TRUST AND CONTROL IN COUNTERPOINT:
A CASE STUDY OF CONDUCTORLESS ORCHESTRAS

by

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Can a large organization be successful without a single leader? Common wisdom suggests that organizations need a leader to control and be ultimately responsible for decision-making and guarding against inefficiency and vulnerability to the behavior of employees. Nonetheless, my case study of two large conductorless orchestras – Persimfans and Orpheus – suggests otherwise. Such apparently leaderless organizations reject the idea of hierarchical control because it violates their fundamental goals of artistic freedom and creativity. Yet the absence of a single leader does not mean that conductorless orchestras are, in fact, leaderless. More so than conventional orchestras, they benefit from the talent, commitment, and professionalism of all their members. In contrast to rigid hierarchical control, both Persimfans and Orpheus rely extensively on trust-based governance mechanisms that are essential for collaborative decision-making.
Nonetheless, they have also developed a number of less formal control strategies that facilitate the search for consensus and help create and maintain trustworthy relationships among musicians. Reliance on trust and less formal control mechanisms, however, blurs the line between these two governance strategies. To use a musical analogy, trust and control in conductorless orchestras create counterpoint, or the combination of different melodies into a more beautiful polyphonic whole. Besides offering insights into intra-organizational trust and control, my research also contributes to the literature on post-bureaucratic organizations, leadership, power, and collaboration.
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**Introduction**

A train approaches the station. People get in and out. The train leaves. In about four minutes another train comes, and then another one, but people carry on with their activities without giving it much thought. It is just a train getting passengers from Newark Liberty International Airport train station to airline terminals. What can be less exciting than that? Only when you enter the first car, do you realize that there is no operator. This is an engineerless train.

Trains can be operated by a complex computerized system, which ensures that people have enough time to get on and off the train at stations and that trains do not crash into each other. Computers help people make their lives easier, safer, and more convenient. While trains may not always need engineers to direct them, people are human, and it can be hard for us to function effectively in a group setting without somebody guiding us along the way. Human behavior cannot be preprogrammed, however, because people are spontaneous and creative. This unpredictability of human behavior makes it difficult to coordinate individuals in a group without a leader. The larger the group, the greater the chances it needs a leader.

One example of a group that presumably needs a strong leader is a symphony orchestra (Young 2004). Symphony orchestras usually consist of about one hundred musicians who play their own instruments and have their own parts in the score. Musicians start playing at different times during the performance of a piece and often cannot hear what their colleagues are playing because of the acoustics on stage. It is the conductor’s task to coordinate the musicians’ performance. Conductors have to be ahead of their players to show where the music is going to take them next. They also must
perform their duties in real time on stage, with hundreds of people watching. This is clearly a complex set of tasks that must be coordinated. Without that coordination the result is noise. With it, though, the result is beauty and grace.

Orchestra conductors tend to rely on their power to influence musicians, trying to create a well-balanced performance in a short period of time (usually within four to five rehearsals). They control musicians’ behavior by telling them how the piece should be performed and by expecting players’ full obedience. Such control can transform live performance unpredictability into manageable risks (Clarke 1999) and consequently lead to coordination. Yet this control can also come at the cost of restraining musicians’ autonomy and creativity, which can make players feel as though they are technicians.

As it happens, a collection of musicians can be organized into an orchestra without a rigid hierarchy of power. In the fall of 2002, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending a chamber orchestra concert. The stage door opened, and musicians walked on stage. They bowed, and the concert began. Something was missing, but we could not figure out what it was right away. “The conductor,” I said to my wife, “Where is he? Where is the podium?” Only after carefully reading the concert program did we realize that the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is a conductorless orchestra.

When I came home and searched the Internet, I found out that Orpheus had a precedent. It turned out that the Soviet orchestra Persimfans, which in Russian means the “First Symphonic Ensemble,” performed in Moscow in the 1920s. Now that I knew that Orpheus was not a lone warrior, I set out to find how orchestras operate without a conductor on the podium. Organizational theory suggested that coordinating such a complex collection of tasks requires strong leadership. But there we were, watching and
listening to a coherent and beautiful performance of synchronized sound making – music – without any leader in sight. How could this be? More than five years have passed since that concert, but I am still excited about the very same question: *How can an orchestra perform without a conductor?* This question led to what you will read on the pages to come.

**Sociological Overview of the Argument**

The leadership literature says that collaboration among peers should require some level of trust (Costa 2003). Trust is typically viewed as an enabling mechanism, which implies the notions of competence and goodwill. Competence in this case refers to the expectation that others will be technically, cognitively, and communicatively skilled partners, while goodwill means that they will have good intentions, good faith, and be willing to work in the interest of the group (Blomqvist 2005; Das and Teng 1998; Jones 1996). Indeed, working closely together during long rehearsals helps players build trustworthy relationships with each other. They come to trust one another largely because all orchestra members are highly trained professionals devoted to the idea of a conductorless performance. They are passionate about their art and nearly as committed to performing their art without a formal leader. Consequently, musicians in conductorless orchestras are willing to place group interests above their personal interests, which allows them to be so creative and take risks by performing in such an unconventional way. Instead of trying to minimize uncertainty of live performances as conductors do, musicians in conductorless orchestras try to embrace it, which can lead to creative performances and artistic success.
Relying on trust in itself, however, is a risky business. When not controlled, some musicians may turn out to be slackers, unwilling to contribute to the group. Such “free riders” in conductorless orchestras can make coordination problem even more difficult (Olson 1965). Moreover, the creative freedom musicians enjoy in conductorless orchestras is exciting, but it can be difficult, frustrating, and exhausting to work so closely with peers. Players have different personalities, and often enough they do not get along. Although intense interpersonal relationships require that members trust each other, the quality of their final product can suffer if members’ behavior is not restrained in certain, preferably subtle, ways. So, what can musicians do to impose limitations on their own behavior?

