our regular business is associated with building up our presence. We could always have more, but in terms of presence we are quite well off in many ways.

The same is true in terms of performance in its many dimensions associated with music. Unfortunately, not enough people are aware of the level and meaning of our performance. But performance is there and improving all the time.

We also have a great deal of participation; again, not as much as we would like, but what we lack in numbers we have in geographic and demographic coverage. For example, music study is a daily factor in millions of homes and thousands of schools throughout the United States. Hour by hour, millions of Americans listen to music *and* are engaged with their choices.

On individual advocacy, our record is mixed. In general, individuals promote the music and musicians they like, but there is far less individual advocacy for music beyond entertainment, or for music study. Individuals our institutions have educated reach many in the American population constantly, and have personal contacts with them. This is a capability that many advertisers would virtually die to achieve. We have extensive untapped resources in the realm of individual advocacy.

We also are reasonably adept at simple promotion. We tell people what we do and what we are going to do. We invite, we welcome, we explain. Of course, we can do all of these things better, but we have experience and familiarity with the techniques involved.

In our view, our field is not so adept at complex promotion. But perhaps we do not want to be. Perhaps it is not natural to us, or not what we should be doing. But the three of us believe this is an approach to advocacy we should look at carefully both as a field and as institutions. We will explain further and propose a conceptual approach later on.

In summary, we have a lot of things going for us already in terms of advocacy. We are more successful reaching the goals that advocacy is trying to achieve than with producing messages and using advocacy techniques in sophisticated ways. As we look at our advocacy situation with a view to improving it, we need to remember to use what we have first, and not discount it. Three of our greatest strengths are our discipline itself, our artistry, and our commitment to the kinds of education that develop knowledge and skills.

## **C. The advocacy–commodity relationship**

We turn now to another important area that needs careful thought, that of the relationship of advocacy to scarce commodities. Scarcity is a powerful force. Today, advocacy of all kinds faces serious challenges that were not present to the same degree even 20 years ago. Today, two of the scarcest commodities are time and attention.



Advocacy always has tried to conquer time by simplifying messages and proposals. But it has grown fat on being able to attract attention. Before the personal computer and Internet, we had mass media that was truly mass. Remember when there were just three television networks, plus eventually PBS, and a handful of respected national publications? Remember when technology did not allow people to be so isolated and yet participate in what were once communal activities? Now, people are standing under a flood of information, and advocacy cannot be effective unless it can grab and hold attention. Grabbing attention is hard; holding it is even harder. It is often necessary to advertise your advertising.

#### **D. Old and new purposes for advocacy**

Analysis of what these scarcities mean could go on for quite some time, but let us turn now to the changing environment for advocacy, ways to influence public opinion, and the ways we craft our own advocacy.

In his book, *Life After the 30-Second Spot*, advertising analyst Joseph Jaffe contrasts old and new purposes for advertising. He indicates that most textbooks present three primary roles: to inform, to persuade, and to remind. He shows that this set no longer works in most cases, and suggests three new purposes or roles: to empower, to demonstrate, to involve.

If Jaffe is correct, the new set of roles is more consistent with what we do naturally in education than is the old set. What will we do with this possibility?

#### **E. Distinctions between specific and cumulative messages**

As we work to negotiate the various conditions and possibilities, it helps to remember the distinction between specific and cumulative messages and the difference in short- and long-term effects of particular advocacy messages and approaches.

What happens over the long term if all arts advocacy justifies the arts in terms of something else? For example, for the past 40 years, advocacy messages have justified the arts more on economic development than on what the arts are. Consider this within the context of the following recent situation.

In 2008, the Canadian government reduced arts appropriations by \$44 million, and redirected the money to a future Olympic bid by the city of Vancouver. Due to scope and magnitude, the Olympics produce more immediate economic impact than the arts. While the economic justification has merit, it becomes dangerous when it overshadows all other arguments, year after year. Once any given belief is ingrained, flawed or otherwise, it is hard to change.

