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Democratising Orchestras

How do player-governed orchestras sustain their governance?

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*We are democrats, not because the majority is always right,
but because democratic traditions are the least evil ones of which we know.*

Karl Popper (2002, p. 472)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEO	chief executive officer
FBO	Freiburg Baroque Orchestra
LMF	labour-managed firm
LSO	London Symphony Orchestra
OAE	Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
OCB	Organisational citizenship behaviour
PC	producer cooperative
PGO	player-governed orchestra
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

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Declaration

I declare that, (i) this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy except where indicated, (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used, and (iii) the thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Brian Long

Abstract

Player-governed orchestras use democratic and participatory organisational models that give musicians governance control and have sustained these governance structures over many decades. The labour-management literature suggests, however, that worker governance can be difficult to sustain. This study investigates the research question: how do player-governed orchestras sustain their governance structures? Using qualitative interviews with musicians and managers in five orchestras and one contemporary music ensemble, based in Germany and the UK, I investigate the sustainability of governance by musicians and how these organisations have achieved it. My research appraises the economic, artistic, organisational and cultural challenges facing player-governance and the responses to them that these firms have developed.

Three key findings emerged from the study. Firstly, the sustainability of player-governance depends on orchestras' ability to adapt labour-management principles to the parameters of work in orchestras. Orchestras create unique challenges for the realisation of labour-management, but their ability to master these challenges is crucial for the sustainability of player-governance. Secondly, strategies to facilitate and channel the participation and social energy at the core of player-governance are essential to its sustainability. Player-governance is sustained by the fostering of virtuous circles that arise when the opportunities for enhanced governance participation among members facilitate high levels of engagement, commitment and feelings of responsibility. Finally, mastering the challenges of performance optimisation in the context of democratic control is essential to sustaining player-governance in orchestras. Navigating the challenges of managing performance quality in a democratic context is critical for sustaining player-governance.

The research applies labour-management theory to creative-industries and not-for-profit firms while isolating and illuminating the strategies involved in sustaining worker control in such a context. The thesis considers orchestras and a contemporary-music ensemble that were established in the last three decades, thus highlighting the viability and potential of labour-management as an alternative organisational form in contemporary performing-arts companies.

1 Introduction

Orchestras combine organisational elements and work practices that strive for closely coordinated performance among a group of individuals. Traditionally, they were built on strict control and authority hierarchies (Savage and Symonds, 2018); these structures reflect organisational concepts from the nineteenth century, when the modern orchestra emerged as an organisational form (Holoman, 2012). Management theorists, including Peter Drucker, have nonetheless portrayed orchestras and their decision-making practices as exemplars for modern management (Drucker, 1993; Khodyakov, 2007; Savage and Symonds, 2018). As a result, a small industry based on conductors training chief executive officers (CEOs) in leadership has emerged in recent years (Atik, 1994; Beau, 2014). The focus of my interest is on orchestras that use high levels of democratic participation in governance and management decision-making to renegotiate the traditional control hierarchies of orchestras and ensembles. In light of the literature on labour-managed firms, I ask the question: How do player-governed orchestras sustain their governance structures? The organisations I studied employ participatory and democratic practices in their governance systems. In so doing, they embody a type of labour-managed firm (LMF) that has been the subject of very little study.

The broad context of this research is one of multiple conflicting drivers, logics and practices. Public funding remains essential to the business models of most orchestras (Flanagan, 2012; Galinsky and Lehman, 1995). Meanwhile, generating the box-office revenue needed to balance orchestral finances is difficult when audiences are spoilt for choice in a crowded cultural and entertainment landscape. Orchestral musicians report high levels of physical and psychological stress caused by unhealthy working conditions, unergonomic instruments, precarious employment and economic insecurity

(Bennett, 2008; Breda and Kulesa, 2012; Halleland, Harris, Sørnes, Murison, and Ursin, 2009; Sternbach, 1995; Voltmer et al., 2012). Seemingly undeterred, graduates continue to emerge from music training institutions looking for work in orchestras and ensembles.

Despite these challenges, professional orchestras and ensembles continue to be established. Many of these initiatives are the creations of conductors seeking to realise their own musical ideas and professional advancement. However, an important subgroup among the new orchestras and ensembles is those founded on the initiative of their players. They are built on the foundations of participatory, democratic decision-making, high levels of player engagement, shared leadership and joint responsibility. These organisations have instituted and refined models of governance and management that give musicians greater say over their own professional destinies while creating organisations that have developed reputations for excellent music-making.

A duality is germane to orchestras. They produce cultural artefacts while operating as enterprises. Orchestras embody, negotiate, and realise the logics of music performance while operating subject to labour law, the dynamics of the relevant labour markets, to demands for compliant and effective governance structures and processes, and to the parameters of various markets. These dualities are reflected in my research: I examined the principles, practices and challenges of labour-management and governance in the context of such orchestras so as to identify the ways in which participatory decision-making is sustained in player-governed orchestras.

Governance structures in orchestras cover a wide array of approaches, ranging from those that give players little or no input into decision-making, to those for whom ultimate decision-making authority rests with the musicians. The latter group has a long

tradition, dating back at least to the foundation of the Vienna Philharmonic in 1842 (Bennett, 2008; Holoman, 2012). Some of the world's most prestigious orchestras — including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic and all of London's four independent symphony orchestras — are governed by their respective musicians using democratic processes (Galinsky and Lehman, 1995; Lehman, 2002). These orchestras were, however, established more than one hundred years ago and in very different cultural, economic and political environments than those into which their contemporary counterparts emerged. To establish an orchestra now is a different proposition than it was for the founders of the orchestras of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My focus is on the governance structures of orchestras and ensembles that were founded under contemporary conditions, and that sought to adopt a model of player-governance. In this thesis, I analyse and map the establishment, development, and evolution of five player-governed orchestras (PGOs) and one contemporary music ensemble. This examination begins with a focus on the initial setup phase. I then consider the full operationalisation of orchestra governance to the period of generational change, when the last founding member completes their handover to their successors, at which point additional governance sustainability challenges emerge.

The first player-run orchestra was established in 1842, when members of the orchestra at the Vienna Court Opera mounted a series of matinee concerts to complement their work as pit musicians playing for the opera and ballet (Bennett, 2008; Hellsberg, 1992). From the start, the musicians wanted to retain control of the new enterprise. Thus was the Vienna Philharmonic born, and today the essential features of that early initiative remain in place. Its musicians are still drawn from the orchestra of what is now the Vienna State Opera, and the orchestra's governance remains the responsibility of a democratically elected committee of players (Hellsberg, 1992).

The London Symphony Orchestra was likewise built on democratic foundations

(McVeigh, 2013). It was founded in 1904 by a group of disgruntled musicians who broke away from an existing orchestra after a dispute with the conductor about employment rights (ibid). The Berlin Philharmonic similarly traces its roots back to an “act of rebellion” (“The initial phase”, n.d.) when in 1882 musicians refused en masse to sign contracts they had been offered by a conductor and promoter, and established their own orchestra. Cooperative orchestras were quite common in early twentieth-century America (Mueller, 1951).

Despite the use of player-governance in these now well-established and high-profile orchestras, there is little systematically collated information on how such models work. The existing research focuses almost exclusively on long-established orchestras (Lehman, 2002; Maitlis, 1988, 1997); there is very little analysis of player-governance among recently established orchestras.¹ Yet these new orchestras are at the vanguard of repertoire renewal, audience development and the enrichment of performance practices in the orchestral landscape. Not only that, the very nature of PGOs as recently established organisations means that it is possible to study first-hand the experience of player-led decision-making. This includes the challenges presented across the entire lifespan of the respective orchestras. The challenge this research addresses concerns the conditions under which player-governance structures work in recently established orchestras. I seek to answer the question of whether, and in which ways, these models, along with the orchestras and ensembles that use them, are sustainable.

1.1 The question

One of the central debates in the literature concerns the sustainability of labour-

¹ Orpheus is a notable exception. It was established in 1972 as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (Seifter and Economy, 2001, p. 3) and has been the subject of extensive interest and various studies (Banai, Nirenberg, and Menachem, 2000; Khodyakov, 2007; Lehman, 2002; Seifter and Economy, 2001; Vredenburg and He, 2003).

management. At the heart of such continuing discussions stands controversy about the risk of “degeneration” of the principle of labour-management in this form of organisation (Pencavel, 2013, online article, no page). Any claims to strengths and benefits made by labour-management are weakened if the model itself is not sustainable. At a first glance, the PGOs considered here seem able to sustain their governance structures. The purpose of the research, therefore, is to identify the elements of player-governance and management that are resistant to the risk of degeneration. The aim of my research was thus to establish the factors, practices and thinking that support the sustainability of player-governance in newly established orchestras and ensembles.

1.2 Thesis overview

Locating player-governance in the labour-management and creative labour literatures is the first step toward understanding the sustainability of such control. Chapter 2 opens by detailing orchestras’ labour practices, authority structures and commercial strategies. The chapter highlights the intricate web of internal and external rationales and pressures that shape the modern orchestra. Musicians, conductors, and management staff bring their interests and priorities to bear, while cultural and artistic dynamics, market and funding imperatives, and legal frameworks comprise the most compelling external factors. Establishing how orchestras embody such an array of drivers sets up the study for the subsequent assessment of their suitability as sites of control by workers.

A consideration of labour-management’s viability in the orchestral context follows. My literature review argues that different industries have distinct suitabilities as sites of labour control (A. Jensen, 2013; M. C. Jensen and Meckling, 1979). Dow underscored how LMFs tend to “congregate in certain industries, regions, and time periods” (2003, p. 230). This insight led him to propose a set of “conditions that have been said to favor LMF viability” (ibid., p. 256). A central task of chapter 2, then, is to discover areas of

alignment between orchestras and the labour-management viability conditions proposed by Dow and other theorists. The final section highlights areas of overlap as well as aspects of orchestral operations that place them outside the existing labour-management literature.

The third chapter outlines the research design, key concepts, data collection methods and the reasoning behind the choice of PGOs for study. The subsequent three chapters analyse the interviews and identify key aspects of player-governance.

Chapter 4 highlights the role of set-up decisions and initial operationalisation in the sustainability of player-governance. The breakdown of the chapter mirrors the bifurcated structure of typical orchestras. The operations of most orchestras have an artistic and cultural aspect next to a business management strand (Glynn, 2000). At the executive level, orchestras usually have an artistic/musical director and a chief executive or general manager (Glynn, 2008). The chapter's first section covers the place of artistic logics in the realisation of player-governance. In the second, the attention shifts to the part played by economic thinking, pressures and dynamics. It focuses on how insecure work among orchestral musicians influences the founding of PGOs. The chapter's third theme concerns the enfranchisement rationales at the heart of player-governance, in particular the allocation of voting rights solely to musicians and the employment of management staff as hired labour. Decisions made at the foundation stage set the parameters for player-governance and its sustainability.

Participatory decision-making is the subject of chapter 5. It identifies three elements that are germane to participation in the PGOs I studied: its facilitation, channelling and harnessing. The literature shows that workers' high levels of engagement, commitment and sense of responsibility for their firms characterise LMFs (de Jong and Van Witteloostuijn, 2004; W. G. Weber, Unterrainer, and Schmid, 2009). The interviewees'

statements reveal the essentially circular nature of participation. Player-governance creates opportunities for democratic decision-making, while the engagement and commitment that members experience in turn contribute to the sustainability of player-governance. The chapter's final section examines such affective responses in PGOs. How these firms put democratic decision-making to work through the channelling of participation forms the core of the chapter.

Maintaining high levels of performance is a central component of any orchestra's governance. Chapter 6 examines the ways in which PGOs' optimise performance from three angles: performance monitoring, generational change, and recruitment. All three are essential in sustaining player-governance; labour-management's principles, practices and challenges then influence all three of these activities. One of the critical questions for player-governance is whether it supports effective performance optimisation. I begin the chapter by considering performance monitoring, a crucial element in achieving and preserving artistic quality. It is also an area in which player-governance has a radical effect on traditional and hierarchical optimisation practices.

Similar impacts in connection with generational change emerged during the study. Existing research documents the effects of musicians' age-related loss of performing proficiency (Gembris and Heye, 2012, 2014; Manturzewska, 1990). In the PGOs I studied, addressing such a complex problem in the context of mutual monitoring poses significant challenges, as became apparent during the interviews. Recruitment represents the third strand in the study of performance optimisation in PGOs. Here too, the flat hierarchies and democratic decision-making of player-governance add complexity to the process. In chapter 6 I observe how these PGOs balance the conflicting demands of performance monitoring, ensure that generational change is dealt with sensitively, and maintain recruitment processes that are efficient but thorough in establishing the suitability of members from multiple perspectives.

The attention in chapters 7 and 8 shifts to analysing and synthesising the interview data to produce overarching conclusions. Chapter 7 reveals the essential features of the PGO as a type of LMF. The chapter's sections highlight the logics behind the creation of voting franchises and principles of membership in these PGOs, the operation of labour-management incentives and forms of utility, and the negotiation of authority and leadership in the player-governed context. By outlining how these firms deal with such critical aspects of governance, these three conceptual clusters constitute some of the research's most valuable contributions to the literature on labour-management.

Chapter 8 returns to the research question and draws conclusions about how PGOs sustain their governance structures. It begins by highlighting the risk of degeneration in labour-management. The greatest threat to the sustainability of player-governance results from a tendency toward hierarchy that is common in the performance structures and processes of orchestras. Dilution of musicians' control may also occur if departing members are replaced by recruits who are agnostic about player-governance. The fundamental question of chapter 8, and the thesis as a whole, is how, in light of such challenges, PGOs sustain their governance systems.

The conclusions chapter argues that three elements support governance sustainability in the PGOs of the research cohort. The ability of these firms to adapt the basic ideas and principles of control by labour to the practices of orchestral management is fundamental to sustaining player-governance. Flexibility and responsiveness are crucial strategies. Equally vital is the social energy at the heart of PGOs. This resource manifests itself in the democratisation and collective identity-making that emerged from the interviews. The chapter's third section addresses the intra-organisational identities that players in PGOs give to their orchestras and ensembles. Engaging, committing and sensing responsibility all presuppose the existence of organisational identities with

which people can identify. Among PGOs, such a construct is, however, created in the context of collective decision-making. Player-governance presents particular challenges when developing organisational identities. The model's sustainability rests on the successful navigation of these complexities. The last part of chapter 8 shows the links between governance sustainability and the management of musical quality in the PGOs studied.

The thesis makes a pioneering contribution to the understanding of labour-management in the not-for-profit creative and cultural industries, an under-researched field. By foregrounding the debate surrounding sustainability and the threat of degeneration in labour-management, the study highlights how PGOs adapt the ideas of control by musicians to the exigencies of orchestral management and the challenges that arise. Orchestras are complex enterprises that unite artistic goals with economic rationales. Adding labour-management to such a combination creates a set of fascinating and multifaceted firms. Studying these PGOs throws light on a little-understood segment of LMFs and their potential.

2 Orchestras and labour-management – the literature

An orchestra embodies myriad competing interests, practices, logics and exogenous forces. Introducing labour-management into such a complex and delicate constellation inevitably realigns the dynamics. How well, then, do orchestras and governance by workers align? Are orchestras viable as firms controlled by their workers, or does labour-management distort their finely balanced models? What are the sustainability challenges inherent in labour-management? A review of the literature concerning work in orchestras opens this chapter; a survey of key texts in labour-management follows. The latter highlights arguments and insights in the literature that concern conditions conducive to LMFs and the threat of degeneration. Finally, I combine the insights gained from the literature to determine the viability of orchestras as sites of worker decision-making. Do features of orchestras foster control by workers? What are the challenges facing workers who seek to sustain control of their orchestras? The chapter addresses such questions as a prelude to the later chapters' consideration of governance sustainability in practice.

This thesis represents the first application of the theory of labour-managed firms to player-governed orchestras. The research fills a gap in the understanding of how decision-making by workers functions in enterprises that differ in important ways from the types of firm that the LMF literature typically considers. The thesis thus broadens and enriches the labour-management literature with an original contribution to knowledge in the field. It also brings specialised insights from the labour-management literature to the performing arts, and orchestras in particular. The research brings fresh and unique perspectives to the literature on management in the performing arts and to the nexus between creative workers and their firms.

Orchestras and music-making have long served as examples of hierarchical organisation in tandem with charismatic and inspiring leadership (D. Young and Vaupel, 1981). Writing about the separation of capital and control in factories, Karl Marx observed that:

A musical conductor need in no way be the owner of the instruments in his orchestra, nor does it form part of his function as a conductor that he should have any part in paying the “wages” of other musicians. (1894, p. 263)

On the subject of authority in a “combined organism”, Marx averred that “all combined labour on a large scale requires more or less, a directing authority” (2011, p. 363), noting that just as a “single violin player is his own conductor; an orchestra requires a separate one” (ibid). Drucker penned analogies between the work of conductors and chief executives as well as between orchestras and other enterprises (1985, 1988, 1993). Some orchestra–conductor collaborations have transformed such metaphors into management education programs and brought corporate leaders into rehearsals (Bathurst, Williams, and Rodda, 2007; Kammerhoff, Lauenstein, and Schütz, 2019; Mintzberg, 1998). However, such thinking has also fostered misunderstanding and spawned dubious metaphors about orchestras and the work of musicians (Hunt, Stelluto, and Hooijberg, 2004; Spitzer, 1996). Writers seeking analogies often oversimplify or romanticise orchestras (Hunt et al., 2004; Savage and Symonds, 2018).

Understanding how orchestras and ensembles operate requires a mapping of the artistic, economic and organising forces that shape and define them. Central to such an examination is an unpacking of musicians’ work. Exploring the orchestra as a firm and site of group endeavour is the chapter’s first task. It takes the first step toward understanding the potential of orchestras as LMFs. A review of key labour-management texts follows, and investigates the idea that a range of conditions results in some types of enterprise being more viable as LMFs than others. On this point, Dow

(2001, 2003, 2018) along with Jensen and Meckling (1979), provided valuable insights. The chapter's last part projects these conditions onto orchestras and determines what light the LMF literature can throw on the viability of such firms as candidates for labour governance.

2.1 Labour conditions in orchestras

Human capital defines orchestras and ensembles. They rely on their workers, the capabilities of players and management staff, and the organisation's ability to facilitate excellence. Comprehending the dynamics of work in orchestras is thus key to understanding their operations and survival. In what follows, I outline the logics, parameters and conditions of orchestral work as a prelude to determining whether they make orchestras conducive to control by their workers. The discussion concentrates on demand for players, artistic hierarchies and performance monitoring, along with key features of creative labour including job insecurity, affective resonances with work in cultural firms and the economic–creative nexus at the heart of such companies.

Every orchestra has its own mission, governance structure, processes and operating environment. Nonetheless, orchestras have much in common, and a single operating model with two halves is discernible: the musical and the managerial. Both have diverging trajectories. Artistic operations such as the use of conductors, programming formats and even seating arrangements were largely standardised in the early nineteenth century and have changed little since (Holoman, 2012; Spitzer and Zaslav, 2004). Conductors decide most interpretative questions (Khodyakov, 2007; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Krause, 2015; Lewis, 2012). Unified playing takes precedence. Musicians play the same score at the same time and in the same location. Few other activities call for such conformity and high levels of collaboration (Bennett, 2008; Khodyakov, 2007).

While variety characterises the management of orchestras, it is possible to outline a model. Working ‘behind the scenes’ for orchestras evolved in line with trends in the wider economy, law and management. Chief executive roles overlap with those in other industries, and supervisory boards are common (Rentschler, 2014). Managing independent² orchestras calls for specialists found in other sectors: marketing, human resources, budgeting and accounting, sponsorships and partnerships, the law and operations. Administrators can shift into and out of the orchestra world more readily than players with their very specific skills (Bennett 2008). They share organisational goals with players, but their work routines differ from them as they are not generally tied to rehearsals and performances. Management teams operate differently from their playing colleagues (Bibu, Brancu and Teohari, 2018).

At the top of the musical side is an artistic/musical director or a chief conductor. Sustained success and simple survival of an orchestra call for close cooperation between its CEO and artistic leadership (Glynn, 2000, 2008). This is particularly true of programming. Chief executives oversee financial controlling, marketing, fundraising, the recruitment and supervision of management staff, stakeholder relations — including with sponsors, donors and public funding bodies — and legal aspects of the firm. Musical directors oversee the recruitment and management of playing personnel as well as an orchestra’s profile (Khodyakov, 2014). They also lead rehearsals and performances of their programs and may be involved in the choice of guest conductors (ibid). Decision-making on the two sides often overlaps, and both depend on the other’s successful functioning. Understanding the artistic–operational bifurcation helps one to grasp the basic structures of orchestras and ensembles.

Orchestral management has evolved in line with other sectors of the economy.

² Independent orchestras are those that operate outside larger organisations such as opera houses, theatres or ballet companies.

Marketing and brand-building are essential. Many orchestras have high levels of labour organising (Ayer, 2005; Flanagan, 2010; Williamson and Cloonan, 2016). Larger orchestras negotiate enterprise agreements, while industry-level bargaining features in some jurisdictions (Broughton, 2001; Flanagan, 2010). Health and safety statutes demand responses, as do social security regulations and labour laws. Using industry-specific software has become common. The chief executive's role may be similar to those of senior managers in other industries, but the economics of orchestras create unusual challenges and set atypical boundaries. Foremost among these challenges is the demand for players.

Demand for players

Management's control over the number of musicians in the different instrumental groups within an orchestra varies between the strings and other sections. String complements are determined by conductors or performance directors while consulting with managers, but within tight limits set by industry standards and traditions. Most composers before the twentieth century did not stipulate the exact number of each string instruments required. In the case of the cello, for instance, composers typically wrote just a single musical line. Whether two, four, six or eight celli were used, they mostly played the same notes and additional musicians only amplified and enriched the sound (Brown, 1988). What constitutes a desirable number of string players has varied over the centuries. Some variance between orchestras still occurs, even when playing the same work (Edge, 1992). String sections thus present limited possibilities for conductors and executives to reduce expenditure without changing the repertoire.

The composer sets the number of woodwind or brass instrument players required to play an orchestral work, however. To all intents and purposes, management cannot change these requirements (Flanagan, 2012). The tuba, for example, was invented

after Ludwig van Beethoven's lifetime (1770-1827) (Bevan, 2014). The orchestral repertoire revolves around his symphonies (Pompe, Tamburri, and Munn, 2011), but performing them never involves a tuba player, though it creates many hours of work for violinists. Those same symphonies include separate parts for each instrument in the woodwind family, typically two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons (Brown, 1988). Performing Beethoven's fifth symphony with, say, just one flautist is impossible without omitting some of the score; no professional orchestra would do that. Performing most Beethoven symphonies requires at least eight woodwind players. Executives have practically no room to vary the woodwind, brass and percussion personnel engaged for performances of a particular work.

The challenges of programming along with the necessary player complement produce complex rosters in tenured orchestras. In freelance orchestras, "fixers" book different player cohorts between projects and in many cases from piece to piece in a single concert as an orchestra shrinks or grows to reflect the demands of different works. Managers and artistic leaders in a freelance orchestra can reduce the number of players by, for instance, programming Mozart symphonies rather than those of Gustav Mahler. The latter require around double the players. But managers cannot program a Mahler symphony with half the players required. The performing personnel required by an orchestra is dictated by factors other than commercial logics. Indeed, it is largely outside the manager's control (Flanagan, 2012).

A direct relationship exists between the number of players needed to perform a given work and the resulting wage costs. But such a connection does not exist between player numbers and ticket sales (Luksetich and Lange, 1995). For a freelance orchestra, musicians' fees for the approximately 85 players required to perform a Tchaikovsky symphony are more than double those required for one by Mozart (around 35 musicians). The larger orchestra is, though, unlikely to earn twice as much ticket

revenue (ibid.). Some works that demand large numbers of musicians can generate high ticket sales, but music demanding many fewer players can do that too. Limited ticket price variation can apply but is unlikely to equate to the large orchestra's greater costs (Pompe, Tamburri, and Munn, 2013). Managers have little influence over the relationship between wages and revenue. Putting on more players does not boost sales. Delicate balancing of labour and economic factors underlies a concert season, while repertoire must appeal to a range of potential listeners and maintain an orchestra's profile. All forms of orchestral governance face this challenge, but programming's centrality gives musicians a strong interest in it. Repertoire choice plays a critical role in an orchestra's success and sustainability (Tepavac, 2010).

Asset ownership in orchestras

Most orchestral musicians own their instruments (Holoman, 2012; McManus, 2017), although orchestras often own or hire percussion gear. Orchestras are thus relieved of providing productive assets, even if some pay musicians modest instrument allowances. As a result, setting up an orchestra does not require the large capital involved in, for example, establishing a manufacturing firm. Players' owning productive assets means that orchestras' funding requirements cover operating rather than capital costs.³ This form of asset ownership has other implications for firms and workers in the orchestral sector. It facilitates freelancing because musicians own their tools of trade and can use them where and when they like. Dow identified "strong economic reasons" for workers to own their tools (2018, p. 269), in particular because it "guarantees that workers will pay attention to maintenance, and it avoids costly monitoring or bargaining with an outsider who has no direct role in production" (ibid). Orchestras do not generally finance their productive assets in the way that manufacturing companies own

³ Player payments make up around 49 percent of costs for a typical US symphony orchestra (Flanagan, 2012).

the machines and premises that their workers use, or most transport firms finance the vehicles their workers drive.

Nevertheless, other assets, including rights in recordings and brands, are valuable to orchestras. Attending an orchestral concert is a discretionary and premium purchase for which buyers have high expectations (Crawford, Gosling, Bagnall, and Light, 2014). Brand recognition and loyalty characterise the market for concert tickets and recordings (Tong, 2016), but for musicians other than soloists, building and benefitting from a brand is only possible in an ensemble or orchestra. Players benefit from the repeat sales and regular income enjoyed by orchestras with strong brands. Although orchestras generally do not provide musicians with the productive assets (instruments) they require to work, they do offer opportunities to share the economic benefits of brands.

Artistic hierarchies and performance monitoring

The orchestral production model evolved into today's form during the early nineteenth century (Holoman, 2012; Spitzer and Zaslav, 2004). Work practices in orchestras have changed little in the intervening two centuries. Artistic decision-making and routine onstage operating in orchestras occur with little input from managers, although programming and high-level planning involve more liaising. Conductors or lead instrumentalists decide practically all musical questions, sometimes with section leaders (Lewis, 2012). Decision hierarchies are omnipresent and players have very little room for input. An ideal of musical unity plays a key role, as does controlling individuality. String players in particular must align their playing with their section colleagues, but all players must work toward a shared sound ideal. Orchestral production remains rooted in hierarchies and the sublimating of individuality.

Achieving and maintaining high playing standards poses the greatest challenge for any orchestra or ensemble seeking long-term success. Concert audiences and consumers of orchestral recordings demand the highest possible performing and presentation standards (Roose, 2008). Orchestras compete for the best soloists and conductors as much as for residencies and bookings from major festivals, promoters, venues and opera houses. Attracting and retaining sponsors, donors and public funding reflects the quality of performances. Recruiting the best players is also a function of an orchestra's performance quality, because musicians seek to play with the best orchestras and ensembles (Faulkner, 1973a; 1974). Performance quality dictates an orchestra's artistic and economic success.

Playing in an orchestra involves great physical and psychological demands (Halleland et al., 2009; Sternbach, 1995). It calls for excellent motor skills and cognition. Research among German musicians demonstrated that such attributes diminish after they reach their late forties or early fifties (Gembris and Heye, 2014). Manturzewska (1990) showed that Polish musicians displayed similar characteristics, and that their proficiency peaked between the ages of 25 and 45. Players may develop skills to at least partly offset age-related declines in proficiency (Brodsky, 2011), but sooner or later all struggle to consistently produce the required performance (Brandfonbrener, 2003; Gembris and Heye, 2014; Piperek, 1981).

High performance, and its hierarchical monitoring, characterise orchestras. Here too music directors, conductors and section leaders have the strongest voice. This hierarchical performance monitoring aligns the artistic side of orchestras with practices in other industries. Musicians rarely get invited to participate in decision-making (Cottrell, 2004). They must ensure their playing aligns with unitary ideas on interpretation, sound and performance practice (Dobson and Gaunt, 2013). Programming involves artistic leaders and managers, but most musicians interact little

with managers during their routine work (Pegelhoff, 2010). Top-down decision-making and monitoring set the tone (Savage and Symonds, 2018).

Orchestral musicians provide creative labour. The features and logics of their work shapes the orchestral firms in which they work. In the next section I explore the literature on orchestral musicians as workers. What does it say about labour of the type they undertake? How do the interests and priorities of musicians, as well as the challenges they face, influence the potential of orchestras as sites of labour-management or governance? Understanding and charting the characteristics of work in orchestras is a prerequisite for analysing player-governance.

Creative labour

A rich literature on creative labour, and specifically on musicians as workers, has emerged over the last sixty years. Westby's study of career mobility in orchestras contributed early insights (1960). He observed how "the musician's professional identity, developed over long years of training, is constantly being buttressed and reinforced, holding to a minimum the possibilities of pursuit, or even consideration, of other possible ways of life" (Westby, 1960, p. 227). Arian, a musician in the Philadelphia Orchestra who later became a political scientist, foregrounded alienation⁴ among orchestral musicians (1971, 1974). Writing of his former orchestra, he observed that players experienced alienation from management as well as from their own work (Arian, 1971).

Arian (1971) located the roots of player's alienation from their work in the "routinization of the traditional symphonic format ... which blocks the individual's needs for self-

⁴ Arian borrows the term from the behavioral sciences (1971) and the writing of Erich Fromm, rather than from Marxist theories.

expression, recognition, and sustained interest in his [sic] work” (p. 74). An image of orchestral musicians as workers locked into alienating and routine careers began to emerge from these early studies. It became clear that in important ways, orchestral players do not provide the “*concrete and named* labour of the artist” (Ryan, 1992, p. 42, emphasis in the original). Rather than resisting “the abstractness and alienation that Marx attributes to pretty much all other work under capitalism” (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011, p. 84), much orchestral work, Arian (1971) observed, produced in musicians “both an alienation from the work which they perform and an alienation from the management of the organization in which they perform it” (p. 74). Orchestral work thus represents a particularly complicated and conflicted form of creative labour.

Economic and managerial thinking has grown in importance for cultural firms over the same period. Arian (1971) called attention to the spread of bureaucracy — the “process wherein organizational policies and procedures are rationalized and routinized to conform to economic necessity” (pp. 15–16). Bureaucratic thinking, he warned, meant that “economy and efficiency, the deadly enemies of unstructured charismatic leadership, become the ascendant values” (ibid.). Arian thus articulated one of the key tensions afflicting cultural industries firms and their workers: the friction between economic and creative–cultural logics. Later authors, including Ryan (1991), Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) and Banks (2010), have continued to investigate this fundamental characteristic of creative firms.

Faulkner (1973a) expanded the early literature with his research on players’ attitudes in an orchestral sector he described as “one of the most complex, competitive, and stratified organizational sets in existence” (p. 336). Allmendinger and her colleagues (1996) studied “life and work” in 78 symphony orchestras in the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK) and pre-reunification Germany. Their findings included the insight that “orchestra players are ... fuelled by their own pride and professionalism”

(Allmendinger et al., 1996, p. 201). Despite, or perhaps because of this, their general job satisfaction ranked mid-field among thirteen groups of workers and the average rating of their satisfaction with professional growth opportunities sat at 4.9 on a seven-point scale (ibid.).

Ryan's 1991 book on *The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production* brought a Marxist perspective to his sociological study of "how production and circulation imperatives impel managers and workers [in the culture industry] towards specific forms of work organisation" (p. 2). Hesmondhalgh and Baker explored and mapped the features of work and careers in the cultural industries with a focus on music recording, magazines and broadcasting (2011). They highlighted the challenges facing creative workers, in particular when dealing with alienated work. In the process, they proposed a model of "good and bad work" (ibid, p. 17) as a way of understanding Marxist alienation. Wood considered orchestral musicians (2010) while Bennett examined classical musicians more broadly (2008). Young further refined the scope and studied the relationship between job satisfaction and "non-performance organizational roles" among orchestral players (2017).

Concerns about the health and wellbeing effects of orchestral work have also generated extensive research (Abréu-Ramos and Micheo, 2007; Ackermann, Kenny, O'Brien, and Driscoll, 2014; Gembris, Andreas, and Seifert, 2018; Harper, 2002; Kenny, Driscoll, and Ackermann, 2016; Voltmer et al., 2012). A study of "medical, psychological, sociological, and legal strain factors" (Piperek, 1981) in the Vienna Symphony Orchestra pioneered insights in this field and a wide-ranging literature followed in subsequent years. Much of this research congealed around themes of mental health and stress (Halleland et al., 2009; Levine and Levine, 1996; Parasuraman and Purohit, 2000; Sternbach, 1993, 1995), injury (Kenny and Ackermann, 2009; Rickert, Barrett, and Ackermann, 2013) and hearing loss (Behar,

Wong, and Kunov, 2006; Walter, 2009). In 2006, the Association of British Orchestras, along with the Musicians' Benevolent Fund in the UK, launched a Healthy Orchestra Charter in recognition of the challenges facing the sector.

Surveying these diverse literatures highlights the following three elements of orchestral work that are particularly relevant to player-governance: security, affective resonances and the economic–creative nexus.

Security

Widespread agreement exists that creative work is often precarious (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Murray and Gollmitzer, 2012). Hesmondhalgh and Baker, in their study of three cultural industries, found that insecurity is “arguably worse in the cultural industries than many other sectors, because of the uncertain and short-term nature of many cultural-industry job contracts, and the high level of subjective investment that many creative workers have in what they do” (2011, p. 114). A lack of employment security characterises much creative work.

The insecurity observed in segments of the cultural industries also shapes the working conditions and experiences of orchestral players. The problem appears to be perennial. Writing as far back as 1960, Westby found that in the US, “symphony musicians are an occupational group exhibiting considerable anxiety over their jobs on a number of dimensions, most prominently performance and security” (p. 223). Orchestral musicians experience security and its absence through multiple prisms (Long, 2015). Williamson and Cloonan (2016) found that in 2013, just over half of orchestral players who were also members of the Musicians Union in the UK worked as freelancers. However, such findings risk oversimplifying secure and precarious work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). No matter what their contractual status is, injuries,

as noted above, and early age-related declines in playing proficiency (Brandfonbrener, 2003; Gembris and Heye, 2014; Piperek, 1981; Schulz, 1981) threaten the work of players. There is little current research on organisational responses to such threats in the orchestral context. In a report sponsored by the Musicians Union, Oakland (2014) interviewed orchestral musicians in the UK and concluded that there appeared to be “little meaningful dialogue between management and players as to how individuals could approach retirement with dignity and self-esteem” (p. 38). Job security remains a pervasive concern for many orchestral musicians.

Affective resonances

An array of concepts in the literature share a focus on psychological or affective responses to the core activity or organisational and industrial parameters of creative labour. These ideas include identification, absorption, job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, ownership and self-realisation. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) observed how creative workers might enjoy “states of pleasurable absorption in their work that are the opposite of the alienated clock-watching many of us dread in labour” (p. 132). Self-realisation often goes hand-in-hand with such ideas of absorption or engagement. For Hesmondhalgh and Baker, self-realisation:

involves a sustained sense of good work, so that work may contribute to a sense that a person might have – and other people might also share – that they are developing, flourishing, achieving excellence in forms of work activity that are valuable. (2011, p. 140)

The literature, however, paints a multifaceted picture of how orchestral musicians develop affective states such as absorption, job satisfaction, self-realisation and identification. Breda and Kulesa (2012) surveyed 698 players in the US. They established that “younger musicians are more stressed, less satisfied, and more critical

of their orchestras and their profession than older musicians” (ibid., p. 24). National differences also play their role. Allmendinger, Hackman and Lehman surveyed musicians in the UK, US and the former West and East Germany (1996). They charted different attitudes between players in these countries in a range of satisfaction factors, including general satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with job security, pay and management (Allmendinger et al., 1996). Mogelof and Rohrer (2005) looked for connections between satisfaction and differing levels of resourcing in an “elite, major orchestra and a non-elite, regional orchestra” (p. 93). They established that “employment in a prestigious, resource-rich organization actually lowers ... chances of deriving certain kinds of satisfaction” (ibid., 107). Johansson and Theorell (2003) produced similar results. Charting affective responses to the work of orchestral musicians is complicated by the sheer range of terms and concepts in the literature (often used with insufficient delineation or definitional precision) and by the diverging research findings.

Two recent research projects provided pertinent results (Wood, 2010; A. Young, 2017). Both researchers studied how job satisfaction among orchestral players correlates with taking on non-performing roles. Wood (2010) investigated the interplay of three factors and musicians’ job satisfaction: conductor leadership style, employment status and organisational participation. His work showed that musicians who “participated in the organization beyond the role of performance reported higher satisfaction ratings in 6 ... of the 9 facets” (ibid., p. 164) of job satisfaction. Young (2017) also found that “musicians who hold unpaid non-performance roles report significantly higher job and role satisfaction levels than those musicians who do not have non-performance roles” (p. 69), though she also acknowledged that demonstrating causality required further research (ibid., p. 89).

Hall, Schneider, and Nygren (1970), in their study of the US Forest Service, understood

organisational identification as the “process by which the goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent” (p. 177). Hesmondhalgh and Baker and others have observed this phenomenon in the way that creative workers identify with their jobs (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Reid, Petocz, and Bennett, 2016). The relationship between organisational identity and workers’ satisfaction was emphasised by Watts (2010), who argued that job satisfaction in cultural organisations “can be improved by strengthening the level of identification between the employee and the organization” (p. 201). Orchestral musicians’ identifying with their organisations as well as with their work is a core theme in this study.

The economic–creative nexus

Portraying musicians as workers calls to mind debates about how economics and artistry interact in the cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Ryan, 1991). Segments of the literature foreground the economics of players’ work (Case, 2013; Cloonan, 2014; Frith, 2017; Harper, 2002; Silva, 2017) but the “contradictions of the art-capital relation” (Ryan, 1991, p. 33) can never be entirely occluded. Ryan’s Marxist approach teases out the contradictions by mapping the specifics of artistic labour. In particular, its irreducibility to “abstract value” (ibid., p. 44) means that “artistic workers ... cannot be made to appear in the labour process as generalised, undifferentiated artists” (ibid.). In other words, musicians are not easily substitutable for each other. The reality of orchestral work observed by writers such as Arian (1971, 1974), and discussed above, suggests, however, that alienation is a common problem of artistic labour in orchestras. Musicians’ work is characterised by its hybridity (Glynn, 2000, 2008) both between the routine, alienating work of Arian’s “traditional symphonic format” (1971, p. 74) and players’ desire for artistic control, and between the poles of the economic-creative nexus.

Navigating the confluence of economics and creativity while directing artistic workers requires “creative management” among executives in cultural firms (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011, p. 84). Hesmondhalgh and Baker characterise such control as “unlike the top-down, inflexible supervision found in many industries” (ibid.). However, most orchestras use vertical management structures and musicians routinely chafe at the authority exercised by conductors. Parasuraman and Purohit (2000) found that “disagreements with the conductor” and musicians’ “perception that playing in the orchestra undermines their artistic integrity” (p. 78) “exacerbate(d) distress, boredom stress, and job dissatisfaction” (ibid., p. 80). A survey of 78 orchestras across four countries found that “symphony players ... are not well satisfied with their managements” and “players in US Major orchestras score lower on this measure than do those in regional orchestras” (Allmendinger et al., 1996, p. 203). Subsequently, Breda and Kulesa’s (2012) research showed that orchestral musicians have a “general negative view of management, a mistrust of management, and the perception that management is more concerned with budgets than musical performance” (p. 12). Labour-managed orchestras bring alternative perspectives to the economic–creative nexus by giving control to workers.

Summary

Orchestral players constitute a heterogeneous group of workers. This section highlighted three sets of characteristics. It began by showing how musicians deal with myriad security concerns that go beyond contracting and any division between tenured and freelance work. Musicians also experience a wide range of psychological states and affective resonances relating to their work and orchestras. Many of these — such as identification and absorption — are positive, but alienation and dissatisfaction are also common. When players form ensembles, balancing economic and artistic priorities was the third feature that frames player-governance. The friction in the economic-

creative nexus can then manifest itself in the work and life of individual musician decision-makers. Player-governance puts musicians at the centre of their firms' decision-making. It also brings the logics, priorities and challenges of creative work into the heart of the organisations that players create and control. In the next two sections I turn to the literature on LMFs and assess whether orchestras — complete with their musicians — are viable sites of labour-management.

2.2 Conditions conducive to labour-managed firms

This section of the literature review contains an outline of the foundational theories that contextualise the following empirical chapters and analysis. Dow's (2003) list of "conditions that have been said to favour LMF viability" (p. 256) provides the primary source of theory. The aim at this stage is not to determine the sustainability of labour-management in orchestras; that follows in the later empirical chapters. Instead, in this section I assess whether, using the theories of Dow (2001, 2003 and 2018) and Jensen and Meckling (1979), labour-managed orchestras are likely to emerge. I also consider the threat of degeneration in labour-management. The section highlights the challenges involved in implementing labour-management in orchestras.

Labour-managed firms come in various shapes and sizes (Jossa and Cuomo, 1997). In 2016, Spain's Mondragon Cooperative Group had 268 businesses and cooperatives across forty-one countries and more than seventy-three thousand employees (Mondragon, 2017). The group spans banking, manufacturing and higher education (Malleon, 2013). The John Lewis Partnership, Britain's largest omni-retailer, posted earnings of £10.2 billion in 2017–18 and had over eighty-five thousand partners (Cathcart, 2013; John Lewis Partnership, 2018). Partnerships are common in the legal, accounting, medical and consulting sectors (Greenwood, Hinings, and Brown, 1990; Greenwood, Hinings, and Prakash, 2017; Leblebici and Sherer, 2015). At the other end of the spectrum sit countless two-person partnerships. Faced with such diversity, it is

futile to search for a single model of LMFs beyond basic definitions (Jossa and Cuomo, 1997; Vanek, 1970). Nonetheless, conditions that appear to support the setting up and sustained success of LMFs can be observed and described. Dow (2001) called them “conditions under which LMFs may be expected to perform well in competition with capitalist firms” (p. 214). This section outlines these factors.