On the one hand, Persimfans decided to make its concertmaster responsible for analyzing artistic suggestions of all musicians and for developing a coherent musical interpretation. While musicians were encouraged to express their opinions, the concertmaster had the final say in decision-making to make it more efficient. Having a permanent leader who is also performing with the orchestra is quite different from playing under a conductor’s baton. Not only does this approach to making music eliminate the most visible barrier between musicians and the audience – the conductor’s podium – it also makes players more comfortable sharing their ideas with each other and with their leader. The fact that Persimfans had a musician-leader allowed players to have more trust in each other, as everyone was allowed to participate in artistic and organizational decision-making, which made musicians’ personalities and professionalism more evident. At the same time, however, organizational hierarchy was
not completely eliminated in the orchestra, and the concertmaster had more power than other players.

On the other hand, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra arguably represents a different solution to the coordination problem because its members share and rotate artistic leadership roles on a piece-by-piece basis. Orpheus members select a concertmaster and principal players of each musical section for every piece on a particular program. This system literally allows musicians to be both leaders and followers. The idea is that leaders of the first piece will be sitting in the back of their musical sections while performing the next piece. Leadership sharing and rotation create a temporary hierarchy that provides musicians with an overarching framework by setting clear priorities and responsibilities but at the same time giving them freedom to innovate and improvise. Temporary hierarchy can be viewed as a flexible type of control appropriate for creative organizations (Kamoche and Cunha 2001). Orpheus players argue that it is not the absence of a conductor, but the presence of rotating leaders and temporality of organizational hierarchy that make this orchestra so unique.

While some may argue that conductorless orchestras are anti-conductor or leaderless, my view is that they precisely illustrate the need for strong leadership. This leadership, however, is not based on musicians’ exclusion from artistic decision-making but is grounded in their active participation in organizational life. Musician participation allows conductorless orchestras to capitalize on the talents of all their members. It incorporates both trust and control governance strategies, which become intricately intertwined.
Why Orchestras?

The study of conductorless orchestras provides interesting insights into intra-organizational dynamics of a wide array of contemporary organizations, ranging from smaller collectivist-type organizations (Rothschild-Whitt 1979), to large cooperatives (Cheney 2006; Russell, Hanneman and Getz 2006), to more traditional bureaucratic organizations (Perrow 1986; Weber 1978). While it is true that conductorless orchestras are artistic organizations that strive to be creative and unique, companies in other sectors of economy are also trying to be innovative and are searching for their unique market niche. Analyzing how conductorless orchestras function and the problems they face can provide interesting insights into the organizational dynamics of the so-called “post-bureaucratic organizations” that are becoming increasingly popular.

I use the notion of post-bureaucracy as an umbrella term for a dynamic and interactive type of “alternative organizations” characterized by the presence of a more flexible, decentralized organizational structure that is based on consensus rather than rigid hierarchy, the promotion of employee involvement in decision-making, and the encouragement of employees’ creativity in problem solving. Post-bureaucracies tend to be relatively small, have more permeable organizational boundaries, are willing to change and innovate, promote open communication, and value trustworthy relationships among their members (Heckscher 1994). These organizations may include, for example, R&D units of large corporations, improvisational theaters, fashion industry firms, project teams, small voluntary organizations, and professional workplaces like law firms and consulting companies.
Nonetheless, my goal in this book is not to search for parallels between conductorless orchestras and other organizations per se. In contrast, I treat the process of music making in such orchestras as a metaphor for understanding the nature and complexity of governance strategies used in contemporary organizational settings. Metaphor is a literary, descriptive, and creative device that is based on the idea of crossing different and otherwise unrelated images. Metaphors produce an image for the study subject, which is governance in conductorless orchestras, and have a potential to generate new meanings and interpretations of that subject (Morgan 1980). Music metaphors have long become popular among students of organizations because they provide interesting insights into various problems contemporary organizations face, including coordination, decision-making, motivation, innovation, and change issues (Drucker 1980; Hackman 2002; Seifter and Economy 2001; Young 2004).

**Data Sources**

My book is based primarily on intensive interviewing, close observations, and analysis of historical documents. This multi-method approach enables me to produce rich qualitative data on personal interactions within the orchestra and to explain how these interactions create large-scale governance structures. I have collected data on how musicians rehearse and perform without a conductor, collaborate with each other, and solve artistic and interpersonal conflicts. To increase the richness of my conclusions, I relied on multiple data sources. My study of Orpheus is based on in-depth interviews with orchestra musicians, managers, and board members, observations of orchestra rehearsals and performances, and analysis of newspaper and magazine articles, as well as Orpheus concert programs. While studying Persimfans, I analyzed various archival documents that
detail the history of this orchestra and used interviews with Persimfans musicians conducted by Stanislav Ponyatovsky (2003) (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for the methodological details of my study). Because I do not have comparable data, I cannot compare Persimfans and Orpheus directly. Although incompatibility of my data sources poses certain methodological challenges, I use the two orchestras to analyze the benefits and problems of performing without conductors and to explain the complexity of trust-control relationships in seemingly leaderless organizations.