#### **F. Different advocacy for different purposes**

Consider another distinction: the types of advocacy we might use if we are hoping to sell numerous concert tickets. In this instance, we are promoting a single event and seeking customers for it. We sell specifics: personalities, repertory, setting, theme, lifestyle, etc. The same kind of advocacy may not work as well if we are trying to sell the continuing presence of a symphony orchestra. Here we are not just selling a single event but a long-term investment in a performing institution.

But what if instead of selling concert tickets for a symphony orchestra, or the idea of maintaining an orchestra, we are selling ideas and systems associated with long-term investments in music study?

One of the difficult challenges in arts advocacy is to keep advocacy approaches consistent with specific purposes.

The arts advocacy history of the last 40 years shows that it does not work to assume that the only way to advocate is to rely on the same kinds of messages and techniques used to sell artists or specific events. It also doesn't work to act as though advocacy is the first purpose of every arts and arts education activity. It is time to become more sophisticated.

#### **G. Areas that need attention and multiple advocacy approaches that reinforce each other**

Of course we need to sell concert tickets and get audiences and listeners. Let's redouble our efforts there. But, we also need to advocate for the idea of a musical culture and for its perpetuation through various means, including comprehensive music study for all students in the P-12 cohort, and the efforts all of us undertake daily in higher education.

Funding and advocacy for music remain crucial, but we need to look carefully at ways to get beyond the hand-to-mouth approach that too much arts advocacy perpetuates, in part because of its event and personality fixation.

As we have said, in our own corner of the arts, we need to call attention to our achievements and productivity. We need to advance our schools individually and collectively, the field of music, and the various people and elements that make up our school and our field. We need to promote both events and long-term conceptual engagement with the idea of professional education, and of music in general studies at all levels.

And insofar as humanly possible, we and our arts colleagues need to target advocacy approaches to the nature of each of these specific needs. We need to use different messages and different techniques in ways that support those advocating for other arts purposes. This means change. Such a result will not happen automatically. We need to think harder about how to do this ourselves and how to convince others in the arts to work cooperatively with us.

#### **H. Current summary**

So far in this presentation we have presented a number of facts about advocacy, and we have encouraged considerations of several areas, including sources of advocacy, the current scarcity of time and attention, the pervasive use of advocacy technique and its consequences, and creating the best possible relationship between and among specific purposes and the kinds of advocacy needed to fulfill them. This is a good basis for thinking in broad terms about what we need to do.

### **IV. What do we need to do?**

Several fundamental recommendations.

*"What you say in advertising is more important than how you say it."*

— David Olgivy

Let us look at a number of resources, principles, and possibilities that can help us to be more effective in using what we have. And, as we did once before, we begin with music.

For many people, music advocates for itself. The experience is powerful. Therefore, every performance or experience is critically important. Music's unique and ineffable power should invite

the hearer to return, and ultimately to become engaged. No verbal advocacy can substitute for this aspect of music.

What about music study? Both research and experience show that those who have studied music performance in their youth are most likely to be engaged in music for the rest of their lives. As best we know now, sequential music study that develops knowledge and skills in music itself is ultimately the best advocacy for music and for music study. Study produces the sustained engagement we and the whole field of music need.

What about genres? Individuals and groups have strong genre preferences. So be it. We need to pursue advocacy for genres in ways that do not weaken common advocacy for music and music study. Genre preferences are a base for building, not a prison from which we cannot escape.

What do these three points tell us about what we should do?

#### **A. Look at our responsibilities in light of our resources**

Given the nature of our responsibilities in higher education, we must focus on music first. We must pursue music on its own terms, that is, music as music. Otherwise we cannot prepare future musicians. Our advocacy needs to affirm the importance and value of music in terms of music itself. This does not mean denying other purposes for music, but rather affirming that knowledge and skill in music itself is the most authentic basis for connecting music to other purposes. The point is that we should not join in focusing attention *exclusively* on other purposes. Most of those other purposes can be accomplished without music or the other arts as our Canadian example demonstrated.