Many contributors to the literature observe greater labour-management viability and sustainability in some sectors than others. Dow (2003) found that LMFs tend to occur in the “professional services (law, accounting), craft manufacturing ... low-skill service tasks ... and construction” sectors (p. 10). Jensen and Meckling (1979) noted that partnerships were the dominant organisational form among professional services firms (see also Harlacher and Reihlen, 2014). For Alchian and Demsetz (1972), “team production in artistic or professional intellectual skills will more likely be by partnerships than other types of team production” (p. 790). Different types of enterprise interact with control by workers in distinct ways.

This section draws on the LMF literature to establish whether orchestras are propitious sites for labour-management. Anthony Jensen (2013) used the term “propensity to emerge” (p. 4) to describe features of firms and their operating contexts that appear to support the setting up and survival of LMFs. Pinning down conditions that facilitate or hinder labour-management across all firms is the first step toward describing the specific circumstances and practices that may or may not support labour-management in orchestras. Two key texts are germane to this investigation. Michael Jensen and Meckling (1979) “criticize the claim that labor-managed systems are efficient” (p. 476) but went on to observe that:

the professional partnership form of labor-managed firms is more likely to dominate other organizational forms when:

1. the capital/labor ratio is small,

2. *the ratio of labor value added to all nonlabor costs is high,*
3. *there are economies of scale to team production,*
4. *external monitoring costs are high and/or the monitoring of the productivity of team members is more cheaply performed internally,*
5. *the size of the team is small,*
6. *the returns to the human capital of the individual team members are farther from perfectly positively correlated,⁵ and*
7. *the agency costs associated with the capitalization of future labor income are high.⁶ (ibid., p. 503)*

The second key contribution comes from Dow (2003). He created a list that expands on Jensen and Meckling and encompasses wider industry conditions in which LMFs operate. Dow's list includes eighteen characteristics that are conducive to labour-management:

- 1) *Production technology and the market environment are common knowledge.*

5 In such cases it is difficult to clearly isolate individual contributions to a team's output. This then means that fair and transparent reward and remuneration structures are equally difficult to implement. Orchestras provide a good example. The abilities of players naturally vary, particularly between experienced musicians and newcomers (though young players may have greater dexterity, stamina and technical proficiency than their more experienced and older colleagues). But the collective, team-focused nature of orchestral music-making means that the "returns to human capital" (M. C. Jensen and Meckling, 1979, p. 503) of individual musicians cannot be isolated and cannot be correlated with reward structures. However, principal or solo players are an exception.

6 One of the basic theoretical "asymmetries" (Dow, 2018) between capital-managed and labour-managed firms is their differing treatments of financial capital and labour. Capital suppliers can readily sell their entitlements to future returns on their investment. Labour suppliers cannot sell the future returns on their labour because doing so would result in a form of indentured labour. Such contracts are now illegal in Western countries (Dow, 2003).

- 2) *Production depends strongly on teamwork and information sharing.*
- 3) *Production does not require an extensive division of labor.*
- 4) *Production places workers in close geographic proximity.*
- 5) *Mutual monitoring is cheap and accurate compared with monitoring by supervisors.*
- 6) *Non-human assets are easily maintained and not highly vulnerable to abuse.*
- 7) *Non-human assets are not highly specialised.*
- 8) *High rates of investment in shared non-human assets are not required.*
- 9) *Minimum efficient scale is small, and the cost penalty for operating below minimum efficient scale is minor.*
- 10) *Workers have substantial wealth compared with the per capita financing needs of their firms, or external financing is readily available.*
- 11) *Workers are not strongly risk-averse, either because of their personal preferences or the availability of personal wealth that can be diversified through financial markets.*
- 12) *The industry is characterized by relatively stable import and output prices.*
- 13) *Rigidity in the face of short-run cost or demand shocks is not strongly penalized.*
- 14) *Workers prefer job security even at the expense of fluctuations in income or hours.*
- 15) *Egalitarian treatment of members does not conflict strongly with a need for*

internal incentives, or a need to recruit members on outside markets at unequal wages.

16) Workers are relatively homogenous with respect to age, sex, and ethnic, cultural, or religious background.

17) Adverse-selection problems are minor because worker skills and the quality of non-human physical assets are easily ascertained in advance.

18) Exogenous worker turnover is infrequent. (ibid., p. 256)

Because Dow's list expands upon the factors identified by Jensen and Meckling, I rely on it in the following analysis in which I identify five clusters of factors: a) work practices, b) assets and financing, c) industrial and cultural factors, d) organisational factors, and e) markets. This grouping structures the following discussion.

Work practices

Four of Dow's viability conditions relate to work practices. He argues that LMFs are more viable when teamwork plays a key role in production, the division of labour is minimal, "production places workers in close geographic proximity" (Dow, 2003, p. 256) and "mutual monitoring is cheap and accurate compared with monitoring by supervisors" (ibid.). Dow (2003) finds that labour control is viable when production "does not require an extensive division of labor" (p. 256). How extensive then is the division of labour in orchestras? The answer is not straightforward. The work of players and operations staff is clearly divided, though such separation is complicated when musicians take on operational roles such as executive positions.

Task specialisation features in the work of musicians. Each player is a highly trained expert and seldom plays more than one type of instrument. Some players double on

instruments from the same family (oboists may play cor anglais and percussionists play a range of percussion instruments), but specialising is common within an orchestra's woodwind and brass groups. Every horn, trumpet or trombone player requires special skills. The principal or solo player of each wind or brass instrument performs solos demanding skills rarely called for among their colleagues. String players are different. A player in the first violins might work alongside as many as fifteen colleagues all playing the same part (Allmendinger et al., 1996); together, they strive for unity (Cottrell, 2004). For string instrumentalists, conforming replaces specialising (Faulkner, 1973a). Division of labour occurs among woodwind and brass musicians but much less among the strings.

Despite these divergent experiences of specialising, many aspects of musicians' work bring regimentation and counteract any division of labour (Allmendinger et al., 1996). Players work in close physical proximity. They start and stop at the same time. Their playing is uniformly directed by common control structures. They have a shared goal: realising one musical score. The team-focused nature of orchestral music-making counteracts demands for specialising. Division of labour among musicians is low and suggests that orchestras may suit labour control along the lines listed by Dow in his writing on LMFs more broadly (2003).

Much has been made of orchestras as teams (Scholz and Schmitt, 2008, 2011; Tal-Shmotkin and Gilboa, 2013; Vredenburg and He, 2003). Players' work depends on and aligns closely with that of colleagues (Gaunt and Dobson, 2014). More experienced or proficient players cannot, of course, work with greater efficiency and finish early, though mistakes can waste time. Musicians are expected to master their parts before a project begins. Rehearsals serve as information exchanges (Parton, 2014). Conductors and players share ideas on tempos, balancing, articulating and phrasing notes and the coordinating of individual parts with others (Koivunen and

Wennes, 2011). Dow (2003) argued that workers' "close geographic proximity" (p. 256) or production's dependence on "teamwork and information sharing" (ibid.) both facilitate labour-management. In these respects, work practices in orchestras make them viable sites of labour control.

The lists of LMF viability conditions created by Dow (2003) and Jensen and Meckling (1979) highlight the capacity for successful mutual monitoring. A firm's success depends on optimising production. Monitoring work plays a key role in this optimisation. Labour-management has an advantage when workers monitor each other, and the result is cheaper or more accurate than using monitors from outside a team (Dow, 2003). Monitoring raises three essential questions: *What* gets monitored? *How* is it monitored? And, *who* monitors it? Monitoring in LMFs concentrates on the *who*. Workers monitoring each other's productivity typifies LMFs, but capital-controlled or externally governed firms rarely apply it (Hansmann, 1996). Most of the literature characterises LMFs' ability to successfully implement mutual monitoring as a strength (Ben-Ner, 1988; Bowles and Gintis, 1993; Hansmann, 1990, 1996; M. C. Jensen, 2000; Jossa and Cuomo, 1997; McCain, 2007). However, questions remain about the viability of peer-to-peer monitoring in orchestras and ensembles.

Some types of work are more difficult to monitor than others (Jossa and Cuomo, 1997). In these cases, reciprocal monitoring may achieve greater efficiency than hierarchal types. Creative and knowledge-intensive labour can present challenges for external monitors (Alvesson, 2004) and may benefit from peer-to-peer monitoring. The "ambiguities of the results produced" (ibid., p. 64) characterises sectors such as the performing arts, law, accounting and consulting. These ambiguities suggest that lawyers are best placed to evaluate and monitor the work of other lawyers, accountants can best monitor the work of their peers, and musicians may be able to successfully evaluate the work of other players. Peer monitoring can bring benefits if workers have

information or perspectives that are unavailable to monitors from outside a work group and if it is suited to the type of activity being monitored.

Worker-to-worker monitoring may falter, however, if incentives to undertake it are weak, especially when it entails burdens for workers. To be viable, peer-to-peer monitoring in LMFs must balance the responsibilities it imposes on workers with benefits to them and their firms. In much of the LMF literature, financial returns to members represent the primary benefits. Jensen and Meckling (1979) made such a connection in noting how “profit sharing will ... tend to be more efficient when the team members themselves have a comparative advantage over an outsider in monitoring the behavior of other team members” (p. 502). In not-for-profits such as orchestras, surpluses cannot be shared and other incentives become necessary for mutual monitoring to be sustained (Carpenter, Bowles, Gintis, and Hwang, 2009). Here, the query concerns whether incentives other than profit sharing suffice to make such monitoring viable in the face of any resistance from workers who take on burdens it imposes.

Assets and financing

Establishing a firm requires financial and human capital, productive assets or intellectual property. Some firms and sectors are more capital-intensive than others. An indicator of a firm’s capital requirements is provided by comparing them to ongoing labour costs (Jossa and Cuomo, 1997). High capital-to-labour ratios mitigate against labour-management if workers cannot raise the funds needed and banks and other financiers refuse to lend to workers or to their LMFs (Dow, 2003; Jossa and Cuomo, 1997). Dow (2003) proposed that LMF viability is favoured when firms do not require “high rates of investment” (p. 256), when assets are “easily maintained” (ibid.), “not highly specialised” (ibid.), and when workers have “substantial wealth compared with the per capita financing needs of their firms” (ibid.). To what extent do these conditions

appear in orchestras?

As noted earlier, most musicians own their instruments, though some orchestras purchase unusual ones (Holoman, 2012; McManus, 2017). Instruments are very specialised, but orchestras do not need to pay for their primary productive assets.⁷ Asset financing in orchestras thus aligns with Dow's (2003) theorising that the absence of demands for "high rates of investment in shared non-human assets" (p. 256) favours labour-management. Jensen and Meckling (1979) also argued that firms with low capital-labour ratios are more likely to succeed as LMFs. Owning their tools of trade incentivises players to maintain and protect them from abuse. The labour-management literature maintains that such incentives bolster the viability of musicians controlling an orchestra. The asset and financing models found in orchestras appear to make them viable as candidates for control by workers. Problems nonetheless arise when trying to establish whether workers in orchestras have "substantial wealth compared with the per capita financing needs of their firms" (Dow, 2003, p. 256). As just outlined, the capital and asset-funding requirements of orchestras are low; however, the personal wealth of orchestral musicians has not been reliably mapped. What can be said is that when orchestral musicians own expensive tools of the trade — their instruments — at least these assets can count as wealth in a comparison with the financing needs of their firms.

Industrial and cultural factors

Dow's (2003) LMF viability conditions include workers' preferencing job security without being "strongly risk-averse" (p. 256) when it comes to personal wealth. His list also identified the "egalitarian treatment of members" and the "relatively homogenous"

⁷ Some orchestras pay small instrument allowances to players, but these are operating costs rather than capital expenditure.

cultural, ethnic, religious, age and sex backgrounds of members (Dow, 2003, p. 256).⁸ Dow (2003) argued that control by labour is supported when “workers are not strongly risk-averse, either because of their personal preferences or the availability of personal wealth that can be diversified through financial markets” (p. 256) and when “workers prefer job security even at the expense of fluctuations in income or hours” (ibid.). All enterprises involve risk. The important question in the context of labour-management concerns who takes the risk: capital providers or labour providers? In capital-controlled firms, capital owners assume most risk and receive rewards in the form of financial returns. Labour-management transfers uncertainty to workers, either because they provide the firm’s capital or the firm hires such capital and workers risk losing collateral used to secure the loan of capital (Jossa and Cuomo, 1997). For labour, the rewards may be financial, but workers may also opt to “take out their income from the enterprise not in the form of monetary or other physical returns but rather in the form of intangibles” (Vanek, 1970, p. 12). Greater job security can be such an intangible benefit.

Labour-management firm members face the dilemmas of incentives and risk, the financial stability of their organisations and horizon problems⁹ (Ellerman, 1986). (These concerns were an element of the empirical research and are covered in the analytical chapters of this thesis.) Remuneration and reward policies attempt to balance these factors and are key elements in the viability of labour-management in orchestras. Finding a sustainable equilibrium is especially challenging in a labour-managed context, in part because of the diversity of risk appetites and portfolios among decision-making members (Dow, 2001). New members with long careers ahead of them, for

8 For further research into the interaction between diversity and cooperation, see Huberman and Glance’s work on diversity and collective action in civil-society contexts (1993, 1998).

9 A horizon problem arises when decision-makers prefer increased near-term benefits at the cost of long-term payoffs. This might, for example, occur if workers choose an immediate increase in wages over investment in assets that promise future returns (Dow, 2003).

example, may have greater openness to risk-taking than those who expect to retire in the near term (M. C. Jensen and Meckling, 1979).

Insecure work manifests itself very differently among orchestral musicians. Many players in symphony orchestras enjoy “a stable work setting” (Menger, 2006, p. 772) but freelancing is also common (Capiou and Wiesand, 2006; Haak, 2012; Harper, 2002; Long, 2015; Sinapi and Juno-Delgado, 2015). As Cloonan (2014) observed, orchestras represent “one of the few places to guarantee permanent contracts for musicians” (p. 19). Nonetheless, many players of orchestral instruments work without the security offered by large, publicly funded orchestras,¹⁰ either because they are yet to secure a contract with such an employer, or because they work in sectors in which tenure is rare. Such sectors include historically informed performance, contemporary music ensembles and chamber orchestras, all of which feature in my research cohort. The orchestras and ensemble studied for my research only offer freelance contracts, and the focus thus falls on the freelance segment of the orchestral sector.

The precarious working lives of many freelance orchestral musicians often mirror uncertainties that arise from programming. Even when an orchestra or ensemble performs regularly, there may be no need for a specific musician if the programmed works do not call for their instrument. Large, publicly funded orchestras offer year-long contracts that smooth such peaks and troughs of scheduling, while providing musicians with regular salaries (Flanagan, 2010; Holoman, 2012). Freelance orchestras like those studied in this research do not, however, provide similar security. Jensen and Meckling suggested that such variability and insecurity may foster labour-management. They found that:

¹⁰ Terminology plays a role in these discussions. Secure work is the norm if the term “orchestral musician” is taken to mean only those employed by large symphony orchestras. When the term includes all musicians who play orchestral instruments, it encompasses early-career players seeking a secure orchestral position as well as those who work as freelancers.

in circumstances in which a disproportionately large fraction of an individual's wealth is represented by his human capital and when the cash flows on that human capital are highly uncertain from period to period we also expect to see profit-sharing partnerships arise. (M. C. Jensen and Meckling, 1979, p. 502)

Such circumstances apply in the professional lives of many musicians in the orchestras studied. The freelance nature of their work, coupled with the variability of demand for players, can mean individuals may not be engaged for weeks at a time. The desire to reduce workers' cash-flow variability and to bolster job security may incentivise musicians to control their firms, even if full employment security is only partly achievable. As Dow (2018) noted, "LMFs may attract a subset of workers whose preferences for job security is unusually strong" (p. 113). Workers' attitudes to security and risk are central to theories on labour-management. They also play a key role in the empirical chapters of this thesis. This review of the literature indicates that important overlaps exist between labour-management theory and the experience of orchestra workers. The security and risk-focused conditions for LMF viability listed by Dow and Jensen and Meckling suggest orchestras may, in these respects, be viable as LMFs.

Organisational factors

The last group of LMF viability conditions consists of organisational factors. These include the ability to successfully function at a small "minimum efficient scale" (Dow, 2003, p. 256), infrequent "exogenous worker turnover" (ibid.) and the ease with which "worker skills and the quality of non-human physical assets" can be "ascertained in advance" (ibid.), thus minimising adverse selection. All firms have an interest in establishing the skills of potential workers before they engage them. In LMFs, doing so has added weight because new members share control. As Dow (2003) wrote, "in their roles as decision-makers, residual claimants, and asset owners, LMF insiders take a

keen interest in the characteristics of any new member” (p. 159). Poor recruiting can be costly for firms. But choosing new hires presents challenges, particularly when an information asymmetry exists between a firm and a potential employee or LMF member. Orchestras’ discovering players’ proficiency in advance is, however, boosted by a well-developed system of auditioning (Golden and Rouse, 2000) and extended probations. Thorough recruiting is essential to minimising adverse selection in orchestras. By vetting an applicant’s credentials as a member as well as a player, recruiting plays a key role in the governance of labour-managed orchestras.

Chamber orchestras and ensembles can operate at a small “minimum efficient scale” (Dow, 2003, p. 256), as long as the repertoire is selected appropriately. For example, with sixteen players, Ensemble Musikfabrik has the smallest membership of the firms in this study. The average number of members in the research cohort is thirty-four. All the firms studied engage supernumerary players as required by repertoire-driven changes in demand for musicians. PGOs outside the research group, including the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) or the Berlin Philharmonic, regularly have between seventy and ninety musicians on stage.

Worker turnover can be a problem for LMFs if it creates horizon problems. Such problems arise if, for example, a soon-to-depart member prefers short-term returns over long-term investing in the firm (Dow, 2003). However, horizon problems can be limited if turnover among workers is low (Dow, 2003). Low worker turnover helps LMFs make long-term commitments that contribute to governance and organisational sustainability.

What, then, does the literature say about turnover among orchestral musicians? Allmendinger et al. (1996) found that “relative to other professions, there is not much career mobility for symphony orchestra musicians” (p. 204) and that “retirement is far

and away the most common reason for departure among major orchestra players” (p. 206). The highly specialised skills of musicians, coupled with the high rates of precarious work in the sector, also keep down job turnover among orchestral musicians (Flanagan, 2012), though many players undertake regular freelance session playing or teaching with other employers (Cottrell, 2004). That orchestras enjoy low worker turnover suggests further alignment with Dow’s list of viability conditions. By minimising the risk of horizon problems, low turnover among musicians may also contribute to the viability of labour-managed orchestras.

Markets

The remaining three of Dow’s viability conditions describe markets for a firm’s products or services as well as LMF responses to changes in those marketplaces. He observed that worker control is viable when firms can absorb “short run cost or demand shocks” (Dow, 2003, p. 256); when an industry enjoys “relatively stable” prices and when “production technology and the market environment are common knowledge” (ibid). All of these conditions apply in orchestras, if to varying degrees. Demand for performances, tours or projects varies considerably and can be difficult to predict (Lange and Luksetich, 1993; Pompe et al., 2013). The result can be “short run cost or demand shocks” (Dow, 2003, p. 256) when individual projects require large resources or involve repertoire outside the mainstream that achieves lower than expected revenue. Nonetheless, non-performance revenues such as sponsorships, as well as public and philanthropic funding,¹¹ can allow orchestras to absorb short-term losses and even deficits from whole seasons (Flanagan, 2012).

11 Public funding varies greatly between orchestras. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra, for example, received practically no “substantial and long-term public funding” (“5 questions for Michael Hoffmann-Becking,” 2018) during the first twenty years of its operation. The London Mozart Players adopted player-governance in 2014 when all of its public funding and that of its major sponsor were cut entirely (Hewett, 2014).

Orchestras do not seek competitive advantage through their production technology, instead usually seeking to differentiate themselves through marketing (Seaman, 2004) and to a lesser extent through pricing (Courty and Pagliero, 2014; Seaman, 2006). The essential non-human elements of an orchestra's production system — the instruments and playing techniques — are common knowledge and were more or less standardised by the early twentieth century (Spitzer and Zaslav, 2001). In recent years, leading orchestras have begun video-streaming their concerts as well as experimenting with other enhancements to the audience experience (Janer, Gomez, Martorell, Miron, and de Wit, 2016; Prockup, Grunberg, Hrybyk, and Kim, 2013). Limited technology-based competition may emerge between well-resourced orchestras if more sophisticated websites, software or other technologies confer advantages over their rivals. However, selling tickets to live events remains an orchestra's core business. Here, the "production technology" (Dow, 2003, p. 256) remains widely adopted and common knowledge. Similarly, the core market environment for orchestral performances is public knowledge. Any observer can easily estimate the number of tickets sold for a particular performance. In terms of market dynamics, orchestras' operating models thus align with the relevant conditions of labour-management viability proposed by Dow. Critical features of markets in their sector make orchestras viable as sites of labour governance.

2.3 The degeneration threat

The labour-management literature also considers the potential for degeneration in LMFs. Michels (2000 (1915)) observed a degenerative tendency in democratic political systems and labelled it an "iron law of oligarchy" (pp. 224–235). Pencavel (2013) noted how "the belief that worker co-ops lose their distinctive participatory and democratic character over time and either close or convert to conventional capitalist firms is widely held" (online article, no page). Cornforth (1995) observed that "historically there has been a good deal of pessimism about the possibility of sustaining genuinely democratic

forms of organization” (p. 487). Such loss is often tied to a drift away from high-participation decision-making toward control by a small subset of workers (Dow, 2018). Stryjan (1989) isolated two degenerative “processes”:

... the one, a gradual restriction and, eventually, elimination of all steering inputs, save for loyalty; a restriction commonly legitimated by reasons of expedience; and the other, a successive deterioration in the quality of membership, through selective exit of involved members. (p. 87)

Jossa (2017) also warned that “the most proactive members of a cooperative and those interested in rapid and efficient decision-making may be tempted to gain full control of the firm by ousting the other members one by one” (p. 185). For many researchers in the field, degeneration threatens governance sustainability in LMFs.

The threat of degeneration in labour management is, nonetheless, contested. Dow (2018) takes issue with the idea that a transition from labour-management to capital-management is degenerative. The literature’s lack of agreement on suitable measures to address threats to democratic decision-making hampers any axiological evaluation of transitions from democratic to oligarchic governance in orchestras as much as in the economy as a whole. What this research seeks to understand is how PGOs, as a type of LMF, resist the threat of degeneration and sustain control by workers. I consider specific aspects of the degeneration threat and responses to the them throughout the thesis.

2.4 Orchestras as LMFs — a (not-so-perfect) match?

This chapter provides unique perspectives into the possibilities and perils of labour-management in orchestras. Establishing whether orchestras make viable candidates for labour-management lay at the heart of this preliminary investigation. It combined and contrasted the literatures on labour-management and the conditions found in these

firms. The following questions guided this review of the salient literature: What does the theoretical literature say about the potential of labour-managed orchestras as they begin operating? Do orchestras' practices, structures and markets facilitate or hinder workers' potential to control such firms? The study highlighted five features of orchestras with parallels in LMF theory: 1) work practices, including the division of labour and teamwork, 2) assets and financing, 3) industrial and cultural factors, 4) organisational factors and 5) markets. The orchestral operating model, with its work practices, entrepreneurial dynamics, incentives, hierarchies and boundaries, makes these firms viable sites for control by workers, though questions remain. The mixed messages emerging from the current chapter's study of orchestras as sites of labour-management need further scrutiny.

Viability does not guarantee longevity. The long-term viability of labour governance in orchestras — its sustainability — still requires investigation. Additional rationales and drivers may undermine labour governance in orchestras as these firms evolve and develop. The following research into the sustainability of labour-management in orchestras congeals around three broad themes: realising and operationalising labour-management in orchestras, facilitating and channelling participation, and optimising performance. Within these zones of interest, critical questions emerge concerning the importance of players exercising artistic control, boosting job security as a critical form of utility for workers, and creating sustainable governance structures. Bolstering workers' participation in decision-making by renegotiating hierarchies at the same time as navigating affective responses such as commitment, engagement and identification are further focal points. The challenges of optimising performance in a labour-governed context (in particular, mutual monitoring) are also central to the insights that emerge from the empirical study presented in the remaining sections.

The focus now also shifts from the theoretical analysis of the current chapter to the

empirical and qualitative research I undertook in seeking to establish what underpins and supports the sustainability of worker governance in the orchestras and ensemble I studied. Labour-management theory necessarily blends out the work of individuals. My research redresses this imbalance. The remaining chapters prioritise the insights and perspectives of workers — in this case, orchestral players and management staff. Their thinking tends to get lost in theoretical studies, but studying workers' ideas about job security, work practices, monitoring, teamwork and other features of work in orchestras enriches the understanding of labour control in practice. The attitudes, experiences and ideas that orchestral workers voiced about their work and firms take centre stage in the remainder of the research, as the next chapter outlines the research design and interview process.

3 Research design

The first of four sections of this chapter outlines the research question and the main concepts involved. I then explain how I selected the cohort of firms and explain and justify the research approach adopted. The final section canvasses the data collection methods and describes how I analysed the resulting information. In the final section, I reflect on my professional background and how it shapes the current research.

3.1 Research question and underlying concepts

3.1.1 Research question

Various factors threaten the sustainability of player-governed orchestras' governance structures. Arguably the most pressing danger is that a subset of members gradually takes control of a labour-managed firm (Jossa, 2017, p. 185). They could do this by ensuring that new workers are engaged as hired labour with no voting rights or other membership entitlements, rather than as members who participate in decision-making. Taken to its end point, this practice could lead to the transformation of what started as a labour-managed firm into one that is controlled by an individual, or into "a form of dictatorship run in the interests of a single dominant constituency" (Dow, 2003, p. 278). At the latest then, such a firm ceases to be labour-managed in any meaningful sense. Such a development might be accepted as being the result simply of rational decision-making and evidence of a tendency toward hierarchical bureaucracy of the type that Max Weber (1947) observed.¹² In my research, I do not attempt to establish whether player-governance is "better" than other forms of organisation and control. Labour-management has strengths, benefits and pay-offs in the orchestras studied, leading

¹² See Rothschild and Whitt for a comprehensive treatment of the tension between Weber's analysis and "organisational democracy and participation" (1986, p. 19).

members to consider it worth sustaining once it has been adopted. Avoiding and countering the risk of degeneration in the commitment to player-governance is an essential element in sustaining such a model, and the thesis approaches the questions that arise from several different angles.

The five orchestras and one ensemble that I studied have sustained their governance structures for between five and thirty-three years, an average of twenty years. The OAE has used labour governance since its foundation in 1986 and the FBO has done so since 1990.¹³ At a first glance, and using a simple measure such as years of operation using a specified model, player-governance in orchestras and ensembles thus seems sustainable and resilient against the threat of degeneration. However, the reasons why this is so are less immediately apparent.

Orchestras and ensembles are a special type of firm. They embody complex and interactional sets of economic, social, organisational and cultural logics that do not perfectly match any other type of organisation. Some of the factors that enable labour-managed orchestras to sustain their governance structures are *sui generis*. Nonetheless, many more do resonate with other labour-controlled firms and suggest that researching how PGOs sustain player-governance is a valuable undertaking that will enrich understanding of the LMF. With this background outlined, and having highlighted my hopes for this study, the core research question becomes: how do player-governed orchestras sustain their governance structures?

3.1.2. Concepts, structures and definitions

In this and the following two subsections, I unpack the key concepts that underlie the research question. I begin the section by mapping the concepts of “governance” and

¹³ A list of major PGOs is provided in Appendix 1.

“management”. These concepts are routinely used to refer to different loci of decision-making within firms and organisations. Perhaps the most widely accepted understanding of the two terms comes from principal–agent theories.

Principals are defined here as people who are typically the owners of firms or the bearers of legally constituted authority in cases of not-for-profit companies or public bodies, and who are the ultimate controllers of these entities but who also engage agents or managers to implement their decisions (L’Huillier, 2014). In this understanding, governance refers to the decision-making of principals that sets an organisation’s strategy, while management involves decision-making concerning how to realise the strategic objectives set at the governance stage. Principal–agent theories are only one way of understanding control and decision-making in firms and organisations. Conceptualisations of terms such as management and governance depend on their organisational contexts, while reflecting “different meanings for different people depending on their ontological preferences” (L’Huillier, 2014, p. 302).

The sustainability of a particular system of control is at the heart of my interest in labour-management in orchestras. Most of my analysis concerns what Dow (2003) called “ultimate” control (p. 5), and, in keeping with agency theory, I use the term “governance” to refer to such high-level decision-making. The players in my research cohort mostly make governance-level decisions, that is, they are principals in the principal–agent scheme, while leaving the realisation of their decisions to agents in the form of management staff. It was against this background that I chose to describe the structure I consider in my research as a player-governed orchestra (PGO) rather than player-managed orchestra. Similarly, I avoid the terms “self-managed orchestra” and “self-governed orchestra” because the word “self” is too vague and these terms do not sufficiently differentiate between board members who are recruited from outside the organisation and musicians who are also governance officers. My study thus focuses

on the sustainability of organisational structures in which ultimate control — labelled “governance” — is exercised by musician members of orchestras and ensembles.

Nonetheless, there is some variance among the firms in my research cohort in their separation of governance and management. Among the five orchestras and one ensemble I studied, all but one have management staff who were recruited from outside the playing membership. In these cases, players serve on boards and board committees that make governance decisions, while leaving implementation decisions to management. One orchestra in the cohort has a senior management team, most of whom are also musician members. In this case, players make governance *and* management decisions.

I should also comment briefly on the use of the term “orchestra” to refer to both orchestras and ensembles. Though the terms “orchestra” and “ensemble” are often used interchangeably, differences exist. The differences between orchestras and ensembles concern musical instrumentation and are not relevant to organisation theory. The rewards and challenges of player-governance I found manifested in the orchestras and ensemble I studied are sufficiently uniform to make the adoption of a single collective term reasonable. I thus refer to them as player-governed orchestras. This term refers to both orchestras and ensembles that use player-governance.

I will now consider three specific types of governance, namely LMFs, partnerships and cooperatives, all of which share a commitment to participatory and democratic governance but that also diverge from one another in a number of ways.

The framework for my study of player-governance is generated from literature relating to LMFs. Analysing governance sustainability in PGOs, in turn, contributes to the understanding of labour-management more widely. However, the LMF is only one form

of democratic and participatory organisation, and PGOs have elements in common with other types, particularly professional partnerships and cooperatives. PGOs do not neatly align with any one type; instead, they borrow elements from all three. In this subsection, I briefly define LMFs, professional partnerships, and cooperatives before highlighting some of their key commonalities and differences. I also highlight the elements that PGOs borrow from them.

Dow (2018) defined a firm as “an organized set of individual agents who participate in a common production process and sell the resulting outputs on a market” (p. 3). LMFs are a subset of all firms, one in which “ultimate control is held by labor suppliers” (Dow, 2018, p. 4). Stryjan (1989) took a similar approach when he defined the “self-managed enterprise” as “any enterprise that is managed democratically by its workers by virtue/right of their labour” (p. 3). A different understanding focuses on ownership rather than the supply of labour. Ben-Ner (1988), for example, defined a “worker-owned firm” as “an organization in which the ultimate right to decision-making rests principally with workers. This right is a reflection of workers’ individual or collective ownership of a dominant share of the firm’s equity” (p. 288). The essential feature of an LMF is, then, the legitimation of control, decision-making and democratic management by workers based on their providing labour or their ownership of the firm.

Professional partnerships are a type of organisation that is recognised in many jurisdictions. They frequently appear in professional services such as accounting, legal advising, management consulting, architecture, and medicine. Jensen and Meckling (1979) as well as Dow (2003) view professional partnerships as a type of LMF. For Levin and Tadelis (2005), “the defining feature of a partnership” is the “redistribution of profits among the partners” (p. 131). An important point of commonality between PGOs and professional partnerships is their extensive use of non-member hired labour (Greenwood et al., 1990), a feature that the theoretical literature on labour-

management regards as a threat to the sustainability of the governance model (Dow, 2018). Using hired labour ignores one of the key principles of cooperative organisation but is also a common practice — if to a lesser extent — among PGOs. Levin and Tadelis (2005) identified other features of professional partnerships. Those shared by PGOs include that “they are not capital intensive” (ibid., p. 159) and, in some cases, the “unlimited liability of the partners”¹⁴ (ibid., p. 162). PGOs thus also have some characteristics of professional partnerships.

The idea of the cooperative has a longer pedigree than the LMF and benefits from more institutional infrastructure, including legal definitions in many jurisdictions. The International Co-operative Alliance (n.d.) developed a widely adopted terminology that defines a cooperative as an “autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise”. (no page)

Professional partnerships, cooperatives and LMFs have features and characteristic practices that go beyond these definitions. Table 1 presents the characteristics that are most relevant for my research. It also includes a fourth column that shows how PGOs combine elements of the three organisational types. Some features (rows in the table) deserve particular mention. The use of hired labour is especially important. The use of non-member hired labour in LMFs and cooperatives is widely regarded as a potential source of degeneration in their organisational models and is discouraged by theorists (Dow, 2018a). It is, however, extensively used in professional partnerships and is typical of PGOs, which usually recruit management staff as hired labour as well as supernumerary players for specific projects. Profit distribution is also an important point of difference. Allowing workers to share in profits is a central rationale for labour-

¹⁴ The FBO and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra both use the legal form of a *Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts*, the German equivalent of a professional partnership.

management (Kruse, 2013; Meade, 1972) but PGOs are usually constituted as not-for-profits because this is a condition of eligibility for public and philanthropic funding. This means that, even when a PGO produces a financial surplus, paying bonuses or dividends to members is not an option and is therefore not a motivation for the introduction or continued use of player-governance. A key part of my study sought to establish whether other factors sustain player-governance in the absence of the profit-sharing motivation that is so important to other LMFs.

	LMFs	Professional Partnerships	Cooperatives	PGOs
Labour membership	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consumer membership	No	No	Yes	No
Democratic and participatory decision-making by members	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hired labour is:	Discouraged	Widely used	Discouraged	Widely used
Are profits distributed?	Yes	Yes	Generally not	No
Is non-member investment possible?	Yes ¹⁵	Generally not	No	No
Are entitlements to profit-sharing tradeable to other members?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Is there limited liability for members?	Yes	Not in all cases	Yes	Not in all cases

Table 1. Summary comparison of key organisational characteristics of LMFs, professional partnerships, cooperatives and PGOs

Researchers in the field of labour-management use the term “member” (and sometimes “partner”) to refer to workers who have voting rights in their firms, as distinct from workers who are not enfranchised. Collectively, the latter group is usually referred to as hired labour. I, too, use the term “member” exclusively to mean a worker with voting rights. Colloquially, a “member of an orchestra” is simply a musician who plays

¹⁵ This may be unusual but is not theoretically excluded. See Dow, 2018, pp. 248-266.

with it. In this thesis, the phrase refers to a musician who has the right to vote and to stand for election to a governance role. All of the organisations studied engage additional musicians as hired labour. I refer to such players as “supernumeraries”. PGOs also engage management and administrative staff as hired labour.¹⁶ Those engaged in the activity of PGOs can thus be allocated to one of three groups:

1. *Members: musicians with voting rights;*
2. *Supernumeraries: musicians with no voting rights; and*
3. *Management and administrative staff: workers with no voting rights.*¹⁷

The following question also emerged: What is the best terminology for the actors at the centre of this study, the people who founded and ran/run the orchestras and ensemble I researched? My focus was exclusively on people who are remunerated for performing music or management tasks. By virtue of this remuneration, they are routinely referred to as ‘professionals’. This term is often used by working musicians and by researchers who study them. However, the economics literature and specifically literature dealing with labour-management uses the generic term ‘worker’ to label a person who is remunerated for their activity within an organisation. In an economic sense, professional musicians are indeed workers (Williamson and Cloonan, 2016). This term can, however, be unhelpfully reductive, though professional musicians certainly see themselves as undertaking work (Coulson, 2012). Moreover, in most contexts, orchestral musicians do not easily identify with the term “worker” (Cloonan, 2014; Silva, 2017), and a choice to label them as such would reflect the preferences of writers and researchers.

16 Only the London Mozart Players has a management staff consisting of both musicians and hired workers.

17 I explore the logics behind the existence of these three groups in the PGOs studied, and in particular the fact that management and administrative staff are not engaged as members, in section 4.3.

To preference the label 'worker' when referring to professional musicians in PGOs would then not only run the risk of adopting a term that hews more closely to the thinking of researchers at the cost of perspectives held by interviewees and other sector actors. It would also elide the hybrid nature of membership in a PGO. The thesis spans the intellectual worlds of professional music performance, economics, organisation theory and organisational psychology. It also ranges across the terminologies of these various fields. In the process, the different terms I use may jar. This friction is in a sense welcome, as it reflects the complexities of the field of research, and the multiple identities and roles that PGO members assume.

The actors at the centre of this research have multiple roles. They are musicians or players who in one moment may be swept up in the absorbing and thrilling activity of playing music with other people. On the same day, they might additionally be called on to make business decisions about the running of their firm. Some also have governance roles that call on them to lead the necessary discussions and debates. In such moments they share many of the rewards and challenges of people in other LMFs, and they might more meaningfully be labelled 'workers'. The desire to understand this duality, the ability of the interviewees to navigate multiple professional roles and identities, underlies my research. I embrace this multiplicity because doing so mirrors that found in the fields I am researching. It also reflects the complex self-conceptualisations that many professional musicians balance and maintain as they work (Bennett, 2008; Cottrell, 2004). I will, however, reserve the term 'worker' for the discussion of people in generic contexts, and will use the terms 'musician' and 'player' to refer to performers in the PGOs I discuss. I will now outline the rationale for selecting the PGOs in the research cohort.

The five orchestras and one ensemble in this study only offer their musicians freelance contracts, even to those who are members. The concept of freelancing therefore looms

large in this research, and I discuss it further in section 4.2. However, both the interviewees and much of the literature use the term 'freelance' without defining it. The use of other, related terms such as casual, self-employed, atypical and precarious work, further cloud the discussion of contracting among orchestral musicians. Dividing lines between different classifications are also blurred. As an example, take a musician who holds a tenured position with a symphony orchestra (Org. A) that provides social security cover, annual and sickness leave, but who also undertakes short-term engagements with another musical combination (Org. B), and is paid on a fee-for-service or freelance basis with no additional entitlements. In a study of Org. B, this player could be regarded as a freelance player. From the perspective of Org. A, the same musician would be regarded as securely employed. It can be difficult to determine whether such a player should be considered freelance, self-employed or even precariously employed, because some of their income is unpredictable and comes without the entitlements associated with secure employment. Now consider another musician who has a tenured position with full entitlements but only on a part-time basis equivalent to one day per week. The rest of her work is on a fee-for-service basis with no additional entitlements. This work accounts for over seventy percent of her income. This player could reasonably be considered as freelance or securely employed, yet her position is quite different from that of the first case (Lewchuk et al., 2013; Lewchuk et al., 2014).

I do not propose to offer a definition of the term 'freelance'; others, such as Lewchuk et al. (2013), have done so. Though it was used widely by the musicians I interviewed, my discussions with them did not focus on their understanding of it. It would be misleading for me as a researcher to impose a single definition across this wide range of usages. It will suffice to note that none of my interviewees has a guaranteed number of hours with their respective PGOs, all are remunerated on a fee-for-service basis calculated using the number of rehearsals or performances completed, and all have more than one

source of income.

3.2 Research cohort and approach

3.2.1 Selecting PGOs for study

A survey of the literature on player-governed orchestras suggested that focusing on a segment of the larger PGO cohort¹⁸ would help close a gap in the research that exists concerning more recently established PGOs. Large, long-established symphony orchestras such as the LSO and the Berlin Philharmonic were the most common targets of investigation. They both featured in Lehman's unpublished PhD research (2002), which is the only substantial academic work specifically on PGOs that predates my study. The Berlin Philharmonic's election of its chief conductor has drawn extensive commentary and has been the subject of a documentary film (Iturriagagotia and Smaczny, 2002), while the LSO has been the subject of a monograph (Mulder, 2015).

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, an approximately twenty-six member orchestra established in New York in 1972 (Banai et al., 2000), was also one of Lehman's case studies and has been the subject of other research (Banai et al., 2000; Wood, 2010), as well as a book co-authored by a former executive director (Seifter and Economy, 2001). Similarly, the managing director of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen — a PGO established in 1980 and with around 40 members currently — co-authored a book about the orchestra's operating model and portrayed it as a high-performance team built on player-governance (Scholz and Schmitt, 2011). There has been, however, very little research on player-governance among the crop of more recently established orchestras¹⁹ that appears in Appendix 1, and none examining PGOs as a type of LMF

18 See Appendix 1 for a list.

19 Juno-Delgado, McCulloch and Sinapi considered the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment among a cohort of performing arts cooperatives (2014; Sinapi and Juno-Delgado, 2015).

or the sustainability challenges that are central to the theoretical literature on labour-management. Initial evaluation of the literature on PGOs thus suggested that this was an area deserving of attention.

Theoretical sampling was an additional approach that guided my selection of PGOs for study from the larger population. For Eisenhardt (1989), “the goal of theoretical sampling is to choose cases which are likely to replicate or extend the emergent theory” (p. 537). The goal here was to select a research cohort that was as homogeneous as possible and adhered to governance sustainability factors. Studying a PGO that has existed for more than a century next to one that has twenty years of experience with player-governance risked creating a very heterogeneous cohort that would be more appropriate to answering a different research question or questions. Similarly, treating PGOs with eighty or more members as meaningfully equivalent to those with twenty or thirty would risk creating a widely divergent and internally incoherent research cohort.