**Theoretical Importance**

In the book, I argue that the long-term success of conductorless orchestras, and consequently of post-bureaucratic organizations, depends on their ability to couple trust-based coordination mechanisms with less formal control strategies. These control strategies should not prevent employees from being active organizational members, but at the same time should impose indirect limitations on their behavior. Reliance on both trust and less formal control strategies, however, blurs the line between the two governance strategies. To use a musical analogy, trust and control create counterpoint, or the combination of different musical lines into a beautiful tune. By using the counterpoint analogy, I argue that trust and control are similar to individual melodies, while a successful governance strategy in post-bureaucracies is reminiscent of counterpoint. Although trust and control can be potentially independent governance strategies, when used together, they create a more complex governance strategy that reinforces the individual strengths of trust and control. By way of illustration, musicians in conductorless orchestras can trust each other because their behavior is not totally free. At
the same time, players’ trust reinforces the existing organizational structure and helps musicians perform without conductors.

The contrapuntal\(^1\) approach to trust-control relationships has important theoretical implications for the study of trust and control in organizations because it calls for a re-evaluation of the nature and roles of these two governance strategies. Instead of looking at trust as being only an enabling governance mechanism and analyzing control only as a restraining governance strategy, I argue that they both can perform these functions at the same time. To illustrate how trust and control form counterpoint, I employ a relational approach to trust and control. As governance strategies, trust and control are two-way influence processes. Although trust reduces our perception of risk associated with relying on others, it simultaneously constrains our behavior because it limits the range of desirable behaviors. Similarly, while exercising control over others, we may restrict their behavior but make it easier for ourselves to do things that otherwise would be deemed too risky.

**General Outline of the Book**

The book chapters are organized thematically. Each chapter of the book has its own sub-theme, which, taken together, help explain how and why conductorless orchestras are able to survive in the long run. Although I focus on conductorless orchestras, I shed light on the phenomenon of conductors’ power and decision-making processes in symphony orchestras and discuss the idea of effective leadership. Each chapter combines theory and empirical data. To further capitalize on music analogies used throughout the book, I call my chapters - movements.

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\(^1\) Contrapuntal is the adjectival form of “counterpoint.”
The first movement illustrates the process of music making in a typical conducted orchestra. A brief description of how conducted orchestras work is important for answering the main question of this chapter: Why have conductorless orchestras appeared at all? I argue that they can be viewed as the most radical reaction to conductors’ power in symphony orchestras. The second movement presents short descriptions of Persimfans and Orpheus and discusses apparent differences and similarities between the two orchestras. The third movement explains the principles of music making in the absence of a conductor. It focuses on the notion of power sharing in conductorless orchestras and discusses the so-called “confrontation vs. compromise paradox” and the “leader-democracy paradox.” Next, in the forth movement, I explore the nature and roles of trust in a conductorless setting. I stress the temporal component of trust, describe three types of trust, discuss the benefits and shortcomings of trust, and explain why trust can both enable and constrain musicians’ behavior. The fifth movement focuses on control and explains how Persimfans and Orpheus employ different control strategies. Instead of limiting musicians’ behavior, these control techniques are intended to facilitate the development and maintenance of trustworthy relationships. Finally, in the last movement, I discuss the complexity of trust-control relationships through the use of different musical analogies. The primary goal of this chapter is to answer the main question of the book: How can the orchestra perform in the absence of a conductor?
First Movement: Why Conductorless Orchestras?

The collaborative character of art worlds affects works of art because all the parties involved in making those works might do what they do differently, or not at all, and everyone has to deal with the consequences of everyone else’s choices. The result, the work at any stage of its development, is thus something no one – not even the one called the artist – means to take just that form. It arises, instead, from what they all did in response to one another, the result being perhaps what no one wanted and almost surely what no one person intended, but nevertheless the result they now all accept as the work they have made or to whose making they have contributed. (Becker, Faulkner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 3)

In the 2005-06 season, the New York Philharmonic introduced a series of concerts for children called Young People’s Concerts. This program is intended to show children how music is created, and how orchestras function. It consists of four concerts, each devoted to a specific theme about music making. The program starts with a discussion of how composers create music. The second concert explains how conductors interpret composers’ ideas. The third part discusses how musicians bring composers’ ideas and conductors’ interpretations to life. And finally, the last concert focuses on the role of the audience members. Throughout the program, children are told that music is a collaborative process that involves multiple people all of whom perform different tasks, but, at the same time, are united by the common purpose - making music happen.

Orchestral music is a collaborative activity because for an orchestra to give a performance, a number of interdependent events have to take place (Becker 1982; Malhotra 1981). First, a composer has to compose the music. Then a conductor has to carefully study the score and to come up with a coherent musical interpretation. Orchestra musicians who know how to perform on their instruments must be recruited and have to learn their parts. Orchestra management has to provide a place for the orchestra to
rehearse and perform. Finally, concerts should be advertised, and audiences capable of understanding and appreciating music should purchase tickets and attend the concert. Although in reality this process is more complex, it illustrates the interdependency of all parties involved in music making. If any of the above steps is missing, a concert may not take place. Thus, music making in an orchestra is a collective process, which depends on successful collaboration between multiple people rather than on the outstanding ability and talent of a single individual.

Collaboration in the field of music, however, is complicated by the fact that all parties involved in music making are not necessarily present at the same time and in the same place. Contemporary orchestras tend to perform music written by composers who lived years or centuries ago and thus cannot attend orchestra rehearsals to help them with musical interpretation. The 2004-05 Orchestra Repertoire Report compiled by the American Symphony Orchestra League, for example, shows that out of the twelve most frequently performed works, four were written by Beethoven and two each by Dvorak and Tchaikovsky. Composers of the eleven most frequently performed works all lived in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Only 9.1% of all works performed in that season were contemporary pieces composed after 1979. Therefore, historically informed and stylistically sound interpretations of composers’ original intentions depend on conductors’ and instrumentalists’ musical preknowledge and stock of musical experience accumulated through the years of learning from their teachers and colleagues (Schutz 1964).