We need to act in full recognition of the fact that music is already and permanently basic to the human condition. Music is not made basic through advocacy.

Therefore, we must find welcoming ways to affirm music and its pursuit at the highest level. We must not appear to apologize for great achievements in music whatever their genre or cultural source. To affirm arrogantly or to apologize directly or indirectly undermines our advocacy for music and especially for music study.

We have a particular perspective. We are interested in far more than sales of events and personalities. We seek also the development of musical breadth and engagement with the richness of musical achievement and possibility in as many individuals as possible. We want to facilitate easy travel among genres and the ability to engage complex music and long time frames. Thus, we also seek support for substantive music study, beginning with all students in the elementary and secondary years. Musical breadth and music study do not sell themselves.

#### **B. Make good decisions about basic strategic orientations**

Let us now hold the centrality of music and music study in our minds, and look at several organizational and technical matters associated with what we need to do.

Throughout this presentation we have been suggesting that we have many advocacy resources that are not used to maximum effectiveness. Let us go further now and say that we need to use what we have rather than deprecate what we don't have and are unlikely to get; or worse, to let what we don't have become an excuse for doing nothing ourselves. We hope to show that we may not need everything we may think we need to be far more successful than we have been.

As we begin considering strategic orientations, let us look at an important distinction: the fundamental differences between sequential and cumulative strategy.

### **1. Sequential strategy**

A sequential strategy sets out a detailed linear plan to accomplish an objective in a series of timed, predetermined steps. It relies on centralized planning and coordination, constant reporting to central control about the achievement of objectives, and timetables so that the center can maintain detailed moment-to-moment oversight of the extent to which the plan is being fulfilled or needs to be adjusted. Decision making is far more central than local.

### **2. Cumulative strategy**

A cumulative strategy is quite different. It depends on the efforts of numerous relatively autonomous units or individuals who are working together toward a common goal, often under a common framework. Coordination is loose, central command and control are minimal. Trust is more important than evaluation. The goal is more important than the plan, and most decision-making is local. Any contribution consistent with the goal is acceptable. Achievement of larger objectives often is invisible until the combination of many small achievements reach critical mass and become apparent.

Both strategic concepts are effective. Specific goals and conditions determine whether a sequential or cumulative strategy is best or what mix is appropriate. Let us ask ourselves which strategy most naturally characterizes the way music and music study are structured and pursued in the United States.

We hope you would agree that in an overall sense we in music and the other arts represent an example of the cumulative approach. By default it is how we operate already.

### **3. Sequential strategy, cumulative strategy, and advocacy**

When the word *plan* is mentioned or when there is a large task ahead, most people think immediately of a sequential strategy. The concept of hierarchical command and control is attractive. The illusion that detailed plans with timetables will always lead to accomplishment is seductive. And, of course, in the right circumstances, sequential strategy works extremely well. However, those circumstances are not always present.

In arts-advocacy discussions, there seems to be a constant yearning for a vast sequential strategy, a conceptual juggernaut rolling through the culture solving all problems of justification and support. Many would like to organize arts-advocacy campaigns using the kinds of sequential strategies they perceive major corporations to be using—carefully orchestrated applications of advocacy messages and techniques, all unfolding on schedule over the nation as a whole and creating a vast upsurge in interest and funding. But the arts are not structured in the same way as large corporations, do not have large advertising budgets, and often are not promoting the same types of things. The following numbers illustrate:

Verizon's annual advertising budget is \$1.4 billion-plus.

The aggregate annual operating budget of NASM institutions is \$1.7 billion-plus. These numbers approximate the annual base salaries of 40,000 to 50,000 school music teachers.

As we have said, the arts must sell more than commodities or personalities or events. In other words, purposes, conditions, and funding patterns differ.