With a research gap in mind, and theoretical sampling as a guiding principle, I first set out to broadly align my work with the literature on LMFs. Initially, I needed to ensure that the PGOs I studied really were ongoing concerns that replicated sufficient features of LMFs so as to be able to contribute to this literature. I decided that, to qualify as such, orchestras and ensembles had to:

- be professional,
- operate continuously,
- perform frequently and regularly, and
- be legally constituted as a distinct entity independent of any other institution.

I have included more details on these criteria in Table 2.

Selection feature	Detailed description
Professional	Remunerates musicians by contractually agreed amounts equivalent to at least seventy-five per cent of the rate recommended by the relevant industrial organisation representing musicians
Continuous organisational operation	Engages at least one management staff member for a minimum of eleven months each year
Regular performances	Publicly performs at least 25 times per year and at least once in each quarter of the year
Independent existence	Exists as an independently registered legal entity

Table 2. Detailed description of initial cohort selection features

Youth, training, and community orchestras were thus excluded, because their missions, cost structures, market dynamics, funding mechanisms and personnel policies differ from those of professional orchestras. Professional orchestras that only come together for, say, a music festival or to record a film soundtrack were also disregarded, because they do not face the governance challenges of ongoing operation. Finally, I excluded orchestras that are constituted as departments of larger organisations and do not have their own independent governance structures. Typically, these are so-called ‘pit orchestras’ that play as part of operas or ballets and exist as parts of larger performing arts organisations. They include orchestras that are incorporated into public broadcasters. These parameters allowed me to isolate an initial research sample.

Next, I further distilled the sample by looking at how I might reduce the role of factors such as membership size and years of experience with player-governance. With an average of thirty-four members, my cohort is closer to the size of start-up companies in other sectors of the arts, as well as in the wider economy, than are the player-governed symphony orchestras studied by other researchers (e.g., Lehman, 2002). On average,

the members of my cohort had nineteen years of experience with player-governance. This also made their experience more relevant and interesting for other potential PGO or LMF founders. Such a period is long enough for trends, themes and features to emerge, yet not so long that the knowledge of the governance development phase is buried in archival materials from times when the cultural, economic and political framework was very different from that of today. The availability of interviewees who were able to speak about the establishment phase of player-governance, and how decisions made at that stage shaped governance sustainability, supported the idea of focusing on PGOs with relatively little experience of player-governance. The PGOs I studied thus brought new perspectives to the sustainability of labour governance and management more broadly, as well as to the sustainability of player-governance in orchestras.

My research cohort also constituted a subset of the broader LMF sector. Orchestras depend on high levels of human capital. The experience of the PGOs I studied has particular relevance to LMFs that are similarly dependent on attracting, retaining, managing and supporting highly talented and creative workers (see chapter 6). The PGOs I studied are also all not-for-profit operations, as is typical of the publicly funded orchestral sector. This sets them apart from most LMFs, but demonstrates that labour governance and management can be sustainable and successful in the absence of profit sharing as a core logic. Instead, other economic drivers — such as the desire to reduce the exposure to precarious work commonly found among orchestral musicians — substitute for profit-sharing in the operation of PGOs (see chapter 4). The research cohort is then a specific type of LMF, one that has to date been subject to little if any study, but that, in its atypical combination of logics, rationales and priorities, contributes to our understanding of labour-management more broadly.

Number of members

PGOs rely on their player-members to undertake governance tasks on committees, boards and working groups that are above and beyond their work as musicians. However, the number of governance roles is rarely proportional to the total membership. Large and small organisations can usually be governed by a similar number of officers. The Berlin Philharmonic, for example, is a PGO with around 128 members and a primary governance body of five players (“The Orchestra” n.d.). The Mahler Chamber Orchestra — one of the PGOs studied — has 45 members and the same number of player members on its governance team. Thus, PGOs with large memberships are better able to spread the governance workload. This may give larger PGOs operational and sustainability advantages simply because of their large memberships.

The memberships of the PGOs studied varied between sixteen and forty-nine; the average was thirty-four. My focus was thus on PGOs that share similar operational and sustainability challenges related to their modest membership size, while I excluded PGOs that might have a sustainability advantage simply because of their large memberships.

Low-incumbency and small-membership professional PGOs operate in the US²⁰ and in European countries. However, I restricted my focus to German and London-based orchestras and ensembles because they exist in the orchestral music sectors with which I am most familiar.

Applying these filters to the larger cohort of PGOs created a research cohort of PGOs that had low levels of experience with player-governance and relatively small player

²⁰ Examples include the Orpheus Orchestra, The Knights, A Far Cry and the East Coast Chamber Orchestra.

memberships. I wrote to seven of them in the UK and Germany and six responded. I describe the participating PGOs in the next section, but a final point should be made about them. As small firms established in the contemporary market, political and funding context, their experiences approximate those of other types of companies looking for sustainable governance structures, either for new enterprises or for new governance structures in existing firms. This gives my research greater relevance for the broader LMF literature. With a research cohort established, I now turn to my research approach.

3.2.2 The firms studied

The PGOs in the research cohort have used player-governance for an average of nineteen years. In 2016, the average number of enfranchised player members²¹ was thirty-four. Table 3 presents basic information on these organisations.

Name	Year of formal establishment	Number of members (in 2016)	Operational base	Repertoire focus
Ensemble Musikfabrik	1990 (player-governed since 1995)	16	Cologne, Germany	Contemporary
Freiburg Baroque Orchestra	1990	26	Freiburg, Germany	Baroque & Classical
Kammerakademie Potsdam	2001	32	Potsdam, Germany	Comprehensive
London Mozart Players	1949 (player-governed since 2014)	40	London	Comprehensive
Mahler Chamber Orchestra	1997	45	Berlin	Comprehensive
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment	1986	49	London	Baroque & Classical

Table 3. Basic information on the organisations studied

²¹ The term “member” refers to enfranchised musicians or partners.

Each of the organisations I studied adopted player-governance under different circumstances. In a subsequent chapter, I analyse the establishment rationales that emerged from my interviews. At this point, I provide only a brief description of how each came to be player-governed, to highlight the diversity of approaches.

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) was founded by musicians who broke away from an existing orchestra (Wallace, 2006). An early mission statement showed the breadth of objectives formulated by members as they established an orchestra that they controlled (Wallace, 2006). The themes that emerge from the statement resonate with those of the interviews I undertook and were shared by players from other orchestras. In particular, OAE set out to achieve artistic goals by addressing the “dangers implicit in playing as a matter of routine, pursuing exclusively commercial creative options, and under-rehearsal” (quoted in Wallace, 2006, p. 13). The roles of conductors and music directors were also prominent in this early mission statement. It cautioned against the “undue emphasis” that many musicians feel music directors impose (quoted in Wallace, 2006, p. 13). OAE is a resident orchestra of London’s Southbank centre and regularly plays at the Glyndebourne Opera Festival. With more than 50 recordings, it has pioneered adventurous programming that ventures further into late nineteenth and early twentieth century music than do most of its peers.

The Freiburg Baroque Orchestra (FBO) first performed in 1987 and was formally established in 1990 (Solare, 2007). Like OAE, it has been player-governed since its foundation (Solare, 2007). FBO won sections of the prestigious Gramophone Classical Music Awards in 1996 (“Early Opera” 1996), 2005 (Blyth, 2005), 2011 (“Baroque instrumental” 2011), and 2012 (“Baroque instrumental” 2012). The Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO) began in 1997 when former members of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra decided to set up a professional orchestra. It, too, was player-governed from

day one. It won a Gramophone award in 2003 and in 2015 won the prize for Recording of the Year in the concerto category of the BBC Music Magazine Awards (Mahler Chamber Orchestra, 2015). The Ensemble Musikfabrik is a contemporary music ensemble that was established in 1990, but only adopted player-governance after its founders left in 1995. It has worked with many of today's most important composers.

The Kammerakademie Potsdam was established in 2001, when two ensembles merged. One of these consisted of former musicians of the Brandenburg Philharmonie Potsdam, a sixty-seven member orchestra that was dissolved in 2000 after losing its public funding (Kaempf and Höbel, 1999). In 2015 the Kammerakademie was recognised as Orchestra of the Year as part of the German industry organisation's ECHO Klassik awards ("ECHO Klassik 2015 / Prize Winners", n.d.). The London Mozart Players was established by the conductor Harry Blech in 1949 ("Biography", n.d.). In 2014, the orchestra came close to being wound-up after losing its major sponsor and two sources of public funding (Hewett, 2014). However, its musicians were not prepared to accept its demise and they took control of its management and governance. In 2019 the orchestra celebrates its seventieth year of performing.

Each of the orchestras and ensembles has its own brand, repertoire strengths, and profile. Three of the PGOs studied have a comprehensive repertoire focus. They perform music from the last three centuries, stretching from the earliest music for the modern orchestra through to music by twenty-first century composers. Two of the orchestras in my study specialise in music of the Baroque and Classical periods (approximately 1600 to 1820) and use historically informed practice. Ensemble Musikfabrik is a contemporary-music ensemble that only plays works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These varying foci present different concerns for governance and operation. However, a focus on the challenges that relate specifically to player-governance enables a coherent study of PGOs as LMFs.

3.2.3 Research approach

In seeking the most appropriate methods for my research, I looked for the best possible alignment with the research question and cohort. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2010) provided guidance, cautioning that “the choice between quantitative and qualitative methods cannot be made in the abstract, but must be related to the particular research problem and research object” (p. 8). The work of Guba, Lynham and Lincoln (2017) was also useful; they described five “inquiry paradigms”: “positivism, postpositivism, critical theory et al., constructivism, and participatory” (p. 109). Each paradigm takes a position on the elements of research, including the nature of knowledge, how we acquire it, the researcher’s role, values in research, and the “goodness or quality of an inquiry” (Guba et al., 2017, p. 110). Debates on the uses and merits of these approaches are extensive, well-documented and perennial (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2010; Guba et al., 2017; Lee, 1999). Here, I will only show how I arrived at the best approach for my research.

Research on organisation theory, governance and labour-management uses a range of approaches (A. Jensen, 2013; Mazzarol, Limnios, Reboud, and Clark, 2014; Olsen, 2013; Seirafi, 2013). Much of the relevant economics literature is positivist and focused on theoretical inquiry. The considerably smaller literature on the management and governance of orchestras, and of PGOs in particular, is more agnostic in its approaches. Lehman (2002) used a qualitative approach in her study of PGOs. Allmendinger et al. (1996) used a broadly quantitative, survey-based approach in their study of former East German orchestras. Studies of wellbeing and health indicators among orchestral musicians mostly use quantitative approaches (Ackermann et al., 2014; Halleland et al., 2009; Kenny et al., 2016; Kivimaki and Jokinen, 1994; Voltmer et al., 2012). Other studies of orchestras and their players use mixed methods (Brodsky, 2006), while Cottrell’s (2004) book on orchestral musicians in London is an

ethnography. The study of orchestras and their musicians therefore spans multiple types and paradigms of inquiry, and researchers in the field show no preference for a single research design. In light of this, I judged the applicability of the five paradigms identified by Guba, Lynham and Lincoln (2017) to my research objects (PGOs).

My choice of research design was, however, further complicated by the nature of my inquiry, which incorporates the perspectives of economics, organisation theory, workplace behaviour and psychology. In my first steps towards clarity, I was guided by Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2010) injunction to make the choice based on "the particular research problem and research object" (p. 8). Starting with Guba, Lynham and Lincoln's (2017) list of ten "practical issues", I then selected the four most pertinent: "inquiry aim, nature of knowledge, knowledge accumulation and voice" (p. 110).

Inquiry aim

My aim was to establish how PGOs sustain player-governance in the face of the various challenges canvassed in the literature on LMFs. This aligned best with positivist/quantitative or constructivist/qualitative approaches.

Nature of knowledge

The ideas at the heart of my research include governance sustainability, hierarchy, democracy, workplace engagement, commitment and responsibility, and artistic quality. These are socially constructed ideas, so are amenable to a constructivist–qualitative or critical theory approach.

Knowledge accumulation

My research maps knowledge that is acquired by social actors, to some extent on an individual basis, but mostly in interaction with others. Their thinking about and awareness of some of the knowledge in my research may have arisen or developed during the research interviews, so here too constructivist–qualitative thinking offered the best alignment between research approach and research object.

Voice

I have a background as an orchestral musician and conductor. This means that I am embedded in the research object — the governance of orchestras and the practice of orchestral work — and in this respect, too, a constructivist–qualitative approach was the most suitable.

Choice of approach

This mapping revealed that my research aligned best with the constructivist, qualitative and critical theory paradigms. I could have used positivist and quantitative approaches based on economic data to map the economic and business operation and sustainability of my cohort, but this would have shifted the focus away from governance. The knowledge at the heart of my research — ideas such as shared or participatory governance, democracy, decision-making hierarchies, workplace engagement, and artistic quality — is constructivist and most meaningfully studied through such a lens, using qualitative methods and an approach broadly aligned with critical theory.

The nature of knowledge about and within firms also suggested the suitability of a constructivist worldview and a qualitative approach. Firms are legal entities with their

own statuses and “social fields” (Seirafi, 2013, p. 16) that embody the collective interactions, ideas, identities and identifications, individual interests and skills of their stakeholders. Firms as legally constituted “institutional facts” (Searle, 2010, p. 97), are amenable to the kind of quantitative studies undertaken by auditors and accountants. Such studies involve analysing firms’ economic and financial performance, the number of buyers for their outputs, the number of workers, and so on. These factors are readily quantifiable, but they do not encapsulate everything about firms. The firm as social field (Seirafi, 2013) is equally important, and, indeed, more so when the object of research is governance and its sustainability. Then, as Seirafi (2013) says, “an organization is not only a group of people following shared goals, but a collective device of distinction and sense-making, a source of world-construction” (p. 28). Studying a firm’s governance is a separate undertaking from researching the firm as a black box. An investigation of governance gives prominence to stakeholders’ attitudes, interests, opinions and ideas. These elements are much less suited to positivist/quantitative analysis. Values-based, normative thinking about the nature of firms is prioritised in this sphere and calls for a constructivist and critical-theory perspective. Such an approach requires qualitative and discursive methods, in particular, interviews.

Nevertheless, to some extent studying PGOs required me to work with one foot in each of the traditional constructivist/qualitative and positivist/quantitative spheres. The preference I gave to the constructivist-qualitative paradigm resulted from my foregrounding of governance as the research focus. My thesis describes the nexus between the ideas, aspirations, motivations and interests of the members and employees of PGOs, and the governance sustainability of the firms they founded and continue to operate. Understanding this complex mixture of collective interactions, ideas, identities and identifications, individual interests and skills was best achieved in dialogue with the people at its centre. Interviews were therefore the primary vehicle in my collection of the research data.

Gathering data through interviews helped create the trust that was essential to handling questions about shared decision-making, managing musical performance, professional motivations, and the like. This trust is difficult to develop through survey methods, especially when the participants are not familiar with the researcher. The interviewees were all working professionals, who tend to have low response rates to surveys (Davern, 2013; Porter, Whitcomb, and Weitzer, 2004). In summary, given the alignment between my research problem, research object and the constructivist-qualitative approach outlined above, using such a design promised the best alignment with my research question. Next, I describe in greater detail the interviews I undertook.

3.3 Recruitment, research ethics, data collection and analysis

Interviewee recruitment began in the second half of 2015. I used publicly available email addresses from relevant websites to contact five of the six PGOs studied. In the remaining case, I made initial contact at the 2016 conference of the Association of British Orchestras. I first contacted the chief executive or equivalent person in each organisation. After expressing their support, they put me in contact with players and management staff who were prepared to be interviewed. In four cases, the chief executives also agreed to be interviewed. Two chief executives were not available for interviews. In one case the chief executive was also a player. No inducements to participate were offered to interviewees.

The research was approved the Faculty of Arts HEAG Human Ethics Advisory Group at the University of Melbourne (application no. 1443250). All participants were given a plain language statement explaining the research and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Each then signed a consent form in which they consented to the terms of the interview and to its being recorded.

I conducted eighteen semi-structured interviews with twenty musicians and

management staff of six PGOs, and an additional interview with the managing director of a national association of orchestras. To accommodate participants' availability, two interviews combined participants; one involved two interviewees and the other three. I undertook the interviews between December 2015 and May 2017. I held twelve interviews in person and three using online video-conferencing software. The in-person interviews were conducted in the offices of the respective organisations or in cafés the interviewees chose. They were held in either English or German²² to accommodate the language preferences of the interviewees. When necessary, I translated quotes that appear in the text. All translations from German are mine. I recorded all the interviews and transcribed them. I then sent the transcripts to the relevant interviewees for review and authorisation.

Seven interviewees were female and fourteen were male. The breakdown of their professional roles is shown in Table 4.

Description	No. of interviewees	Additional information
Players with current governance roles	9	Includes one chief executive
Players with former governance roles	3	
Players who have never held a governance role with their respective organisations	2	
Chief executives (non-players)	3	Not enfranchised ²³
Other management staff	3	Not enfranchised
Other professionals in the sector	1	Not employed by a PGO

Table 4: The professional roles of interviewees

To protect the identities of the interviewees as far as possible, I used pseudonyms

²² I speak fluent German and have for many years worked as a translator with clients including a major music publisher.

²³ These interviewees do not have voting rights under the rules of their respective firms.

throughout the thesis when quoting statements made by them. Table 5 lists these pseudonyms.

Pseudonym	Role
Alvis	Player member
Angela	Player member
Daniel	Player member
Maria	Player member
Patrick	Player member
Richard	Player member
Robert	Player member
Sebastian	Player member
Simon	Player member
Sophie	Player member
Stephan	Player member
Susanna	Player member
Walter	Player member
Alex	Chief executive
Herbert	Chief executive
Mario	Chief executive
Martin	Chief executive
Claudia	Management staff
Kirsten	Management staff
Leo	Management staff

Table 5: Interviewee pseudonyms and professional roles of interviewees quoted

Limitations of the interviewee cohort

The biggest challenge to recruiting participants for the research was the freelance nature of the PGOs studied. This meant that players might go weeks without working for the PGO concerned, and thus be in other cities or countries and unavailable for

interview. Hence, most interviewees were players or staff who were available during my visit. Such people were most likely to be senior players and those with governance or management roles, whose high levels of engagement in governance meant they were regularly in the office. The ratio of interviewees without governance roles to those with them does not match the ratio in the PGOs studied. The chief executives endeavoured to help me to speak to a wide cross-section of players, but it is unavoidable in social science research that sample cohorts reflect the availability and willingness of participants. That said, the interviewees who participated had many years of intimate knowledge of governance in PGOs, and this was the primary focus of my research.

Other data

In addition to undertaking interviews, I consulted the websites and marketing materials of the PGOs studied. The governance model used by an orchestra or ensemble is of little interest to most concertgoers and plays a minor role in publicity materials. In 2006, OAE published a history that provided a useful overview of the orchestra's early development (Wallace, 2006). I was also able to read its Maintaining Standards Procedure and Handbook. The websites and publications of the other PGOs also provided general background to their operations and corporate identities. Some of the interviewees thought that the benefits of player-governance manifested themselves in performances. However, I decided against conducting observational research in rehearsals or concerts. I wanted to put the interests, motivations and perceptions of the interviewees at the heart of my study. Auxiliary observational research would have created what was in effect a second, parallel project that would have overcomplicated the project and occluded its findings.

Data analysis

The interviews produced over twenty-four hours of recorded material. Once the interviewees had authorised the transcripts, I used NVivo software (QSR, Melbourne) to assist with their analysis. Initial coding produced over one hundred nodes²⁴. The challenge for the next step was to categorise these first nodes into higher-level groups and to isolate themes. To counter the risk of overly atomising the interviews, I regularly re-read the transcripts in clean, hardcopies outside NVivo. This helped me keep the broader narrative of each interview in view and helped me avoid over-emphasising single phrases or words. Successive passes over the NVivo analyses gradually led to the emergence of a suite of themes. I describe these in chapters 4 to 7, which present the key data and research findings. They group related statements and thinking from across the interviews and summarise the specific themes from the recorded material.

The questions I used in the interviews were shaped by my prior reading of the different literatures and this was reflected in the nodes, categories, and themes that emerged from the investigation. However, some themes only became apparent during the analytical phase. The challenges involved in optimising performance in a PGO (chapter 6) was the most prominent theme to emerge during the interviews and the subsequent analytical process. It was also one that was not suggested by my study of the literature. Indeed, as discussed in chapter 6, the literature indicates that mutual monitoring should be a strength of LMFs (Ben-Ner, 1988; Dow, 2003; Hansmann, 1990, 1996). It was perhaps natural that the interviewees spoke often and at length about the themes that are summarised in the title of chapter 4 — realising and operationalising player-governance. But the extent and import of discussion about building engagement, commitment, and responsibility (chapter 5) only became clear as my study of the discourse gathered steam. My approach to data analysis was characterised by a blend

²⁴ A node combines sections of a text that have similar themes (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019).

of “pre-understanding” (Hinton, quoted in Birks and Mills, 2015, p. 92) and reflective adaptation.

Analytical tightening of the research, by its nature, involves moving some themes and ideas to peripheral positions. Discussion of finances, for example, was less prominent in the transcripts than I anticipated before starting the interviews. This may reflect the reality that factors such as cost disease²⁵, revenue generation and fundraising concern all orchestras and ensembles and are not peculiar to PGOs (Flanagan, 2012). It also highlights an important feature of PGOs as a type of LMF: the fact that they operate on a not-for-profit basis. This means that profit-sharing, in the form of dividend payments, does not exist for members of PGOs. As my analysis matured, a group of dominant themes emerged, while others took on subsidiary roles. These themes are described and discussed in detail in chapters 4 to 7.

3.4 My role and reflexivity as a researcher

Undertaking a qualitative research project in a field replete with constructivist concepts — including governance, engagement, commitment, optimal artistic performance and professional motivations — often required me to identify, reflect on and question my position in the research. In the process, I embraced the ideas of writers such as Clarke (2005), who proposed that “instead of hiding behind method ... as researchers, we become more visible and accountable for, in, and through our research” (p. 13). In a similar vein, my research was guided by Giddens’ (1982) much-quoted statement that “generating descriptions of social activity is being able in principle to participate in it. It involves ‘mutual knowledge’, shared by observers and participants whose action constitutes and reconstitutes the social world” (p. 15). It is in the dual sense of foregrounding the potential on my part for the creation of “mutual knowledge”, while

²⁵ Baumol and Bowen (1966) theorised that performing arts companies were afflicted by cost disease when they were unable to increase revenue so as to cover rises in payments made to performers.

being reflexively transparent about my prior knowledge and possible biases, that I now briefly describe the professional background and interests that I bring to my role as a researcher.

Music is an essential element in my life and career. The soundtrack of my childhood was orchestral music and opera. Dinner conversations often revolved around the relative merits of the great opera composers Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner. I was socialised in a family that accorded elevated standing to the European musical canon.

I began learning to play an orchestral instrument in secondary school. A degree in music duly followed, as did paid engagements and teaching work. I developed an abiding fascination with orchestral music-making, and became thoroughly socialised into the world of orchestral work. An interest in conducting gradually emerged, and I completed postgraduate studies in the field. The arcane and often misunderstood world of conducting became mine, and I underwent a resocialisation of sorts.

I continued my conducting studies in Vienna, beginning in 1991. I spent a decade in that famously musical city, and it was during these years that I first had contact with a PGO. I wanted to attend rehearsals of the Vienna Philharmonic. The general manager kindly approved, and suggested I introduce myself beforehand. When I went to his office, I was surprised when he rushed in with a viola in his hand. He owed his management position to an election among the orchestra's players, and he divided his time between the viola section and the general manager's office.

Many years passed before I began this research project, but I had already wondered about how an orchestra governed — and in the case of the Vienna Philharmonic, managed — by the players might differ from the ones I knew. I therefore bring to the

research a keen interest in the orchestra–conductor dynamic, in the control structures within orchestras and ensembles, and in whether these structures might benefit from higher levels of participation in decision-making.

4 Realising and operationalising player-governance

The founders of every firm must establish the most effective and efficient governance structures for their enterprise (L'Huillier, 2014). Similar organisations may serve as models. However, risks abound for anyone introducing a borrowed control system that may not accommodate a firm's strengths and weaknesses, its operating context or its stakeholders' interests. In LMFs, the range of interest groups and positions involved in participatory and democratic decision-making magnifies the challenges of honing a governance system (Cornforth, 2004).

This exploration of how PGOs sustain their governance structures starts with an empirical study of its realisation and operation. Moving from the theoretical models of the LMF literature to the realities of operational PGOs entails observing the fundamental decisions that implement and institutionalise the interests, ideas, expectations and ambitions that musicians bring to the setting-up of a PGO. What dynamics and thinking shape governance in PGOs? To what extent have the PGOs in the research cohort managed to integrate the needs and interests of their members? My aim in this chapter is to answer such questions.

The desire of musicians to take artistic control and to improve their job security were the most important of the logics that emerged from the research. This chapter shows how the realisation and operationalisation of the PGOs in the cohort transforms the motivations and thinking of their founders — who are almost exclusively musicians — into functional governance structures and practices. The interests, aspirations and thinking of founding members are a rich source of intellectual and social capital for starting PGOs, while the economic and practice-based parameters of the orchestral

sector set boundaries for player-governance.

The PGOs I studied were either established by their musicians or players took over existing firms. Setting up an orchestra or taking control of one is a complex undertaking. It demands the commitment of resources with little certainty about future returns and benefits. Establishing a system of governance in which labour has control is of a higher order of complexity, because the number of decision-makers, and with it the heterogeneity among them, is greater than in the case of a sole entrepreneur, such as a conductor, establishing an orchestra. Cooperating with a group of like-minded and appropriately skilled co-founders can, nonetheless, help individuals realise plans and ambitions that would otherwise go untried. Alternatively, the readiness of workers to take control of a firm in serious difficulties might be driven by the immediate risk of its dissolution and job losses (Olsen, 2013). The labour markets in which PGOs operate also create parameters that shape the setting up of such orchestras. The interviewees provided some insights that corroborate the LMF literature, and others that diverge from its theories. The research provides new and complementary perspectives into the setup phase of PGOs.

The evolution and life cycles of LMFs have attracted the attention of several writers. Theorists in the field highlight the weaknesses of understanding the LMF as a static black box. Instead, this school of thinking explores LMFs' dynamic, evolutionary and responsive nature (Batstone, 1983; Ben-Ner, 1988; Lichtenstein, 1986). Batstone (1983) described the first phase of an LMF's life cycle as a "primitive democracy" rooted in the "communal effort of a few" who are "highly committed to the enterprise and its success" (p. 150). Lichtenstein (1986) observed an "unusually high degree of uncertainty" (p. 63) during an LMF's start-up phase. Moreover, as in any enterprise, "the physical and financial resources available depend on the circumstances under which the ... organization was established" (ibid., p. 62). Lichtenstein concluded that

the primary attribute an LMF required to survive the establishment phase was “its ability to be flexible, open and self-critical” (ibid., p. 63). My research shows how the musicians in the PGOs I studied attempted to balance labour conditions in the orchestral sector, while working within the parameters of labour-management and instituting sustainable governance structures.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first two sections I map the rationales, interests and factors at play in the PGOs’ establishment histories. The role of factors specific to professional music performance, along with the dynamics of an industry in which freelance work is common, are a central focus. In the first section, I observe that while players’ exercising artistic control over their PGOs is one of their essential features, it is also bounded by the dynamics of programming and artistic planning that operate irrelevant of whether musicians or a music director–chief executive dyad make the decisions. The musicians I interviewed made clear that while players’ taking control over an area of governance and management as important as artistic planning was central to the operation and sustainability of PGOs, it was not a panacea for the economic and musical challenges inherent in programming and long-term artistic planning.

Section 4.3 charts the thinking involved when PGOs create governance structures and decide whether all of their employees should be enfranchised as members — as many LMF models suggest — or various groups of employees should be treated differently. The section also responds to questions surrounding membership size. Orchestras make regular use of supernumerary musicians. Decisions about optimal membership numbers, the relationship between PGOs and their supernumerary musicians, and the various types of involvement within an organisation create a complex interplay of theoretical, democratic, music-specific and economic factors that are also relevant to the sustainability of player-governance. The interviewees emphasised their firms’

approaches to defining membership as well as multiple rationales behind the determination of membership numbers. As the chapter unfolds, a picture of organisations characterised by flexibility, responsiveness and a pioneering spirit emerges.

4.1 Taking artistic control

Governance sustainability in orchestras is a function of work practices, cultures and structures. The operations of these orchestras create incentives for the implementation of labour-management, while also setting boundaries and parameters for its realisation. In the following section I argue that while members taking artistic control is an essential part of establishing and running a PGO, governance sustainability also calls for a balancing of other factors. Taking control does not free members from balancing the economic and artistic considerations in a successful project or season. To remain sustainable, player-governance must align the desire of members to control decisions with the challenges of artistic planning and programming. The section also highlights the role of existing PGOs as models during a PGO's setup phase. This interest stems from Dow's (2003) observation that "once it becomes known that an LMF has been successful in some industry, others are more inclined to replicate this organisational form" (p. 232). The interviewees indicated that Dow's insight was accurate. Nonetheless, a variety of unique circumstances confront each PGO, and they call for specific responses. Models in the form of other PGOs were of modest benefit.

Why taking artistic control is critical

Player control of artistic planning and programming is a critical motivation for establishing a PGO. Martin (a general manager), felt that:

One of the really crucial elements of self-governance for the orchestra is not so much discipline and political procedure, grievance processes and maintaining

standards, though all of these things are part of the orchestra and they are important and you can't avoid them. The really significant, defining element of self-governance is actually artistic.

For Martin, central to taking artistic control was the renegotiation of the leader dynamics of the traditional orchestra or “playing without a conductor, working with a conductor at its own discretion, not having an autocratic artistic director but actually taking artistic matters into their own purview and consideration.” The resulting PGO embodied an important shift because “effectively, the player membership is the music director. They are the artistic director.”

In most of the PGOs of the research cohort, artistic decisions such as programming, the planning of seasons, and the selection of conductors and guest soloists are delegated to a committee or to the board. In some cases, the programming or curating of individual projects or concerts is entrusted to individual players. Such committees consist of members who are elected, usually for fixed terms of two or three years. Management staff advise such committees on financing and marketing questions that may arise from artistic decisions, but final decisions are the responsibility of the respective committee.

Taking artistic control has far-reaching impacts. Leo described how it boosted motivation among musicians while also making connections to the economics of PGOs: “If you decide your own programs, you have to be sure about the quality and that it will be great for the audience, because the players are their own employers in the end.” The result for him was that the “motivation to have good programs and to perform them brilliantly is much higher than in an orchestra where you have to be there and someone else takes care of the program and the dramaturgy.” Richard’s description of a recent planning retreat give an indication of the breadth and centrality of the artistic planning

undertaken by players in his orchestra:

Last time we talked more about programming, future scoping for the orchestra, focal points for coming years, things like where we are going, what can we do, what did we overlook in the past, what are the most pressing things that need to be dealt with. Such things are discussed intensively.

Handing control over artistic planning to players does not, however, shield it from economic and artistic forces. Successful programming and artistic planning harness many perspectives. The expertise of non-member management staff is central, even when the ultimate decisions are made by committees consisting of or dominated by player members. This was clear when Susanna described meetings of her orchestra's artistic committee: "we do usually have someone from development and someone from marketing join us. Then you do get that: 'we're saying this piece, but you're saying box-office death, why is that? Why can't we program this piece?'" She described the outcome, noting how "it's not just players being idealistic and saying we're going to play this piece, why hasn't anybody come?"

Alvis concurred as he described the situation in his orchestra. He acknowledged that "to be honest, as lovely as it would be to do English Victorian music, there is probably a limited number of people who might be interested in that." In his PGO too, the artistic interests of player members are tempered by commercial realities and "it's not just a bunch of musicians being all artistic and saying we want to do this. Fundraising will also get involved in that." In some of the PGOs, this need to reconcile artistic planning with financial exigencies has been cemented into the governance structure through the creation of an overlap between the membership of the artistic committee and the board. Robert noted how the perils of separate board and artistic planning shaped the governance of his PGO when he recalled that "it was realised from the start, that if you separated the governance from the artistic decisions completely, you might just have

two groups of people arguing constantly over how to finance over-ambitious projects.” In response to this risk, his PGO pursued “an idea ... that by keeping an overlap between the membership and the governance of the board you would keep a certain amount of check and balance between the two.” Behind this thinking lay the hope that:

The board would be able to understand the artistic planning much better because there are players on the board, and the players would understand the difficulties that their artistic decisions were having in terms of raising funding for some of the rather unusual and extraordinary projects.

Another of the PGOs took these ideas a step further and gave responsibility for artistic planning to its board, which is elected from among the players. Speaking about the use of an artistic planning committee, Sophie explained that:

We tried that in the past and it was too difficult to implement because a lot of the artistic planning/programming is tied to logistics questions, to finances, to everything, basically. It's the core activity, the core of everything, so we can't really manage well if it's separate. We have always kept it within the board.

The locating of artistic planning authority and its relationship to other decisions varies between these PGOs. These are fundamental elements that require careful alignment of artistic and commercial logics within governance.

How musical motivations drive and sustain player-governance

Players' desire to work regularly with particular colleagues was another key motivation for them to establish an orchestra that they control. My interviews emphasised the team-focused collegiality and bonding that players bring to their PGOs as an important element in their success and sustainability. The importance of working with esteemed colleagues was highlighted as a motivation for establishing an orchestra or converting an existing orchestra into a PGO. Alex acknowledged that “it's not the most obvious

thing for the players to take over an orchestra. But we wanted to play as an orchestra. ... we had a need to play together as an orchestra.” Central to this ambition were the artistic bonds and affinity between the players. Alex felt that “our orchestra is made up of a really diverse group of people and they are some of the best players around.” This realisation provided her with a strong interest in co-establishing her PGO: “we have the very best people there and we really enjoy making music together. ... This is what it is all about.” For her the result was a powerful motivation, which came across strongly when she said: “I’m in this job because I want to perform with *this* orchestra. ... That is my starting point. That is the reason why I am doing it.” Such sentiments resonate with the literature on job identification among creative workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). Collegiality and connection to specific peers are strong motivations for musicians to control their orchestras.

As Walter spoke about setting up his orchestra, he recalled how the experience of performing together in a youth orchestra laid the foundations for a professional, player-governed chamber orchestra:

We did a tour with a Schubert-sized orchestra. It was a good experience that we enjoyed. We had been playing together for four years and there was a stable core that was unusual in a youth orchestra ... we did not want to stop and ... we thought it was a good idea to carry on as a chamber orchestra separate from the youth orchestra.

Another of the PGOs emerged from a group of music students and graduates who met and played together in private, with few thoughts of establishing a professional orchestra. One of its members, Maria, highlighted the interactions between economic, artistic and social factors. She first described how members initially “just kept investing, money and time and energy, everything” though “at first we earned nothing, we just kept putting more in.” Asked what drove this she replied, “Because it was fun. We were

friends and wanted to try it. Others play in quartets because they enjoy it, and similarly we messed around with the old instruments and tried to see what works.” Walter likewise emphasised the primacy of shared music-making in sustaining his PGO when he said that “the key to success, the core idea, the most important thing, is the artistic motivation. Nothing else can keep an orchestra like this together, I think.” Other factors were less important for him:

It's not financial success. It's not wanting to play a certain number of concerts, fame or anything like that. The key element of such an adventure is definitely the artistic motivation. If that's not there, it's going to be flawed from the beginning.

He also emphasised the resilience that players can draw from making music together and how it can help overcome challenges behind the scenes:

Even in moments of difficulty, whenever they occur, the joy of playing together on stage is the most important. That keeps everything rolling. At the moment you are on stage to play a concert, everyone understands what it's all about. You're reminded once again that everything else you do is for that moment and that is the most important. The rest, we just have to find ways and make it come together.

Programming and artistic planning are complex, multifaceted and largely unpredictable elements of orchestral management (Bathurst et al., 2007). In an externally governed orchestra, the decisions involved are typically the prerogative of the artistic director/chief conductor, senior management staff, guest conductors, and soloists, with minimal if any input from players. PGOs, on the other hand, allocate responsibility for artistic planning and programming to an artistic committee or board consisting of player members. The result is that “effectively the player membership is the music director” (Martin). The interviews showed that players’ exercising control over artistic decision-making is, in Sophie’s words “the core of everything”. Project and program planning,

the selection and appointment of music directors, guest conductors or performance directors determine an orchestra's ability to generate revenue through the sales of tickets and recordings. Programming and repertoire decisions also have immediate impacts on the demand for players and on wage costs. Long-term artistic planning also has other outcomes, such as establishing a profile and brand for an orchestra (Bathurst et al., 2007; Luksetich and Lange, 1995). In the next section, consideration shifts to the interest of musicians to improve their job security through the creation of a PGO and the realisation and operationalisation of player-governance.

4.2 Improving job security

Settings made during a firm's establishment period can influence and determine the sustainability of its governance model. To assess the sustainability of player-governance, it was essential to chart the logics, interests and experiences of founding members as they began PGOs or instituted such a model in an existing orchestra or ensemble. The setup histories outlined in section 1.3 display considerable diversity, but speaking to the interviewees who took part in this research revealed a range of shared economic motivations and rationales that were in play.

Workers' desire to share in profits generally undergirds labour-management (Bonin and Putterman, 1987; Bowles and Gintis, 1993; Dow, 2018; Ireland and Law, 1982; Pencavel, 2013; Vanek, 1970). However, profit-sharing does not provide such incentives in PGOs. Instead, the interviewees revealed how reducing the insecurity of employment takes priority. They also showed that reducing players' exposure to precarious work is neither straightforward nor fully realised in the PGOs studied. Balancing musicians' interest in job security and firms' need for commercial success is not obviated by giving players control. In all orchestras, the necessary negotiations take place within the limits of programming and shifting demand for musicians' labour. Offering musicians secure contracts depends on an orchestra's securing sufficient

funding from sources such as public bodies, philanthropists or sponsors, not on the governance model it uses.

The desire for job security must be balanced against the PGO's need to manage the constantly changing demand for the work of individual musicians. Robert described the trade-offs involved when he said that establishing a PGO attempted "to mitigate the disadvantages of the freelance world." He acknowledged that from an individual perspective the "advantage of the freelance world and the self-governing world is the independence, the ability to move fast, the ability to respond to a changing environment and the flexibility". Yet he also highlighted the trade-offs involved when he said that the "disadvantage is the lack of security, employment security." Against this background, he thought that "the self-governing orchestra tries, in a way, to provide a little bit more sense of security for the musicians that they can't just be thrown out at the whim of a conductor." Caution was nonetheless required because "the reality is that we are all freelancers and the legal position is that we do not have any job security." For Robert, his PGO was ultimately an attempt to "create an environment in which there is a sense of semi-permanence" though he "wouldn't put it any stronger than that." In the end he noted that "as a player, there is no guarantee that you will be used on every project. So, in some years you may be very busy, and in other years not." PGOs only go some of the way to addressing the desires of members for greater job security.

This thinking highlights the importance for players of trying to increase their employment security, even if only incrementally. The connection between the realities of playing in a freelance orchestra and the realisation of a "sense of semi-permanence" lies in orchestral musicians' drive to address the endemic insecurity of work many experience and to take responsibility for and control of their professional security. Maria highlighted the especially high rate of freelancing in subsectors of the orchestral labour market. She began by saying that:

There are, of course, no fixed positions in the early music scene. That means what we offer is the best thing that can happen to a player. Everything else means being freelance and totally dependent on being engaged by people.

The advantages of membership to Maria were a combination of modest employment security and various artistic attractions:

At least we know that we can reckon with a certain number of days per year when we are booked to play, that we get to play with a good group, to play interesting concerts, nice programs and to get paid as well. That is very attractive.

The connection between employment security and artistic motivations was prominent in the earlier discussion of artistic control. For Maria, avoiding a dependence on “being engaged by people” overlaps and interacts with intrinsic factors such as musical fulfilment and professional development.

Susanna noted the role of industry standards in shaping attitudes to insecure work and attempts to deal with it:

Part of it, of course, is being freelance. That also makes it so hard because you feel that your work is precarious anyway. If you are working for something like the Royal Opera House or the BBC, which have got strategies that you have in any business, then you know that certain things have to happen before you can be dismissed or ordered to prove yourself. In a way, I think that is what we are trying to model here. We are not “employed” in that business sense, but we can look at businesses and think, “OK, so that’s why they do this, what can we take from how that works?” ... In other orchestras for which I work, that is not appropriate, because if the director doesn’t like you, they just won’t book you.

Here too is an awareness of a freelance player’s vulnerability and the power of

directors (often conductors) who “just won’t book you” if they are not satisfied with your work. Maria spoke of wanting to reduce the risk of total dependence “on being engaged by people,” and Robert desired some protection against being “thrown out at the whim of a conductor.” These three musicians are clearly quite conscious of the perils associated with freelance work, and their negative sentiments provide strong motivations and psychological drivers for the establishment of a PGO, even if such an organisation can only provide “a sense of semi-permanence”. In important ways, founding a PGO is a response to the impact of precarious work. It is, however, only a partial response because the constantly variable nature of labour demand in orchestras means that full employment security with regular and fixed remuneration is difficult to sustain in the absence of substantial and continuing public or philanthropic funding or sponsorship.

The interview statements focus on the structural, organisational and industry-level features of insecure work and PGOs’ attempts to ameliorate its impact on their members. Player members spoke about additional effects of freelancing on individuals, their professional identities and psychology. Walter was conscious of the limited security provided by his PGO: “One of the things we said right at the beginning was that in our minds we are permanently on trial. Being a member is not a guarantee of anything.” Patrick thought that working with a freelance orchestra fostered specific psychological traits: “You are more self-centred as a freelance musician, bordering on narcissistic. That also means that you are also conscious of the fragility, but also the different possibilities that are open.”