Moreover, most of what audiences see on stage is a product of long hours spent by individual musicians practicing their parts of the score in the privacy of their homes.
Orchestras rarely have more than four-five rehearsals before a concert. The small number of rehearsals significantly reduces the time instrumentalists spend together as a group and with their conductor. In such a situation, players are expected to learn their parts before the rehearsal so that during the rehearsal the orchestra can work on the questions of balance and ensemble with its conductor. Finally, the orchestra management rarely attends orchestra rehearsals because office and rehearsal spaces are often located in different buildings (Judy 1995b). Thus there is not only temporal, but also physical distance between all parties involved in music making, which significantly complicates the process of collaborative music making.

Contemporary orchestras tend to rely on an elaborate system of the division of labor because of the different sets of skills required from various members of the orchestra. For instance, performing on a musical instrument depends on technical knowledge of that instrument, while selling concert tickets depends on marketing skills and sales experience. Having multiple people working on the same project, such as an orchestra concert, requires a system of coordination within the orchestra that should be able to minimize tensions between the involved parties. Nonetheless, all members of the orchestra realize that they cannot reach their ultimate goal without depending on each other. Orchestra instrumentalists clearly depend on the ability of the orchestra’s board of trustees and the managerial team to generate enough money so that the orchestra can rehearse and perform. Similarly, members of the board and the management depend on musicians’ ability to perform the music. Even though all members of the orchestra share the same interests - to give a great performance - one of the major tensions in contemporary orchestras is between those members who think in terms of numbers and
dollars and those who think in terms of scales and crescendos, or more broadly, between financial and artistic goals of the orchestra.

In this movement, I look at the tensions that are present in many symphony orchestras and the strategies orchestras use to remedy them. In particular, I argue that historically attempts to resolve these tensions led to the elevation of conductors’ status in orchestras to unprecedented heights. Conductors became the center of attention, the most highly paid orchestra members whose power, at least until recently, was literally unlimited. They not only decide what music will be performed, but also hire and fire instrumentalists at their personal discretion. By using my interviews with Orpheus musicians and the existing literature on conductors’ role, I suggest that the concentration of power in the baton-holders’ hands negatively impacts players’ experiences in symphony orchestras and is inconsistent with the collaborative nature of music making. I argue that it is the unlimited power conductors have and their arbitrary use of coercive control that led to the growing popularity of conductorless orchestras such as Persimfans and Orpheus. Players look at a conductorless approach to music making as a refuge from dictatorial conductors and a realm of artistic freedom and creativity.

Conflict of Interests and Intra-Organizational Competition

While music making purports to be, and often actually is, collaborative, it is nevertheless imbued with antagonistic struggle and crass economic motives. Oftentimes the mismatch between artistic and financial goals of the orchestra leads to various intra-organizational conflicts. Musicians and management, for example, tend to have opposing views on how to balance conventions and innovations or, in other words, how to achieve “optimal distinctiveness” from orchestra competitors (Alvarez et al. 2005). Music, as other art
forms, relies on a large number of conventions because they not only facilitate cooperation among highly specialized orchestra personnel, but also help audiences consume music. According to Becker (1982: 29), people who collaborate “to produce a work of art usually do not decide things afresh. Instead, they rely on earlier agreements … that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in that art.”

Conventions and traditions in the orchestral field dictate the musical forms (e.g., symphony, concerto, sonata), the organization of tones in a scale (e.g., major vs. minor scales), the proper size of the orchestra (e.g., chamber vs. symphony orchestras), and the appropriate length of a concert program (e.g., 2 longer pieces or 3-4 shorter pieces). These conventions save time, facilitate decision-making, and also make it easier for audiences to comprehend the music.

The goal of economic viability often forces orchestras to build repertoires based on predictable and well-known programming, which is expected to increase the box office sales but may be too familiar and thus unexciting for musicians to perform. Performing great music of the past that core audiences love reduces orchestras’ financial risks and enables musicians to economize on rehearsal time because old music does not require lengthy rehearsals. Yet at the same time, it limits musicians’ artistic creativity, professional development, and ability to experiment with new programs. Performing classical repertoire also discourages young composers from writing symphonic music (Wichterman 1998).

The domination of the classical repertoire may also be explained by the fact that much of contemporary music violates some established music conventions, which can be viewed as an attempt to show its distinctiveness. To differentiate themselves from
classical composers, some contemporary composers require that musicians change their standard routines. In *Concordanza*, for instance, Sofia Gubaidulina, a famous contemporary Russian composer, directs woodwind players to pronounce some consonants through the mouthpieces of their instruments. Some composers’ works require even more radical changes. Harry Partch, for example, “broke with the convention of the chromatic scale on which Western music is built, and devised a scale containing forty-two tones between the octaves (the conventional scale contains twelve tones in the same interval),” which requires building new instruments and learning how to perform on them (Becker 1982: 243-44). While such innovations may excite players, they require additional resources that the management may view as unnecessary expenses.

Instead of introducing audiences to new music, orchestras tend to limit the performance of contemporary programs because of the fear that current patrons may be disappointed to see that the established music conventions do not facilitate their musical understanding. To some extent, orchestras do not trust that even their loyal audience will be able to appreciate new music. Similarly, orchestra managers often think that the “classic” pieces are more likely to attract novices to the concert halls. As one of the Orpheus managers put it, “concertgoers would rather see Mozart and Beethoven because they have at least heard of the name” (Joshua, 03/15/2006). Contemporary music is a bad risk for orchestras because it may reduce box office sales, which is one of the financial sources orchestras depend on.