There are many other reasons that such yearnings are misplaced, but here is the most salient one. At base, the arts and arts education in the United States are not, should not, and will not be controlled by a central authority. There is no power to enforce participation and compliance with a sequential advocacy strategy or any other centralized sequential strategy for the arts as a whole or for any one of them. Further, there are too many points of view and too many specific conditions for voluntary cohesion of the kind required.

### **C. Improve fulfillment of critical needs for successful cumulative strategy**

Instead of being concerned that sequential strategy is either absent or too expensive, or does not work, why not recognize and embrace cumulative strategy more consciously? Why not try to do a better job of enhancing and serving cumulative strategy in ways that increase the power of what is natural to the way the arts work and the way they are structured organizationally in a national or regional sense?

What are some things we need to do to promote music and music study in an enhanced cumulative-strategy framework? Here are a few ideas for consideration.

#### **1. Cooperation and mutual support**

Cooperation and mutual support are critical. Nationally among NASM schools, we enjoy these things now, but not much in terms of advocacy. Moving forward in the advocacy arena means looking together at new kinds of relationships between competition and cooperation. It means finding improved ways to work individually and locally in ways that build value for the whole enterprise.

#### **2. Message content**

In working on advocacy, we need to start with the message, not the process or the medium or the technology or partnership with fellow arts advocates. Those are important, but secondary. The message is first. What are we trying to get across? What is our message actually saying? What understandings and values is it asserting or reinforcing? What is the potential long-term effect?

#### **3. Short- and long-term relationships**

We say it again: It is essential to keep the long view in mind and not let the pursuit of short-term gains harm prospects for long-term success.

#### **4. Honesty and specificity**

Our claims must be supported with facts, data, reason, and experience. And our claims must be specific. For example, there is a relationship between music and creativity, but not every encounter with music or music study enhances an individual's creative abilities. Only certain kinds of encounters and studies do. We must be totally honest always. Arts advocacy is too full of hyperbole and false claims about benefits. The overall effect damages the kind of trust building that the arts and arts education need. Promotion mogul Jerry Della Femina warns: *"There is a great deal of advertising that is better than the product. When that happens, all that good advertising will do is put you out of business faster."*

## **5. Common thematic goals, many individual messages**

While we do need to agree on common themes and goals, we do not need to agree on the details of messages for everyone to use. Since different situations and constituencies need different specific messages, we need many messages, and many advocacy models from which individuals and institutions can choose or develop as they see fit. And most of all, we need to help each other become more proficient in developing advocacy messages for specific local use. A successful cumulative strategy requires high competence at the individual and local level. Our students need to be the future bearers of such competence.

## **6. Self-assurance**

We say it again. We must believe in what we do, and believe it is important and worth learning. We don't get anywhere worth going by dumbing down what we do or apologizing for who we are.

## **7. Patience and persistence**

We must work slowly but surely over the long term, building public understanding, engagement, and support. There is no magic formula for instant success. No single message that will work.

## **8. Keep numbers in perspective**

We must not be driven to distraction or despair by a low percentage of market share. We must insist that market share is not a proxy for ultimate value. According to non-definitive research at Stanford University, the median hardcover per week fiction sales for a *New York Times* "bestseller" is approximately 18,000—0.006% of the U.S. population.

## **9. Separate what is essential and what is essentially symbolic**

We must obtain and work from a realistic understanding of where our strategic interests lie. This means separating what is desirable from what is essential, and what is essentially symbolic from what is fundamentally real. In a strategic sense, federal funding of P-12 arts education is so small that it is essentially symbolic. A total loss would be tragic and hurtful, but not even close to being fatal. Local school board funding is essentially real. Total loss of it would be both tragic and fatal. Our advocacy should give highest priority to what is essentially real not what appears most glamorous. Above all we must be careful lest we support the symbolic in ways that weaken support for the essentially real.

## **10. Test advocacy against essentials and desirables**

When we have good understandings about what is essential, we have the basis for testing all advocacy messages and actions, ours and those of others. For example, if we believe that music study is essential, we won't produce or participate in arts education advocacy that does not promote or support study or that conflates experience with study. Experience and study are essential and complementary, but they are not the same thing. In the appendix, we have provided sample tests for advocacy about music education. Our point is not that these test questions are the only valid ones, but rather that each of us needs to develop one or more sets of test questions so that we can check ourselves quickly as we make decisions.