Herbert emphasised the responsibility felt by freelance players and how it was manifested within a PGO:

The musicians who come to us are also freelance players who already bear considerable responsibility for their lives and those of their families, and so on.

When they come to us they join a group of musicians that shares the risk.

In a similar vein, Walter stressed the resilience required of freelance players, the performance pressure under which they work, and the upshot that working in a freelance PGO creates demands that function like a filter on potential members:

Any soloist, conductor or singer who has a career knows that. They can only count on themselves, that's all. If their standard drops, if they behave badly, eventually their career will suffer. It's the mentality of the musicians who join [our orchestra]. Those that stay agree with that, can cope with that, are strong enough in their minds and in their playing. ... I think it is not for everyone. Some people can't cope with it and won't give their best under these conditions.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) showed how discussions of the dichotomy between freelance and secure employment are often overly simplistic in the cultural and creative industries. Walter's comments illustrated this. He observed that "nowadays, there is no such thing as security, even in big institutions. It's a bit of an illusion." In the face of such widespread insecurity, he felt that "it is an illusion to think you are protected and you are safe." Instead, membership of his PGO meant that:

We are just closer to the front row, or in the driving seat for some of us, and we know how quickly it happens. There is no such thing as security and I believe it is much better to know that right from the start. You know the truth, you know the risks.

The high prevalence of freelance work among orchestral musicians is a key driver in the setting-up of PGOs, because it offers at least some control over their work opportunities. The interviewees had a wide range of perspectives on the nature of freelancing and the ways in which it shapes their PGOs. Negative images of being dependent on work offers from capricious sources or being "thrown out at the whim of a

conductor” are powerful drivers for players to seek greater control over their terms of employment by establishing a PGO. The interviewees were, nonetheless, also conscious of the freedoms and flexibility that they felt freelancing offered. For the sustainability of player-governance, perhaps the most interesting idea was that membership in a freelance PGO was “not for everyone” and might therefore function like a filter that goes some way to aligning the “mentality of the musicians who join” (Walter).

The focus of the next section is the regulation of essential governance elements in the PGOs researched, in particular, deciding who gets to vote, how decision-making functions in practice, and how the processes involved in such governance are optimised. The role of other PGOs as models is also briefly considered at the end of the section.

4.3 Creating governance structures

One of the most severe threats to the sustainability of labour-management arises from the creation of two groups of workers that results if members engage additional workers as hired labour without membership or voting rights. The use of unenfranchised workers in an LMF threatens its democratic and participatory foundations if a fall in the share of workers who are enfranchised dilutes labour-management (Dow, 2003). What might be thought of as the density of labour-management varies depending on the share of the total workforce that is enfranchised. At one end of such a density spectrum are LMFs in which all labour is supplied by members. Enfranchisement is one hundred per cent of the workforce. At the other end, the share of non-member, hired workers is so high, and the firm is controlled by such a proportionally small group of workers, that labour-management degenerates and the firm can no longer be meaningfully described as labour-managed (Batstone, 1983; Ben-Ner, 1988; Dow, 2003; A. Jensen, 2013; Russell, 1985). Rothschild and Whitt

(1986) warned of the risk that, “in search of growth, members are seduced into abandoning their principles. Internal democracy gives way to rule by a small group of elite members who are able, through the control of information and patronage, to make themselves indispensable” (p. 23). The opportunity to boost economic returns per member by reducing the number of members, to restrict decision-making to existing members as a firm expands by taking on new workers, or to limit the franchise to a group among a firm’s workers are three of the prime motivations that can tempt members to restrict a firm’s franchise and its number of members.

The parameters facing firms that experience fluctuating or seasonal demand for labour or whose work practices are characterised by a clear division of labour, is, however, more complex. In practice, defining and maintaining a membership franchise with high levels of participation while allowing the hiring of non-member labour in clearly delineated and specific contexts is a key element of sustaining labour-management. The demand for musicians’ labour in PGOs is such a case, because it results from a complex web of factors, some of which are economic, others artistic. The division of labour between musicians and management staff also raises challenges for the theoretical ideal of one hundred per cent enfranchisement. This section outlines the ways in which PGOs balance the competing demands of democracy, decision-making efficiency, and artistic control. The key query is whether a governance structure that enfranchises one group of workers (musicians) but not another (management staff) is more sustainable than one that enfranchises workers irrelevant of the type of work they perform. A further question also arises about the degree of enfranchisement among musicians and whether a governance system that offers membership to some musicians, while engaging others as supernumeraries, is more or less sustainable than one that offers — or even requires — membership for all players.

I argue that despite concerns that the employment of hired labour leads to the

degeneration of labour-management, in the PGOs studied, the different labour market dynamics among management staff and musicians mean that they are more efficient and sustainable when they engage management staff as hired labour. Doing so creates greater homogeneity of interests within the membership and avoids the risk of having two voting blocks that reflect the bifurcation of economic and artistic priorities between players and management staff. I begin by exploring how the interviewees and their respective organisations have sought to create a balanced and sustainable franchise that reflects the different types and level of engagement among PGO players and management staff and realises the desire to foster and sustain a democratic and participatory governance model.

Patrick summarised the challenge of establishing a franchise and balancing the interests of various groups:

There are different [stakeholders²⁶] and we have to then decide who we want our [stakeholders] to be. Do we want it to be just the members? Do we want it to be the office, maybe? Do we want it to be the people on the board of our foundation, because that might encourage them to take on more of a role? On the other hand, sometimes you see foundation boards become too powerful and then they start wanting to call the artistic shots. Do we also include our non-members who play with us a lot? They are also important to us, and so that they have some sense of having a stake?

Susanna described the challenges her orchestra confronted in defining full, enfranchised membership and the adjustments it made, including creating another category called “ordinary member” for those musicians who would only be hired on a project basis and would not be enfranchised:

²⁶ Patrick used the term “shareholder” but later in the interview, he said that the term he had wanted to use here was “stakeholder”.

When we changed [the governance] we knew that there would be some players who'd been playing quite a while with the orchestra who would not fall into the category of player member, because of where they are on the fixing lists²⁷. They might well still come and play for the orchestra, but when you try to make a demarcation, the area around the line gets terribly messy. Ordinary member was a way of leaving it open for people who were not player members but who still wanted to have a connection with the orchestra and wanted to have a membership.

Claudia also described the need to optimise the various elements in a PGO's governance structure and to ensure that enfranchisement of some, while others remain unenfranchised, did not create counterproductive gaps:

What we've now come to [realise], is that you need much closer correlation (if that is the right word) with your board, your player representatives, your marketing, your development, your finances. They had to be brought closer together, and your development, of course. That is to do with the financial climate, the changes in industry and that sort of money not being around. It just meant we had to be a bit more clever and really work a bit more closely together, as to how we were going to manage that.

The experiences of the PGOs throw light on the divergent treatment of enfranchisement among players and between players and management. In most cases, the founding members or the people who drove the introduction of player-governance into an existing organisation were musicians. Administrative and management tasks were initially undertaken by musicians, and it was not until initial setup was complete that they first considered creating specialist roles for management positions. Angela's recollections of the beginnings of her orchestra are typical: "It was run from a kitchen table. The early meetings felt like we were underground, having

²⁷ Fixing lists record the order in which musicians are offered work in freelance orchestras.

meetings around a table at various locations discussing whether we could create something like this, where we took charge of our musical destiny.”

The proportion of musicians who are enfranchised as members in the PGOs studied, and therefore the proportion of those who are engaged as supernumeraries, reflects the interplay of artistic, business and policy decisions. The challenge involved in establishing the ideal proportion of members has two sides. One concerns the absolute number of members. The other relates to the ratio between enfranchised and unenfranchised musicians. Expanding beyond 130 players makes neither musical nor economic sense for any orchestra, because few musical works call for such numbers. The number of musicians on stage for any performance is primarily a function of the demands made by individual musical works. In PGOs, these limitations and logics interact with the efficiency dynamics of democratic governance. The LMF literature argues that the efficiency of decision-making in LMFs suffers as the number of members grows. Too many enfranchised members may impede effective decision-making, and too few diminishes player-governance. As Stryjan (1989) observed, a “belief that size is detrimental to democracy, participation, and immediate personal relations between members is commonly shared by practitioners and students of self-management” (p. 138). In this section, I argue that to sustain player-governance, the PGOs must achieve a balance between the numbers of enfranchised and unenfranchised musicians which ensures that democratic decision-making remains viable and efficient.

Maria highlighted the dilemmas facing orchestras and ensembles trying to get the balance right between the numbers of enfranchised members (whom she refers to as “partners”) and supernumeraries who would like to become members:

At the moment we have, for example, eleven partner violinists. That is absolutely enough. There are certainly another five violins who would

immediately become partners, where we know that they would like to become partners. But we don't have enough work. If they became partners, we would have to discuss who would be allowed to play for every project. We don't want that, rather, those who are members should, in principle, have the possibility of playing every project, and can decide for themselves what they don't want to play.

In the situation Maria described, members are keen to ensure that their income is not weakened by granting membership to supernumeraries. It is clear from Maria's comments that repertoire and programming decisions dictate that, for her PGO, eleven violinists is "absolutely enough" for the music they usually play. That number is dictated by artistic and financial considerations. A decision to play the same repertoire with the eleven violinist members and the five would-be member violinists that she mentioned would run up against artistic hurdles.

Herbert made it clear that taking on new members also represented a commitment by the orchestra to providing a minimum amount of work. Such a commitment requires careful planning and often reflects long-term repertoire plans. As Herbert noted:

... when we consider taking on particular instruments in the partnership, then we also commit ourselves to offer these musicians work. Thus, we cannot have two horns and then say we are only playing string music for the next two years.

Describing the process through which his orchestra decided to expand what was originally a string orchestra into one including wind instruments, Herbert said that this was the result of a decision through which "we committed ourselves to taking a different approach to the repertoire." He added that:

The number of musicians is a function of our development. We started with thirteen: twelve strings and a harpsichordist. That was exactly the number

required to play concerti grossi.²⁸ Later we started to play more music from the classical period as well as Baroque music with winds, and so we first added four winds, a flute, an oboe, a bassoon and a horn. In the next step we took on another four winds, the same instruments. That practically gave us the classical complement and we could play small Mozart, Haydn symphonies etc. with those forces. That put us at eight plus thirteen, makes twenty-one, and from there we added a few extra violins, another cello, a viola.

Like Maria's comments above, this quote shows the centrality of musical considerations such as programming and repertoire choice in deciding the numbers of player members in the PGOs studied. Expanding the repertoire led to an expansion of the membership. At the same time, Herbert, like Maria, highlighted economic considerations as he described how taking on previously supernumerary musicians as members entailed "commit[ing] ourselves to offer these musicians work." There is a direct connection between demand for players and the ability of a PGO to increase its membership.

These statements reveal artistic, financial, and efficiency factors involved in determining the optimal number of members in a PGO. Restricting the number of enfranchised members in an LMF may make governance processes more efficient (Dow, 2003). The situation observed in the music-performance sector throws a different light on these debates. Factors other than the maximisation of profit and the distribution of residual earnings are decisive in determining the number of enfranchised members in a PGO. In this section, I argue that despite risks that the employment of hired labour leads to degeneration of the self-governing ideal, the different labour market dynamics among management staff and musicians mean that PGOs are more efficient and sustainable if they engage management staff as hired labour.

28 A Concerto Grosso is a musical form that was popular in the Baroque period.

As Maria and Herbert observed, the demand for musicians' labour in an orchestra or ensemble is primarily a function of its repertoire, individual programs and projects. This situation poses a dilemma for PGOs, in particular those, such as the FBO, that are constituted as partnerships without the protections of a limited liability firm (Bastuck, 2009). In such cases, members are individually liable for any financial losses incurred by the firm and there is an incentive to increase the number of members, because doing so reduces the financial liability of existing members. Yet, even in such cases, the number of members is limited by other factors, as the interviews revealed. These PGO-specific factors contrast in several respects with the theoretical literature and reveal the complexity of operationalising the principles of labour-management in the context of orchestras.

Among some economists, there is a criticism that LMFs have a "perverse" (Murat, 1987, p. 1619) incentive to reduce the number of members, because doing so boosts the financial returns per member, an objective they argue is central to the formation of LMFs (Dow, 2003; M. C. Jensen, 2000; Meade, 1972). Members who are eligible to receive a share of residual income should, accordingly, resist an expansion of the membership, because each new member has the same entitlement to a share of residual income and thus reduces the distribution to existing members. The latter should, then, cover any additional need for labour by hiring supernumerary workers at market wage rates and without granting them membership and a share of profits (Bonin, Jones, and Putterman, 1993; Dow, 2003; M. C. Jensen, 2000). However, in not-for-profit organisations, members suffer no loss of profit-share when new members are admitted, though, as discussed below, their ability to influence other decisions, including those around artistic control and programming, may be watered down.

Similarly, the incentive to create additional capital for the firm or partnership through the expansion of the franchise to new members does not exist in PGOs. Musicians in

PGOs do not make up-front financial contributions or pay joining fees (beyond very small nominal membership fees in some cases). This reflects the facts that most musicians already contribute capital in the form of the self-financed instruments they bring to work (Holoman, 2012) and that the future distribution of residual surpluses is precluded in a not-for-profit structure. In the absence of the potential for future financial returns, new members have little incentive to contribute anything more than a token amount. Thus, expanding the membership does not increase capital or reimburse departing members for their putative share of retained surpluses. This incentive is, then, neutralised.

Other factors play a role in determining the optimum ratio of member to supernumerary musicians in a PGO. As the statements above highlight, taking on new members — as distinct from engaging additional players as supernumeraries — represents a commitment by the existing membership to satisfy reasonable expectations of work among new members. The PGOs considered as part of the research all operate on a freelance basis. This has two important ramifications. When we consider that one of the primary economic motivations for the establishment of a PGO is the aim of reducing the exposure of musicians to insecure work (see section 4.2), and that increasing the number of members does not normally lead to greater production capacity, it becomes clear that extra members have to be allocated work from the existing quota of hours available. As Maria and Herbert both noted, this causes a reduction of hours for existing members, unless the total number of hours increases. Existing PGO members do thus have an economic incentive to cover needs for additional musicians with supernumerary hired labour. As Herbert noted, the membership of a chamber orchestra is suggested by the number of players required by its core repertoire. Similarly, contemporary music ensembles typically consist of a sixteen-member core that is made up of one player of each instrument from the main sections of a full orchestra, two percussionists and a pianist. The basic activity of an

orchestra or ensemble (performance of specific repertoire) thus influences its governance structure in ways generally not seen in sectors outside the performing arts.

The demand for musicians' labour in orchestras varies enormously, irrelevant of the governance system used. Models under which the workers of a company are assumed to be engaged for a broadly similar number of hours in a year are thus of little relevance to most orchestras and ensembles. In a PGO there is, then, an incentive for members of less frequently required instruments to argue for more frequent performances of the repertoire that requires their instruments. By doing so they stand to increase their income. As Herbert noted, even if membership in a PGO does not typically come with a contractually agreed number of hours per week, month or year, enfranchised members would normally expect a certain minimum number of hours. Moreover, as an enfranchised member they would have the right to protest to their colleagues who are responsible for programming if they felt consistently disadvantaged by their decisions. Likewise, the relatively low demand for the services of some instrumentalists would be expected to further hinder any desire on the behalf of existing members to offer enfranchised membership to such musicians. The engagement of such players as supernumeraries is, then, less a sign of degeneration in the player-governance ethos than a response to the parameters of the sector. The engagement over time of increasingly large numbers of frequently required instrumentalists — such as the violinists Maria referred to — would, nevertheless, be a symptom of such degeneration. The theoretical incentive to engage all post-foundation players as supernumeraries — including those whom the repertoire requires on a frequent basis — thus remains a challenge for the PGOs considered.

In this section I looked at some of the key challenges facing PGOs as they establish a player-governed structure. During this process, important decisions are made about the balance between the number of members and the number of supernumerary

musicians. These decisions go to the heart of player-governance. If imbalances result, a PGO may prove unsustainable as governance tensions create friction, inefficiency or degeneration in the ethos of player-governance. The result can be artistic and then business failure²⁹ or a move toward a hierarchical, non-participatory organisation. The interviews highlighted the delicate balancing of interests and drivers at the heart of a PGO, a balance that is critical to the operationalisation and sustainability of player-governance. I firstly identified the challenges and balancing involved in achieving a sustainable membership. I then argued that while acknowledging concerns that the employment of unenfranchised, hired labour can lead to the degeneration of labour-management (Jossa, 2017), the different labour market dynamics among management staff and musicians mean that PGOs are more efficient and sustainable if they engage management staff as hired labour. These are the central elements of creating governance structures in these PGOs.

The role of models

These PGOs are possible sources of pooled experience, knowledge and expertise for each other. Existing PGOs can serve as governance models for later entrants. In particular, musicians who work with more than one PGO increase the potential for knowledge sharing among these firms. Dow (2003) argued that the tendency of “traditional workers’ cooperatives” (p. 230) to “congregate in certain industries, regions, and time periods” (ibid.) might be explained by the presence of a “template firm whose organizational structure was imitated when other coops were created in the same industry” (ibid., p. 231). My research suggested that the challenges facing PGOs, even when they share similar governance structures, show such diversity that in most cases

29 Members of one orchestra in the study cohort — the London Mozart Players — were faced with the dissolution of their orchestra in 2014 after it lost all its public funding and its major sponsor. It was at this point that the players took control of the orchestra and introduced player-governance.

founding members sought to find their own way. Mario's comments in this regard were particularly clear:

It can sometimes be helpful to know that an orchestra has faced the same challenges, but it does not necessarily lead to solutions for the same problems in your own structure. A child has to fall five times before it learns to walk, even when, at least theoretically, you can tell someone how to walk without falling. So you need to make certain mistakes yourself.

Walter recalled that as he and his colleagues set out to establish a PGO:

There were a couple of ready-made suggestions on how to run and govern the orchestra, proposed by someone within the orchestra and someone closely connected on the outside. But we rejected that. We wanted to do it all ourselves and democratically.

Susanna said of information sharing:

We do ask around. If we are on the committee and something comes up, we might ask someone who works for the Mahler Chamber Orchestra about how they do that. We do have players who work in other groups and who might come back and say, "This is how they do it, can we think about it?" Not that we have systematically gone out and researched or looked for this or that.

Alex partly concurred when she said that "we have, indeed, talked to people in other orchestras, the LSO for example, we have spoken to them ... It is slightly different from our orchestra. No, we have actually done most of this on our own." The usefulness of these PGOs' pooled governance experience is limited by the diversity of their disparate contexts, backgrounds and governance rules.

This research revealed that the exchange between PGOs of experience, insights and possible solutions to common problems mostly takes place on an ad hoc basis. In

some cases, it is, as Susanna noted in her statement above, most effectively furthered by individual players who work with more than one PGO. Such players act as conduits for information sharing, but usually in an informal capacity. There is, then, nothing like an easily transferrable template among the PGOs in the research, but they are aware of developments and practices that the firms have in common. This shared knowledge is at times facilitated by individual musicians who work with more than one PGO and who contribute to the development of a greater understanding of player-governance.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I investigated the rationales, interests, drivers, and limitations that came together to erect the three key structural pillars in the PGOs studied — members' artistic control, job security, and governance structures. My focus on the processes and activity of governance realisation and operationalisation, rather than on structures, emphasised the dynamic, creative but contested nature of player-governance, particularly during a PGO's early setup phase.

The vast majority of the literature on LMFs approaches these firms from the perspective of economics and, in so doing “neglects a number of causal factors, including history, politics, institutions, and culture” (Dow, 2018, p. 371). In the case of PGOs, such an omission is especially problematic. While orchestras can be studied from a purely economic perspective, doing so would neglect other factors, foremost of which are artistic factors that have a role in player-governance. The PGOs in the research are quintessentially hybrid organisations that combine artistic motivations with economic rationales.

I began this chapter by considering the artistic motivations and interests that shape PGOs. The interviewees were clear about the centrality of taking control of artistic planning and programming. Walter highlighted “artistic motivation” as the “core idea”

without which a PGO is “going to be flawed from the beginning.” Martin felt that taking artistic control was, “the defining element of self-governance.” Alex said that, “certainly [among] all the people I know who are on the programming or artistic team there is this real desire and belief in wanting to play with *this* orchestra.” These artistic motivations constitute a strong foundational resource that can help sustain player-governance.

The challenge, however, is to ensure that PGOs remain able to counter any opportunistic interests among members to pursue unsustainable artistic planning and programming and to ensure that, in Alvis’ words, “it’s not just players being idealistic and saying ‘we’re going to play this piece, why hasn’t anybody come?’” If, as Martin said of his PGO, “effectively, the player membership is the music director,” then members also need to take on the responsibility for commercial sustainability that is a key element of successful artistic planning. The interviewees indicated that this is indeed the case as they described the processes through which they ensure, as Alvis, put it, “it’s not just a bunch of musicians being all artistic.” The balancing of competing logics is, once again, the key element of sustaining player-governance.

Here there are parallels with the desire to improve job security for player members. Governance sustainability cannot be neatly separated from long-term commercial viability. PGO members that opportunistically give themselves more job security than the financial realities of their firm allow endanger the sustainability of the firm and, in turn, the sustainability of player-governance. From these conflicting imperatives emerged PGOs that were only partly able to realise their members’ desire for improved employment security. This might be perceived as disappointing, but at the same time, it is evidence of the ability of PGO members to balance competing drivers in the interest of governance sustainability. Protection from being “thrown out at the whim of a conductor,” a key element of improved job security, is only possible as a result of members’ taking artistic control.

The final substantive section of this chapter mapped the interviewees' thinking on key questions around the right to participate in decision-making in their PGOs. Susanna described how "terribly messy" the setting of the necessary divisions between enfranchised and unenfranchised stakeholders can become. Determining membership numbers also calls for structural responses that do justice to the needs for optimal decision-making, to the artistic logics of labour demand in orchestras and ensembles, and to the ethos of player-governance. Here, too, the sustainability of player-governance is dependent on the ability of the PGOs studied to achieve a flexible, responsive and dynamic balance between competing logics.

5 Facilitating and channelling participation

Player-governed orchestras aspire to minimise hierarchies and to maximise participatory decision-making in governance. However, the productive work of orchestras and ensembles — the performance of musical works — is, strongly hierarchical and has long been so (Boerner, 2004; Koivunen, 2003; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Lewis, 2012). Practically all the critical decisions involved in orchestral performance are entrusted to a conductor, with limited input from section leaders (Atik, 1994; Logie, 2012). In the PGOs studied, what has long been hierarchically organised productive activity takes place, within a governance structure that aspires to the minimisation of hierarchy. Nonetheless, hierarchy in music performance appears to increase efficiency and can still be desired by the members of a PGO.

In this chapter's first main section I consider the balancing of hierarchy and participation. I highlight the ways in which PGOs manage the conflicting imperatives of "intrinsic" music performance hierarchies and the anti-hierarchical desire for participatory decision-making that stands at the heart of player-governance. This tension is most clearly manifested in the crucial relationship between players and conductors or performance leaders (Atik, 1994; Boerner, 2004; Koivunen, 2003; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Lewis, 2012; Logie, 2012). The PGOs in this study, by allocating decisions about the hiring of conductors to member musicians, reverse the traditional relationship between players and conductors, but rather than simply turning the tables, their models recast the relationship as one of collaboration and partnership.

In the second section, the focus shifts to the challenges inherent in making participation work in these PGOs. The task of maximising decision-making efficiency while protecting the rights of members is familiar to many LMFs. For the PGOs studied, an additional challenge arises as they try to ensure that any political or personal tensions that may arise in governance fora are not allowed to spill over into and impinge on the spirit of cooperation, teamwork and collegiality that orchestras and ensembles seek when on stage (Allmendinger et al., 1996; Boerner and Freiherr von Streit, 2005; Gaunt and Dobson, 2014; Lipton, 1987). Failing to do so risks turning rehearsals and even performances into politically fraught battlegrounds, rather than an environment for creativity, artistic exploration and a product for which the public wants to pay.

In the chapter's third section, the focus shifts to the connections between player-governance and engagement, commitment and a sense of shared responsibility in the PGOs studied. An essential element in the sustainability of player-governance is the extent to which members respond to this responsibility. The ways in which people relate to their work and to its structures are key factors in their professional performance and wellbeing (Callan and Lawrence, 2009; Stanley and Meyer, 2016). High-quality performance among workers is, in turn, an essential element in the sustainability of an enterprise (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, and Young, 2009). Researchers use an array of terms to delineate and describe the ways in which people relate to and experience their jobs and the organisational contexts in which they work (Albrecht, 2010; Denunzio, 2016; Kahn, 1990; Meyer, 2016). Engagement, commitment, involvement, and job satisfaction are constructs at the heart of this conceptual array (Albrecht and Dineen, 2016; Callan and Lawrence, 2009; Judge, Hulin, and Dalal, 2012; Kahn, 1990; Mogelof and Rohrer, 2005). My interviews highlighted how and to what extent player-governance fosters such responses. The argument in this section is that the sustainability of player-

governance is enhanced by its ability to create a virtuous circle: participation builds engagement, commitment, and shared responsibility, which, in turn, sustains player-governance. Sustained player-governance thus both results from and produces engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility in PGOs. Harnessing governance participation and exploiting its self-reinforcing ability to build engagement, commitment and shared responsibility is central to the sustainability of player-governance. A central focus of this section is on the ways in which engagement and commitment among musicians are facilitated.

5.1 Reshaping artistic hierarchies

Orchestral performance has traditionally been built on hierarchy. Conductors have practically unrestricted power over questions of interpretation.³⁰ PGOs, on the other hand, are built on a desire to reduce hierarchy and realise participatory and democratic decision-making. The result is a tension between the performance-related hierarchies found in the orchestral model and the relatively flat organisational structures and operating processes that exist in PGOs. Achieving and sustaining a balance between these two structures is at the heart of the long-term viability of PGOs.

One of the most important manifestations of player-governance in the PGOs is the reversal of the contractual relationship between conductors and musicians. Traditionally, this relationship gave conductors the power to “hire and fire” orchestral players. Conductors had much more power than musicians. Orchestral musicians now enjoy more employment protection (Arian, 1974; Ayer, 2005; Long, 2015), but conductors continue to enjoy great musical authority within orchestras and ensembles (Boerner and Freiherr von Streit, 2007; Hunt et al., 2004; Lewis,

³⁰ See, however, Koivunen and Wennes (2011), who described “an ongoing relational process between the conductor and the musicians” (p. 51).

2012). Their judgements about a player's proficiency can still lead to professional repercussions (Koivunen and Wennes, 2011). The player-governance structures in this study enable enfranchised musicians to choose whether to work with a conductor at all, and if so, which conductor they want to work with for a project. Conductors and performance leaders are hired as a result of decisions made by musicians, and repeated engagements depend on conductors enjoying continued support among the majority of members. This type of relationship represents a far-reaching reversal of the hierarchies found in customary orchestral operations.

Choosing the conductors with whom they work is, then, a central element of governance in the PGOs in this study. For Sophie, it is "the most important discussion we can have with each other if you are making music: what do you want to play, who do you want to play with, and how do you want to play?" Martin similarly noted that "we spend a long, long time talking about conductors," and was of the view that at least some autocracy was important. In his view, the orchestra-conductor relationship is crucial and involves a delicate power balance:

You have got to be really careful about it. That is a big challenge. It's art. It's a funny relationship. Everything else is a metaphor for the conductor and the orchestra. Because in a really good conductor-orchestra relationship the players do want a little bit of autocracy, they do want that. But they don't want it at the expense of everything. They just need someone who is going to say, "Look, we can't have a vote on this. You just have to do that." ... So they do want that kind of leadership very much.³¹

Comments made by Maria made clear both the degree of control democratic

31 This observation about the desire on the part of musicians for leadership and not conducting "what you hear" contrasts with Koivunen and Wennes' (2011) finding that "the conductor does not force the orchestra to play according to her pre-existing idea of music interpretation but first listens to the orchestra and then works from that" (p. 58).

governance gives players in their dealings with conductors and the process involved:

When someone comes and says, "I have seen this conductor who was great, we should give him a try" and the general feeling is "why not?", then [name of general manager omitted] gets in contact and they have a chat. ... If an agreement is reached ... then he will do a project with us and after that we meet here and discuss whether it was good and whether we want to work together again. And then the group decides whether we want to do something with him again. And there have been some where the group has said, "no, we could do without repeating that."

While musicians in PGOs have, then, considerable power in relation to conductors, Robert was keen to emphasise that this was not a matter of simply reversing semi-dictatorial powers, but rather of transforming a unidirectional power regime into one of partnership:

One shouldn't have the idea that we try to separate ourselves from the conductors or principal artists, who, when you are talking about Baroque music, might be a violinist. We want to have a relationship with these people. We don't want them to dictate to us, but neither do we want to dictate to them. We want to work and collaborate with them. The whole enterprise is just one huge collaboration from start to finish. Everywhere you look, it is collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. It is working together.

In a similar vein, Martin said that:

When you are working with people like [names of conductors omitted], it is not always going to be the most fruitful relationship if you just say, "we want to do this, you do it." ... There has to be give and take. In a way what is good about [name of orchestra omitted] is that when it's at its best, it's just

being cooperative and it is receptive to ideas, and it doesn't really matter whose idea it was.

Later, Robert expanded on the vision of collaboration by highlighting the central questions involved:

How can we do this? How can we make this happen? I hope that is how the conductors feel with us: "I want to do this piece, how can I make it happen? How can I encourage this orchestra to bring my artistic vision to life?" I respect them for that.

In response to a question about whether some conductors might not be suited to working with the ethos and artistic principles of his orchestra, Martin agreed, adding:

Yes, and some don't want it either. It doesn't work with the [name of orchestra omitted]. It's not so much a problem with Classical and the Baroque, it can be a challenge, even then, but it is less likely. But when you start getting into the Romantic repertoire there is a temptation, if you work with a name conductor, what will happen is that they will turn up and just treat it like a symphonic orchestral job, and they will do two rehearsals and then one on the day and then do the program. That is a disaster with the [name of orchestra omitted]. It doesn't work.

Alvis offered a compact overview of how his orchestra's thinking on conductors evolved. He described how at the outset:

We thought we ought to have a principal conductor, because that's what orchestras do. So we continued with [name of conductor omitted], who was very supportive. But then, what we felt was, hang on a minute, this is a ... classical chamber orchestra, our core repertoire is classical music, why do we need a conductor? ... If we are empowering ourselves, why do we need

a kind of dictatorial figure telling us what to do for that kind of repertoire? So, then we sat down and really thought about this and then we really made the decision that this would be a leader-led orchestra, player-directed orchestra. ... We now have conductors who we bring in, in the expectation that they have got something to offer us. If a conductor is not going to bring something to the table, other than a beat, there's no point. And that was a very empowering decision to make.

On the question of musical leaders, be it a conductor or an instrumentalist, Angela sounded a warning and highlighted leadership as a key element in creating an efficient structure in the rehearsal room or on stage. For her, any absence of leadership resulted in “a free-for-all among the players ... when we start having fights, arguments and mutiny in different pockets, because the directors had not got control and no one respects them.”

In a statement quoted in the discussion about taking artistic control, Martin said that

The really significant, defining element of self-governance is actually artistic. It's playing without a conductor, working with a conductor at its own discretion, not having an autocratic artistic director but actually taking artistic matters into their own purview and consideration.

The PGO–conductor dynamic is unusual among LMFs. As Martin pointed out, the first decision for the members of a PGO is whether to engage a conductor at all. When conductors are engaged by these PGOs, they are asked to take on leadership roles for discrete projects and to provide “a little bit of autocracy” (Martin). Guest conductors (as distinct from musical or artistic directors) are not members of the PGOs they conduct and are contracted on a fee-for-service basis. Thus, for the duration of a project with a conductor, the musicians of a PGO

transfer a considerable amount of their artistic control to an external, non-member leader who, while filling a leadership role, is in turn ultimately answerable to the membership, who will decide if he or she is engaged again for further projects. In the case of instrumental performance directors, such players are external to the organisations, while in other cases they may be members of the orchestra or ensemble who have been granted a leadership role and interpretative control by their colleagues.

Figure 1 visualises the circular control structure adopted by most of the PGOs studied. At the top of the diagram, player-members have ultimate authority that they delegate to committees that, in turn, make decisions about the hiring of conductors or performance leaders. The left, blue-shaded part of the diagram depicts control in music performance. Here, the work of players is directed by conductors and performance leaders to whom the players have delegated authority. The PGOs studied transform the vertical and hierarchical structure of the traditional orchestral model into a circular flow of control. Balancing the forces and dynamics of this organisational constellation is essential to the sustainability of the PGOs in the study.

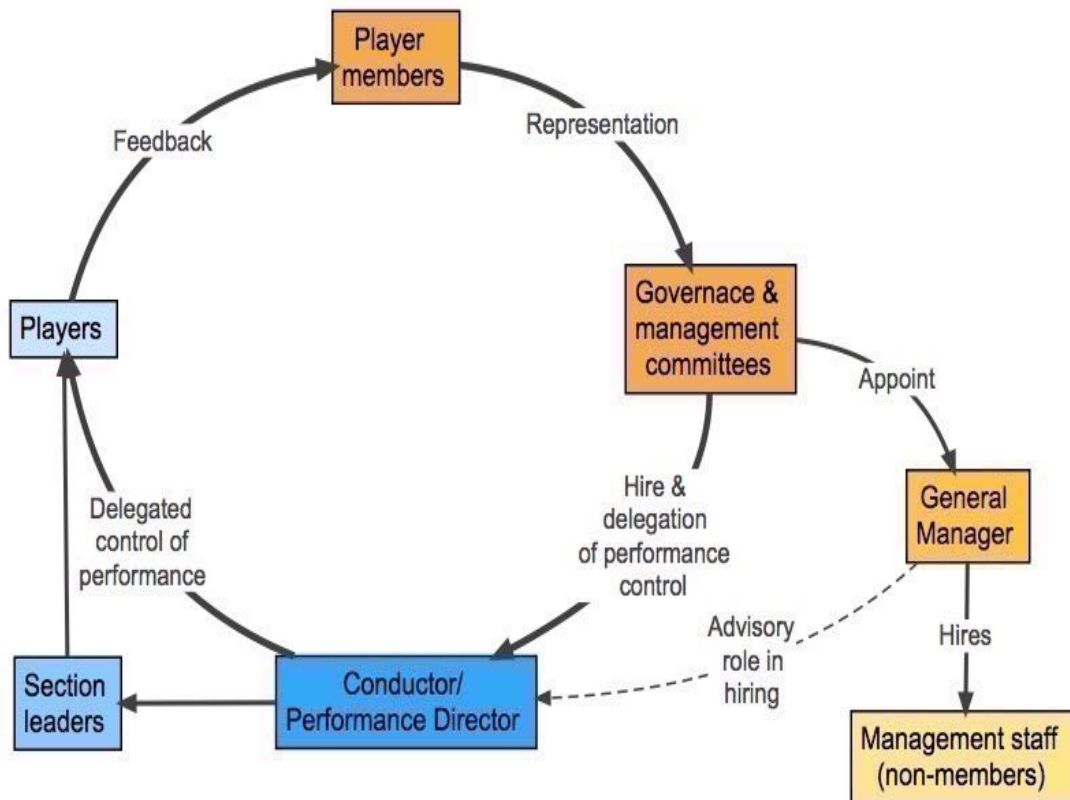


Figure 1. Circular distribution of control in PGOs

The question remains, however, as to why PGOs continue to work with conductors at all. The circular model outlined above can be largely avoided if players decide against hiring conductors and take control of all artistic decisions, not just those of programming. Richard described the effort to reduce hierarchy in his orchestra as “not as extreme as in Orpheus” — a New York orchestra that badges itself as “the world’s only conductorless orchestra”³² (Seifter and Economy, 2001). While noting that “we used to have concerts on occasion when the section leaders changed positions,” he felt that the hierarchy between solo and tutti players that has evolved in his orchestra was a question of “quality assurance” and “there is no alternative,

32 Other orchestras and ensembles, including some of those studied for my research, now also routinely perform without conductors. Orpheus has, though, more experience rehearsing and performing without conductors than any other orchestra. It has turned this experience into what it calls the Orpheus Process; a structured approach to rehearsal and performance without conductors.

because not everyone is the type of person who makes a section leader.” Maria had a similar position: “I am one of these people who likes to play along. I like to react, but I am not keen on standing at the front.” Angela observed that “some people are good at giving instructions, some people are good at receiving instructions. Some play better when they are in a support role. Put them in a leading role and they go to pieces.” In the same interview she recalled that:

One of the biggest lessons that I had an instinctive feeling about at the very beginning was that everyone was a leader and everyone was equal. And, I think that was very optimistic, what’s the word, slightly naive ... we were all paid the same, there was no hierarchy, everyone was equal. I thought that was not realistic, because not everyone is a leader.

The orchestras studied have been able to achieve a far-reaching and sustainable re-alignment of control. In particular, they have instituted a model of hired leadership in which a traditional authority figure, such as an orchestral conductor, is engaged by musicians and granted a collaborative leadership role rather than dictatorial power. Collaboration, along with “being cooperative and ... receptive to ideas” (Martin) characterises the relationships with conductors sought by the musicians interviewed. The literature amply documents the dynamics of the conductor–orchestra relationship (Boerner and Freiherr von Streit, 2007; Hunt et al., 2004; Lewis, 2012), and it has often been described as akin to a dictatorship, in which conductors have all the power or what Alvis described as a “kind of dictatorial figure telling us what to do.” Robert stressed that the realignment of this relationship realised by PGOs was not simply a matter of reversing the tables. Rather, members “don’t want them to dictate to us, but neither do we want to dictate to them.”

The relationship achieved between conductors and musicians in these PGOs

represents a rebalancing of a key axis of power and authority. Players approach the conductor–orchestra relationship from a position that is rooted in self-assurance and the authority derived from having “set up our own orchestra, that belongs to us” (Sophie). They now have “conductors who we bring in, in the expectation that they have got something to offer us” (Alvis). Players want to “have a relationship with these people to work and collaborate with them” (Robert). This axial realignment is central to the mission of PGOs, to their vision and to their contribution to the understanding of labour-management more widely.

The PGOs balance the continued exploitation of decision-making hierarchies in the rehearsal and performance context with a desire to reduce hierarchy as far as possible in their governance structures. There is a recognition that the artistic decision-making hierarchies in the traditional orchestral model can serve a valuable purpose. Conductors, instrumental leaders (usually lead violinists or keyboard players) and section leaders play a role in enhancing decision-making efficiency, but the power they exercise is delegated to them by members, who retain ultimate governance control. Robert spoke of “collaboration” and “working together” being the essential characteristics of the relationship between players in PGOs and their conductors. Alvis, when he spoke of engaging conductors “in the expectation that they have got something to offer us,” was similarly clear about the essentially partner-like quality between conductors and PGOs. The PGOs studied have thus radically realigned the orchestra–conductor relationship, but without rejecting outright the hierarchy involved. Musical leadership continues to play a part, and there is an understanding that an approach that assumes every musician is equally skilled as a leader is unrealistic, unless players are recruited with such roles explicitly in mind.

Sophie made a statement that serves well to close this section and its emphasis

on balancing hierarchy and player control. Asked about the decision to found a PGO, she was clear about the sense of developing an identity and orchestra that was led by the musicians and about the related desire to minimise hierarchy:

I don't think there was ever an alternative. The idea that we would set up something hierarchical seemed so strange that we never even discussed it. It was totally clear. ... We did have support from [name of conductor omitted] ... but it was totally clear that we didn't want to be dependent on one person, but rather we wanted to find our own way. That was as clear as day, so that, as I said, we didn't even discuss it: that we wanted to set up our own orchestra that belongs to us.

5.2 Making democracy work — decision-making

The focus now moves to the development, refinement and optimisation of participation in the governance of the PGOs studied. PGOs pursue two key objectives in their governance processes: reaching the best decisions (using various understandings of decision quality), and sustaining the democratic legitimacy of player-governance by maximising the opportunities for members to take part in and influence decision-making. PGOs need to ensure that any conflict from governance decision-making does not weaken the sense of cooperation and synergy at the core of high-level musical performance (Dobson and Gaunt, 2013). The interviews revealed how these PGOs have adapted democratic structures to fit their requirements as firms working in professional music performance. It became clear that the sustainability of player-governance in the orchestras and ensemble in the research was a function of the continuous balancing of decision-making efficiency and the optimisation of enfranchisement and “voice” among members. In this section, I argue that the ability to adapt democratic thinking to these PGOs' specific contexts and practices is a key element in their governance

sustainability. Making democracy and participatory decision-making work in these PGOs requires reflexivity, an openness to evolution, and the ability to reach shared understandings of governance.

The research explored the interviewees' experience of making democracy in PGOs work. Their views showed that the widely accepted trope of democratic decision-making being inefficient and excessively time-consuming was too simplistic. These voices argued that, at times, the quality of decisions was more important than the speed with which they were reached. For Alvis, the emphasis lay on the quality of decisions made and on being "reflective":

We don't make fast decisions, we really reflect on them. When we first took over the orchestra we felt that we had to make decisions quickly, but actually we are much more reflective. So, the idea of panicking; we don't do that anymore. That might sound a bit glib, but it's absolutely crucial to making really good, confident decisions. ... I think we take our time with difficult decisions, we don't rush them, and, if we have to ... we'd literally move the project back until we are all confident that this is the decision, as a unit, we are going to make. So we try to get rid of those tensions, so that we can go and play and still get on with each other.

Leo spoke about balancing democracy and the need for quick decisions:

That was the big discussion over the last two years: how can we rebalance it? Sometimes the democratic process is too slow, and sometimes there are issues that make you want to decide immediately ... There is this split: should we wait or if we wait, what will happen to this project?

Daniel likewise thought that the essential concern was:

A question of balance. Who makes the decisions? There are critical decisions and there are less critical decisions which have to do with long

periods of time. There are decisions that have to do with one hour on the concert stage. All of these decisions need the right kind of balance. They have got to be made in a way that is satisfying for all of the ... musicians plus the members of the office who have to carry out the administration of all of this.