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2 Pseudonyms are used to protect subjects’ confidentiality.
Moreover, orchestral music is a highly competitive field, where soloists, conductors, and orchestras compete with each other for public admiration and high honoraria. Life in symphony orchestras is often very stressful because instrumentalists tend to fight with authoritarian conductors for their artistic freedom, compete with their fellow musicians for tenure and leadership positions in the orchestra, try to achieve technical perfection on their instruments, and experience the “chronic internal conflict between diminished self-esteem and … natural desires to think well of themselves” (Levine and Levine 1996: 16).

As with any other organization, orchestras have to ensure their economic stability and use effective governance strategies to achieve intra-organizational coordination. At the same time, however, orchestras have to remember that they are different than other organizations because their final product is music, which requires the creative input of every member of the orchestra. Creativity in orchestras emerges from the collaboration of many people who share their unique skills and talents to reach a desired goal (Henry 2004). Nonetheless, creative collaboration itself raises multiple coordination problems and increases the potential for intra-organizational conflict. Thus orchestras have to find governance strategies that allow them to be economically stable without totally restraining anyone’s freedom and creativity.

**Coordination through Hierarchy**

Contemporary symphony orchestras are complex organizations with rigid organizational structures that tend to hinder the development of truly collaborative relationships among orchestra members by excluding musicians from participation in important organizational decision-making. The establishment of a layered organizational structure is closely
related to the increasing size of the orchestras. Orchestras of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were not very large, and most of them performed as instrumental ensembles. At that time, an instrumental ensemble was a group of up to nine musicians, most of whom could perform on more than one instrument. In smaller ensembles, coordination can be achieved through democratic principles and direct communication between all members of the group (Murnighan and Conlon 1991). Leadership in such ensembles is shared, and decision-making is collaborative (Young 2004). When orchestras grew in size, musicians began to specialize in a particular instrument, which raised questions about musical coordination and rehearsal effectiveness (Jacobson 1979).

The larger and the more heterogeneous an organization is, the more difficult it is to maintain coordination. A typical symphony orchestra consists of different instruments that have their own parts in the score. They are grouped into four musical sections - strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion - that have their own musical roles. On a rare occasion, musicians play several instruments during the same concert. These instruments, however, all belong to the same musical section and are rather similar to one another (i.e. a flutist who can also perform on piccolo, which is a small flute). Because performing on each instrument requires specialized skills, orchestral musicians are not easily interchangeable. While grouping all instruments into four smaller sections makes it easier to monitor the behavior of each musician, such a division also creates certain status inequality within the orchestra:

For instance, in the strings, the double basses provide the foundation of the orchestra - a crucial, but almost never glamorous, role. The cellos help provide the foundation but also, with their rich, gorgeous sound, get to play important thematic melodies. The violas play inner voices and accompaniments but rarely receive notice. The violins fancy themselves the aristocracy of the orchestra, are playing the main thematic melodies, with their feet planted firmly on the
shoulders and faces of the other strings. Even within the violins, there are two divisions: first violins and second violins. The distinction is enormous….The first violins consider the second violins as also-rans, wannabes, eternal bridesmaids, the Miss Havishams of the orchestra - relegated, by definition, to playing second fiddle to the first violins. (Greenberg 2000: 1-2)

To facilitate coordination of multiple players in the orchestra, each musical section has its own leader, the principal or the first chair player. Principals have to ensure that all section members play in unison. They help coordinate the activities of their section members and monitor their behavior (Young 2004). Moreover, the concertmaster, or the chair of the first violin section, is the second most important person on stage after the conductor. Concertmasters sit right next to the baton-holders, lead the largest section of the orchestra, and have more responsibilities than other musicians. Concertmasters, for instance, help conductors with artistic discipline in the orchestra by working on tuning, ensemble, and balance questions, prepare bowings for the string sections so that all string players bow in unison, and often act as mediators between conductors and musicians during rehearsals (Malhotra 1981).

While concertmasters have more power than other instrumentalists in the orchestra, their influence is still limited to technical decisions and is rarely extended to managerial or artistic decision-making (musical interpretation). In Europe, professional musicians are more involved in all aspects of orchestral decision-making than their American counterparts. They tend to form musical societies that are directly responsible for raising money, finding rehearsal space, and inviting soloists (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001b). Therefore, besides performing on their instruments, European musicians are actively engaged in organizational decision-making. Different levels of musician participation in European and American orchestras, however, can be partly explained by
the fact that while many European orchestras are sponsored by their national and local
governments, American orchestras tend to be independent non-profit corporations,
primarily sponsored by private, non-profit foundations and are expected to generate
enough money to support themselves (See the sixth movement for more details).
Similarly to the for-profit sector, American orchestras tend to employ governance
strategies that help them achieve efficiency, which may de-emphasize the artistic and
creative component of musicians’ work and prevent them from participating in important
organizational decision-making (Hart 1973).

Compared to musical societies, a more efficient way of running orchestras is to
make a conductor fully responsible for the orchestra’s success. Conductors are expected
to act not only as leaders during rehearsals and performances, but also as musical
promoters and entrepreneurs who attract financial resources to the orchestra. Their roles
and status in orchestras evolved significantly over time. The rise of conducting as a
profession is associated with Baroque music and the growth of orchestras in the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Originally conductors were orchestra
instrumentalists who, besides performing on their instruments, also coordinated
musicians on stage. Nowadays, however, conductors combine responsibility for both
managerial and artistic decision-making with public outreach work¹ (For more details
about conductors and history of conducting See Barber and Bowen 2001; Botstein 2001;

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¹ There are two types of conductors in contemporary orchestras. Each orchestra has a principal conductor,
or a music director. Music directors are the ultimate leaders in the orchestra responsible for both artistic and
managerial decision-making. Strictly speaking, my discussion in the paragraphs to follow focuses on the
role of principal conductors. Nonetheless, because contemporary conductors have international careers and
thus have to travel a lot, symphony orchestras also perform with guest conductors who join the orchestra
for a short series of performances. Guest conductors’ responsibilities are purely artistic in nature, centered
on technical leadership, and do not involve any managerial decision-making.
Hallmark 1986; Jacobson 1979; Schonberg 1967; Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001a; Stevens 1986).