## **11. Improve the capacity of music majors to work productively in a cumulative strategy environment**

We need to think deeply about the advocacy issue in terms of the preparation of our music majors. What do they need to know and be able to do with advocacy? A lot of good effort has been spent in the recent past to improve the entrepreneurial skills of music graduates. More is yet to be done. But we need to make sure that as entrepreneurialism is understood in terms of building and sustaining a personal career, it also is understood in terms of advocating and supporting the music field. Music and all musicians will be deeply hurt if entrepreneurialism reduces cooperation, or turns into a vitiating narcissistic war of personal advocacies.

### **D. Shape opinion rather than repeating it**

As we have suggested, too much arts advocacy follows opinion rather than shaping it. The goal is to justify the arts according to someone's view of the prevailing fad or mood. Over time, this teaches the public that the arts have no intrinsic purpose or meaning.

Additionally, some opinions hurt our cause, and thus the general cause of the arts.

What is our positive response or our counter to problematic messages that show up regularly, and often become public beliefs through repetition? Every one of them uses a grain of truth to mislead. We follow each misleading point with a countering message more oriented to gaining long-term engagement.

#### **1. Purpose of arts education**

*The purpose of public education in the arts is to produce ticket buyers and supporters of arts organizations and advocacy groups.*

Education may lead to future consumption and support of many things, but promoting consumption and support is not the basic purpose of formal education. Learning—knowledge and skills—is the basic purpose. If learning is present, collateral benefits will multiply.

#### **2. Focus of arts teaching**

*To produce more arts consumers, experiencing, reading about, and talking about the arts should replace or take significant precedence over learning to create and perform, especially in P-12 settings. Performance is based on the acquisition of technical skills, thus is not intellectual, and thus does not lead to understanding.*

Doing music is just as important for learning music as doing mathematics or writing or chemistry is for learning those subjects. In the arts, performance, experience, and study serve each other. Pitting them against each other is counterproductive.

#### **3. Respect for teachers**

*Every problem in the arts has a single root cause: the folks who teach the arts.*

Engaged teachers of music and the other arts are the people in our society who have dedicated their lives to continuation of arts knowledge and skills in as many people as possible. They work miracles given the resources they have.

Why is it a good thing for the arts to weaken respect and confidence in arts teachers?

#### 4. Numbers of professionals

*There are too many music graduates for the number of positions available. The proper music role for most colleges and universities is music in general education and providing space and administrative support for artists' series.*

We need all the educated and trained musicians we can get for many reasons, but one is simple demographics: in about 40 years the U.S. population is projected to grow by one-third to over 400 million. The artistic and educational demands will be enormous. It does not work to say that more substantive education is needed to create demand, and then recommend that we reduce the pool of professionally prepared musicians who will teach in curricular and non-curricular ways.

#### 5. Supply and demand relationship

*The supply of artists and arts experiences should not increase until there is more demand.*

In art, supply regularly produces demand. No nineteenth-century focus group could have created impressionism. Monet and his colleagues created it, and the demand followed in time.

#### 6. "Elite" art

*Elite art has no future.*

If "elite" means excellent instead of snobbish, no one need worry.

The art forms always will attract people of high intelligence and ability. These gifted, hard-working people will always produce and teach outstanding work and patrons will support them. No sociological environment, market condition, academic theory, government planning, or advocacy campaign can stop the artists, the teachers, or the patrons. The question is not whether art so produced, taught, and supported will survive, but rather who will have access and how large its following will be.

We need to find ways to be affirmative and positive about these and many other issues. For example, what if individually we all agreed today to use the ideas in the above talking points whenever possible this year? This would be an example of cumulative strategy implementation and would begin to shape opinion in our favor. No one else will do this kind of thing for us.