Alvis also described a specific decision that benefited from a deliberative approach and spoke about the importance of getting “everybody on side”:

There were two very ... different ideas ... the two sides ... were quite entrenched in their views. So, we just took our time ... and ... now that we've stepped back from it just a little bit ... I'm more comfortable ... just literally by ... not making rapid decisions that people are going to resent. ... When you do a big project, everybody has got to agree. You've got to get everybody on side.

These interviewees thus acknowledge the efficiency challenges of democratic decision-making in their organisations, and they have developed strategies to address them and to reach a balance between efficient decision-making and democratic participation. The PGOs in the study use committees and working groups that investigate problems and develop a range of possible solutions that can expedite decision-making. The range of solutions can subsequently be put to the wider membership. In other cases, decision-making is delegated. Mario said that:

I think the orchestra and the way we operate is a good reflection of society. There are elected representatives of the musicians, which means one does not need to be active in every role and can delegate responsibility. The representatives who have that mandate can direct things while one remains one's own boss, because at the end of the day you can influence the processes used to make decisions. That is representative democracy.

Leo was, likewise, aware of the balance between direct and representative democracy when he said that:

On our website, it says we are organised as a basic democracy, which is [only] partly true, because I think it is more of a representative democracy. Nevertheless, the musicians have a meeting every month, at which general matters and special questions are discussed as well as what has happened in the last few months, what will happen in coming months, and criticism about how things have worked out in the end. ... But these large meetings are, I think, not the right forum for reaching decisions quickly. Therefore, the ensemble elects three representatives to an artistic committee.

Richard was also clear about the trade-offs between speed and consensus:

The timespan between when a problem arose and when a solution was found was extremely long, when you always need to have everybody on board. This preparatory work in smaller groups expedites it. It does, however, restrict the diversity in some respects. Not everyone is then really close to the decisions from the start. Many only come to the problem later and hear about it at a later stage. There are pros and cons to that. At the moment it is important for us to prioritise speed a little.

The interviewees describe how this adoption of representative democracy brings in other elements. Some members may have lower levels of commitment to democratic ideals or may not want to devote high levels of energy to the governance of an organisation. For Maria, this meant acknowledging that governance structures do not assume a uniform level of organisational engagement:

Meanwhile it is no longer the case, as it used to be, that we're all required to sit here when there is a meeting. There are a few that are compulsory, but there are many that are voluntary. And, of course, it's always the same

people that come. That's human nature, and it is also right in a group of this size. It took us a while to accept it. But I think, on the other hand, we would go crazy if all of us joined in the discussion. That would be terrible. It's good that a few simply say, "We trust you, you do that, and I'm happy to play along."

The various trade-offs involved in player-governance generally, and the different forms of democracy in particular, were central to comments made by Martin:

Self-governance has this kind of utopian perspective that it is going to be a sort of social contract and that people come to it equally and there is an equal share in power along with this sort of democratic process. All of that is wonderful and it is reasonably achievable, but it does bring with it quite an administrative burden.

Balancing the desire to make good decisions with that of maximising the level of participation in the attendant processes and thus the democratic legitimacy of an organisation's governance and management is a central priority in the sustainability of player-governance in the orchestras studied. At the same time, decision-making occurs in an environment in which tension from management or governance decision-making fora can spill over into the rehearsal room and onto the performance stage. Such spillage can be detrimental to the cooperation, synergy, and relationships that are conducive to high-level music performance (Boerner, 2006; Dobson and Gaunt, 2013; Gaunt and Dobson, 2014). This risk can be exacerbated when, as is frequently the case, governance hierarchies and those within an orchestra or ensemble as a team of performers do not align. There is no reason why senior players in the music-performance hierarchy, such as section leaders, should be elected to similarly senior roles within the governance structure. Indeed, one interviewee thought this was difficult to achieve. Richard said that,

Time and again you notice that it is difficult for more highly exposed players

to also have highly exposed positions on committees. But you see that in all orchestras. In my experience, it is quite rare for a solo oboe or solo cellist to be on the board. Quite often that is because someone on a committee makes themselves vulnerable to attack. And when you sense the collective hostility of twenty people, it is easier to survive as a tutti player than when you, as a solo cellist, are dependent on support. You need the positive energy. It is simply difficult to play a solo when you have just come from a discussion that went pear-shaped. Of course, that is not always so, but I think there is a tendency there.

Walter observed that:

There is, I think, pretty good separation between the administrative, the committees, the general meetings, and then playing together. I am not saying it is always easy, of course. On the whole, I think we are able to separate these things. If the most important thing is to play together, if that is always there, it is possible to overcome the rest.

Governance and administrative work is not always disruptive and a source of friction for players. Daniel made this clear when he said that:

To a certain extent, the structure does, for me, have something to do with the collegiality, the cementing together of the ensemble, because we do work together a lot, but most of the time it is not on stage. What happens on stage, then, is actually, because of the working together that we do in the background — the preparation for a concert, the rehearsal period and the performance itself — is, then, different because we know these people very well.

Later in the same interview, he put it more forcefully:

That is part of the background which does come out on stage: this feeling

that the experience of working together even in that situation where the project manager has to say, “No, we can’t do it the way you would like, we have to do it another way,” and you have to be prepared for that and you have to say, “That’s OK. I understand the difficulty, please go ahead, I will deal with it.” That is part of the cementing of the whole ensemble that gives me the power that I need, the joy in life that I need to go out and play that fucking instrument on that stage for the audience.

The interviews provided many insights into the challenges of making democracy work in the player-governed context. Concerns about the risk of governance conflicts infiltrating orchestras’ musical performance highlighted the essential task of balancing various possible forms of democratic organisation and participation. I became aware of the tensions between decision-making efficiency and the maximisation of enfranchisement and “voice” (Mantouvalou, 2014; Wilkinson, Donaghey, Dundon, and Freeman, 2014) among members. The literature acknowledges that the achievement and sustenance of a balance between these outcomes is challenging (Kruse, 2013; Leach, 2016; Putterman, 1982). One of the most common complaints about democratic decision-making concerns the extra time it can require, especially if unanimity or consensus are needed. Many commentators on LMFs have argued that they are inefficient because of their inability to make quick decisions (Hansmann, 1996; Leach, 2016). Much of the literature on group decision-making posits that in a democratic system, large groups require more time and resources to decide than do small ones (Dow, 2003; Hansmann, 1996; Putterman, 1982). Finding a middle way between direct and representative democracy is a central challenge to these PGOs.

Representative democracy using committees elected from the membership can expedite decision-making, but at the cost of alienating members if they feel

marginalised from the deliberative processes of such committees. The PGOs studied have all implemented governance systems that go some way toward representative democracy. In particular, they have instituted artistic committees to optimise decision-making in this essential area. At the same time, they are conscious of the need to ensure that all enfranchised members continue to have a voice in critical decisions. Introducing such representative democracy is a common method of increasing the efficiency of democratic decision-making within organisations. In a system of direct democracy, each enfranchised voter is entitled to vote on a proposal without having to consider the interests of anyone else, and all enfranchised members are entitled to vote on a proposal. In a system of representative democracy, members elect peers to committees that are charged with making decisions on behalf of and in the interests of the electorate as a whole. These representatives are expected to represent the interests of the people who voted for them and to vote accordingly. Voters can elect a different representative or stand for election at the next opportunity, if they feel that their representatives have failed to protect the interests of voters.

As governance moves toward representative democracy, a separation opens up between an organisation's enfranchised members and decision-making fora. Members may feel that they are no longer directly involved in or informed about decisions (Kaswan, 2013), or as Richard noted, the result can be that "not everyone is then really close to the decisions from the start." There is, then, a trade-off between direct and representative forms of democracy. Direct democracy promises a high level of participation, voice and transparency, but at the price of decisions that take longer to reach than in other systems. These problems are heightened when unanimity or consensus is required. As Sebastian said of his PGO: "the ensemble has sixteen voices and getting them all to agree, unless the question is a very obvious one, is quite unlikely. The likelihood that the CEO is

going to be of the same opinion is trivial.” The greater the number of enfranchised members, the more time-consuming direct democracy is likely to become.

By relieving members from taking part in all decisions, representative democracy can expedite decision-making. This form of governance delegates control in areas of specialised knowledge such as financial or legal matters to those who have relevant skills or are prepared to acquire them. Delegation to representatives may, though, lead to a sense of alienation among members who feel less well informed about the factors influencing decisions. If members become less engaged, there is a risk of losing one of the essential strengths of player-governance, that “participation may result in better decisions” (Strauss, 1998, p. 10). The challenge for player-governance is to foster its potential for effective decision-making by achieving a balance between decision-making efficiency and members’ sense of enfranchisement.

As they deal with this delicate balance between high-participation decision-making and efficiency, PGOs also run the risk of democratic decision-making being counterproductive if any political tensions that arise in management and governance meetings involving players disturb the sense of teamwork that is thought to exist in high-performing orchestra and ensembles (Boerner, 2006; Gilboa and Tal-Shmotkin, 2012; Murnighan and Conlon, 1991; Tal-Shmotkin and Gilboa, 2013). It is essential for the success of a PGO that in the presence of the tensions that may arise in a participatory governance and management system, players remain able to, in the words of Alvis, “go and play and still get on with each other.” However, the interviews throw light on the risk of tensions arising when players are required to deal with complex governance and management matters in decision-making fora that subsequently spill over into the team-based music-making context.

This is exacerbated in the case of section leaders, for whom, as Richard observed, “it is simply difficult to play a solo when you have just come from a discussion that went pear-shaped.” Much to the same effect, Patrick described the challenges experienced by section leaders when they are expected to deal with concerns about performance quality. To reiterate:

We are trying to get the leaders and the principals to do that. But that is not easy, because some of these people want to be able to just play and don't want to be one of the people in the firing line having to go and have that hard conversation with whoever.

Martin, likewise, highlighted the “enormous burden” put on section leaders;

Because it is not just that they turn up and they lead their section, but they have got this sort of political issue as well, they have to manage the team, they don't have an HR person, there isn't an artistic director looking over them, there isn't a [famous conductor like Georg] Solti saying, 'you're fired, you're fired'. It is sort of down to them and they have this very immediate, very difficult role with the people around them.

A further feature of player-governance that emerged from the interviews was the way in which PGOs overlay the hierarchies and power dynamics of a music performance team with those of the organisational structure. The two hierarchies — no matter how flat they may be — overlap, and this has the potential to create various tensions and challenges. This research highlighted that the musical skills and abilities required of a section leader in an orchestra are not necessarily those that make the same individual a competent member of a governing board or management team. Indeed, the artistic demands made of players who are required to play solo passages may hinder them from also taking on leadership roles in the governance structure. Richard was clear about this when he noted that, for example, solo oboists and solo cellists seldom held important decision-making

positions in the governance structure of PGOs.³³

This risk of excluding musical leaders from governance leadership can, in turn, lead to friction when committees, such as artistic planning committees, make decisions about playing personnel in which section leaders feel they should be consulted. Angela described being notified about “something that is simply an outrageous decision that [the artistic committee] have made. I totally disagree with it. I was totally not consulted, and I’m a principal player. Things are happening that even principals don’t even know are happening.”

Speaking of the artistic committee, Angela also noted that “there are some ruthless decisions being made in there where they are not even having a wider discussion with the principal players”, before asking:

How can my number two [name of instrument omitted] player make a decision about a principal player over my head as a principal player? I think that is wrong. I’m more qualified, in the orchestra, because I’m a principal player. But they are making some radical decisions, which I think needs to be done, but I’m not sure we are doing it in the right way.

The tensions that can result from this duality of decision-making structures inherent in a PGO are clearly deserving of attention. The interviewees make it clear that player-governance is not a panacea for the tensions, rivalries and conflicting interests that arise in many professional contexts. Instead, player-governance requires organisations to be aware that a delicate balance between management and artistic responsibilities is required and needs to be constantly maintained and sustained. Interpersonal rivalries, tensions and conflicts arise in

³³ Young’s (2017) research produced a similar finding about the willingness of section leaders to take on non-performance roles.

many professional contexts, yet may be particularly dangerous in organisations that have creativity at the heart of their operation. As Alvis noted, “if you’ve got one person who absolutely still thinks it’s a stupid idea, that’s going to create a lot of tension.” Orchestras and ensembles, irrelevant of their governance systems, experience such interpersonal dynamics (Kemp, 1996; Kenny and Ackermann, 2009). However, in PGOs they are potentially more damaging because musicians in such organisations work together in multiple contexts. They need to collaborate and achieve balances in committee and board meetings as much as they do on stage.

5.3 Building engagement, commitment and responsibility

Participation sustains player-governance by enhancing engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility among members in the PGOs. Speaking with the interviewees showed that high levels of these three phenomena — engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility — were, indeed, associated with player-governance and the participation it facilitates. However, the three terms are understood and used in many ways, so before considering the interviews, I will establish some working definitions for the key terms through surveying and synthesising thinking on engagement and commitment. I also examine how the interviewees use the terms and the role engagement, commitment and responsibility play in the PGOs studied. I argue that participation contributes to the sustainability of player-governance to the extent that it can be harnessed to build engagement, commitment, and shared responsibility. All three elements play important roles in the success and sustainability of the PGO model found in the cohort. Harnessing participation and exploiting its ability to build engagement, commitment, and shared responsibility is central to the sustainability of player-governance.

Definitions of engagement, commitment and responsibility

In the organisational and occupational psychology literatures, the range of terms used to describe the ways in which workers relate to their work and their work contexts includes “commitment” (Albrecht and Dineen, 2016), “engagement”, “disengagement” and “burnout” (Callan and Lawrence, 2009; Denunzio, 2016; Iddagoda, Opatha, and Gunawardana, 2016; Kahn, 1990; Macey et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker, 2002), “job satisfaction” (Callan and Lawrence, 2009; Johansson and Theorell, 2003; Judge et al., 2012; Mogelof and Rohrer, 2005; Olbertz, 2006), and “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Kirchner, Bloom, and Skutnick-Henley, 2008). I begin by exploring how concepts such as engagement and commitment are understood in the literature. According to Albrecht and Dineen (2016), “traditionally, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement have been considered the three “classic” or core barometers of the individual–organization relationship” (p. 70). The literature, moreover, divides this relationship between task-focused responses that manifest themselves when workers “lose themselves in their work, and experience a sense of engrossment when doing their work” (Fleck and Inceoglu, 2010, p. 36), and a further set of responses that relate to the organisation in which tasks are performed, to relationships with co-workers, employers or clients, and to the legal and organisational structures within which people work (Albrecht, 2010; Albrecht and Dineen, 2016; Denunzio, 2016). Fleck and Inceoglu (2010) labelled this group of cognitions and psychological states “organizational engagement” (p. 36). Making sense of this conceptual miscellany and charting its relevance to PGOs poses this section’s first task.

Engagement was the idea most often mentioned by the interviewees. Contemporary thinking about engagement in the work context began with a

seminal article written in 1990 by Kahn. He defined engagement as the “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). As he elaborated the concept, Kahn (1990) isolated three central elements that constitute engagement:

- “employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others,”
- “personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional)” and
- “active, full role performances” (p. 700).

“Vigor, dedication, and absorption” form the pillars of engagement as understood by Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 75). They characterised vigour as “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties” (ibid.). Dedication they described as a “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” (ibid.). The third element in their definition, absorption, is described as “being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work” (ibid.). For Denunzio (2016), engagement was characterised by “high-energy positive emotions such as vigor and enthusiasm, as well as a deep level of focus on and attention to one’s work” (p. 400). Macey et al. (2009) defined engagement as “an individual’s sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals” (p. 7). For a comprehensive comparison of ways in which engagement is conceptualised, see Iddagoda et al. (2016). Table 6 aligns and presents the terminologies for “engagement” of four key authors and author groups in the field.

Kahn (1990)	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	Denunzio (2016)	Macey et al. (2009)
<p>“Employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others”</p>	<p>Vigor: “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties”</p>	<p>“This experience includes high-energy positive emotions such as vigor and enthusiasm, as well as a deep level of focus on and attention to one’s work”</p>	<p>“An individual’s sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals”</p>
<p>Organization members display “personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional)”</p>	<p>Dedication: “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge”</p>	<p>“Engagement connotes action — engaged employees immerse themselves in their work, expend high levels of effort, and are generally considered to be highly productive members of the organization”</p>	
<p>Organization members display “active, full role performances”</p>	<p>Absorption: “being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work”</p>		

Table 6. Overview of selected descriptions of engagement

Interest in engagement as a concept extends beyond the definitional. The conditions under which it may emerge are an additional area of inquiry. Kahn

(1990) posited three “psychological conditions” that had to be fulfilled before workers could experience engagement: “meaningfulness, safety, and availability” (p. 703). Macey et al. (2009) found that “engagement follows when: employees have the capacity to engage; employees have a reason or the motivation to engage; employees have the freedom to engage; and employees know how to engage” (p. 10). Table 7 summarises these conditions.

Kahn (1990)	Macey et al. (2009)
Meaningfulness: “sense of return of self in role performances”	“Employees have the capacity to engage ... Engagement requires a work environment that does not just demand ‘more’ but promotes information sharing, provides learning opportunities, and fosters a balance in people’s lives, thereby creating the bases for sustained energy and personal initiative”
Safety: “sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career”	“Employees have a reason or the motivation to engage ... Engagement happens when (a) employees have work that interests them and aligns with their values; and (b) employees are treated in a way that reinforces the natural tendency to reciprocate in kind”
Availability: “sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances”	“Employees have the freedom to engage ... Engagement happens when people feel safe to take action on their own initiative. Consequently, trust matters most under conditions of adversity, ambiguity, and the need for change — precisely when employee engagement is most important”
	“Employees know how to engage ... Strategic engagement happens when people know what the organization’s strategic priorities are and why, and when the organization aligns its processes and practices — its culture — with attainment of those goals”

Table 7. Overview of selected conditions for engagement.

Macey et al. (2009) conceived of engagement, its antecedents and consequences as a “value chain” that leads from a “high performance work environment” to “shareholder value” (p. 8). In Figures 2 and 3, I have adapted this model to reflect the specific consequences of engagement in music performance. In particular, I have replaced the ultimate consequence in Macey et al.’s model as depicted in Figure 2 — shareholder value — with organisational sustainability, a more relevant goal for not-for-profit companies such as PGOs. Similarly, the intangible assets that orchestras and ensembles might hope to accrue as a result of heightened engagement are different from those that Macey et al. (2009) listed in their more broadly applicable model “brand equity, customer satisfaction and loyalty, innovation, lower risk” (p. 8). These outcomes are still relevant to orchestras and ensembles but are less so than those I have included in the revised model. The details of specific goals vary between industries and sectors, the basic conceptualisation and direction of Macey et al.’s model remain valid, nevertheless.

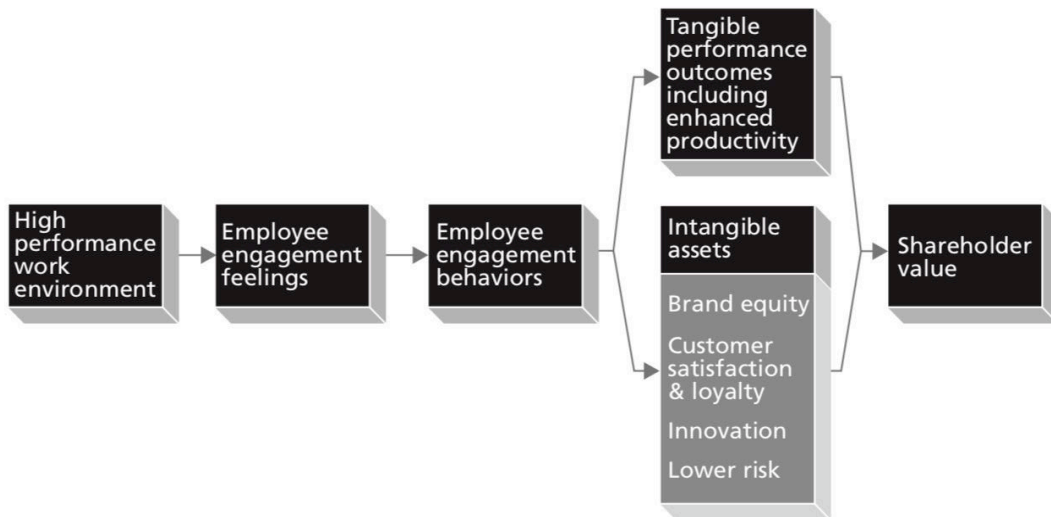


Figure 2. Macey et al.'s (2009) employment engagement value chain (p. 8)

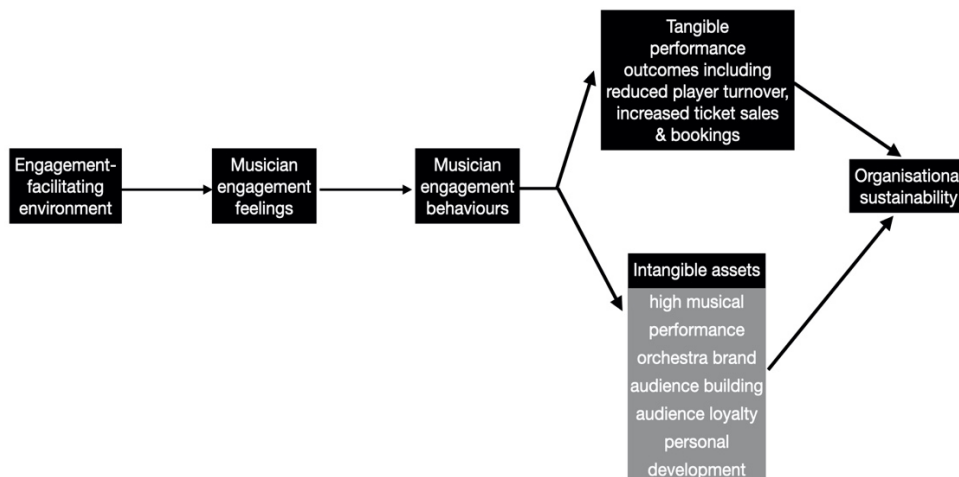


Figure 3. Modified representation of Macey et al.'s employment engagement value chain

Macey et al.'s (2009) discussion of engagement-facilitating environments guided my consideration of whether player-governance and the participation it makes possible function as such an environment. Various researchers suggest that worker participation and empowerment of the type embodied in player-governance is, indeed, conducive to high levels of engagement and commitment that, in turn, help sustain player-governance as a virtuous and self-sustaining circle emerges. In

their study of health-care workers, Laschinger et al. (2016) found that “empowerment appears to be an important driver of commitment, both directly and indirectly. Structural empowerment is a leadership strategy that can influence psychological empowerment and ultimately organizational commitment” (p. 326). In particular, empowerment in the form of player-governance is an example of what Kahn (1990) described as a “sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (p. 703).

In addition to talking about engagement, the interviewees used the word “commitment” when describing the relationships they develop with their PGOs. In workplace conversations and even among some commentators (Albrecht and Dineen, 2016; Iddagoda et al., 2016), the concept is often used interchangeably with the idea of engagement. However, a range of researchers in the field draw boundaries between the two. Albrecht and Dineen (2016) observed that while “the constructs are similar in that they both refer to positive psychological states that are adaptive for employee wellbeing and performance” (p. 72), most understandings of commitment have at their heart “a psychological state that characterises the employee’s relationship with the organization and has implications for their decision to continue or discontinue membership” (Meyer and Allen, 1991, cited in Albrecht and Dineen, 2016, p. 70). Meyer and Allen (ibid.) postulated the existence of four differences between engagement and commitment:

- 1) *Organizational commitment generally references an attachment to the organization as a whole, whereas engagement references the work role or work itself,*
- 2) *Employee engagement is generally expressed through more-activated, high-arousal positive affective states such as energy and enthusiasm. In contrast, commitment is characterized by less-activated positive*

affective states such as contentment and comfort,

- 3) *Organizational commitment is generally regarded as a stable construct that develops slowly over time” while “engagement fluctuates within individuals over short time periods, and*
- 4) *Commitment can be constituted by as few as one of its constituent elements [while workers must] experience all constituent engagement dimensions (vigour, dedication, and absorption) to be considered engaged. (p. 72)*

Having mapped how the relevant literature understands the ideas of engagement and commitment, attention now turns to the interviews and the roles these ideas — along with that of responsibility — play in sustaining player-governance.

Engagement, commitment and responsibility in PGOs

Interviewees often used the terms “engagement” and “commitment” as they talked about their responses to player-governance. Their comments on this theme were some of the most voluminous in the interviews. Many interviewees were vocal about the connection between player-governance and engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility for the organisation. Susanna said that player-governance was:

An element in having players feel more engaged. A lot of our success, and a piece of feedback that keeps coming back to us, is that we seem really energised on stage. ... there is an energy and communication, a sense of wanting to be there. I think that partly comes from having the opportunity to be involved. ... I certainly think it's an element.

Richard maintained that though “democracy is not an end in itself ... it makes

another musical dimension possible”, while Simon felt that it “generates more energy among individuals because they identify with it more. The willingness to go the extra yard, so to speak, is greater, the engagement is greater, and that produces different musical results.” Patrick said of his decision to join the orchestra that “I realised that there was a different kind of energy or a different kind of engagement, a higher level of engagement that came with ... the fact that it was self-governing and self-run.”

Other interviewees spoke of the satisfaction afforded by the opportunities for participation that player-governance provided. Robert highlighted the particular satisfaction that came with involvement in artistic planning and programming and linked this with a sense of ownership:

I was responsible for planning and curating the current season ... So, recently I have had a great sense of satisfaction of playing in a concert that I helped to plan, and for which I chose particular pieces. There is a great pleasure in playing a piece that I picked out and was quite unknown ... and to hear the feedback from people: “That’s a really good piece.” And I feel, “Yes, and I chose that,” and I was really pleased that it went well. There is a great sense of ownership in that respect. There are those moments when self-governing makes a real difference.

In a related vein, he described the sense of satisfaction from another opportunity to undertake artistic planning and programming:

I was responsible for devising a whole education project based on [name of musical work removed]. Here, too, I had a huge sense of ownership of that project because I devised it. In many small ways, and sometimes not so small ways, self-governing works really well. If it wasn’t a self-governing orchestra, they might well have gone to someone outside the orchestra

altogether and asked them to devise an education project for us. But in the [name of orchestra omitted], they said “so-and-so could run this project, let’s get them to do it.”

Richard has a similar role and likewise spoke of the satisfaction that came with the engagement involved:

At the moment, I am very engaged in the contemporary music series that we have in the [orchestra name omitted] and I see that as a field that interests me a lot and is satisfying, and where I think I want to contribute a lot. That is the kind of thing that we ourselves structure in-house, we come up with the programs, we think about how we realise it.

For Sophie, the sense of engagement that appears to be fostered by player-governance went hand-in-hand with a feeling of being important to the organisation: “the artistic side must, without question, be outstanding, but I also do think that it is so good because everyone identifies with it more strongly. No one feels so dispensable as might be the case elsewhere.” Patrick had a particularly evocative take on questions of engagement, and stressed the importance of the self-directed nature of the process in a player-governed organisation:

It’s the difference between going to a restaurant and eating a wonderful three-course meal — and you do that every day, and that’s fine — or you can go shopping, go to the markets, buy your own produce, cook it all up at home and eat something equally good, or maybe less good. If food is your only concern, then you can eat in the restaurants. But it’s not just about that, it’s also about the fact that you are making it yourself.

Some of the interviewees clearly sought to understand their experience with PGOs through a lens shaped by their experience with other organisations. Susanna said:

They are all led by the conductors, the ones I work for. They might ask for

your suggestions, but you don't really have that same sense of engagement or that feeling that you can make a difference. It's about how you play and not very much else. Whereas here, there is room for all sorts of other ways of expression.

Sophie observed that:

Of course, freedom brings risks, but it also creates opportunities. I had a different job that was much better paid, but which I gave up because I didn't enjoy it. And I am far from being the only one who has responded to the so-called "meaning question" in that way.

From a manager's perspective, Martin was clear that:

All orchestras have their issues, they all have problems, it is not as if the [orchestra name omitted] is special in that respect, but it is an additional commitment and engagement that you get from players, which makes everything stand out in relief, I think. They will come back at you with a little more determination than perhaps anywhere else. They will very quickly respond to things if they're uncomfortable. That's good!

Most of the interviewees have experience working with other orchestras and ensembles. This gives musicians an awareness of other governance and management structures. Richard, for example, acknowledged the challenges that player-governance can create for individuals, but through a comparison with other structures also emphasised the high levels of engagement that come with managing them:

It's a challenge that's worth taking on. It's got something to do with that presence thinking that you mentioned before. It is demanding, no question, and it costs nerves, but I think it's worse for a group or an ensemble when people withdraw, when they just perform a function while watching the

clock and are unsatisfied, start a hobby and somehow transfer their whole life outside the orchestra. That is why for many of us here it's a strong life focus, and it's accepted that it's a life focus. I know that from other orchestras where you have to withdraw and what actually enlivens you is your hobby, gardening and pets, or travel, where you always try to get more engaged in your leisure time and much less in what you actually work at. A lot of that's to do with the space that people are allowed.

This engagement, identification with the organisation and “willingness to go the extra yard” was allied with ideas of responsibility that several interviewees raised. Walter made a clear connection between player-governance and a sense of responsibility for the orchestra or ensemble:

We are shareholders and we are all equally responsible. I think that shows in performance. You can see that we are very engaged. There are no leaders, followers and passengers. Everyone feels totally responsible, active. ... All the members, not just the board, have to take responsibility.

Angela echoed these sentiments:

I think it is because it is a sort of personal feeling of responsibility, the fact that we think that the organisation is going to listen to us. Which is the opposite to [name of conductor omitted] orchestra, or [name of orchestra omitted] or [name of orchestra omitted], which are all governed by one person. You think, “Oh, they're going to listen to my opinion about this. I've got a say.” That's attractive in itself because it makes you feel valued. And I felt valued.

Responsibility for the public face of the orchestra was at the heart of Simon's reflections on how the orchestra changed after becoming player managed:

I think what it has done, is it has galvanised the players because they have

to behave very responsibly, have to really take on the role of being advocates for the orchestra. That might seem an unusual thing to say, but you get tenured musicians who are very negative. Not that they are particularly negative people, but they feel a disconnect with the direction the orchestra wants to go. And what we are just doing is, basically, we are saying "OK, it's up to us now, it's up to you."

Mario emphasised the importance of player-governance more broadly: "I think that this very self-determined way of making music, of having lots of free space, operating in a very flat hierarchy, wanting to be involved in decision-making, taking on responsibility, operating very internationally, that is becoming increasingly relevant."

Kahn (1990) included in his description of engagement the "expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others" (p. 700). This inclusion of co-workers manifested itself in the interviews. Several interviewees made analogies between their organisations and families, while also stressing the importance of friendship among players. Maria stated that "in essence we are like a big family. We all have faith in each other's performance and in our togetherness. And that crosses over into the music-making." Walter said that:

We are a group, we are not alone. We support each other. We are human, with highs and less highs. It's also a strength to be able to provide support to the others in the group. That's a beautiful thing. A bit like in a family.

Later in the interview he added that "there is another element that is important beyond the artistic quality: we are an orchestra of friends. We started out as a group of friends and I think that it's still mostly true that people enjoy being together."

Several interviewees' statements suggest that the involvement of PGO musicians in the governance and management of their organisations creates potential for self-development and learning. Patrick claimed that:

The kind of people who are attracted to a self-run orchestra are people who are keen to evolve personally and musically. So they are willing to look out for the next thing and they are a bit more open-minded because you don't have that mentality of "This is my job, this is what I'm going to be doing for the next forty years. This is my work time."

In a similar vein, Richard highlighted the potential for players to invest themselves beyond their musical roles:

That someone's personality is active and present, and that there is also room for someone as a person. Not only in a function, I am a member of the first violins, for example, that is a function, but when you are allowed to be present as a personality: what do you bring to the table? What are your strengths? Is there a place in which you can positively contribute these strengths? Then it is also musically noticeable.

Sophie raised learning, too:

It is also a big learning process. You learn how to lead discussions, you learn how to run votes, you learn how not to run votes. You learn which things should be discussed and for which things it is simply not worth it because you get tangled up in trivialities and don't get any further with the important things. An ongoing, very, very big learning process for everyone who is involved.

Mario stressed the personal development derived from involvement with a democratic structure that brings together different personalities:

That was a real learning process. I am also someone who is relatively rational, and then dealing with emotionality and taking emotional arguments just as seriously as rational ones, and that emotional arguments, that from a rational perspective might appear wrong, can be just as valid and correct. That is something that you have to learn to deal with. And that being right, or being proven right is not the only criterion for success.

Player involvement in governance and management extends, in some instances, to the conceptualisation, development and planning of professional development programs and offers a further chance for players to expand their professional activities and skills. Susanna described how:

I've also become involved in the education program. ... as well as all the playing, I now can lead workshops and I get to devise the under-fives concerts and present some of those ... I am heading up the nursery project that I visited today, for example. So there is a whole area of life that I didn't have any ambition in that has opened up to me and I have had training. It's a great other asset.

These reflections about the opportunities for personal development afforded by player-governance align with Kahn's (1990) description of engagement as "expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others" (p. 700). Writers on the "learning organisation" concept (Senge, 2006) emphasise the importance of learning for human wellbeing and what Kahn calls the "preferred self". Senge includes in his seminal book *The Fifth Discipline* (2006) a memorable quote from Edward Hall: "humans are the learning organism par excellence. The drive to learn is as strong as the sexual drive — it begins earlier and last longer" (cited in Senge, 2006, p. 14). The opportunity to develop and learn at work is thus closely aligned with the building of engagement. I discuss the importance of this and of theories of the learning

organisation below.

The interviews, while overwhelmingly positive about the opportunities for engagement and commitment presented by player-governance, also revealed that complications can arise. The relationships in family-like groups and among friends can, for example, be inappropriate to a professional context. Angela felt that:

We have got ourselves into trouble in some places because we've allowed people to stay in because of friends and family. ... We don't tell each other "That's not working." And that's where we are not doing our homework. If we are a self-governing orchestra, we need to govern ourselves honestly. I want to be told it's not good enough ... If I can't take it, that's my problem. I know that doesn't mean you don't love me. We're here to make the [name of orchestra omitted] good. I don't care whether you're my best friend or not.

Other interviewees suggested that high levels of engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility in their PGOs might be off-putting for some musicians. Walter said that:

There are also musicians who are not cut out for it and we have seen that. Right from the beginning, some of our members said, after a year or two "No, this is not for me, I would prefer something else where I don't have that commitment."

Much to the same effect, Daniel said that "someone from the back of the second violins probably wouldn't know where to start in this kind of ensemble. It's a huge engagement that's required from each individual musician." High levels of engagement, commitment and responsibility may be challenging to some musicians. If this is the case, then caution is required in the face of any attempt at extrapolating to other organisations. If musicians with higher personal and individual propensity to engagement and commitment are attracted by the

opportunities afforded by PGOs and others are put off and choose to work in other organisations, a “selection effect” (Weltmann, Joseph, and Douglas, 2015, p. 270) may result. Such selection effects may represent an example of sorting that contributes to the sustainability of player-governance by boosting the homogeneity of interests and attitudes to work among members (Dow, 2018).

Building engagement, commitment, and shared responsibility in PGOs

Two caveats are required before analysing the interview statements presented in the preceding subsection. The interviews illustrate the richness of professional experience offered by PGOs. Players generally embrace opportunities to engage broadly and deeply with their organisations. They welcome chances to develop skills in addition to those related directly to music performance. There is a consensus among the interviewees that high levels of commitment, engagement and responsibility manifest themselves in high-quality performance outcomes and make “another musical dimension possible” (Richard). Such perceptions cannot, though, be objectively measured. Nonetheless, my research strongly suggests that player-governance and the sense of engagement and commitment it embodies have a positive impact on artistic quality in the organisations studied.

The interviews strongly suggest that giving musicians the opportunity for participation in governance creates an organisational environment in which engagement and commitment can develop, while also acting as a sorting mechanism that increases the homogeneity of interests among members and, as a result, helps sustain player-governance. In the terms proposed by Macey et al. (2009), player-governance creates the “freedom to engage” (p. 10). The interviews indicate that player-governance and the opportunity for involvement in management decision-making create a framework in which high levels of

engagement can be achieved. Several interviewees made this connection explicitly. Susanna made it in reverse by noting that in other orchestras that are led by conductors rather than their musicians, “you don’t really have that same sense of engagement or that feeling that you can make a difference.” Governance participation and player engagement go hand in hand.

Kahn’s (1990) “safety” prerequisite — “the sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (p. 703) — is clearly reflected by Susanna when she observes that “here, there is room for all sorts of other ways of expression.” In Richard’s view, PGOs provide a structure in which personalities are “active and present”, and members were valued for more than simply performing a musical function. Likewise, Angela described responding to the opportunities for involvement in a PGO in terms reminiscent of Macey et al.’s “freedom to engage” (2009, p. 10): “You think, ‘Oh, they’re going to listen to my opinion about this. I’ve got a say.” For her, this contributed to a sense of being valued. Maria voiced similar early impressions of player-governance when she spoke of the excitement she felt on finding that “I was able to channel my energy into creating something, things were moving. That was very attractive.”

Various benefits accrue to firms with high levels of worker engagement (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, and Saks, 2015; Böckerman, Bryson, and Ilmakunnas, 2012). The creation of an environment in the PGOs that provides opportunities for personal development is an important result of player-governance, member participation and engagement. Adaptability is a further organisational attribute that results from engaged workers (Reeves and Deimler, 2011). The musicians in the PGOs in the cohort are “willing to look out for the next thing” (Patrick), but more importantly, they feel that they can make use of such insights to help ensure the future and the sustainability of their organisations. Susanna spoke of “feeling that

you can make a difference” in a PGO, while Richard spoke of being “allowed to be present as a personality.” In Kahn’s (1990) terms, player-governance provides the “safety” to engage or the “sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (p. 708).

The perception that player-governance provides greater scope for personal development, the acquisition of skills that complement musical proficiency, and the exercising of extra-musical abilities and knowledge may be a particularly important factor in the music performance sector. The core work of orchestral musicians — rehearsing and performing — does not usually provide much scope for professional development, promotion or other forms of reward (Schulz, 1981). Players typically end their careers in the same role in which they started. Even “promotion” within a section of the orchestra — say, from second clarinet to principal clarinet, or from the second violin section to the firsts — is rare. Schulz (1981) surveyed orchestral musicians in Vienna and found that 23 per cent of string players agreed with the statement that “I suffer from the fact that in the orchestra my chances of promotion are limited” (p. 41). By allowing musicians to be involved in the governance and management of their organisations, PGOs create a valuable opportunity for musicians to achieve a sense of professional development, career progression and reward.

Alongside engagement and the opportunity for learning and development, the interviewees pointed to a connection between player-governance, via increased engagement and commitment. Many of the sentiments described by interviewees are consistent with what have been described as organisational citizenship behaviours (Newton and LePine, 2016; Poutsma, Coen van, and Ligthart, 2015). Poutsma (2015) defined organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) as “behaviors that may result in employee contributions that exceed formal job

expectations” (p. 224). OCBs are viewed as results of high levels of engagement. Fleck and Inceoglu (2010) reported that:

Engaged employees are also more likely to “go the extra mile” for the organization and show behaviors that go beyond the requirements of their job, such as taking the initiative to solve problems, or offering help to co-workers before being asked for it. (p. 39)

Alvis, for example, spoke of player management having “galvanised the players,” meaning that they “have to really take on the role of being advocates for the orchestra.” Being an advocate for the orchestra is the sort of organisational citizenship behaviour highlighted by Fleck and Inceoglu (2010), who found that “engaged employees are more likely to act as positive advocates for the organization when interacting with people external to the organization” (p. 39). Walter emphasised ideas of ownership when saying that “we are shareholders and we are all equally responsible. I think that shows in performance. You can see that we are very engaged. There are no leaders, followers and passengers. everyone feels totally responsible, active.” These views align with the literature. Pierce and Furo (1990), for example, found that “employee ownership can have a positive effect on a work group’s norms, cohesiveness, and cooperative behaviors; on an employee’s work-related attitudes, motivation, and behavior; and on an organization’s performance and profitability” (p. 42). The interviews and the literature both highlight the promise of engagement generated by player-governance and the boost to sustainability from the resulting OCBs.

It is, though, important to recall the cautionary words of some interviewees that not all musicians are “cut out for” (Walter) membership of an organisation in which levels of commitment and engagement are usually so high. Clearly there is an element of self-selection among the members of PGOs. This is, though, true of any

organisation. Establishing “fit” between organisations and workers is a central part of human resource management in all enterprises (Albrecht et al., 2015).

Much research in the field focuses on employee-owned firms, often those that have introduced employee stock ownership schemes (Buchko, 1993). As noted, the PGOs I consider in this thesis do not, though, provide any opportunity for financial dividends or the acquisition of tradable shares in the companies. The high levels of engagement, commitment, the acceptance of responsibility and other forms of OCB reported by the interviewees indicates that these features can develop in freelance organisations and in the absence of financial incentives such as dividend payments or the acquisition of tradable entitlements. This aligns with the findings of Pendleton et al. (1998) that:

Participation in decisions accompanying employee ownership has a more powerful impact on feelings of ownership than levels of shareholding per se. Employees feel like owners if they perceive that they have been involved in the process of transition. An assessment that participation in work organization decisions ... has increased also has a clear positive impact on feelings of ownership. (p. 112)

Ultimately, for an orchestra or ensemble, the most important benefit from greater engagement and commitment is the achievement of the highest possible standard of performance. Susanna spoke of her orchestra being “really energised on stage” and she traced this, at least in part, back to opportunities for engagement that PGOs provide. “Different musical results” were also something that Simon thought resulted from greater engagement. For Robert, being involved in the artistic planning of a concert season produced a “great sense of satisfaction” and a “great sense of ownership.” Caution is called for, though. A large range of factors is involved in achieving high standards of musical performance (Dobson and Gaunt,

2013; Koivunen, 2003; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Langendörfer, Hodapp, Kreutz, and Bongard, 2006). The optimisation of performance and its connection to governance sustainability are the central focus of the next chapter.