On the one hand, conductors hire and fire instrumentalists, select the repertoire, and invite soloists. They have to reduce any contradictions between artistic and financial goals of the orchestra. Conductors have to know the repertoire preferences of their instrumentalists, be familiar with the orchestra’s financial situation, and understand the musical tastes of the orchestra’s core audiences. Conductors have to clearly articulate both long-term and short-term artistic plans of their orchestras and coordinate them with the orchestras’ financial situation. Oftentimes, these plans may require more resources than the orchestra currently has. In such a situation, conductors are expected to encourage board members, orchestra management, and audiences to provide the necessary resources to ensure the orchestra’s artistic and financial success (Wichterman 1998).

On the other hand, conductors are actively engaged in practical aspects of running rehearsals and performances. They interpret music before the first rehearsal and prepare the score by making revisions that reflect their vision of the music as well as the size and composition of the orchestra. During rehearsals, they explain to instrumentalists how a specific passage should be played. They translate the general composers’ instructions about tempo into the specific pace musicians should follow. Conductors also work with the orchestra on the questions of coordination, balance, ensemble, intonation, and other technical aspects of performance. Sometimes conductors rearrange the seating plan of the orchestra or change the number of musicians on stage to achieve proper sound. They have to ensure that the melody performed by one orchestral section is not overplayed by others, and that the orchestra’s sound does not get distorted. Finally, conductors instruct
all orchestra members when they should begin and then stop playing their parts (Young 2004).

Performing multiple roles in the orchestra allowed conductors to accumulate a lot of power. They make all important decisions and expect that musicians follow what they are told to do without questioning conductors’ directions. Conductors tend to believe that their status in orchestras gives them the legitimate right to control instrumentalists’ behavior by dictating them what to do and by making them responsible only for technical performance on their musical instruments. Some scholars have argued that in symphony orchestras, the conductor’s main role is to increase efficiency of rehearsals and performances by providing musicians with a coherent interpretation of music, clearly indicating nuances of each musical piece, and coordinating different sections of the orchestra (Kamerman 1983; Virkhaus 1997). Organizational efficiency is traditionally achieved through reliance on control. Conductors’ use of control mechanisms is intended to reduce performance uncertainty because careful selection of musicians, thorough rehearsals, and imposition of sanctions for disobedience are assumed to ensure that players would follow the conductor’s baton during concerts. Indeed, reliance on control can lead to coordination, but at the cost of restraining musicians’ autonomy and creativity, which makes musicians feel as though they were technicians.

**Negative Consequences of Conductors’ Power**

To a certain extent, organizational structure of contemporary orchestras is analogous to that of many large non-artistic organizations. Although music making is a collaborative art, the structure of contemporary symphony orchestras, which is supposed to help resolve the coordination problem, tends to prevent the development of true artistic
collaboration in large conducted orchestras. Reliance on conductors’ control misses one important point – instrumentalists, who actually do most of the work in the orchestras, are highly skilled and well trained professionals who collectively often know more about musical instruments, musical performance, and musical history than many conductors. As one musician put it,

In a symphonic context, you find “workers” with fabulous talents, formal training, and an abundance of theoretical knowledge, and yet strangely enough these musicians are forced to separate their capacity for conceptualization from the moment of execution. This is an incredibly authoritarian and antidemocratic model of musical production. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the symphony itself is a mass celebration of authoritarianism – perhaps even charismatic dictatorship. (Seifter and Economy 2001: 10)

Musicians in the top-tier symphony orchestras, which is the type of orchestras this book is about, are highly educated professionals who begin their vocational training in childhood and have to practice hard on a daily basis to stay in shape and to further their technical skills. Orchestra instrumentalists have to go through a rigorous process of blind auditions before joining the orchestra. Once a musician becomes a permanent member of a full-time orchestra, he or she can expect to work for roughly 20 hours a week (this includes both rehearsal and performance time) and enjoy up to 10 weeks of paid vacation a year. Because musicians have a lot of “free time,” many full-time orchestra members freelance in other orchestras and ensembles, perform and record as soloists, teach at music schools, and attend various music festivals.

There is a strong interdependence among the instrumentalists in any orchestra, which is reinforced by “the intense intellectual, emotional, and physical togetherness of their work and work place [and] buttressed by a commonality of training” (Judy 1995b: 17). Because musicians work in close proximity to each other, their behaviors directly
influence and are also influenced by other musicians. For instance, if someone misses a note or enters too late, other instrumentalists may need to skip some notes so that the orchestra can get back on track. Although there is high interdependency among musicians on stage, which is one of the factors that make the process of musical performance a collective activity, orchestral players often feel that they are only expected to play their instruments and are excluded from making decisions that affect them personally (Noteboom 2003).