### V. Conclusion

Synthesis and mission

*"You've read the book, you've seen the movie, you've bought the T-shirt; now...EAT THE PIE!"*

— Benny Hill

Many conditions are aligning in ways that are consistent with the way music works as an art form and the ways that music and music study are structured operationally in the United States.

The kinds of resources we have seem more consistent with current and future promotional effectiveness than they have been in the past. We don't have to change fundamentally, but we do need to change how we think about and use what we have, and how we work together.



To demonstrate, let's gather and integrate a number of strategic positives already mentioned.

### **Strategic Positive 1**

Earlier we suggested a new set of promotional roles based on empowering, demonstrating, and involving. The education sector of music is well suited to fulfilling these roles. As we all know, our field teaches millions of students each day, a personal connection that is beyond the wildest dreams of many corporations. Remember, the best advocacy is one-to-one.

### **Strategic Positive 2**

New technologies such as the iPod offer tremendous possibilities. The digital playlist is a remarkable bridge across musical genres. By their very nature, these technologies broaden engagement with genres and promote the concept of personal ownership of one's musical environment. We can help people learn how to enrich their own environment. Who is better positioned than we are?

### **Strategic Positive 3**

The ways we are naturally positioned to promote music and music study also are increasingly consistent with the way people obtain information and form opinions. No longer does information flow through just a few major media sources. Individuals rely increasingly on more specialized sources they trust. At the local level, how can we and our students learn to create more trust in ourselves as sources of information and opinion about the purposes, values, and needs of music and music study? The job we have to do here is consistent with the ways we raise funds. We build relationships patiently individual by individual. It is slow but extremely effective over time. We need to keep enlarging the niche.

### **Strategic Positive 4**

Our values, structure, and resources are consistent with conditions needed to combine these current realities with massive and effective use of cumulative strategy, the general approach most natural to our condition and way of working. Let's connect some dots. Cumulative strategy is perfect for the empower-demonstrate-involve approach to promotion. It is perfect for using current and projected technologies. It is consistent with current ways that education in music is structured, information is distributed, and opinion is formed. And even better, it requires an artistic rather than technical approach to message creation: specific messages need to be tailored to specific conditions and situations by people who know those situations best.

### **Mission considerations**

As a field, we hardly could ask for more, except for a more stable world financial framework, and that will come in time. What will we do? Simply put, we need to learn, think, and act in light of the great potential we have. There is a lot to be done to take advantage of our opportunities. So let's get started. Remember, no one else can advocate from our perspective. No one else has the same responsibility for the next generation of music professionals, or the opportunity to help members of that generation learn to work together on advocacy from the perspective of their distinct specializations.

We hope that this presentation and various others at this meeting will be the first steps in renewed efforts to think and work together on advocacy issues and messages so that we and our students are better prepared for effective work and leadership in this critical area.

Music and music study are the center, the reason, the basis, the foundation from which we connect to other things. Constantin Stanislavsky tells us: *"Love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art."*

Our future advocacy needs to develop forces of understanding and opinion that sustain the art of music and the teaching of music in far more effective ways than we have seen in the past. Our common goal in NASM always has been to increase engagement with music and music study because every human being should have the gifts of civilization and creative human action that such engagement brings. This goal does not change; the ways that we pursue it do.

There is much to accomplish with advocacy under new conditions. There is much to do to increase the aggregate effect of our separate efforts. Knowledge, thought, and action are required. To paraphrase Churchill: We are not at the beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning. We are at the beginning of the beginning. Let us take the next steps thoughtfully, but boldly, and with all appropriate inner pride in the big ideas that inspire us: the power of music, the power of its meaning in the mingled worlds of artistry, intellect and culture, and the role of education in the productive cultivation of that power.

Above all, we need to continue and enhance our work together in order to support local decision-making. For what each of us does and can do at home is the major source of our common advocacy power.