Other research suggests that worker empowerment can play a role in boosting engagement with task performance. Albrecht et al. (2015) posited that “organizations that create the conditions that support, enhance and sustain employee engagement will have higher levels of job, unit and organizational performance, and therefore competitive advantage” (p. 13). In a similar vein, Laschinger et al. (2016) find that “workplace empowerment is a logical driving force behind employee commitment” (p. 320). Concepts such as engagement, commitment and responsibility clearly resonate with the members of the PGOs studied.

5.4 Conclusion

The themes that emerged from the interviews in this chapter congeal around the idea of participation and its role in achieving the sustainability of player-governance in orchestras and ensembles. The participation of playing members in decision-making is the essence of player-governance, but the interviews make it clear that participation also needs to be facilitated, channelled and harnessed. As a form of organised activity, the modern orchestra evolved around rigid hierarchies with conductors at the pinnacle and section leaders in a supporting role. Player-governance, however, challenges these hierarchies because it seeks to distribute authority across the membership. Nonetheless, the interviewees spoke in terms of a rebalancing and realigning of artistic decision-making hierarchies, rather than a wholesale rejection. The PGOs in the study continue to work with conductors and other performance leaders, but on players’ terms. The shift is from a hierarchy to a collaboration in which leadership still plays a role, though a circumscribed role

which might be understood as the leader as collaborator.

The perennial challenges inherent in optimising and sustaining workplace democracy were the central theme of the interviews. The interviewees were conscious of the trade-offs between the efficiency of representative democracy and the participatory and democratic legitimacy of direct democracy. Their thinking also revealed subtler and less clear-cut concerns. The optimal balance between direct, high-participation democracy and its representative form emerged as contextual. Quick decisions were, in some contexts, less important than those founded on thorough consultation and high levels of participatory decision-making. Sustaining the participatory and democratic core of player-governance is, then, a matter of continuing adaptability, responsiveness and negotiation. This process also needed to separate any tensions that might arise in the course of participatory governance decision-making from the collaborative and team-oriented music-performance space. This separation was further complicated when the PGOs in the research had two parallel decision-making structures, one on the governance side, and the other on the music performance side. Musical leaders within these PGOs are not necessarily governance officers, and this creates a potential for conflict that needs to be managed if it is not to weaken and threaten player-governance.

The participation of players in the governance of their orchestras and ensembles creates an environment in which organisational engagement, commitment and a sense of responsibility can flourish. This clearly emerged from the experience of my interviewees. They spoke of feeling “galvanised,” of “everyone feel[ing] totally responsible,” and of a willingness among players to “go the extra yard.” These responses are central to the sustainability of player-governance. To have long-term viability, the model needs to be embraced by members, it needs to add value and meaning to the working lives of players, thus giving them a “strong life focus.” When this happens, the result is a virtuous circle that builds commitment to and

support for player-governance among members. This dynamic is crucial to the sustainability of player-governance. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to the optimising of performance, perhaps the ultimate test for the sustainability of player-governance. A governance model that does not support or facilitate high-level musical performance is unlikely to survive for long.

6 Optimising performance

Performing at the highest possible level is at the heart of every orchestra and ensemble's mission. Optimising performance is central to governance and management activity. Players and managers who took part in this research highlighted the essential role that high performance standards have in their PGOs. The interviewees were, however, also aware of what Maria called the "explosive" impact of the peer-to-peer monitoring inherent in player-governance. They described a friction between the traditionally hierarchical nature of performance monitoring in orchestras and the demands of shared responsibility for maintaining standards that result when players take control of artistic decision-making. Susanna sketched the dilemma: "when you work in other orchestras, it is so much easier, in lots of ways, to work for a dictator and all hate the dictator together. It's so much easier. You are all looking in the same direction." Such dynamics are familiar to orchestral musicians (Prinz, 1993), but Susanna felt that "you can't do that in a self-governing orchestra. You absolutely can't do it." The need to maintain high performance standards produces a tension between hierarchical monitoring's relative ease and the demands mutual monitoring makes. Optimising performance in orchestras involves three main tasks: monitoring, managing generational change, and recruiting the best players.

Mixing player-governance and performance optimisation results in an intensified process that brings strengths and challenges. As in other areas of governance and artistic decision-making discussed earlier, performance optimisation throws into sharp relief the tensions between the competing hierarchical and horizontal logics at the heart of the PGOs in the research cohort. Monitoring performance is built on an implicit

hierarchy. From an early age, musicians are socialised into proficiency hierarchies in which the authority to monitor and assess another player's performance assumes superior skills on the part of the monitor. The relatively flat hierarchies of player-governance challenge these monitoring hierarchies. As Susanna said of peer monitoring, "players do question it and say, 'Who has got the right to question a colleague's playing?' None of us have got that right. But we haven't given anybody else that right either." This short quote lays bare the dilemma. Optimising performance is essential, the players take on artistic control and along with it the collective responsibility for performance optimisation, but they find it difficult to deal with situations in which colleagues are not performing at the desired level. This dilemma is at the heart of this chapter, and addressing it is essential to governance sustainability among the cohort of PGOs. A failure to optimise and maintain performance poses an existential threat.

The literature generally argues that mutual monitoring among workers is a strength of labour-management (Bowles and Gintis, 1993; Dow, 2018; McCain, 2007). Hansmann (1996) observed that when workers monitor each other, each has "an incentive to monitor her fellow employees and to apply pressure on them not to shirk, an incentive largely lacking in an investor-owned firm" (p. 70). Such writing mostly leaves unexplored the tension between the quintessentially hierarchical nature of monitoring and the anti-hierarchical logic of peer monitoring that comes through in Susanna's statement above.³⁴ The work practices and cultures of orchestras are, on the other hand, particularly well suited to exploring this tension. Performance deficiencies in orchestras and ensembles are usually clear to most (if not all) players, and even a single minor problem can seriously detract from the overall performance. Monitoring of artistic performance is, though, often controversial, and objective measures are largely

³⁴ See, however, Bowles and Gintis (1993).

absent. Mutual monitoring is a key element of LMFs, and the PGOs studied represent an ideal real-world laboratory in which to observe its operation.

Mutual monitoring and the allied questions of generational transition and recruitment in the PGOs I looked at involve considerable complexity, as well as bringing their own risks and challenges that range much wider than “improving the productivity of the firm” (Hansmann, 1996, p. 70). Recruitment is more complex and multifaceted because new players and members must be able to flourish in a player-governed structure as well as performing at a very high standard. The management of generational change is particularly challenging when founding members are experiencing age-related declines in proficiency. Questions of generational change also give rise to discussions about organisational identity, because founding and long-term members realise that, to be sustainable, their PGOs must become “institutionalised”. Underlying these themes is the problem of monitoring performance in an artistic context, where objective measures are generally not available, authority structures are diversified and horizontal, and no one has the “right to question a colleague’s playing,” but nor have members “given anybody else that right either.” The essence of the argument in this chapter is that to achieve and sustain peak performance, the PGOs in the study need to balance the conflicting demands of performance monitoring, maintain recruitment processes that are efficient but thorough in establishing the suitability of members from multiple perspectives and ensure that generational change is dealt with sensitively. The chapter devotes sections to each of these sub-themes: 1) monitoring and maintaining performance quality, 2) recruiting musicians, and 3) managing generational change.

6.1 Monitoring performance

The musicians and management staff in this study outlined a dilemma at the heart of their organisations: maintaining the highest possible performance standards is an

essential element of organisational sustainability, but the mechanics and politics of mutual monitoring are fraught with potentially destructive energies. Musicians who as members share control of their organisations have an incentive to monitor the performance of their peers. Not doing so exposes their orchestras or ensembles to the consequences of falling performance standards. In competitive marketplaces, these include reduced revenue from ticket sales and recordings, less hiring by promoters, and the loss of opportunities to engage with high-profile conductors and soloists. On the other hand, musicians' monitoring of peers may foster high levels of awareness for their own performance. In the PGOs studied, there are, however, risks that, in the absence of agreed performance measures, responsibilities for making decisions about the work of members dissipates in a sea of personal loyalties and rivalries.

The literature on mutual monitoring in LMFs suggests that it is one of their key strengths, because it is supposed to minimise shirking, build engagement, and foster collegiality (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Ben-Ner, 1988; Bowles and Gintis, 1993; Hansmann, 1996). As Lehman (2002) noted, mutual monitoring is far from being simple, straight-forward or an unalloyed strength of player-governance (p. 146). Nonetheless, monitoring performance is an essential prerequisite for optimising player-governance, and this research showed that these PGOs worked hard to address the dilemmas involved and to balance the inherent tensions. Mutual monitoring in a sector that lacks clear and widely agreed performance measures is more difficult and demanding than the LMF literature allows. To ensure their sustainability, PGOs must be able to balance the need for effective performance monitoring with the lack of objective measures and the resulting potential for conflict and tension.

Martin highlighted the stakes and tensions involved in peer monitoring among musicians:

If person A, sitting next to person B, starts playing sharp, and they may have

been playing together for fifteen years or twenty years, since day one ... when ... they hadn't considered that fifteen years down the line they may be sitting next to a peer who is underperforming and they'd have to do something about it, and if they didn't do something about it, then the orchestra would simply become a band of brothers who gradually age and decay together and fall entirely into decline and into obscurity, where the audience ceases to be fee-paying and becomes friends and family who turn up on a social basis. And the orchestra does not want that. The orchestra wants to play at Salzburg ... it wants its donors and its support and it wants its international touring.

Patrick added to the list of challenges and highlighted the contradictions:

We are all one level, it's democratic. ... This then leads to the problem that you need some kind of body with a mandate to be able to say, "look, if someone is slipping" — you don't have to throw someone out — but you have to be able to talk to them before it gets too late. That is contradictory in our structure, because we need someone, or a group of people, with that mandate, but on the other hand we are democratic and we decide everything.

Susanna highlighted the inherent dilemma and raised the first of the key themes in this section when she said of peer monitoring that "players do question it and say "who has got the right to question a colleague's playing?" None of us have got that right. But we haven't given anybody else that right either." Thus the stakes are high, and there is a fundamental tension between the hierarchical nature of monitoring and the democratic logic of player-governance.

The thoughts of several interviewees clustered to form the second important theme of this section: the emotional and social burden of mutual monitoring. Sophie described the discussions involved as "extremely contentious" and Mario called the process "super painful." Maria described dealing with a case of unsatisfactory performance as a

“totally difficult subject” that was “brutal” and “really awful” while “cost(ing) us very much discussion, energy and nerves.” Susanna felt it was “absolutely the hardest thing we have to do” and thought that “for some outsiders, that is a great reason not to be in the [name of orchestra omitted], because they see the difficulty of that.” Simon also noted that:

Politically, it is very difficult to speak with colleagues and to find a way of saying, “your artistic quality is not sufficient for this thing at the moment, we need to rotate,” or something like that. That is always a very sensitive point.

Various explanations for why mutual monitoring is so difficult emerged from the interviews.

The absence of objective measures in musical performance was one element. Martin spoke about this lack of objective measurements and performance indicators that might support mutual monitoring:

If you are a footballer, people can really tell if you don’t score goals. ... But when someone’s really not playing well in an ensemble, when they are a little bit out of tune, sometimes you get this leprechaun problem where it’s fine one day and then it’s a problem again. It’s very difficult to take a measured, responsible approach to that and not be accused of gerrymandering or abusing the process, because the empirical data doesn’t exist. You cannot refer to “facts” in artistic performance. You can only really refer to opinions. ... And that is another reason why the burden of self-governance is so heavy.

Socialisation in a specific profession is a further challenge to mutual monitoring. It occurs during professional training and education and continues in the workplace and within firms. Mario said this of life in his PGO:

The activities are very closely interwoven and that, “I turn up at work and go home at the end of the day and have my private life or an existence in addition

to my job,” that is much more difficult with this kind of music-making because the private and professional are much more interwoven. And when professional conflicts or challenges arise, through poor performance or the like, that is something that impacts your whole life.

Richard mentioned the difficulty of “all sitting together on stage and having an unpleasant discussion, for example about quality — who is playing how well.” The result can be that “in the end we have to come together and play music, even though beforehand there was not a single point of agreement, no harmony, nothing. That is very, very difficult.”

It is perhaps inevitable that in the face of such challenges, some of the interviewees longed for a more traditional and hierarchical model of performance monitoring.

Richard observed that:

I think, we all wish that there was some external person who is neutral and makes a judgement call, where we can simply say, “He is to blame, he is evil, he is the bad guy.” That would be a great relief for us. But on the other hand, that is simply part of it.

Walter spoke in similar terms:

We have, of course, had to deal with these problems and it’s very difficult. We don’t have a fixed conductor, who often takes this role elsewhere, who can be the “bad guy” and then go. The orchestra members stay together for a longer time. It is very tricky.

In a statement quoted at the opening of this chapter, Susanna noted that while the “bad-guy” model was seductive, it was unworkable in a player-governed context. Working under dictatorial conductors was “so much easier” because it allowed players to “all hate the dictator together,” but in a PGO, she thought that “you absolutely can’t

do it.”

Mutual monitoring clearly presents considerable challenges, but some of the interviews showed that it also fostered positive attitudes, in particular, responsibility for performance quality and a culture of self-assessment and monitoring. Herbert noted that:

In an orchestra in which the musicians are all equal, every musician has a great responsibility to the others. That means always checking well, is the quality of the performance that I'm delivering sufficient and good for what we collectively want?

In the words of other interviewees, there was also a connection between this sense of responsibility and player-governance. Sophie said that “if something is not good, you have to do something about it yourself. Who else is going to do it?” This approach was reinforced by Mario, who said that “you can’t delegate the responsibility and you can’t put it off. You have to take responsibility yourself and you have to take responsibility in the context of friends or family-like surroundings.” This, in turn, feeds into high levels of self-awareness and self-monitoring, as illustrated by this exchange between Leo and Daniel about quality review during monthly meetings:

Leo: We discuss the concerts that have taken place and then people will say of a guest musician: “He was great, but I wouldn’t ask him to do the other piece.” There is also room for self-criticism and criticism among the members. One is definitely allowed to say, “you did not play well in this piece.”

Daniel: There has to be an internal forum for self-criticism. But the interesting thing for me is the way that this self-criticism works. In my experience, the self-criticism functions on a personal level and one uses one’s colleagues as a model for one’s own comparison and self-criticism. This, of course, works very, very well, because you deal with it all yourself and then you do your very best to

give your colleagues no opportunity to criticise you about the standard and quality of your performance.

Interviewer: So, performance maintenance is primarily based on self-reflection?

Daniel: In terms of instrumental performance, yes. I think it is different in other areas. But certainly, in terms of instrumental performance, that is [the case].

This combination of responsibility for the organisation and rigorous self-monitoring promises to deliver benefits.

The final group of interview statements in this section attempts to deal with issues raised by the processes and procedures of maintaining performance standards. Susanna spoke of a need for such arrangements: “you have to work out strategies for who is deciding, how do you decide? Who has got that role? Otherwise you end up in terrible, muddy waters.” Walter commented that:

Over time, we have developed some procedures to cope with that. Everybody knows what they are, whether it's a behaviour problem or whether it's a playing problem. When that happens, we tell the musician they have some time to fix problems and if that's not the case they will eventually go back onto probation, there is a trial period and we all have to vote. It's very unpleasant. Fortunately, we haven't had to do it very often, partly because everyone understands that it's like being a chamber musician or a soloist, you can't just sit there and relax.

Documented processes are, nonetheless, unlikely to suffice when tackling such a complex and highly charged dilemma. They are not panaceas. Several interviewees pointed out the inevitable difficulties such processes may entail. Mario noted that, while:

There are written statutes with rules covering things such as breaches of conduct or artistic underperformance, ... there is, on the one hand the abstract

thinking of the rules, and then there is the emotional aspect, and finding the right balance, without causing enormous friction or other conflicts, that is a great challenge, as in any social mechanism.

Angela felt that her orchestra's documented performance maintenance procedures were "saying one thing and doing another." The anonymous nature of feedback in some procedures was also a source of friction that came through in comments she made, and that brought home the highly charged nature of mutual monitoring:

You're invited to give feedback at the end of every project, and you can give anonymous feedback. You're being asked to grass on people and remain anonymous. I think that is despicable. ... I will not write feedback and remain anonymous. I want to own every note that I play and own every word that I say. I don't need to be anonymous. ... I work hard to keep my standards up. They can fire me tomorrow if my standards are not good enough. I want them to, I hope I recognise it before they do. I want people to tell me when I'm playing out of tune, or too fast, or too slow. Not to find out about it a month later through nasty letters from a little gang ... who all want to remain anonymous. It's destructive. I also want to be told when I'm doing something really well. I want to be told immediately: "That's wonderful," as well as, "That didn't work." It's important. We need to express to each other with absolute honesty. I want tough love.

The interviews indicate that mutual monitoring among orchestral musicians is an important but contested element of player-governance that results from players' decision to take responsibility for artistic control, and with it, performance quality. Taking control of and responsibility for artistic decisions brings with it the responsibility to deal with its less enjoyable side: addressing problems of inadequate performance. At such moments, some of the players interviewed would welcome the opportunity to pass this responsibility back to a "bad-guy" music director, even when they acknowledged

that this longing implies the reinstatement of a hierarchy that is antithetical to player-governance. The discussion now moves from performance monitoring to a focus on recruiting players, another essential element in optimising performance and building sustainability in a competitive marketplace.

6.2 Recruiting players

Members of LMFs have an interest in ensuring that the work quality and productivity of recruits are at least as high as those of existing members. As Dow (2003) observed, “in their roles as decision-makers, residual claimants, and asset owners, LMF insiders have a keen interest in the characteristics of any new member” (p. 159). This interest is even greater in sectors that demand high levels of human capital, such as orchestral performance. Recruits must be excellent musicians. In PGOs, they must also be able and willing to work in player-led governance structures, to meaningfully contribute to decision-making, and, at a minimum, be open to the possibility of taking on a governance role. Hiring processes that deal with such a breadth of skills and attitudes are inevitably more comprehensive than those that assess little more than a musician’s playing proficiency. It is these interests and processes that are investigated in this section, where I argue that recruitment to PGOs is a more complex and time-consuming process than in externally governed orchestras; Lehman (2002) reached a similar conclusion. At the same time, this thorough, multifaceted recruitment is germane to sustaining player-governance. Recruitment to the PGOs studied plays a role in their governance sustainability by ensuring that potential new members are as committed to their governance model as were the founders.

Before turning to the organisational side of recruitment, I consider the process from the side of potential players and ask what motivates musicians to seek membership. Do musicians simply want to play with the best possible orchestra or ensemble, irrelevant of governance type? Or does governance play a role for musicians making career

choices? Patrick reported being “happy to play with a good orchestra.” He also felt that what made his “the most interesting orchestra” was “not directly the fact that it was self-governing and self-run, but the things that I realised came, consciously or subconsciously, from that.” He surmised that “it appeals to a certain sort of person, regardless of the quality of music-making.” Members described disparate motivations for seeking membership in these PGOs.

In contrast to Patrick, Herbert thought that it was “becoming more the case that the people are interested simply because it is a fantastic orchestra.” He also highlighted the level of individual connection players may feel when he said that “as a musician, you always want to play with other fantastic players and to show the others that you can also play fantastically.” Walter, similarly, felt that new players “sometimes ... just want to join because it’s artistically attractive,” though he also noted that “people who stay are obviously interested in the artistic goals, but they will also fit in the spirit.” For some members, the benefits of player-governance appear secondary to the search for work in a high-quality orchestra.

I turn now to the organisational perspective on recruitment. The attitudes of the interviewees in the following quotes can be clustered around three themes: the importance of recruitment in PGOs, the attention paid to factors other than musical proficiency, and the resulting complexity when both of these considerations are combined.

The importance of recruitment was at the heart of comments made by Sophie, who explained that “it is important for us to get to know the people a little, how they tick, what they are like in such a community. That’s why it takes so long, sometimes too long.” This sense of community came through when she added that “who plays with us is the most important thing. That is the most important decision of all in the orchestra,

and that's why it takes a while." The sociological dynamics of music performance make successful recruitment crucial in PGOs.

Walter concurred when he said that "partly the reason the orchestra has remained the way it is, is the very strong method of recruitment." Maria, speaking about the centrality of the democratic ethos in her PGO, also stressed the primacy of recruitment. She felt that it was "the most important [factor for success] of all," and "the reason why we have been successfully together for so long." She went on to explain that "from the start, we placed the greatest importance on the interpersonal. The musical was — it would be going too far to say it was of secondary importance — of equal importance." Her closing words highlighted the role of the personal: "We have never taken someone on who was fantastic but whom we didn't want as a person. ... We don't take on people whom we don't already know." Herbert supported this line of thinking when he noted that:

We are a very special ensemble that works together a lot. We do a lot of concerts together and when we find someone, they also have to fit with us in many respects, need to have the right personality that complements the people who are already here, in the various groups and in the ensemble as a whole.

A third group of comments clustered around the idea that the recruitment processes in the PGOs studied were protracted. For some interviewees, this was a positive feature and a sign of thoroughness. Walter observed that: "it's a long procedure to become a member. There are several stages and it's not just a straight audition and probation period as in most orchestras. ... I think that makes a big difference." Herbert highlighted the time involved transitioning from supernumerary musician to member: "We don't hold auditions and a day later whoever won it is a partner, rather, we invite people to play with us." He went on to explain that "sometimes that lasts one, two years or perhaps longer" before members, having established that the player in question "fits

in with us, ... [we] have a vote, without [the player's] knowledge, and decide whether he or she can be a partner with us. It's only then that we speak to the musician and ask, 'Could you imagine it?'" Membership in these PGOs involves much more than instrumental proficiency. A thorough recruitment system, even when time-consuming, has a central role in making player-governance work.

Walter mentioned similar ideas about the familiarisation of potential new members with the orchestra: "When you spend a lot of time on the road in an orchestra, even if you are not a member, you participate in so much that you can feel if it's tense, or relaxed, whether it's happy or less happy." He also described how this familiarisation could extend to attending meetings in advance of becoming a member:

The recruitment process lasts quite a while, so by the time people are members, they have already attended some of the meetings. We invite them to meetings when they are in the final stages of their trials so that they know what is going on.

Sebastian commented on the relative importance of the audition and the subsequent trial period during which suitability as a member is established: "What you learn about the player from the audition is really the prerequisite, and what the player then shows of themselves on trial is finally much more important than what they demonstrate in an audition."

Not everyone was approving of such lengthy recruitment processes, however. Patrick explained his dislike for it: "I think that it's bad. I don't think it's a good process. I don't think what we have is a 'process'. It's more like happenstance." He felt that it was "really difficult for us because we are touring and there are so many different types of program. This means that often members aren't there and it is very difficult to do." Martin was likewise concerned that "the decision-making activity associated with

appointing people in an orchestra, on trial is really hard. It almost always ends up taking up a huge amount of time.” Long member recruitment procedures can create friction and tension.

Members make the decisions involved in recruitment in the PGOs studied. In most cases, there are separate processes for auditions that precede engagement as a supernumerary and for subsequent acceptance as a member (when membership is an option). A probationary period of twelve months or more between these processes is common. In the smallest organisation I considered, a candidate for membership needs the unanimous approval of members. Among the others, the approval of two thirds or three quarters of the membership is typically required for membership. In the only orchestra with a music director in my cohort, only one vote is granted to the holder of that position.³⁵ In contrast, audition panels in externally governed orchestras normally consist of a much smaller group of players along with the music director, who may have a veto or a weighted vote (Lehman, 2002). In such cases, recruitment usually happens solely through an audition, which may be concluded in only an hour or two, though extended probation periods are also common.

As noted in chapter 3, orchestras rely on high levels of human capital. An important area in which they can gain a marketplace advantage is the proficiency of their players and the performance of the collective. This is, though, true of all professional orchestras and ensembles, irrelevant of their governance structures. The extra challenge in PGOs is to ensure that new, enfranchised members are as committed to the democratic, player-governed ethos as were their founders. A failure to do so runs the risk of eroding the collective commitment to player-governance, and therefore a

³⁵ The experience of the Auckland Philharmonia is highly salient to the question of music directors voting in a PGO. Considerable tension resulted when a revision of its constitution granted the music director a 33 per cent weighted vote in artistic decisions, and one disgruntled member even took legal action (Bathurst et al., 2007).

serious challenge to its sustainability.

When it comes to recruitment, the primary difference between PGOs and most other LMFs lies in the former's labour structures. The number of musicians engaged by an orchestra or ensemble is primarily determined by musical factors. For PGOs to be able to recruit members, a range of musical indicators must require it. It is not possible for PGOs to offer supernumerary players more-or-less automatic conversion to membership based solely on length of service or some economic indicator, as might be possible in other business partnerships. PGO models have similarities with the partnerships found in many legal, consulting, medical and accounting firms; that is, sectors in which levels of human capital are high. However, PGOs differ from them because musical factors play such a decisive role. As previously discussed, membership numbers in the PGOs studied are determined by musical factors such as repertoire and programming choices. The PGOs I researched have upper limits on their membership numbers that are dictated by the demand for musicians' labour. Exceeding these numbers only reduces the amount of work for existing members.

6.3 Managing generational change

Managing generational change is a key sustainability problem for PGOs that are seeking to optimise performance. It challenges them to modify their identities from member-specific organisations to long-horizon firms that embody collective ideas above and beyond the interests and engagement of individual members. Generational change presents PGOs with two key challenges. The first is the added difficulty of mutual monitoring when it needs to respond to age-related declines in playing proficiency. The second is maintaining a commitment to player-governance as founding members leave, in some cases as a result of retirement. Orchestral work demands high-level motor skills and psychological resilience (Halleland et al., 2009; Sternbach, 1995). Research shows that most musicians find manual dexterity difficult to sustain as

they age (Brandfonbrener, 2003; Gembris and Heye, 2014; Manturzewska, 1990). In 2014, the third international orchestra conference concluded that “a significant number of players can face psychological and physical impairments that adversely affect their ability to perform before they reach retirement age or can afford to retire” (*Conclusions of the 3rd international orchestra conference, 2014*). The delicacy of discussion required in dealing with end-of-career transitions is amplified when the organisations concerned have the flat structures of PGOs. Here, the decision to broach the subject of age-related proficiency decline must be made by peers who may be close, long-term colleagues and friends. In some cases, new players are former students of musicians whose skills may be waning as the result of ageing. Such conversations are even more challenging when the players concerned are founding members of their PGOs.

Kirsten highlighted the dilemma: “The inherent problem with being a young, pioneering orchestra is that we get old, and our playing ability decreases and no human being is very good at recognising that.” Maria concurred: “At the moment we have a quite explosive issue: we are getting older and there will be cases when someone won’t be able to deliver the performance that we are looking for.” Patrick summarised the risks:

If you look at other self-governing orchestras that have a similar provenance to us, they have often started like we did as a youth orchestra, idealistic, wanting to change things and then they have gone through together, so they have all been twenty to thirty [years old] and twenty years later they are all forty to fifty and then twenty-five years later it is difficult, even verging on impossible, to maintain artistic standards for that length of time. We have to find ways to think about how to do that. It is a potentially very dangerous discussion to have.

Susanna noted how generational change played a role in a recent revision of the organisation’s governance:

What drove that was a feeling of disjunction. It was around the time when the

orchestra was twenty-five years old, so there were all sorts of questions to do with founding members hitting a certain age — a large group of people hitting similar ages at similar times — and what the impacts of that might be for the future. If they all decided to stop at the same time, you would suddenly have no orchestra.

Dealing with end-of-career transition among musicians is a problem that faces all orchestras. But the peer decision-making of player-governance adds extra challenges. Maria highlighted the difficulty of managing sensitive personnel decisions within a flat hierarchy:

We don't have a retirement age, nor do we have a boss who tells you, "Now you are sixty you can keep playing for two years and that'll be it," or who might say to a first flute, "it might be better if you go back to second." Our hierarchies are too flat for that.

For Angela, the lack of adequate pensions made the problem of asking players to consider retirement more difficult:

If, from day one ... every player ... had given a [small amount] of every fee into a pot for all of our pensions, we'd have a way to help people to leave, a very noble way, actually, a respectful way. I think we have not done that. We don't have that pot.

Other interviewees were conscious of the demands made by the profession and were open to the idea of pursuing other interests before retiring. Sophie said that:

I don't think that I want to be touring around the world until I retire. I can imagine that at a certain age many people start looking around to see if they can do something else, find a different orientation. It's quite good to have such a mix.

For Patrick, the chance to develop business skills within his PGO was an attractive way to build a second career and a motivation to join:

I don't think that I can be a performing musician my whole working life, I think it's too physically demanding. So, I thought it would be an opportunity to get a leadership role and see how the business side works and perhaps see that as springboard or pivot to something else.

Robert dealt with the challenge from both angles — as a member of the governance team responsible for dealing with end-of-career transitions, and himself reaching the later stages of his career:

I'm now at the stage at which my role in the [orchestra name omitted] is changing. I'm still a player member, but I'm now an associate principal. I'm not going to be the main principal player, I will be someone who they can call on to come and fill in when there are gaps. So, I'm very much in a transitional stage at the latter end of my playing career. I will carry on playing as a working musician for at least a good ten years, but not perhaps in the same way. ... I've been on both sides of the table, discussing personnel issues for other player members and then having to have discussions with [name of general manager omitted] about my own future. I can see things from both sides.

The retirement of founding players can occasion debates about the identities of PGOs.

Mario's thoughts highlight the issue:

For the orchestra it is still a great challenge to determine to what extent the orchestra is defined through its members, i.e., through the individual members of the association, or to what extent the orchestra is an idea that extends beyond the individuals, and is then an open container for new protagonists who then also have to find a meaningful place in it. ... And to what extent [the orchestra] is a life form that works for everybody or only for a certain group of people, or also for those for whom it is a stage-of-life project, and for others again a project that is at the centre of their lives. That is something that is always fluid and that generates discussion.

The idea of a PGO as a flexible “container” that provides a framework within which there is room for evolution as new members join and make it their own is a subtle but important element in the sustainability of player-governance. Robert, a founding member of his PGO, spoke to the theme of bridging the generations from the perspectives of new members:

They might look at us and say, “What right do we newcomers have to make decisions?” But we look at them and say, “Well, you have got every right to make decisions, because you are so good at what you do and it’s going to be your future.” This is an issue that we will be addressing in years to come. It’s only coming to the fore as people are now starting to retire and create generational change. Now there is a significant number of younger members. In the past there were only a few. We have new members on [the artistic committee] who are helping make the decisions. [Name removed] is one of our leaders who was appointed four or five years ago and is now also on the board. There is certainly a willingness to pass on to the next generation and let them make of it what they will.

The interviewees were generally confident that it was possible to maintain the commitment to player-governance as founding members were replaced. Sophie said that “the people who join and stay are people for whom that [democratic ethos] is just as important. ... When you find the right people, I can see that it extends quite wonderfully.” Mario agreed:

Interviewer: Can this spirit, this ethos, that special quality of the orchestra be retained? Is it passed on?

Mario: Yes, I think so, simply because it is a particular way of working. ... I think there are people in each generation who want to work in this way.

Ensuring that the best possible musicians are performing at any time is essential for

the success of all orchestras and ensembles. Doing so requires the recruitment and retention of the best players possible, as discussed above. It also needs a respectful, supportive, and dignified process for assisting musicians who are no longer able to consistently perform at the required standard because of age-related loss of proficiency. Addressing retirement becomes challenging when players themselves are unable or unwilling to recognise and acknowledge that they are no longer playing at that level. As Kirsten observed of the recognition that playing proficiency usually declines with age, “no human being is very good at recognising that.”

The risk for PGOs is that the difficult nature of a process that requires peers to manage each other’s end-of-career transition invites procrastination in dealing with age-related performance decline. Indeed, the sustainability of player-governance is linked to the ability to successfully manage generational change. The interviewees were conscious that end-of-career transitions are rarely easy, and the challenges involved are heightened by the relatively flat hierarchies of PGOs. However, retirement is not the only element involved in successful generational change. Departing members need to be replaced by players who share their commitment to player-governance and who have the skills required to sustain and develop it during a future that will present new challenges and contexts. PGOs must create an environment that welcomes and facilitates governance engagement by new members.

The earlier discussion concerning founding logics made it clear that artistic motivations such as the desire to perform with specific colleagues, along with the economic rationale of minimising precarious work, were far more important than any idea of establishing any long-term enterprise. Interviewees’ comments on the early years of their PGOs suggest that specific membership was a key element of organisational identity during the early years. The ability of the PGOs in the cohort to remain sustainable, as they continue into the second and third decades of their existence,

indicates that in the intervening years they indeed do change into “open container[s] for new protagonists” that “extend beyond the individuals.”

The PGOs studied are still struggling with the challenges and dilemmas of generational change, and no simple, flexible and painless approach to it emerged from the interviews. Managing change effectively is central to the operation and sustainability of these PGOs, particularly those that are grappling with the retirement of their founding members. The next section turns to an allied theme and the final element of performance optimisation: recruitment.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined player-led activities that seek to maintain the highest possible standards of performance, namely the monitoring of performance and dealing with cases of deficiency, the managing of age-related declines in performance standards, and the recruitment of new members with the highest possible instrumental proficiency. All three are central to achieving the highest possible standards on stage.

In the second section of the chapter I examined recruitment, and a now familiar pattern emerged: recruitment is made more complex, but also more thorough, in a player-governed context. Taking on the most proficient musicians available is essential for any orchestra or ensemble. The PGOs studied also work hard to ensure that new recruits embrace, understand and support player-governance. The recruitment of suitable new members is central to sustaining player-governance.

I could have treated age-related decline in performance as just another type of proficiency loss, along with loss linked to physical or mental health problems, family-related problems, or substance abuse. I decided, however, to treat age-related decline and retirement separately for two reasons. Firstly, age-related proficiency declines are

not usually reversible or “treatable” in the way that health problems may be. More importantly in the player-governed context, age-related declines in performance, especially when they are experienced by founding members, can have wider implications than simply an organisation’s need to manage the retirement of an individual musician. In a PGO, such a player might also be a senior board member or other governance officer. Their retirement could have far-reaching implications for governance. Here again, the existence of parallel decision-making structures in the PGOs studied can create difficulties. A member’s governance skills, experience and expertise might reach their zenith just as their instrumental proficiency begins to suffer from age-related decline. Separating the two structures — governance and performance — so that, for example, a senior board member might be allowed to continue in that role while retiring from performance, would pose a serious threat to the basic principle of player-governance. It would also considerably increase the risk of senior governance officers gradually becoming an oligarchy. The sustainability of player-governance is, then, dependent on a PGO’s ability to successfully and sensitively regenerate membership, particularly when founding members retire.

7 PGOs as LMFs

Analysis and synthesis of the preceding three chapters now come to the fore, as this chapter presents a picture of player-governed orchestras as a type of labour-managed firm. The process incorporates the labour-management viability conditions proposed by Dow (2003) and Jensen and Meckling (1979), and relates these to the features and operations of PGOs. The chapter foregrounds the essential features of PGOs as a type of LMF. Writers on labour-management have said little about not-for-profit firms (see Borzaga and Sacchetti (2015) and Taylor (2015) for two exceptions). PGOs' focus on utilities other than profit sharing sets them apart from the LMFs typically considered in the literature. Similarly, the work of orchestral musicians, like that of many other cultural industries workers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), differs in important ways from that of other workers in today's economy (Allmendinger et al., 1996; Bennett, 2008; Cottrell, 2004). Orchestral players have unique proclivities for labour-management in the abstract and face specific challenges when actually establishing and running PGOs. These firms represent special examples of labour-management in practice, and studying them enriches the literature on LMFs.

How decisions are made about who votes in PGOs is the focus in section 7.1. The contexts and parameters of orchestras' operations set PGOs apart from most other LMFs. Orchestras display a clear division between two groups of workers — players and administrators — that challenges some theoretical positions about membership and voting rights in LMFs. Orchestras' not-for-profit status is a further important characteristic of the firms studied, whereas the distribution of profits to members is a crucial element in most theoretical LMF models. Section 7.2 investigates the alternative utility, incentives and responsibilities partners have through their membership of a PGO. Artistic control and employment security emerge as the most salient alternatives

to profit-share. In section 7.3, I consider the renegotiation of authority in PGOs. Vertical authority structures are deeply rooted in orchestras and at first glance such firms might appear to be unsuitable sites for worker control. Yet the PGOs I studied have developed pragmatic solutions to the realignment and renegotiation of the authority systems inherent in orchestral music-making. These three features — deciding who votes in PGOs, mapping the incentives and utility that shape their operations and structures, and the renegotiating of authority — are the essential features of PGOs that encapsulate these firms' specific contribution to the labour-management literature.

7.1 Who votes in a PGO?

Workers who establish and seek to sustain control of their organisations must agree on the best voting franchise for their firms. Defining voting rights is easier when a firm's workers have relatively homogenous interests (Dow, 2003). For Benham and Keefer (1991), "homogeneity of voter interests ... reduces disagreement and eases voter fears that firm policies will diverge a great deal from their own interests" (p. 709). In the PGOs studied, however, musicians and management staff constitute distinct groups and voting rights must accommodate their different interests. Patrick outlined some of the questions involved in delineating a franchise when he mentioned some of the possible voting groups: players, "the office" and non-members who regularly play with the orchestra. Various combinations of these three groups might constitute a voting franchise in a PGO. Which possible franchises exist in a PGO, then, and does one of them promise greater governance sustainability than the others? The following discussion responds to these questions, based on an analysis of how the PGOs in this study sustain control by workers despite having to deal with divergent worker constituencies. Understanding the dynamics of voting and membership in the context of heterogenous worker interests provides a valuable empirical contribution to the labour-management literature.

Giving all workers membership and voting rights seems the most straightforward way to create a franchise. Orchestras have various worker constituencies, including musicians and management, full and part-time workers, new recruits and old hands. A franchise could include or exclude any of these groups. Voting rights might reflect an orchestra's division of labour between players and management staff. Other criteria could further subdivide these groups. Years of service, for instance, could serve as an eligibility criterion; voting rights would then be restricted to workers who have completed a probation period.³⁶ Already, various possible franchises start to emerge.

A franchise that differentiates between workers who work a lot and those who work less frequently might also make sense. For office staff, for example, a division between full-time and part-time workers could be appropriate. In the case of players, voting might be restricted to those who work more than a specified fraction of whatever counts as full commitment. Such an arrangement exists, for example, in the LSO. Its rules stipulate that members "perform in at least 85% of the major London concerts which are subsidised by the Arts Council" (Lehman, 2002, p. 254). In the following discussion of franchises, the terms "sufficient-hours players" or "sufficient-hours managers" describe players and managing staff who meet time-fraction requirements.

Combining the musicians/management and hours-worked categories produces four potential voter groups: sufficient-hours players/insufficient-hours players and sufficient-hours managers/insufficient-hours managers. Additional franchises result from combining these groups in various ways, but in the PGOs studied, only five qualify as realistic and deserving of further consideration. The following analysis excludes combinations that involve musicians disenfranchising themselves. Such franchises are

³⁶ Musicians seeking membership in the Vienna Philharmonic, for instance, must have completed at least three years of service in the Vienna State Opera orchestra (<https://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/orchestra/tradition>).

unrealistic because musicians founded all of the firms studied and in normal circumstances would have little interest in giving up their voting rights.³⁷ Five groupings remain and appear in Table 8. A discussion of them forms the basis of this section.

In practice, all of the orchestras studied have adopted the last of the franchises in Table 8 (LP/NM). They all restrict membership and voting rights to players — thereby excluding management staff, unless they are also players — while engaging some players as unenfranchised supernumeraries, thus limiting membership to a subset of all their musicians. The basic principle holds that musicians who perform more than a certain amount of the PGO's total work may qualify for membership and voting rights. In reality, the process of setting such dividing lines is complex. Susanna made this clear when she described her PGO's governance restructuring and its attempt to “make a demarcation” between enfranchised and unenfranchised musicians. The result was “[an] area around the line [that] gets terribly messy.” In this case, some players were excluded from the franchise “because of where they are on the fixing lists.” The choices involved in establishing a franchise have important implications for the sustainability of player-governance. In the remainder of this section I explore the rationales involved.

37 Players have, however, given up their voting rights in at least two cases. In 1908 the musicians of the New York Philharmonic voted to accept a funding package from a group of philanthropists who required that the players gave up the orchestra's cooperative governance and institute a board controlled by the financiers (Aldrich, 1908; "Mahler to conduct the Philharmonic: Orchestra to be reorganized and the co-operative system to be dropped," 1909; *Meeting of the Philharmonic Society February 12 1909*, 1909; "Plans for Philharmonic: Mrs. Sheldon explains proposals for its reorganization," 1908). In 2005, the members of the Auckland Philharmonia voted for a similar transition from cooperative to corporate structure after operating for 25 years as a PGO (Bathurst et al., 2007; Bathurst and Monin, 2010).