Moreover, although instrumentalists in professional orchestras are experts in their field and make up the majority of the orchestra, they are literally the least influential members: they are located at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy and their voices rarely get heard. Musicians are expected to comply with the conductor’s vision of the music and to passively accept the administrative decisions made by the management. Thus many contemporary symphony orchestras are faced with what Abbott (1988) calls “jurisdictional disputes”- players are trying to protect and extend their jurisdictions in artistic decision-making that go beyond actual performance on their instruments, while conductors are trying to protect their decision-making privileges. Instead of looking at orchestras as being a system of interdependent professions, different orchestra constituents compete for decision-making power and control over work.

When conductors rely on control too much, musicians may feel that their artistic freedom and creativity, which are crucial for music making, are significantly limited and overshadowed by the baton-holder. Consequently, conductors’ power and low levels of player involvement in artistic decision-making only add to high levels of musicians’ job-related stress, which is caused by the constant need to suppress their artistic ambitions for
the greatness of the orchestra as a whole, tensions among orchestra musicians, stage fright, and poor working conditions (Levine and Levine 1996; Piperek 1981; Wilson 1985).

Limiting the use of employees’ skills and talents on the job is also inconsistent with major principles of creative organizations that are highly dependent on the input of all their members and therefore require some delegation of decision-making power. As Bell (1966) suggests, the higher the level of professional training, the more likely an employee desires discretion in performing his or her tasks. Indeed, professionalization is usually associated with considerable employee discretion because professionals are viewed as highly committed to and involved with the organization and derive much of their self-identity from the organization in which they work (Fox 1974). Employees should not be compartmentalized; their work is collaborative in nature and depends on their abilities to share knowledge with each other and to come up with decisions that reflect the position of a group rather than the position of either a boss or an individual member of the group.

Nonetheless, symphony orchestras are typically characterized by uneven power distribution, which means that musicians have little control over their direct working environment and are not involved in important organizational decision-making processes that have a direct impact on them. Such a disengaged role of orchestral musicians may lead to their alienation, infantilization, high levels of depression, and low levels of job satisfaction. These negative aspects of performing with conductors can only increase the levels of stress and anxiety that all performing artists experience (Wilson 1985).
The first negative consequence of performing under an overly controlling conductor is musicians’ feeling of alienation. In the workplace, alienation often means three things: a sense of powerlessness, which refers to low levels of perceived control over the production process, a sense of social isolation from other employees, and a sense of self-estrangement, which could be viewed as involvement in the production process that is not personally meaningful and intrinsically rewarding to workers (Seeman 1983; Seeman, Seeman and Budros 1988). Similarly, musicians in large symphony orchestras may become alienated from the process of music making, from other members of the orchestra, and from themselves (Schulz 1981).

Instrumentalists become alienated from the process of music making because they have little control over the repertoire selection, artistic interpretation, and tour planning that directly influence their lives (Levine and Levine 1996). Such a limited involvement in artistic decision-making can estrange musicians from what they do because they realize that their input, although very important, is rather truncated by the orchestral hierarchy. They may realize that they have low levels of control and autonomy over the process of music making in general as their roles are significantly curtailed by conductors. It is common for musicians to say that they performed under a certain conductor instead of saying with a conductor, which further illustrates the idea that musicians are often given a secondary role in a symphony orchestra.

Alienation from colleagues can be illustrated by the lack of communication between different music sections of the orchestra during rehearsals. In the questions of balance, for instance, members of one instrumental section usually do not tell members of another section how they should play their parts to make the orchestra sound better
Moreover, conductors tend to mediate the interaction between musicians and invited orchestra soloists. Sometimes conductors may even prevent orchestra players from following the soloist by overconducting them.

Musicians’ self-estrangement can be understood as their inability to fully express themselves musically. Players are not encouraged to think about music and interpret composer’s original ideas. Musicians may feel that music making becomes routine instead of being a creative art process that requires full devotion of every member of the orchestra. Explains Andrew (01/10/2005):

For musicians, our life is our music, and we live it almost all the time every day even if you have something going through your head. Taking this away from a musician, who was well trained in a conservatory potentially being a soloist or a chamber musician and find himself sitting in the back of the second violin section, or whatever, you have given up a large part of yourself. And you are simply playing to somebody else’s satisfaction. It is not an entirely satisfying way to go, way to live. When you have a lot to offer, but no one is interested, that can be very frustrating. I have not had that experience, but when I have to play a particular show or a concert for many, many times, the repetition does begin to get me after a while. I need that kind of variety. I need a chance to be involved. I need to have a chance to say things, to participate. I think when you are sitting in the orchestra, you do not really have that opportunity.

The second negative consequence of power concentration in orchestras is musicians’ *infantilization*. There is a widespread belief that symphony orchestras are fundamentally patriarchal organizations, where conductors are viewed as “omniscient fathers” and musicians as children “who know nothing and require uninterrupted teaching and supervision” (Levine and Levine 1996: 18). Such an attitude is associated with a dictatorial or authoritative conducting style that used to be practiced by most conductors. Some authoritarian conductors, such as Berlioz or Szell, treated instrumentalists like “strings, pipes, soundboxes and soundboards of wood or metal – intelligent machines that
the conductor plays like an immense piano” (Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001b: 539). Explains
Karen (01/19/2005):

Some people think that dictatorship is the only way to get the orchestra sound a
certain way or get anything done. But I would say that we are not in the
kindergarten. It is a collaborative environment of adults who are highly trained in
what they do, and you have to start out with that basis of respect and mutual
appreciation. From there, everything is possible….My preferred environment is
one where there is mutual respect between players and the conductor, and where
there is no sort of “God complex” going on in the conductor’s mind that they are
above everyone else in every way.