## Appendix

### I. Quotations on Advocacy, Advertising, Propaganda

*“You can tell the ideas of a nation by its advertising.”* — Derby Brown

*“Advertising may be described as the science of arresting human intelligence long enough to get money from it.”* — Stephen Leacock

*“It is a strange trade that of advocacy. Your intellect, your highest heavenly gift is hung up in the shop window like a loaded pistol for sale.”* — Thomas Carlyle

*“If the entire flimsy structure of Madison Avenue with its projection of images, incentives to wastefulness, and touting of trash should one of these fine days disintegrate into irretrievable ruins, a lot of us would cheer our heads off.”* — Lucius Beebe

*“I don’t think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination, and encourages people to go further. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.”* — Keith Haring

*“Advertising is the very essence of democracy.”* — Anton Chekhov

### II. Lists of Sample Test Questions for Advocacy Statements and Projects

#### A. For P–12 Music Education

1. Will the action we are contemplating cause us to diminish or deny the uniqueness of our field; that is, what music can do that no other field can do?
2. Will it harm understanding of what we do and its importance among those who make fundamental decisions about our survival, including parents and students?
3. Will it diminish understanding of the need for professionals to conduct the work of our field?
4. Will it damage our ability to recruit, develop, and support future professionals?
5. Will it decrease the number of students who receive substantive, sequential music education?
6. Will it diminish the fundamental resources we must have in order to teach?

*Please Note: These questions may be stated positively if you wish, but often it is a lot easier to get useful answers if they are stated in ways that reveal the potential dangers of an advocacy message or project. The goal is to look at and craft advocacy proposals with an understanding of what can go wrong, as well as what can go right, what is likely to happen as well as what we hope will happen.*

**B. For P–12 Arts Education as a Whole— *Children and Youth, Arts, and Public Policy: Present Urgencies in Higher Education*, CAAA policy paper, 1998**

1. Does the program, policy, or activity treat the arts disciplines with the same seriousness as English, math, science, and other basic subjects?
2. Does it make clear distinctions and appropriate connections between formal education on the one hand and entertainment, exposure, and enrichment on the other?
3. Does it respect and promote the arts disciplines as worthy of study in their own right and on their own terms, more than use of the arts to accomplish other educational goals?
4. Does it focus on arts education or arts advocacy?
5. Does it recognize and support public school arts education, the only existing delivery system that matches the nature of the educational task to reach all children and youth?
6. Are claims made to support or evaluate the policy accurate and based on student learning?
7. Are the claims made for learning consistent with the content being taught and the time available?
8. Does the program or policy promote clarity of roles and thus common effort among various groups and organizations that teach and present and support the arts?

**III. Resources**

Booth, Gregory D., and Terry Lee Kuhn, “Economic and Transmission Factors as Essential Elements in the Definition of Folk, Art, and Pop Music.” *The Musical Quarterly* 74, No 3 (1990): 411-438.

Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1973.

Ewen, Stuart, *PR!: A Social History of Spin*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996.

Jaffe, Joseph, *Life After the 30-Second Spot: Energize Your Brand with a Bold Mix of Alternatives to Traditional Advertising*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005.

Lutz, William, *The New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone’s Saying Anymore*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.

National Association of Schools of Music, *Creating a Positive Future for Art Music*. Reston, VA: National Office for Arts Accreditation, 2005.

National Association of Schools of Music, *Creating a Positive Future for P-12 Music Education*. Reston, VA: National Office for Arts Accreditation, 2004.

O’Shaughnessy, Nicholas Jackson, *Politics and Propaganda*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press: 2004.

Scott, James C., *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.

Tusa, John, *Engaged with the Arts*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007 (specifically, the chapter on the Ten Commandments for the Arts).

Tye, Larry, *The Father of Spin: Edward L. Bernays & The Birth of Public Relations*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1998.

**For advocacy messages and advocacy planning suggestions for institutions:**

National Association of Schools of Music, *The Basic Value of Music Study*. Reston, VA: National Office for Arts Accreditation, 1999.