Franchise type	Franchise name	Code	Summary	Comments
Unlimited	All players/all management	AP/AM	Players in/management in	All management staff and players are granted membership and are enfranchised
Limited by working hours	Limited players/limited management	LP/LM	Sufficient-hours players in/insufficient-hours players out Sufficient-hours management in/insufficient-hours management out	Management staff and players who work more than a defined share of total commitment are granted membership and are enfranchised
Limited by type of work	All players/no management	AP/NM	Players in/management out	Membership and enfranchisement are granted to players but not management staff
Limited by type of work and working hours	Limited players/no management	LP/NM	Sufficient-hours players in/insufficient-hours players out Sufficient-hours management out/insufficient-hours management out	Only players who work more than a defined number of hours per year are granted membership and are enfranchised. Management staff are not enfranchised

Table 8. Possible voting franchises in PGOs

Comparing the literature on voting rights in LMFs to the practices of the PGOs studied reveals essential differences. Much of such writing warns that dividing an LMF's workforce into members with voting rights and hired labour without the same entitlements leads to degeneration in labour-management. Pencavel's (2013) overview of the literature highlighted how "the worker co-op has been described as an impermanent production unit that changes its participatory qualities over time" because its "incentive is to replace departing member-workers with hired workers (wage

employees)” (online article, no page). He warned of the possibility that “over time, an organization that starts with all workers being members and all members being workers becomes one in which most workers are hired employees and only a remnant of worker-members remains” (ibid.). Ben-Ner (1984), writing about stability in producer cooperatives (PCs), cautioned that “the only sure way to void the transformation of a PC into a capitalist firm appears to be prohibition on hiring wage-laborers” (p. 259). Dow (2018) was more cautious, concluding that “the general temptation” to “replace departing members with hired employees” was “real, but in practice it can be (and often is) restrained through institutional mechanisms” (pp. 107–108). The widespread use of hired labour is common in professional partnerships (Leblebici and Sherer, 2015) and medical practice (Hansmann, 1990), where it does not seem to cause degeneration.

An orchestra’s handling of players and the management team is the first feature to require attention when considering franchises (AP/NM and LP/NM in Table 8). Operating staff and musicians both depend on the success and sustainability of their firms, but in the firms studied, only players have the right to vote. The way orchestras are established helps explain the difference. The initial idea to set up any ensemble or orchestra almost invariably comes from a conductor, a group of players or an individual musician. Management staff may have roles from the start, but they do not provide the impetus. The founding members in the PGOs studied were almost all players.³⁸ Being present at the outset does not, however, count as a criterion for enfranchisement, because sufficient-hours musicians taken on later are also granted membership and voting rights. Other factors must be considered.

The data I collected from the interviewees shed light on how a limited franchise might be more sustainable than extending voting rights to all the employees of an orchestra.

³⁸ In one case, a musician in an early incarnation of one of the PGOs in my study subsequently stopped playing and became the chief executive.

Musicians' and management workers' diverging interests in artistic control and insecure work soon come into focus. Patrick, Susanna, Claudia and Angela made this clear. Patrick highlighted the desire of musicians to retain artistic control in the face of others wanting to "call the artistic shots." Angela emphasised the primacy of controlling musicians' "musical destiny." For management staff, having artistic control is, though, not as critical. They do have an interest in programming, to the extent to which it shapes an orchestra's earning potential and continuing commercial success, and thus their long-run employment security. Programming that leads to what Susanna called "box-office death" can imperil an orchestra's survival as a firm and endanger the jobs of management staff and players alike. Marketing, development or financial managers do not, however, work with conductors or performance leaders in the way that players do, and nor do they have the corresponding desire to recast the orchestra-conductor relationships that emerged in chapter 5.

The second significant divergence in the interests of players and management staff concerns job security. For musicians in the orchestras studied, the search for improved security is a crucial factor, one that reflects the labour market for musicians and the fluctuating demand for their work. On the other hand, sectors such as marketing, accounting or project managing generally offer higher security than musicians have (DHA Communications, 2012; Scharff, 2017). Therefore, two broadly similar yet distinct interest groups emerge and create a dilemma for orchestras seeking to implement control by workers. Combining players and office workers in a single, all-worker franchise risks creating a fractious control structure that struggles to accommodate the diverging interests of the two constituencies and eventually proves unsustainable. On the other hand, a franchise excluding management staff because their interests differ from those of players may reduce a labour-managed orchestra to what Dow (2003) — writing about LMFs in general — called a "pale imitation of democratic procedures" (p. 201). In the face of such a dilemma, a focus on governance sustainability and

stability suggests that a franchise preferencing musicians is most likely to succeed.

The PGOs I studied give voting rights to players but withhold them from management staff. Such a differing treatment of workers in the same firm supports governance survival by mirroring the division of labour, divergent labour markets and the resulting differences in the interests of the two groups. The literature supports this conclusion. Dow (2003) observed how “when workers do not have uniform tasks or skills, voting rights in LMFs are often confined to a subset of the workforce, with others being hired as employees or contractors” (p. 204). Restricting the number of voters may also expedite and simplify decision-making — a goal that democratic control may struggle to realise (Benham and Keefer, 1991; Dow, 2001, 2003; M. C. Jensen and Meckling, 1979). Dow (2001) noted that such efficiency gains might result from “disenfranchising groups such as clerical workers whose interests diverge from those of the dominant coalition” (p. 208). Restricting voting rights to musicians, as the PGOs in this study do, appears to bolster labour-management.

The exclusion of management staff from membership may be viewed by LMF theorists as counter to the participatory principle at the heart of labour-management, but it might actually protect player-governance against oligarchic forms of degeneration when a small leadership team emerges and increasingly takes control without meaningful reference to the wider membership. Among the PGOs studied, managers accrue control by virtue of their centrality to their organisations, their access to information, or their specialist leadership and management skills. Such skills are necessary for the success of a PGO, but such specialisation clearly poses a threat of “oligarchisation” (Diefenbach, 2018, p. 3). Some LMFs have sought to address this risk by rotating members through leadership and management positions or imposing term limits on member-managers (Cornforth, 1995). Engaging management as hired labour, as all but one of the PGOs in the research do, is an alternative bulwark against the risk of

oligarchic management castes. This approach treats managers as hired specialists, akin to consultants, who provide specific services to the membership but who can be more easily removed and thus controlled because they are not members and do not have voting rights. In a similar way, engaging conductors on a project basis and at the discretion of members prevents their accretion of excessive control. Conductors, too, are engaged as specialists who bring performance efficiency and artistic profiles but who are subject to ultimate governance control by members.

This section concentrated on the balances between the two key stakeholder groups in PGOs. In it, I argued that the engagement of management staff as hired labour with no voting rights was a rational response to the division of labour within the PGOs studied and to the ways in which labour markets for musicians and management workers differ. The PGOs of this research consistently restrict membership, and with it voting rights, to a segment of their workforce (players), while engaging management staff as hired labour. The latter do not enjoy the same rights and powers to shape their PGOs that enfranchised players do. This flies in the face of traditional labour-management thinking, which argues that the contracting of hired labour threatens the sustainability of the participatory ethos if the share of unenfranchised workers grows (Dow, 2018). In the case of this research cohort, however, I argue that in their accommodation of the divergent labour-market dynamics between musicians and management workers, these PGOs represent a successful and sustainable model of labour-management.

7.2 Utility and incentives

Members enjoy various benefits from working in PGOs. The desire to maximise such benefits creates incentives to pursue some strategies rather than others. The interaction of these incentives with the parameters of orchestral work and its organisation creates a framework that is atypical among LMFs. Maximising monetary returns to members typically counts as a paramount goal for LMFs (Furubotn, 1976;

Kruse, 2013; Meade, 1972; Pencavel, Pistaferri, and Schivardi, 2006). In his groundbreaking treatise on labour-management, Vanek (1970) described the “maximization of income per laborer” as a “key operating principle” (p. 2), while Bowles and Gintis (1993) highlighted the same incentive, labelling it a “direct residual claimancy effect” (p. 93). In his overview of the literature, Pencavel (2013) likewise identified a “dividend maximization hypothesis” (online article, no page). Workers’ sharing in profits is usually a key rationale behind labour-management.

The writing of other theorists is more circumspect. Dow (2003) cautioned that “from the standpoint of the modern theory of the firm, it is not obvious that LMFs maximize anything” (p. 142). Instead, he observed that:

Firms are complicated coalitions in which each agent has her own preferences, information, and feasible actions. These coalitions face difficult coordination, bargaining, and incentive problems. Whether the strategic actions of individual labor and capital suppliers translate into the pursuit of some objective by the coalition as a whole is very much open to debate. (Dow, 2003, p. 142)

Jossa (2017) pursued similar thinking when he proposed benefits beyond maximising monetary returns and concluded that “the guiding principle of the cooperative firm is the criterion of maximising the well-being [of] workers, i.e. a compound of wages per worker, job stability and a number of additional non-pecuniary benefits such as pleasant working conditions” (p. 42).³⁹ This refocusing on a broader concept of “utility”

³⁹ Vanek (1970) also felt that a:

dimension ... deriving more from labor management than from income sharing — is the far greater ability of autonomous producer’ groups to take out their income from the enterprise not in the form of monetary or other physical returns but rather in the form of intangibles — such as longer vacations or a substitution of a conveyor belt for a wheelbarrow (p. 12).

(Jossa, 2018, p. 33) is pivotal to understanding incentives in not-for-profit LMFs, such as orchestras.

The study of PGOs as LMFs would be curtailed without the prospect of understanding control by musicians in the broader terms of utility rather than financial returns. In PGOs, other types of utility replace the maximising of pecuniary returns. Non-monetary benefits, including the right to exercise artistic control and increasing job security — the two most salient ideas to emerge from this research — act as alternative forms of utility in orchestras. The chance to maximise artistic control and employment security provides the members of the PGOs studied with real incentives for participation. In what follows, I explore artistic control and job security as forms of utility in PGOs, while remaining wary of projecting onto members a “pursuit of some objective by the coalition as a whole” (Dow, 2003, p. 142). The insights presented enrich the LMF literature by exploring alternative forms of utility and incentives in not-for-profit LMFs, a neglected field of labour-management studies.

Artistic control

The fundamental role of members in making artistic decisions in PGOs clearly emerged from the interviews. Artistic planning and programming are two of an orchestra’s pivotal management activities (Pompe et al., 2013) and members’ control of artistic matters is at the heart of PGOs. Other research has shown that musicians have a strong desire to be involved in artistic decisions. Schulz (1981) found that 83 per cent of the Vienna Symphony musicians he interviewed were “in favour of participation” in decision-making (p. 54). Rickert and colleagues (2013) investigated wellbeing among cellists in an Australian orchestra and found that “lack of creative input” led players to feel like “note producers” working in a “note factory” (p. 226). Other researchers have highlighted the stress and damage to health that can result when musicians feel

excluded from artistic control (Johansson and Theorell, 2003; Parasuraman and Purohit, 2000). Creation of a framework through which PGO members can take control of artistic decision-making is, then, a response to desires that are widely held among orchestral musicians.

The interviewees similarly described how important it was for members to control artistic decisions in PGOs. Martin and Walter thought that members' having such control was the essential element of player-governance, while Sophie spoke of it being the "core of everything." Leo highlighted how responsibility for artistic planning and programming flowed through into greater motivation for players to give their best on stage. Satisfying the desire of players to control some of the most important decisions made in managing an orchestra is, nonetheless, not the whole story. Allocating artistic authority to musicians also boosts efficiency and may reduce alienation (Jossa, 2017), with the result that members have a heightened sense of engagement and commitment.

The reduction of information asymmetries between workers and management is hailed as one of the advantages of labour-management (Dow, 2003; Hansmann, 1996). Strauss observed that worker participation in decision-making "may result in better decisions" (1998, p. 10) because "employees often have information which senior management lacks" (ibid.). Such participation, he argued, also allowed "different views to be aired" (ibid.) so that "groupthink is reduced" (ibid.). Player-governance takes artistic decision-making away from an artistic director and a small group of senior managers. Members' control brings artistic decisions into a broader forum of player representatives. Information is shared more widely, and the collective knowledge and experience of all members has the potential to shape the orchestra.

The potential for greater information sharing is an essential strength of member-led

artistic control in the PGOs I studied. The intellectual and artistic capital in an orchestra of thirty or forty highly trained musicians is considerable. Facilitating opportunities for members to share their experience, insights and perspectives is a crucial strength of these PGOs. The conversations balancing the idealism of players with the challenges of economically sustainable programming that Susanna described go to the heart of the PGO model. Robert likewise highlighted the shared understanding between players and board members. The taking control of artistic decision-making, the rejection of autocracy from conductors, and musicians having a sense that they can influence their professional futures are also central. Equally important are the conversations and understanding that are facilitated by the information exchange at the heart of player-governance.

Decisions on artistic questions must, however, balance competing factors (Pompe et al., 2011), some of which are beyond the control or influence of decision-makers, in particular, the varying demands for musicians made by different composers and works (Flanagan, 2012). Taking artistic control does not free PGO members from addressing the dilemmas of programming and artistic decision-making. These challenges involve creating programs and projects that build long-term audience loyalty and willingness to purchase tickets and recordings, while balancing production costs such as conductor, soloist and players' fees (Pompe et al., 2011). These challenges exist independently of the governance structure an orchestra adopts.

The interviewees were, nevertheless, well aware of the risks and conflicts that might arise through opportunistic and short-term artistic planning and programming by musicians. There is a risk that players opportunistically develop programs that primarily appeal to their interests with little concern for budgetary repercussions or marketing challenges. Robert spoke of the risk that player-governance would lead to musicians planning projects with little regard for financial considerations. However, the interviews

also indicated that players were conscious of such risks and introduced governance and management systems to ensure that programming and artistic planning consider financial implications. Susanna noted that in practice, members understood the compromises required. Robert spoke of checks and balances between the artistic ambitions of musicians and the concerns of marketing and fundraising professionals. The risk of members' substituting their artistic and economic interests for those of audience development appears manageable.

To further understand the importance of artistic control in orchestras as a form of member utility, it also helps to consider its potential for reducing alienation (Jossa, 2014, 2017). As part of their study of creative labour, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) developed a "model of good and bad work" (p. 25) that rests in part on ideas of worker alienation and responses to it. Their analysis is rooted in Karl Marx's thinking and Blauner's (1964) book on "alienation and freedom" in particular. Like Blauner, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) steered away from granting power to workers as a means to address powerlessness as an ingredient of alienation (p. 28). Instead, their work mainly focused on autonomy, which they characterised as "self-determination" (ibid., p. 40). LMFs show, nonetheless, that workers controlling high-level decisions beyond their "immediate job and work load" (Blauner, 1964, p. 18) is feasible. The interviews undertaken for this research show how exercising collective control is also a response to powerlessness and alienation. The levels of commitment, engagement and identification with their orchestras that interviewees highlighted amply demonstrate the utility and broader positive outcomes that PGOs derive when musicians take artistic control.

Employment security

Improving job security is the second critical form of utility for PGO members that

emerged during this research. The firms studied do not provide the level of employment security offered by some orchestras, but they do reduce the precariousness of freelancing. By doing so, PGOs at least partly address and fulfil an interest among players who are well aware of perils such as the risk of being dependent for work on the goodwill of conductors. The interviews undertaken as part of this study revealed that the crucial economic incentive for PGO members was the belief that establishing and running their respective firms would improve their employment security, even if only modestly. Despite the interviewees' desire to improve job security by founding or joining a PGO, the reality is that all of the firms considered offer their members only a slightly more secure form of what is, in essence, freelance work. Improved job security is a significant form of utility in PGOs.

Nonetheless, increasing job security is not straightforward. The interviewees described approaches that illuminate the dilemmas of organisational sustainability and responsible decision-making in a labour-management context. Job security in PGOs poses far-reaching challenges for decision-makers and requires that they balance competing demands. Orchestras with large enough financial reserves, public funding, sponsorship or philanthropy can offer musicians full security. Such contracts offer players tenure and regular salaries even when they do not play all calls (Flanagan, 2012). Orchestras without similar resources cannot be so generous (Flanagan, 2012); they offer less security in order to remain financially viable. In a PGO, balancing the demands of players and the firm's commercial viability is the responsibility of members. They must steward their firm's governance and economic sustainability while also seeking to maximise their own job security.

Decision-makers in a PGO must balance three factors: players' desire for maximal job security, fluctuating demand for musicians' services, and the firm's ability to attract non-performance income. One of the musicians' key rationales for membership disappears

if PGOs cannot offer members a modicum of job security. At a minimum, PGOs need to offer members a regulated and transparent player-booking system. Without such an arrangement, members have little incentive to support the governance work necessary to enable control by players. The absence of a player-booking system would result in a drift toward increased market-based and ad hoc contracting of players while members seek opportunities for greater job security elsewhere. An orchestra would be left to recruit players from an expanding pool of musicians who felt little commitment to the firm. The result could be increased costs and uncertainty of contracting coupled with less efficient production (in particular, rehearsals) if the continuity of musicians involved from project to project withered.

PGOs that lack the financial reserves or non-performance funding to allow them to offer tenured positions must, nevertheless, ensure that musician contracting tightly mirrors programming-related variability in demand for players. Offering higher levels of employment security by, for example, paying members when they are not playing a particular project could jeopardise the firm's financial future. Dealing with players' interests in improving job security can create tension between governance sustainability and economic survival. PGOs must be able to balance the competing demands highlighted above, and, perhaps most importantly, their members need to resist the temptation to pursue opportunistic strategies. The ability to achieve a sustainable balance between the desire for employment security and financial rigour demonstrates that the PGOs studied do not fall victim to opportunistic behaviours. These firms do not provide employment security beyond the point at which it ignores the variability of demand for players and thus threatens their financial viability.

High levels of job security for orchestral musicians depend on an orchestra's ability to secure sufficiently high levels of funding from non-production sources such as public funding bodies, philanthropists or sponsors (Flanagan, 2012). Player-governance does

not relieve PGOs from having to address the entangled economics of programming, demand for musicians and the desire for the highest possible levels of job security for members. The essential element is that the power to make the relevant decisions is vested in the players, who are also the crucial interest group. A conflict of interest arises, and the sustainability of governance is at risk if the player decision-makers cannot get the balance right.

Before leaving the subject of improved job security as a type of utility in freelance PGOs, it is worth briefly considering the differences between financial returns and the search for better job security as motivations. One of the weaknesses of profit sharing as a form of utility in LMFs is a free-rider problem (Dow, 2018) that arises because founders must share the financial benefits of membership with others. As Dow (2018) wrote:

Even if an LMF would have substantial productivity advantages, it may not be in the interest of a single individual or small group to incur the cost of creating one, because other agents will appropriate most of the resulting benefits. This is true both for creation of new firms and the conversion of conventional firms into LMFs. (p. 387)

The utility derived from job security differs from that of profit sharing because it is less clearly finite and it more closely approximates a non-rival good⁴⁰. It remains a non-rival good as an orchestra or ensemble expands up to the point at which a PGO takes on more members than it needs for its core repertoire. Only after an orchestra that usually plays with ten violins recruits an eleventh does rivalry in the form of positions on hierarchical fixing lists become a concern. The division of labour within an orchestra is also a consideration. The recruitment of an eleventh or twelfth violinist to a PGO that regularly needs ten has little impact on the employment security of other

⁴⁰ A non-rival good can be used or consumed by one beneficiary without reducing its amount or utility to others.

instrumentalists, such as trumpet players or cellists. For these players, improved job security remains a non-rival good if, as in the example, violinist members join. The barrier to the formation of freelance PGOs or the conversion of conventional orchestras may, then, be lower than is the case among profit sharing LMFs. It may also mean that the ongoing risk of post-establishment free-riding in PGOs is reduced and, as such, suggests that LMFs that do not distribute surpluses have more sustainable governance structures than do their profit-sharing peers.

Showing how members of not-for-profit firms and those in the creative and cultural industries experience utility represents this section's contribution to the understanding of labour-management. The PGOs in the study demonstrate that intangible, non-pecuniary forms of utility, such as taking control of artistic decisions, can provide powerful motivations for labour-management. The presence of two incentives — taking artistic control and boosting job security — additionally illustrates Dow's (2003) observation quoted above concerning the complexity of interest coalitions in firms (p. 142). The balancing act involved in lifting job security without making firms unsustainable further exemplifies the "difficult coordination, bargaining, and incentive problems" (ibid.) LMFs face. Taken together, these two forms of utility provide the primary motivation for the engagement of PGO members, and in so doing, provide a solid basis for the sustainability of player-governance structures.

7.3 Negotiating authority and leadership

Redefining internal authority and leadership is a hallmark of LMFs and PGOs. Jossa (2017) suggested that LMFs' "reversed capital-labour relationship" (p. 97) helps make them part of a "new mode of production" (ibid.). Dow (2003) observed how in LMFs "it is clear to everyone that authority is an instrumental, utilitarian social arrangement serving the interests of the subordinates, chosen by them, and continuing only with their consent" (p. 36). In his book on Orpheus, a PGO based in New York, the

orchestra's then executive director, Seifter (and his co-author, Economy) observed that "in Orpheus, we stand the traditional model of fixed organisational leadership on its head" (2001, p. 90). Rothschild-Whitt has written extensively on the sociology of "collectivist organizations" (1979) and "co-operative workplaces" (Rothschild, 2012) while contrasting them with "bureaucratic organizations" (Rothschild and Russell, 1986; Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). For her and her co-author Whitt, "perhaps more than anything else, it is the basis of authority that distinguishes the collectivist organization from any variant of bureaucracy" (1979, p. 511). The following analysis highlights how PGOs renegotiate authority structures, including the subtleties and balancing involved.

The essential feature of authority in LMFs is its foundation in shared decision-making. As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) wrote, authority resides "not in the individual, whether on the basis of incumbency in office or expertise, but in the collectivity as a whole" (p. 511). The principle underlying such collective authority is simple: "all those who would be affected by a decision have a right to be invited to take part in making it" (Rothschild and Stephenson, 2009, p. 801). The negotiation of authority in LMFs is, then, not about simply rejecting authority or leadership, but rather subjecting both elements to collective decision-making and oversight. Delegating authority to leaders remains possible in LMFs, but at the discretion of members and on their terms, "subject to recall by the collectivity" (Rothschild, 2000, p. 200). The primacy of the collective's authority, along with its task of ensuring that all members can take part in decision-making, are the two central features of player-governance that emerge from my study.

Authority and hierarchical leadership structures are particularly long-established and rigid in orchestras, or "not far removed from feudal ways" (Holoman, 2012, p. 18). For some, the symphony orchestra is "one of the last bastions of authoritarian rule in the industrialized world" (Cahn, 1992, p. 28). PGOs thus make for especially revealing case studies of how labour-management renegotiates, realigns and redistributes

authority in firms. Conductors embody a level and type of authority that has attracted considerable discussion and research in recent years (Atik, 1994; Boerner, 2006; Boerner, Krause, and Gebert, 2004; Carnicer, Garrido, and Requena, 2015; Drucker, 1993; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Parton, 2014). Commentators often focus on the “god-like” (Cottrell, 2004, p. 127) and charismatic nature of conductors’ work (Atik, 1994, p. 23; Boerner et al., 2004). But musicians’ work with conductors is often problematic (Ladkin and Bathurst, 2012, pp. 110-111). Players routinely describe some of them as “dictatorial” (Cottrell, 2004, p. 108) and complain about the lack of opportunities for input (Bennett, 2008; Brodsky, 2006; Cottrell, 2004; Parasuraman and Purohit, 2000; Schulz, 1981). As Faulkner observed, “an occupational lore develops around performers’ problems and work adventures with conductors” (1973, p. 149). The renegotiation of authority within these PGOs begins with conductors.

The authority of conductors does not neatly square with decision-makers in other enterprises. In some respects, conductors are like chief executives or production managers (Mintzberg, 1998), but elements of the conductor–orchestra relationship are unusual among corporate authority structures (Atik, 1994; Glynn, 2008). Unless a conductor also has a position with an orchestra, such as an artistic or music director post, their authority is temporally circumscribed. They may have almost unchallenged authority over practically every aspect of a performance, but such power is only exercised within the bounds of the project for which they are booked, and such an engagement may last as little as a few days. Nevertheless, even when an orchestra works with multiple conductors over a year and none has the role of a music director, the interviewees who took part in this research placed great importance on their control over who conducts. The right to choose who musicians collaborate with is particularly important in PGOs. In some cases, such choices start with consideration of whether to engage a conductor at all for a particular project. Performing without a conductor is increasingly common, particularly among chamber orchestras of the type studied here

(Carnicer et al., 2015; Seifter and Economy, 2001). When orchestras perform without a conductor, leadership and authority typically come from the concert master (the most senior violinist) (Beau, 2014). Nevertheless, the experiences of the PGOs studied show that performing with a conductor remains the default arrangement.

The firms studied in this research have renegotiated conductor–orchestra authority but have not rejected it. The Orpheus model that always allows an orchestra to perform without a conductor (Khodyakov, 2007; Lehman, 2002) has not been widely adopted by other PGOs. In the firms studied for this research, conductors are instead engaged for their specialist skills, the rehearsal efficiency they can bring, and the marketing/branding advantages the best of them contribute. The interviewees' comments made this clear, particularly those of Alvis, who described his orchestra's journey away from engaging conductors because that was the customary mode, to bringing in conductors only when they have something to contribute. PGOs thus reassess and renegotiate authority. As Robert described it, this renegotiation serves not so much to reverse power and authority structures as to redefine and reinvent them. It is not about players dictating to conductors. Rather, these PGOs delegate decision-making to conductor/leaders when doing so creates efficiency, but on terms that are ultimately controlled by members.

Conductors are, nonetheless, not the only authority figures in orchestras. Chief executives also wield power. Here too, the literature suggests that orchestral musicians and senior managers often have conflicted relationships (Allmendinger et al., 1996). When attention turns to executives, a crucial debate arises: should they be members of the firm, or hired labour drawn from outside the firm and denied voting rights? The literature provides at least two answers. One school of thought insists that all workers in an LMF or PGO must be members: "The only sure way to void the transformation of a PC into a capitalist firm appears to be prohibition on hiring wage-laborers" (Ben-Ner,

1984, p. 259). The primary risk of deviating from this stance, the argument goes, arises if the labour-management principle becomes compromised and “over the long run, the proportion of members in the PC workforce decreases and the organization is transformed gradually into a capitalist firm (ibid., p. 248). Whether chief executives are selected from within the membership or come from outside shapes the authority they exercise and may have broader implications such as threatening an LMF’s democratic ethos.

A second school of thought displays more pragmatism concerning the possibility of recruiting chief executives from outside an LMF’s membership and paying them as hired hands. Dow (2003) acknowledged that “any reasonably large worker-controlled firm will ... have an administrative system with professional managers” (p. 276). How far, though, should the powers of such managers be circumscribed by members? One answer to that question involves a board of LMF members restricting its own role to engaging and supervising managers before delegating more or less all decisions to them (ibid., p. 278). Such an extreme case engenders debate about the “extent to which democracy must be sacrificed on the altar of managerial authority in order to make workers’ control a viable governance structure” (ibid.). PGOs embody one response to such a trade-off. Their members retain control over programming, artistic personnel, and performance monitoring, some of the basic elements of orchestral operations. They thus restrict the scope of the executives they engage, typically to aspects of external relations, marketing, legal affairs and financial controlling, plus the oversight of non-playing staff. Executives answer to members, while specific — mostly artistic — areas of these firms’ operations remain under the direct control of members, with managers supplying, at most, advice.

The experience with authority of the PGOs in this study is more nuanced and complex than the literature describes. For its first six years, the OAE had general managers who

were also player members (Wallace, 2006). The London Mozart Players adopted player-governance only in 2014 (London Mozart Players, 2014) and its executive still consists mostly of players (Wright, 2016), though interviewees from the orchestra spoke of how the arrangement might prove temporary. The other PGOs studied all have externally recruited chief executives. Pragmatism drove the choice in some cases. As new orchestras evolved and grew, the position of chief executive became more time-consuming for musicians who wanted to continue working as players. Benefits and efficiencies also arose from uniting many areas of control in the hands of a manager from beyond the membership. This was particularly true when members' desire to continue working on the artistic side of the enterprise meant they showed reluctance to take on full-time management roles.

The psychology and sociology of orchestral musicians also play a crucial role in the way they approach conductor and management authority in their firms. Even when the study of orchestral music-making often highlights the collective nature of such work, players continue to identify as artists with a sense of individuality and personal sovereignty (Bennett, 2008). The pre-professional training that musicians undertake is germane to this self-image (Dobson and Gaunt, 2013). In writing about the orchestral musicians he interviewed, Cottrell (2004) observed how they were "intensively trained to develop their inner world and to have strong conceptions of themselves as self-conscious individuals" (p. 117). Such individualism was reflected by the interviewees for this research, particularly Martin, who spoke of how members "come back at you with a little more determination than perhaps anywhere else" when they feel uncomfortable with decisions made in his orchestra.

The daily individual practice that players undertake, usually at home and self-directed, strengthens this understanding. Musicians thus perform part of their routine work — on average seven hours a week, according to research by Krampe and Ericsson (1995) —

away from the orchestra. Moreover, such practice work primarily serves to maintain basic proficiency that is independent of any specific employer. It develops and fosters individual and transferable human capital that exists independently of employers and is transferred between engagements. Musicians' ownership of their instruments may also give them an atypical sense of professional independence and sovereignty. Orchestral players remain economically dependent on their employers, but their creativity and productive capability exist separately, giving them a sense of individuality that is atypical among most workers.

Amongst such individualistic workers, it is likely that, as Cottrell (2004) observed, "frustrations arise ... when in certain situations the final shape of the object of the creation — their musical performances — are not entirely in their own hands" (p. 117). Throughout the interviews undertaken for the current research, underlying demand for self-determination as a means to minimise such frustrations was apparent. Sophie felt that there had never been an alternative to player-governance in her orchestra, and Walter was similarly resolute about the desire among his playing colleagues to take control of their orchestra from the start. Robert and Martin likewise underlined the desire of musicians to collaborate and cooperate with conductors, but not to dictate to them.

A tension thus emerges in the work and self-awareness of orchestral musicians, one that seems particularly conducive to the establishment and running of PGOs. Players' training and work creates and nurtures professional independence that is bolstered by the freelance contracts offered by firms such as those in this study. Orchestral work, nonetheless, remains essentially collective and collaborative, with interpersonal relationships taking on central importance. As Dobson and Gaunt (2013) noted:

It is possible that greater emphasis is placed on working relationships in this context than in other professions, relating to a team effort for a distinct common

goal (the performance) in which the majority of one's working hours are spent in the direct presence of – and in constant collaboration with – one's colleagues.
(p. 12)

This tension mirrors and indeed feeds the adaptive and blended approaches to renegotiating the authority of conductors and chief executives in PGOs. Members of the PGOs I studied are pragmatic about power and control in their firms. Player-governance ensures that members retain ultimate control, but they are prepared to delegate limited situational authority to appropriately skilled specialists such as chief executives and conductors on the basis that such an arrangement benefits the firms and its members.

7.4 Conclusion

By highlighting PGOs' three constitutive components, this chapter makes an important contribution to the labour-management literature. Chapter two demonstrated how orchestras' work practices, labour conditions and organisational structures resonate with many of the conditions conducive to labour-management described by theorists such as Dow (2003) and Jensen and Meckling (1979). Despite the existence of these parallels and synergies, the literature on LMFs has rarely ventured into the study of player-governance in orchestras.

These firms show that labour-management remains feasible in contexts characterised by disparate interests among a firm's workers. Establishing pragmatic voting franchises that mirror the exigencies of orchestral work gives PGOs solid footings for their governance structures. In all the firms studied, the founding musicians have restricted voting rights to a subset of players. Much of the LMF literature warns that restricting membership and voting rights to some workers while engaging others as hired hands threatens the longevity of labour-management. However, the firms in my study show

how aligning membership with a firm's operational and structural dynamics can become an overriding consideration. The conditions and parameters specific to individual LMFs or, indeed, whole sectors, can tip ideas on membership toward restricted franchises despite theoretical concerns about possible dilution of a firm's democratic ethos. Restricting voting rights can boost the viability of labour-management.

The core LMF literature has, moreover, said little concerning labour-management in non-profit firms. This chapter showed that forms of utility other than monetary returns take centre stage in not-for-profit firms. Particularly noteworthy was the desire among freelance musicians to increase job security by exercising governance control. However, funding in the PGOs studied circumscribes the extent to which job security can be ensured. These firms show how PGO members counteract any incentives for opportunistic decision-making, and instead reach commercially sustainable arrangements that enhance job security as far as is prudent.

The renegotiation of authority in the PGOs considered is the third cornerstone of these firms and their unique embodiments of labour-management. With their centuries-old hierarchies, orchestras are prime candidates for an investigation and realignment of authority. The primary message from this research is, nevertheless, that such renegotiation redirects authority rather than rejecting it. Vertical control continues to play a role, as do leaders such as conductors and executives. Nonetheless, the PGOs of this study have instrumentalised authority, taking control of it and turning it to members' advantage. Authority thus becomes an efficiency tool that members can delegate to specialists whom they engage for their ability to further the goals of the collective. PGOs retain the traditional hierarchies of orchestral music-making when such structures serve musicians' interests. The results are flexible and responsive authority and leadership structures that adapt to the challenges these PGOs face,

giving them a resilience that stands them in good stead for continuing viability.

The next chapter returns to the topic of sustainability of player-governance. While in this chapter I described PGOs' essential characteristics and features, in the final chapter I consider how these firms sustain their governance structures. It begins with a discussion of the oft-theorised degenerative potential of labour-management, before it highlights the ways in which the orchestras achieve governance sustainability.

8 Conclusion: Sustaining player-governance

At the heart of this thesis sits the debate about whether an LMF's control by its workers is sustainable or contains the seeds of its own degeneration. How do player-governed orchestras sustain their governance structures? Is labour-management a transitory or immature arrangement that either withers or 'ripens' into control by a small subset of workers, capital owners or a board of external directors? By way of concluding this thesis, the following three sections collect the research findings on how my cohort of PGOs sustain player-governance under a trio of rubrics. These focus on the roles played by adaptability, social interaction and the energies it produces, and the fostering of musical quality in a player-governed context. The chapter is central to the thesis' contribution to the literature as it draws on the empirical research to demonstrate how player-governance can be sustained and the threat of degeneration can be countered. It extends the understanding of labour-management in the context of not-for-profit creative firms and highlights the ongoing viability of such governance.

8.1 Countering the degeneration threat

Sustainability and degeneration are opposites. So, while my research foregrounds questions of sustainability in player-governance, the threat of degeneration also needs considering. Do the rationales of player-governance also contain tendencies that may lead to the formation of oligarchies in these firms? Is there a risk that a small clique of members will gradually, perhaps even unwittingly or with good intent, accumulate authority and reduce democratic decision-making? Does this risk grow as the firms become older and founding members move on? If so, how do the PGOs studied counter such risks and sustain genuinely participatory player-governance? Such questions sit at the heart of this chapter, and the current section's overview of the

“degeneration thesis” (Cornforth, 1995, p. 488). In what follows I explore how PGOs sustain their governance in the face of these degenerative tendencies (Cornforth, 1995; Diefenbach, 2018; Dow, 2018; Pencavel, 2013).

Theoretical and empirical studies over more than a century have failed to reach general agreement on whether labour-management, and in this case player-governance, is inherently degenerative (Dow, 2018; Pencavel, 2013). In this study, I did not seek to prove or disprove the degeneration thesis; instead, I regard degeneration as a risk or threat. Risks and threats do not inevitably materialise, and when they do, they can be reduced or countered. The threat of degeneration in PGOs needs to be contextualised. There are factors involved beyond the economic considerations that feature prominently in the theoretical writing on degeneration in LMFs (Ben-Ner, 1988; Cornforth, 1995; Dow, 2003, 2018; Rothschild and Russell, 1986; Stryjan, 1989). In the case of PGOs, degeneration in participatory decision-making may result from an unwillingness of members to take on governance work. Creating and sustaining an environment in which PGO members are willing to take on governance work means more than creating economic incentives. The opportunity to be involved in artistic decision-making is critical. Equally, a virtuous cycle of engagement, commitment and sense of responsibility that is fostered by player-governance, can, in turn, boost the willingness of members to contribute to the sustainability of player-governance by taking on governance roles.

Player-governed orchestras face further degenerative threats to their governance. Among these threats is declining member commitment to player-governance if, for example, other motivations for joining become dominant. The six firms studied in this research all offer potential members attractive artistic and professional opportunities that may relegate any role of player-governance to insignificance. In a sector characterised by widespread precarious employment (Williamson and Cloonan, 2016),

the PGOs studied offer modest employment security, even if they do not offer the high levels of protection that musicians in tenured orchestras enjoy. There is, then, a risk that new members are primarily attracted by the artistic opportunities and work offered, and have little interest in player-governance as an idea or in practically supporting it by taking on governance roles.

Such a lack of willingness to take on governance roles among new members may lead to the emergence of a leadership group whose connection to the broader membership becomes tenuous. This may occur if the other members free-ride on the governance and management work of the core group. A PGO drifting toward oligarchic control by a small coterie of quasi-permanent artistic leaders or a traditional artistic director jeopardises the engagement and commitment that are fostered by player-governance. The shared artistic decision-making that is fostered by participation, and the possibility of renegotiating the traditional hierarchies of orchestral work may also be jeopardised. Such a danger is exacerbated if there is a widespread tendency for principal players to avoid the potential for peer animosity that may result from governance work. That situation may further reduce the pool of potential governance officers. This potential disinterest in, or apathy toward, the principles and practice of player-governance is an additional degenerative threat to the sustainability of PGOs.

In chapters 4 to 6 I analysed and explored the essential governance features of the PGOs in the research cohort. The attention now shifts to their responses to the risk of degeneration, and thus how they sustain their governance structures. The essential findings in the following three sections are grouped under rubrics that label how these PGOs sustain player-governance: adaptability, social interaction, and the fostering of musical quality. The next section looks at how these PGOs implement adaptive and flexible approaches to participation as responses to degeneration and as tools to foster governance sustainability. Maximising member involvement in decision-making within

these PGOs is central to the sustainability of their governance structures. However, the logics of adaptation and responsiveness come up against counteracting factors. In particular, the acknowledgement and balancing of orchestral work's hierarchies are critical. These PGOs illustrate the essential role of adaptability and how they foster, institutionalise and carefully balance it with other drivers.

8.2 Adaptability builds sustainability

That the flexibility of player-governance is essential to its longevity was enunciated clearly at various points in the three interview-based chapters. Adaptability and sustainability go hand in hand. The PGOs studied are not orthodox LMFs, even if their control models overlap with many of the conditions for labour-management that were explored in chapter 2. PGOs and their workers use practices that necessitate adaptive approaches to the principles of labour-management theory. By pursuing such adaptive processes, these PGOs demonstrate how control by workers operates in contexts beyond the firms typically scrutinised in the LMF literature. What follows outlines how these PGOs adapt labour-management to the dynamics, drivers and pressures of orchestras and their musicians and in so doing, how they create specialised and customised governance systems.

The concept of adaptability in firms has been the subject of wide-ranging research, including articles on the connection between adaptability and innovativeness (Tuominen, Rajala, and Möller, 2004), competitive advantage (Reeves and Deimler, 2011), profitability (Takii, 2007) and adaptability in approaches to the market (Oktemgil and Greenley, 1997). However, flexibility and adaptability have received scant attention in the LMF literature. Theorists often treat LMFs as desiccated, standardised and static, thereby ignoring firms' dynamic contexts and the diverse labour conditions of their workers. A branch of the literature does posit that LMFs and PCs display evolutionary tendencies approximating to a life cycle (Batstone, 1983; Ben-Ner, 1988; Stryjan,

1989). Generally, though, theorists in the field have not considered labour-management's flexibility, malleability and transformative potential. Such omissions are perhaps unavoidable in high-level theories. In response, empirical and focused studies like this one contribute to the field by foregrounding labour-management's adaptability and evolutionary possibilities.

The review of the literature in chapter 2 described how orchestras were suitable sites for labour-management. But they are also hybrid, multidimensional organisations (Glynn, 2000, 2008), and sustaining player-governance in these firms requires that it is adaptable and flexible to suit their changing needs. The ability of PGOs to embrace and negotiate their fundamental multidimensionality spans their attempts to sustain their firms' governance. This adaptability reappeared at various points during the interviews analysed in chapters 4 to 6. A diverse range of factors, practices, and logics combine to sustain player-governance in the organisations studied. However, none of these factors alone can counteract the potential for degeneration or obviate the need for ongoing vigilance and awareness. Player-governance, like labour-management more broadly, is a continuous process of multilateral balancing and renegotiation rather than a steady state of being or a point of arrival. Charting the ability of complex and hybrid organisations such as orchestras to adapt labour-management to their needs is one of the essential contributions this thesis makes to the literature.

Like orchestras themselves, orchestral workers are considerably more complex and diverse than the hypothetical workers described in most of the labour-management literature. The musicians interviewed for this research bring unique human capital and work practices to player-governance. They also have specific demands and expectations of labour-management. Deep and long-term commitments to their profession mark these workers. Musicians own their tools of trade (instruments). Their training not only begins at a very early age but emphasises the development of

individual and soloistic skills (Bennett, 2005, 2008). The work routines of orchestral players combine ensemble teamwork with solitary preparation and practice away from the organisation. PGO members embody high levels of individual entrepreneurship and identification with their specific work. Yet orchestral work is team-focused and the musicians interviewed are not entrepreneurs in the individualistic sense often associated with that term. Orchestral players are individualistic team workers. The tensions inherent in such a formulation necessitate a broad and adaptive conceptualisation of workers in LMFs.

Orchestras' competing logics and hybrid governance structures call for adaptability in labour-management

The need of PGOs and their members to continuously balance conflicting and competing logics, interests and drivers was the most prominent recurring element in the governance structures and operations of the PGOs studied. Competing economic rationales were observed at the setup stage. Conflicting artistic and economic logics are involved when deciding that some musicians are enfranchised while others are engaged as supernumeraries and management staff are employed as hired labour. Balancing the competing ideas involved when musicians take artistic control, but still share it with authority figures such as conductors, is also essential to sustaining player-governance. In addition, competing interests must be managed when peers undertake mutual monitoring with the aim of optimising performance. All of these elements are best understood as an adaptive embrace and management of a multi-dimensionality and hybridity that is essential to player-governance. At each of these inflection points, these PGOs are ready to adapt the fundamentals of labour-management to create a sustainable balancing of the conflicting logics they embody.

As a result of the factors described above, no single labour-management paradigm

suffices to describe the governance structures observed in the PGOs considered in this research. These firms do not fit neatly into a single governance model. They display features of the classical labour-management studied in the literature, but differ through their widespread and systematic use of hired labour. In this respect, their structures display elements of professional partnerships (Leblebici and Sherer, 2015) and knowledge-intensive firms (Alvesson, 2004). However, these PGOs do not require their members to contribute to firm capital and nor do they create the tradable shares in their firms that are typical of law firms, medical practices or business consultancies (Hansmann, 1990). The profit sharing that is central to most LMFs is not relevant to these firms. Instead of clearly aligning with any single organisational model, the PGOs studied seek to balance and align multiple logics, competing organisational identities and dispersed, multilateral power structures.

Some of the factors observed in these PGOs are, nevertheless, common to all orchestras and ensembles. They serve artistic logics that also direct management decisions while adhering to the principles of (not-for-profit) commercial operations. PGOs incorporate further logics that add other dimensions to the already complex management and governance structures of orchestras. Preeminent among these additional dimensions is, of course, their participatory and democratic decision-making practices. These infuse the operations of PGOs. In some instances, they build strengths (through high levels of engagement, commitment and responsibility). In others, they add complexity, for example when it comes to mutual monitoring, managing generational change, and recruitment. The ability and extent to which these PGOs are able to understand, embrace and harness the complex multi-dimensionality that is the essence of player-governance determines in large part their governance and organisational sustainability.

Fields of tension: artistic

The PGOs considered in this study attempt to combine and resolve two main areas of tension. The first exists between the perspectives of highly trained professionals seeking to exercise greater control over their artistic work than is available in comparable organisations, while still availing themselves of efficiencies that evolved in the traditional hierarchical model of orchestral operation. In the second field of conflicting pressures, PGO members form a group of workers seeking to maximise their employment security in a sector characterised by high levels of precarious work and while working within the varying labour demand structures of music performance. Here too tensions can arise when these desires come up against the commercial realities of orchestra management. The responses of the PGOs studied to these fields of tension demonstrate the crucial role adaptability and flexibility assume in player-governance.

Members' control of artistic decision-making is the most important fundamental feature of the PGOs researched. Every aspect of these firms' operations is impacted by artistic decisions. Such deliberations determine who — if anyone — conducts, who is invited to perform as a soloist, indeed, who plays in the orchestra in any given project or performance. Such decisions also establish and maintain the musical profiles and brands of these PGOs. This need among musicians to exercise control of the musical aspects of their work was described in the interviews as "crucial" and the "defining element" in player-governance. It stems from players' deep-seated desires to contribute their knowledge of programming, artistic trends and opportunities, and to increase buy-in, engagement with and commitment to the core of their work as orchestral musicians. In turn, exercising artistic control builds engagement, satisfaction, commitment and a strong sense of ownership. Taking artistic control is a central element in player-governance.

Another of the most pervasive examples of multidimensionality in the PGOs considered manifests itself in the basic operating models and identities of these organisations. As an organisational form, the orchestra evolved and achieved its initial organisational and artistic apotheosis in late eighteenth century Europe (Zaslaw, 1988). Orchestras' adherence to hierarchical control mirrored other social, political and economic constructs of that age. By the second half of the twentieth century those social, political and economic parameters had been substantially revised and realigned. By then, the role and powers of conductors and music directors in the orchestral hierarchy were beginning to seem anachronistic (Faulkner, 1973; Koivunen, 2003). Orchestral musicians increasingly had the skills of highly trained professionals (Bennett, 2005), and treating them as cogs in a machine was outdated. Yet, as the PGOs in this study demonstrated, some elements of the traditional orchestral hierarchy boost artistic efficiency and therefore may merit retention. Closely coordinated action by a large group of performers is the central objective of orchestras and ensembles. Achieving this in the studied PGOs involves judicious use of the leadership and organisational skills of hierarchical authority figures, primary amongst whom are conductors, but on terms and within boundaries set by members. The result is an adaptive amalgam of competing demands: the desire to harness the efficiency of hierarchical organisation, and the demand for musicians to retain control over their work and the high-level artistic decisions it involves. Adapting the flat-hierarchy thinking of labour-management so as to judiciously retain efficient elements of orchestral hierarchy is central to the governance and performance models these PGOs have implemented. Player-governance is sustainable when members are able to understand, embrace and harness the competing logics that characterise multiple aspects of artistic operations and governance.

Fields of tension: job security and hired labour

Divergent economic factors also result in tensions that call for flexibility and adaptability. For PGOs, the primary economic driver is the reduction of precarious employment among musicians. The firms in the study were in part established to reduce the exposure of members to precarious work. These PGOs' success in this endeavour is, though, tempered by the reality that all of them continue to offer work on a semi-freelance basis. Membership offers more employment security than that available to musicians who rely on short-term engagements, but these PGOs do not offer the tenured positions that many musicians in symphony and theatre orchestras enjoy. Members have a clear incentive to create tenured positions for themselves, but the unpredictable demand structures for musician labour in orchestras mean that doing so would threaten the economic viability and sustainability of their PGOs. The members of the PGOs studied resist the temptation to contract each other on terms that would threaten organisational sustainability, for example, by offering tenure and fixed-hours contracts in face of the variability in demand for the services of individual players. In doing so, they prioritise organisational sustainability over short-term employment interests and provide a clear demonstration that organisational sustainability and player-governance can be successfully combined when adaptability is added to the mix.

At the same time, an important subset of the workers in these PGOs — the management staff — are engaged as hired labour, typically using fixed-hours, full-entitlement contracts. This results in a paradoxical situation in which the members (musicians) engage management staff on more secure terms than they are able to offer themselves. The divergent treatments of the two groups (musicians and management staff) are based on the different dynamics of the respective labour markets. When considering precarious work in the sector, the PGOs studied clearly

“look two ways at once” (Jackall and Levin, 1984, p. 11) in their approaches to different workers. In section 7.1 I explored these challenges of establishing the most sustainable franchise in a PGO. My analysis of the PGOs in this study indicates that the LMF literature overstates the risk of degeneration through the engagement of hired labour. The firms studied have managed to counteract the forces observed by Dow (2003, 2018), Pencavel (2013) and others, while being able to successfully embrace the multidimensionality this balancing creates. They make regular use of hired musician labour and their management teams do not become members. But strengths that emerge from player-governance, such as enhanced engagement and commitment to the firm, along with the democratic norms that infused these PGOs from the outset, combine to counteract any temptation to reduce the number of members or to increase the amount of hired labour used.

As their founding members retire, generational change is a challenge for some of the PGOs studied. However, it is not resulting in a cross-generational weakening of player-governance, and new members are being recruited to replace founders. In such cases, being engaged as a supernumerary is often a prelude to membership. The use of such hired labour among musicians further illustrates how “look[ing] two ways at once” (Jackall and Levin, 1984, p. 11) and embracing multiple dimensions constitute pillars of the governance and operational models employed by PGOs. They balance the risks of degeneration that the literature highlights with a strongly anchored commitment to player-governance that is buttressed by the positives garnered from the greater engagement and commitment engendered by musicians’ artistic control.

The PGOs studied can, then, be seen as an embodiment of the desire to give orchestras an operational model that is more closely aligned with wider political, economic and social trends toward the greater worker “voice” (Wilkinson et al., 2014) inherent in labour-management, while retaining the useful elements of their traditional

hierarchical practices. The PGOs in the study use adaptive governance structures that are comfortable with hybridity. They do not revolutionise the operating and governance structures of orchestras they inherited from several centuries of development. Instead, they adapt, expand and update those models while embracing flexible understandings of labour-management. They add new elements such as participatory and democratic decision-making to the world of orchestras, while taking on new objectives and concerns, including the desire to offer musicians greater employment security than they have as freelancers.

This section analysed and described how the PGOs studied step outside the boundaries of the theoretical literature's thinking on LMFs. The degeneration hypothesis highlighted by many thinkers on labour-management makes little allowance for the responsive and adaptive evolutionary potential displayed by PGOs. The governance sustainability these firms have achieved is, nonetheless, to a large extent rooted in the adaptability of player-governance. Their form of labour-management has proven able to meld elements of control by workers with key features and practices specific to orchestras and their workers.

This section focused on firms and their adaptability. The next directs the spotlight onto the people who work in PGOs.

8.3 How social energy counters degeneration

The findings presented in this section highlight the social dynamics of PGOs. The LMF literature typically takes firms as the unit of analysis rather than the interactions of members and other stakeholders. The dominance of economists in the field has meant that the key debates have pitted LMFs against capital-controlled firms (Ben-Ner, 1988a; Pencavel and Craig, 1994), sought to explain the rarity of labour-management (Dow, 2003), or pondered the threat of degeneration (Cornforth, 1995; Diefenbach, 2018;

Pencavel, 2013). This section treats identity-making and democratisation as critical components of these firms. What follows deepens the literature by presenting findings on the role of member and employee interactions and social energy in PGOs. The findings show that negotiating fluid organisational identities plays a key role in sustaining player-governance, and that a flexible, context-specific and pragmatic approach to participation underpins these PGOs.

I have borrowed and adapted the idea of social energy from the cultural and literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt (1988; see also Robson, 2008). He proposed social energy as an analytic lens in his study of Shakespearean theatre and its historical context. The concept of social capital now enjoys wider currency, but Greenblatt's idea has attractive and complementary aspects. Attaching the term "capital" to a social construct gives the phenomenon an economic gloss. It hints at individualistic, transactional and acquisitive qualities that are antithetical to social interaction. Social energy, on the other hand, comes closer to the flowing, reactive, generative nature of much social exchange. Social capital fuels social energy, but the contemporary focus on the capital element of the process overshadows subsequent forms of energy and activity. The musicians and orchestral employees who gave interviews for this study call on their social capital as part of their work, but it is the social energy, dynamics and interactions that most strongly emerged and play the most significant part in countering degeneration in these PGOs.

This preferencing of social energy as an explanatory construct also aligns well with the essence of orchestral work. Orchestras embody and build on social and creative energies. Teamwork is core to their onstage operations. These dynamics run through most aspects of player-governance canvassed in this research, be it the realignment of the orchestra–conductor/leader relationship, the redirection of authority between musicians and management, or the challenges of mutual monitoring required by player-

governance.

What follows has a two-part structure based around aspects of member and employee social energies. My initial focus is the formation and continuous negotiation of shared intra-organisational identities and the self-reinforcing roles they play in sustaining player-governance. In the second substantive section I consider how multiple elements of participation counter degenerative tendencies in control by members.

The orchestra as collective idea: intra-organisational identity and sustainability

Creating, negotiating and balancing multiple and fluid intra-organisational identities are critical ingredients of the social energy observed among PGO members and staff. A range of ideas on company identity have been explored in the management, organisational and psychology literatures (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Bartel, Blader, and Wrzesniewski, 2007; Watkiss and Glynn, 2016; Whetten, 2006). Here the emphasis falls on those conceptualisations that members and other internal stakeholders develop for their orchestras. Under consideration is how PGO members and employees regard and identify with their firms and how these relationships contribute to the structure's sustainability. Studying a PGO's public image adds less value when understanding player-governance. PGO brands and marketplace identities, their "claims to legitimate membership in social categories" (Watkiss and Glynn, 2016, p. 319), also play roles in their commercial success. First, though, the study of PGOs calls for an appreciation of how members and employees view and identify with their firms. Understanding PGOs means considering the identities their stakeholders give them.

From this internal perspective, a firm's identity is not a "property of the organization"

(Watkiss and Glynn, 2016, p. 319). Instead, members and other stakeholders individually and collectively fashion an idea of what the firm represents, what its mission and purpose are, and how they, as members, identify with this construct (Watts, 2010). In the words of Watkiss and Glynn (2016), through this process “the locus of identity resides in the interpretive schemas of the various organizational members” (p. 319). Such identities are vital in the PGOs studied. Player-governance involves members’ negotiating, shaping and managing a “collective sense of ‘what we do’ as an organisation” (ibid.). Control by musicians includes their power and responsibility to shape and direct the vision, mission and identity they give to their firms.

Pratt (2016) built further on such concepts, locating a “normative-utilitarian dimension” (p. 107) in organisational identities. On this spectrum, “utilitarian identities represent a ‘for-profit,’ ‘monetary,’ or ‘economic’ focused self-definition” while “normative identities, by contrast, are non-economic and can represent a variety of religious, cultural, aesthetic, and similarly non-monetary focused identities” (ibid). Pratt’s bifurcation mirrors the commercial/artistic hybridity at the core of orchestras (Glynn, 2000, 2008). How do PGOs reconcile these bifurcated organisational identities? Do the high levels of engagement and commitment the interviewees articulated shape how they think about their PGOs? Do these PGOs maintain a collective internal identity as their founding members leave? If so, does it evolve? What is the link between sustaining such an identity and sustaining player-governance? These and similar questions underlie what follows.

The identities, visions, and missions of the PGOs studied are not (or are no longer) those of individual founders who exercise almost unfettered control. Instead, these firms embody the shared ideas and creativity of their founding members or of those who introduced player-governance. To these founding visions are added the interest

and thinking of musicians who joined after the set-up phase. Creating shared, open and fluid identities is central to player-governance. These identities and the continuing negotiation that shapes them emerged from comments made by several interviewees. Mario described understanding his orchestra as either an embodiment of its current members' thinking or as an "open container" that future members could continue to develop. He outlined several scenarios, ranging from the orchestra as an inclusive "life-form" to one in which the firm only works for a subgroup. Others highlighted a sense of ownership and collective "spirit" in their PGOs. The intra-organisational identities collectively forged by these PGO members reflect the participatory essence of labour-management.

The differing identities described by Mario and other interviewees echo the deep-seated challenges that shape control by musicians. The sustainability of such governance requires members to move beyond individual interests and thinking. It calls for a collective "idea" of the orchestra, as Mario put it. This understanding, in turn, must become an "open container" with the flexibility to adapt and evolve in response to membership changes. The last founding member of several of the studied PGOs will retire in the next few years; then, the idea of each orchestra will be institutionalised as an ongoing firm. This evolution from a newly established "stage-of-life project" (Mario) and experiment in participatory governance to a responsive firm that can accommodate members' coming and going is crucial to long-term governance viability. Such a development tests the ability of new PGOs to institutionalise control by musicians. Sustained player-governance demands a fluid, multifaceted and regenerative shared identity.

The organisational identities of these PGOs embody their plurality as artistic and commercial firms. A normative identity, in Pratt's (2016) sense, is fostered when members take artistic control. Making essential musical decisions such as repertoire

planning, the engagement of conductors and soloists, and building orchestra brands allows musicians to create normative identities for their firms. Doing so mirrors the utilitarian identity associated with addressing employment security concerns. Musicians' desire to exert control over their work is key to creating a shared "idea" of their PGOs, to defining their firms, and to fostering the engagement and commitment that are central to the sustainability of player-governance.

Intra-organisational identity is, then, a construct in a two-way relationship with members who play active roles in shaping the collective ideas of their PGOs. The resulting identities — while remaining fluid and the subject of constant negotiation — in turn act as objects of engagement, commitment and perceived responsibility. Player-governance amplifies these identity negotiations when the high levels of engagement, commitment, and sense of responsibility that it offers, demands, and fosters increase members' identification with the firm. Members shape collective, bottom-up identities. These constructs then shape the interactions between members by providing "performative repertoires" (Watkiss and Glynn, 2016, p. 324) to which members relate. Player-governance creates opportunities and fora for musicians to shape the internal ideas of their PGOs, while also allowing players to develop strong identificatory bonds with their PGOs and the identities they embody. Identity and identification exist in a virtuous and sustainable cycle.

Sustaining control by musicians depends on protecting and fostering this circle. Devoid of such a circle's reinforcing energy, PGOs face declining engagement and members' pursuit of outside interests, as Richard mentioned. This loss of engagement may then endanger musicians' willingness to take on the committee and board work at the core of player-governance. Keeping members engaged is a vital role for intra-organisational identities. The recurrent generating of these shared visions and "interpretive schemas" (Watkiss and Glynn, 2016, p. 319) is crucial for the survival of control by musicians.

Player-governance creates both openings and challenges for the fostering and negotiating of these identities. Its participatory ethos means that members' ideas concerning their PGOs are bottom-up constructs built on democratic decision-making, sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and social energy. Such identities, in turn, clear the way for high levels of engagement, sense of responsibility, and commitment to the firm. The result is a self-fortifying cycle that sustains these PGOs' governance. Constructing a shared organisational identity goes hand in hand with sustaining player-governance. From this discussion of the orchestra as shared idea and identity, I move to consider member participation in player-governance, the next key ingredient.

Pragmatic democratisation, participation and governance sustainability

Two contrasting approaches were observed in the ways these PGOs deal with participatory decision-making. Member decision-making is shaped by these PGOs' adapting of democracy to the specifics of work and authority in orchestras. Remoulding artistic hierarchies — in particular, the orchestra–conductor relationship — contrasts with the democratising of decision-making observed in the governance realm. In most cases, my interviewees see benefits in retaining some hierarchy in music performance. PGO members are prepared to delegate considerable control to conductors or performance directors, thus exploiting any benefits from having “a little bit of autocracy” (Martin). In some situations, there may be musical imperatives to the use of a conductor, for example, when works with many performers needing central coordination are on the program. Nevertheless, five of the six firms studied operate without an artistic or musical director, though some conductors also serve as artistic partners, a role that involves them providing advice on artistic planning. Only one of the firms in the study has a music director. These PGOs thus embrace performance hierarchies at members' discretion and when using conductors boosts efficiency and artistic quality.

Authority structures are much flatter in the governance and management contexts than on stage. Here, a drive to flatten decision-making power is clearly apparent. The interviewees repeatedly emphasised the primacy of their retaining governance control. Some spoke of “empowering ourselves,” others of the orchestra belonging to the members and of wanting to “find our own way” (Sophie). Two approaches thus emerge: the delegation of authority and the retaining of control hierarchies in musical production alongside flattened control structures and participatory decision-making in the governance context. Such hybridity illustrates what might be thought of as “pragmatic democratisation”. This approach responds to and sustains control by musicians. It girds these firms’ hybridity and their balancing of competing logics and energies as they seek to sustain their governance structures. The labour-management literature makes little allowance for such flexibility and pragmatism. These findings on the pragmatic application of democratic thinking enrich the understanding of LMFs.

The pragmatic democratisation adopted by PGOs can, however, cause friction when governance hierarchies do not align with musical proficiency or seniority. Angela, a section leader who does not have a governance role, alluded to the problems that can arise when the two realms collide. Richard described how the pressures of solo performance required of section leaders might make them less likely to take on what he called “highly exposed positions” in governance. A further polarity emerges from the pragmatic democratisation model. It materialises between direct and representative democracy and the disparate types and levels of participation these two poles represent. Balancing these polarities of hierarchy and participation is a central challenge for player-governance and its sustainability.

What is at stake if the PGOs studied are unable to sustainably balance the structural polarities of orchestra management and governance? What indicates that the dynamics are unbalanced? Efficiency is the first factor to consider. Direct democracy may create

efficiency costs if all members are involved in routine decision-making (Dow, 2018). Failing to retain a balance between direct and representative democracy imposes potentially unsustainable costs on PGOs (ibid., p. 241). The weakening of a PGO's participatory decision-making becomes the most acute degenerative danger if it goes too far toward preferencing representative over direct democracy. Perceptions of disenfranchisement can emerge if members feel that their voices are given insufficient weight in a governance system that moves too far toward representative democracy. Any efficiency benefits of such a move must be balanced against the needs for members to sense that their membership and enfranchisement have meaning.

To sustain player-governance, the PGOs in this research ensure that the proportion of players who are engaged as supernumeraries does not grow to the point at which members function as an oligarchy. The risk here of a tendency toward oligarchy and subsequent degeneration in participation is not of a financial nature, but rather is based on musical or organisational seniority or competence. Degeneration into a structure characterised by an enfranchised membership that declines as a share of the total workforce and that is devoid of genuinely participatory decision-making is the greatest risk for a PGO that is unable to balance the competing hierarchies, polarities and tensions at the heart of player-governance.

The role of participation in these PGOs, nevertheless, concerns more than balancing the various drivers that shared decision-making involves. Participation also melds engagement, loyalty and human capital. The literature suggests that engagement is key to retaining workers and can “significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty” (Lockwood, 2007, p. 2). The interviewees' ideas also showed how participation fosters elements such as engagement and commitment, which in turn are frequently linked to governance sustainability and organisational success. Engagement plays a further crucial role in sectors — such as music performance — that rely on high

levels of human capital and retaining essential workers (Callan and Lawrence, 2009). Despite orchestras' dependence on their players' skills, most offer musicians very limited opportunities for career progression (Piperek, 1981). In the absence of vertical career advancement, these PGOs create alternative opportunities for professional development in the form of participation and engagement in governance and management. Such openings help generate sustained member engagement and commitment. Members' participation in the control of their PGOs builds engagement and loyalty while harnessing their human capital to the success of these firms.

Recalling Kahn's (1990) emphasis on engagement's alignment between "preferred self" tasks, and organisations is instructive. He observed that "people who are personally engaged keep their selves within a role, without sacrificing one for the other" (ibid., p. 700). The interviewees preferred terms such as "personality" to "preferred self", but when Richard spoke of "someone's personality [being] active and present" and player-governance ensuring "you are allowed to be present as a personality," it became clear that engagement and sustained high-level performance were intimately linked in these PGOs. Such observations suggest a reconceptualisation of Macey et al.'s (2009) model of engagement away from their linear, unidirectional understanding to one that is circular, as depicted in Figure 4. This revised model also features an element that can be conceived of as akin to a feedback loop, through which OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2016) contribute to the sustainability of the engagement-facilitating environment that Macey et al. position at the beginning of their model.

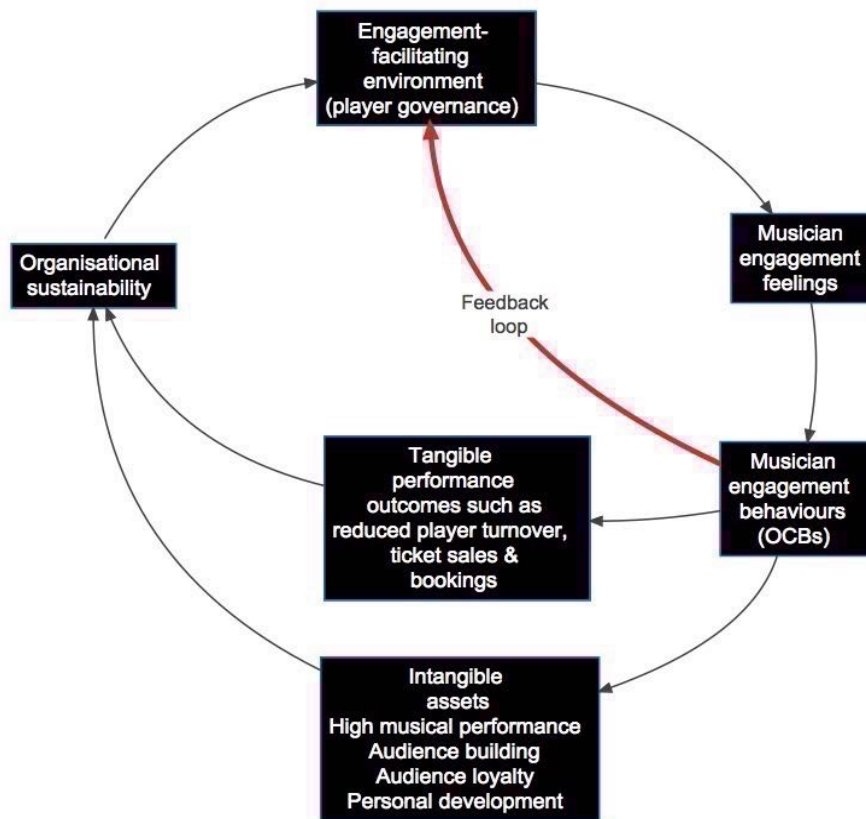


Figure 4 Diagram of circular conception of engagement model proposed by Macey et al. (2009)

In this understanding, player-governance functions as an environment that fosters feelings of engagement among musicians. This engagement then supports OCBs such as serving on governance committees, developing concert programs or educational projects. A further virtuous circle becomes apparent. Player-governance makes engagement and commitment possible, while the behaviours that result from that engagement and commitment help make player-governance sustainable. Other tangible performance outcomes and intangible assets are also founded on and supported by engagement behaviours among musicians. Continuing around the circle, these provide the foundations of governance sustainability.

This section covered some of the core challenges of player-governance. Participation, in its myriad forms, is the defining element of the PGOs I researched. The central

element of the sustainability of player-governance consists of member participation in decision-making, of the engagement, commitment and sense of responsibility that members develop and that can create a mutually supportive, virtuous circle, and the collective, participatory negotiation of intra-organisational identities. Participation in these PGOs is a complex field. Frictions can arise between the parallel sites of decision-making — governance and performance. The former aspires to flat and high-participation hierarchies, while in performance, members retain more of the traditional hierarchies embodied by conductors and section leaders, even if these control structures are fundamentally renegotiated and rebalanced by player-governance. The various participation strategies, responses and processes developed by the PGOs in the research cohort demonstrate that player-governance is sustainable and that successful management of participation is a potent antidote to the risk of degeneration.

The third cluster of findings congeals around the theme of performance optimisation and its connection to governance sustainability. A sustainable governance structure must also be one that fosters and facilitates high performance. The central challenge here is achieving and maintaining peak performance in a context of mutual monitoring by musicians. It is to this theme that the discussion now turns.

8.4 Musical quality, player-governance, and sustainability

The third group of findings concerns the relationship between player-governance and musical quality. The ability to perform regularly at the highest possible level is essential for an orchestra or ensemble (Lagrosen and Lagrosen, 2017). Governance and management systems must facilitate and support great music-making. If player-governance cannot enable sustained high-quality performance, the model itself will prove unsustainable, the victim not so much of degeneration as of marketplace rejection. The findings of this section highlight the difficulties associated with mutual monitoring, recruitment and generational change in PGOs. It also shows that these

PGOs, nevertheless, implement player-governance such that it contributes to and supports high musical quality.

The details of mutual monitoring vary between LMFs. The basic principle, though, is that the members monitor the work of their peers and decide on any actions necessary to address performance deficiencies. A lack of objective measures for musicians' artistic proficiency is, nonetheless, a challenge for peer monitoring in orchestras. Performance optimisation in these PGOs becomes complicated because the mutual monitoring systems they use become contested in the absence of clear and generally accepted quality measures. Without such gauges, musicians' monitoring of each other creates a range of interpersonal and psychological dynamics that raises the stakes involved in performance monitoring.

In some cases, these raised stakes include disillusionment with player-governance to the point at which some members long for a “bad guy” monitor in the form of a music director/conductor. This tension is the focus of the first subsection below. The second aspect considered — generational change — may follow from performance problems, but the discussion also deals with the importance of maintaining player-governance as post-foundation members join and founders move on. The final subsection highlights the unusual, multi-step nature of the recruitment processes required by these PGOs as they take on hired labour before, in some cases, enfranchising such players as members.

Mutual monitoring

The LMF literature mostly holds that mutual monitoring among workers is more effective and efficient than hierarchical supervision (Ben-Ner, 1988; Hansmann, 1990, 1996). Dow (2001) noted that “mutual monitoring is cheap and accurate compared with

monitoring by supervisors” (p. 214). In a similar vein, Bowles and Gintis (1993) argued that one of the reasons for the “superior efficiency of the democratic firm” is that it has “monitoring mechanisms unavailable or prohibitively expensive for the capitalist firm” (p. 93). Hansmann (1990) added the idea of self-monitoring and argued that “by encouraging both self-monitoring and mutual monitoring, worker ownership may offer an important efficiency advantage over investor ownership where monitoring workers is difficult” (p. 1762). Alchian and Demsetz (1972) extrapolated such thinking to different industries, and concluded that the possibility of mutual monitoring favours partnerships of the type observed in PGOs. They found that:

Team production in artistic or professional intellectual skills will more likely be by partnerships than other types of team production. This amounts to market-organized team activity and to a non-employer status. Self-monitoring partnerships, therefore, will be used rather than employer-employee contracts, and these organizations will be small to prevent an excessive dilution of efforts through shirking. (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972, p. 790)

Among the PGOs studied, the use of mutual monitoring proved more complex and multifaceted than suggested by this literature. My research indicates that mutual monitoring in PGOs is not as cheap and accurate as the literature assumes. Theoretical approaches risk oversimplifying the role of workers in organisational monitoring. The psychological burden on workers involved in monitoring colleagues — and in being monitored — can be considerable, but is not generally acknowledged in the literature, with its focus on financial costs. Bowles and Gintis (1993) were a rare exception when they acknowledged that “it may be argued that mutual monitoring introduces sufficient discord within a work team to undermine the positive effect of participation on worker productivity” (p. 93). They, nevertheless, concluded that “mutual monitoring in a democratic setting should strengthen the participation effect, in part by enhancing the perception of equal contribution among members, and hence of

reducing the incentive to free-ride” (ibid.). Mutual monitoring is essential to player-governance, but my research finds that it imposes considerable burdens on members.

The principal monitors in externally governed orchestras are conductors (or instrumental performance directors) and section leaders. The days when conductors could expose, embarrass and even dismiss individual players during rehearsals are now generally past. Music directors (who are practically all conductors), nonetheless, retain a central role in performance monitoring, assessing the abilities of applicants in auditions, and resolving situations in which individual musicians are not playing at the required level (Glynn, 2008). Section leaders also play a role in performance monitoring, usually in tandem with music directors. Peer-to-peer monitoring may occur within hierarchically organised orchestras, but it is generally informal and ad hoc. In effect, performance monitoring in externally governed orchestras is, then, similar to that in other hierarchically organised firms.

Whatever the governance model, the mechanics of monitoring the performance of orchestral musicians are fraught with peril. The central challenge for monitors is the lack of objective and widely accepted measures. None of the conventional yardsticks from other sectors, such as piece rates, revenue generated, or client feedback, are applicable in monitoring individual orchestral musicians. Players’ performance may even vary from day to day or as a function of the works on a program. Modern orchestras perform works from many historical periods and styles. Players are expected to master the various performance practices, sound ideals, and styles required by such breadth, but not all do. Players’ performance quality — if definable at all — may vary between works, further complicating any evaluation of their overall proficiency.

PGOs’ use of mutual monitoring may help them achieve and sustain high performance

in such a challenging context. Mutual monitoring among orchestral players can be more effective than in its hierarchical, conductor-led counterpart when monitoring is difficult (Hansmann, 1990) or when it strengthens “the participation effect” (Bowles and Gintis, 1993, p. 93). Such benefits can, in turn, boost the sustainability of player-governance, but the extent to which these positives manifest reflects how successfully PGOs manage mutual monitoring. Mutual monitoring also brings burdens, as the interviewees made clear. The central tension that emerges from the research occurs between the hierarchical nature of performance monitoring and the low-hierarchy logic of player-governance. Players taking control of artistic decision-making in a PGO creates opportunities, but also brings with it responsibilities for the optimisation of performance quality.

Musicians who were trained in hierarchically organised structures may find it difficult to overtly question colleagues’ playing. Susanna highlighted the dilemma when such players take on mutual monitoring in PGOs. Players may doubt their right to monitor a peer’s performance, yet, as she noted, they have not transferred that right to any other monitor. The interviewees spoke of the difficulties inherent in monitoring their peers’ playing, describing the process with words including “extremely contentious”, “super painful”, “totally difficult”, “brutal”, “really awful” and “absolutely the hardest thing we have to do.” Indeed, some interviewees mentioned the attractions of an authority figure who would take responsibility for the difficult decisions that are sometimes involved. In few other aspects of the PGO model was the tension between shared responsibility and hierarchy so clear and so present in members’ thinking.

The interviewees confirmed that mutual monitoring had the effect of distributing or socialising the tensions inherent in quality management, particularly in the absence of objective and agreed measures. In systems of hierarchically organised monitoring in which a music director assumes the role of the primary monitor, musicians may

experience a sense of solidarity with each other as problems of individual performance are identified and resolved. Such a monitor focuses the resentments of players, allowing them to “all hate the dictator together” (Susanna). The negativity is between the monitor and monitored. Mutual monitoring makes any destructive energy multilateral, while potentially reducing solidarity. The collegiality at the heart of player-governance is threatened. The sustainability of player-governance in the face of mutual monitoring is, then, a question of balancing the positive – higher participation and reduced hierarchy – and the burdensome elements it entails, while containing the tensions it creates as much as possible.

Generational change

The LMF literature highlights concerns about the risk of degeneration in worker participation when members leave their firms. Ben-Ner (1988) wrote that:

In the long run a worker-owned firm with collective ownership of its assets can expect a gradual reduction in the size of its membership due to retirements and quits accompanied by a continuous increase in the share of hired wage laborers in its workforce. (p. 300)

My research shows that PGOs place considerable importance on counteracting this degenerative tendency. Indeed, despite the burdens of lengthy, multi-stage recruitment procedures, PGOs continue to take on members, even if only to replace departures rather than to increase membership. Engagement as hired labour often serves as the first step to membership. In small, human capital-dependent firms such as the PGOs in the research cohort, supernumerary musicians constitute a pool of potential members. An essential difference between the LMFs of the theoretical literature and these PGOs is the lack of entitlement to residual earnings among members of the latter due to their non-profit status. In its absence, members may even have an incentive to increase the

number of members. Doing so increases the number of people available to take on governance roles, spreads any financial liabilities and legal responsibilities and helps sustain player-governance. This temptation is, nonetheless, balanced by the complex music-specific mechanisms that determine demand for musicians' labour in orchestras and ensembles.

Nevertheless, a further dilemma emerges for PGOs. On the one hand, player-governance fosters a strong engagement with and commitment to the organisation among members. On the other, the strength of this bond makes it hard for retirees to deal with separation from the organisation. The members of the PGOs studied have a strong sense of ownership. Such firms might find it easier to delegate control over questions of artistic quality — including those about age-related declines in proficiency — to a music director or chief conductor, yet this would remove one of the central pillars of player-governance: player control over artistic decision-making. Agreeing on a retirement age, perhaps that used in relevant national social welfare systems, is unlikely to help. Considerable deterioration in proficiency may set in among professional musicians before they reach their sixties (Gembris and Heye, 2014), while a small number of players may demonstrate very high proficiency until the age of sixty-five or beyond.

Age-related drops in player proficiency, along with retirements and other member departures, threaten the sustainability of player-governance if the remaining members take on replacement players as hired labour rather than as members. Ben-Ner's prediction quoted at the start of this subsection would, in that case, represent a genuine threat to the sustainability of player-governance. However, the PGOs considered show no sign of such a tendency. Taking on new members in a not-for-profit context does not come with the same disincentives that accompany the expansion of membership in profit-sharing LMFs.

Recruitment

The recruitment of members who are prepared to actively support player-governance is essential to its sustainability. One of the threats it faces comes from the potential for a reduction in membership density if supernumerary players are blocked from becoming members. Yet, while auditions provide a well-developed and relatively reliable means of establishing a musician's instrumental proficiency, determining whether a potential member will flourish in and contribute to the sustaining of player-governance — in Sophie's words, discovering "how they tick, what they are like in such a community" — is much less straightforward. Walter commented on the length of time required to become a member in his PGO, noting the use of "several stages" and emphasising that "it's not just a straight audition and probation period as in most orchestras." He felt that this made "a big difference" and, stressing continuity, added that "partly the reason the orchestra has remained the way it is, is the very strong method of recruitment."

This multi-step nature of recruitment observed in the PGOs studied shines light on related questions in the LMF literature. Theoretical approaches to membership in LMFs are critical of the employment of non-members (hired labour). They see it as a threat to the sustainability of labour-management if the number of enfranchised members shrinks to the point at which decisions are made by a small number of members (Dow, 2018; Pencavel, 2013). Most of the PGOs studied offer initial engagements on a hired-labour basis. Full membership remains open to these players if, after a familiarisation and socialisation phase, both parties are amenable. The use of hired labour thus plays an important role in these PGOs and serves as a form of selection, socialisation and familiarisation that contributes to the strength and sustainability of player-governance. It ensures that recruits to membership are well aligned with the governance ethos of their PGO.

In my analysis of the interview data, three themes emerged about recruitment, and in particular recruitment to full, enfranchised membership: its centrality to the operation and sustainability of PGOs, the importance of factors beyond musical proficiency, and the amount of time involved. For the PGOs I researched, getting recruitment right means assessing potential members' suitability as business partners, not just their proficiency as performers. Assessment of the former needs more time than recruitment in externally governed orchestras (Lehman, 1995). Multi-stage processes result, with many members starting as supernumerary, hired labour before transitioning to membership. Player-governance thus imposes recruitment costs, though the result is a process that reflects the centrality of hiring the best possible players, something Sophie and other interviewees felt was critical to the success of PGOs. Some interviewees viewed the thoroughness of recruitment as an important element of their PGO's success and sustainability, while others felt that the time involved was burdensome. In fact, it is both.

The insecurity of freelance orchestral work may mean that potential new members in these PGOs are attracted to audition primarily by the modest improvement in job security that they offer, rather than any particular commitment to the principles, aspirations and ideals of player-governance. If this prioritisation was widespread, these orchestras would run the risk of degeneration in their player-governance as founders who were committed to player-governance were replaced by recruits who, in their search for the opportunity to work with a good orchestra, might even be ambivalent about such governance. In the face of such risks, the firms I researched have introduced recruitment processes that are especially thorough and that address the need to establish what Sophie called "what they are like in such a community." Extended pre-membership probation periods are also central to successful recruitment to these PGOs. For Sebastian, an audition was only the beginning of the recruitment process, a prerequisite, and the subsequent interactions with a player were "much

more important than what they demonstrate in an audition.”

Socialisation is at work in PGOs alongside a system of filtering of potential members. Herbert observed that “someone who plays with us regularly already knows, they know everyone, they know how everyone ticks, how it works.” Maria described the years of familiarity with potential members that is common in PGOs. For potential members, this period of socialisation plays a more important role than in an externally governed orchestra because successful candidature is dependent on the support of two thirds or more of members. For the organisation, it serves to screen new members for alignment with the values of the membership and the governance model, to discover, in Sophie’s words, “what they are like in such a community.” For the sustainability of PGOs, this is a core element of recruitment. New members must be fine musicians and must also be able to help make governance decisions. It is, moreover, important that fresh ideas can be voiced in decision-making committees and it is essential for the model’s sustainability that new members feel that their suggestions, perspectives and concerns are as valued as those of more established members. Achieving this is also an element of successful recruitment, and the responsibility falls on existing members.

The three aspects of performance optimisation in the PGOs studied place considerable responsibility on members. Monitoring performance, managing retirements and recruitment of suitable members are three pillars of high-level performance. Optimisation lays bare some of the tensions that underlie player-governance and that call for careful balancing and management. Many of the interviewees found the monitoring of their peers’ performance or dealing with age-related drops in proficiency burdensome, and at times even longed for an external monitor to take on such tasks. However, they recognised that doing so would be inimical to player-governance. The ability to recruit members who are willing and able to sustain player-governance as well as being excellent instrumentalists is, perhaps, the most fundamental task in sustaining

player-governance. Engaging potential members as supernumeraries may run the risk of degeneration toward an oligarchic structure, but if carefully managed, it can allow PGOs to assess the suitability of potential new members while also allowing such musicians to decide whether they want to commit to sustaining player-governance.

8.5 Possibilities for further research

Research of the type presented in this thesis can, of course, be extended beyond the focused study I undertook. Further investigation might fruitfully turn to the sustainability of player-governance in countries other than the UK and Germany, the national foci of this study. In particular, North America is home to a group of successful PGOs that could throw light on the challenges they face in economic and policy structures that differ from those of this study. My research focus was on governance structures in relatively small and recently established PGOs, but plenty remains to be explored in the governance of their larger and longer-established sister organisations such as the Berlin or Vienna Philharmonics or the LSO. A closely focused case study of a single PGO, perhaps using participant observation and the comprehensive, quantitative surveying of all its musicians — both members and supernumeraries — as well as its management staff would be worthwhile. Similarly, a direct comparative study between an externally governed orchestra and a PGO might be fruitful, if the attendant methodological problems could be resolved.

Similar types of governance are also used in other performing arts. A study of labour-management and governance among theatre and dance companies could also produce useful insights into this type of organisation in sectors that are largely ignored by the mainstream literature. Equally, the search for incentives and forms of utility in labour-managed not-for-profits in other sectors promises valuable insights in a largely unexplored field. I hope that this thesis inspires further research into player-governed orchestras, their players, management staff, and their successes.

Appendix 1

Database of major player-governed orchestras and ensembles organised by year of foundation⁴¹

Orchestra or ensemble name	Established	Operational base	Indicative no. of members	Player-governed since ⁴²
Vienna Philharmonic	1842	Vienna	135	
Berlin Philharmonic	1882	Berlin	123	
London Symphony Orchestra	1904	London		
London Philharmonic	1932	London		1939
Philharmonia Orchestra	1945	London		1964
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra	1946	London		1963
London Mozart Players	1949	London	40	2014
Orpheus Chamber Orchestra	1972	New York	26	
Tafelmusik	1979	Toronto, Canada	17	

⁴¹ See Lehman (2002; p. 9) for a similar list with some further entries.

⁴² In cases of player-governance being introduced after foundation.

Basel Sinfonietta	1980	Basel, Switzerland	138	
Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen	1980	Bremen, Germany	41	
Ensemble Modern	1980	Frankfurt, Germany	22	
Chamber Orchestra of Europe	1981	London	60	
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment	1986	London	49	
Freiburg Baroque Orchestra	1987	Freiburg, Germany	26	
L'Orquestra Simfònica del Vallès	1987	Spain (Catalonia)	40	
Ensemble Musikfabrik	1990	Cologne, Germany	16	1995
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra	1991	New Orleans, USA	77	
Ensemble Resonanz	1994	Hamburg, Germany	18	
Mahler Chamber Orchestra	1997	Berlin	45	
Kammerakademie Potsdam	2001	Potsdam, Germany	32	
The Knights	2004	New York	35	
A Far Cry	2007	Boston, USA	17	

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