It is true that there are some musicians who prefer to be told exactly what they
should do and how they should play because they want to do their job and go home. They
are likely to be people who prefer to have low degree of control in their jobs, which
means lower degree of personal responsibility and job autonomy (Sparks, Faragher and
Cooper 2001). According to Karen (01/19/2005), true collaboration in an orchestra takes
a lot of energy, and “some musicians do not really want to work on that level.” Others,
however, feel that their skills and talents are underutilized in symphony orchestras and
would like to have greater autonomy. Says Robyn, a frequent concertmaster of leading
American orchestras (09/15/2005):

When you are a musician in an orchestra that is conducted, you just sit there. If
you are a good musician, you pay attention. You try to do what a conductor is
asking for, and you try to play as musically as you can. But you are never
consulted by anybody for any musical question or situation. You are just expected
to sit there and do what a conductor says. If you are a principal player, you may
have a little bit more leeway. If you are a section violinist, it is the worst. You sit
there, and you play as a conductor asks and as a concertmaster does. That’s it. It
is not your job to think. It is not your job to question. It is not your job to know
the whole score. And better musicians think to themselves, and then they get
frustrated. They know the score and know the music. But you have many
musicians who sit there and just do not care, they just want to play their part and
go home.
This quotation shows discontent with the expectations that some conductors have of their musicians. Conductors’ reluctance to engage musicians in artistic decision-making increases players’ sense of worthlessness and de-professionalizes their work. External control reduces their jurisdiction and formalizes their work which may negatively influence musicians’ professional growth (Abbott 1988; Ritzer and Walczak 1988). Some musicians have accepted “the conductor knows best” attitude in an attempt to adapt to the orchestral realities, but such a passive attitude can degrade musicians and reduce their artistic and career aspirations.

The third negative consequence, which is directly related to the excessive reliance on control by conductors, is high levels of depression among orchestra instrumentalists (Romeo 2007). Social psychologists argue that when people have personal control and responsibility for both positive and negative consequences of their actions, they are less likely to be depressed (Mirowsky and Ross 1990; Ross and Mirowsky 1989). Depression caused by the lack of control is especially severe among the groups that are already vulnerable and experience high levels of stress (Levine and Levine 1996). Empirical studies show that perceived control and autonomy are often a missing link between social position and emotional well-being.

In symphony orchestras, musicians are more likely to be held responsible for the orchestra’s failure, while conductors get credit for the performance success. Similarly, when a particular musician performs well, his or her “positive performance within the ensemble is not noticed, whereas his [or her] performance failures are referred to more often” (Piperek 1981: 9). Therefore, musicians often feel like scapegoats, blamed for performance problems or difficulties and rarely rewarded for great concerts that could not
have happened without their artistic input. Instrumentalists’ lack of control over their
direct working environment only increases their levels of depression and job-related
stress caused by early morning rehearsals and late night concerts (Piperek 1981),
performance fright (Wilson 1985), and technical difficulties of performing on their
instruments (Schulz 1981). In a situation where musicians are often being micro-
managed, it only seems obvious that there is a considerable yearning for trust and
recognition among musicians who also want to be held accountable not only for their
failures, but for the group’s success as well.

Another reason for depression among orchestra musicians is so-called aspiration-
attainment gap (Carr 1997). According to Hart (1973: 467), there is “a considerable
reluctance among talented young musicians [at least at the Juilliard School of Music,
where Hart worked] to commit themselves to a symphonic career.” Most musicians, and
especially violinists, aspire to have solo careers or play in a chamber ensemble and may
be very unhappy and experience depression after they realize that they can only make
enough money by playing in a symphony orchestra. Darrel (12/09/2004), a conductor I
interviewed, blames conservatory education for the aspiration-attainment gap that many
orchestra musicians experience:

For many musicians playing in orchestra is the last resort. If you are a student at
Juilliard, you are trained to be a soloist. That’s number one. If that’s not going to
happen, then you want to be in a string quartet. Everyone wants to do chamber
music. It is sort of part of the culture. Maybe it has to do with the fact that they do
not feel an adequate voice in an orchestra. They know once they get into an
orchestra, their voice, their individuality may feel a little stifled. At Juilliard, no
one wants to play in the Juilliard orchestra. They do not want to play and want to
get out of it all the time because they want to practice for their competitions or
doing a string quartet. So when they get out of school and they are not making
any money, they have this reality check. Oh, I have to make a living, so they
audition for orchestra jobs. The New Jersey [Symphony Orchestra] is a good
example because a lot people get into the New Jersey Symphony with the hopes
‘Ok, I am going to sit here for a couple of years. It pays the bills. And if I have to stay in an orchestra, it will not take that long before I can get into Met or New York Philharmonic to make more money.’ This is a sense of not really caring. But what happens ten years later when they are still in New Jersey Symphony?

Instrumentalists, however, describe this aspiration-attainment gap a little differently and prefer to explain it in terms of the underutilization of the skills they acquired in school. Says one of the violinists:

When we go to school, we are trained to think, to interpret. We all play ton of solo music, and you get a chance to voice opinions in the chamber music. And then you get a job as the orchestra player, and 90% of what you do after that is just play the orchestra. You have very few opportunities where you can express yourself. It is very hard to live that way, especially if you are a creative person. It does not bother everybody, not everybody is a creative person. (Robyn, 09/15/2005)

Musicians’ depression may be caused by the realization that their original aspirations have not been reached and that they have to keep the jobs that were considered to be the least desirable when they went to school. So falling short on their original goals of solo or chamber music careers may add to the musicians’ mental health problems.

Finally, it is often assumed that when people choose an artistic profession, they know that they will not make a lot of money. Instead, they expect certain non-financial gratifications, such as enjoying the creativity of music making, experiencing artistic satisfaction of performing interesting and challenging music, and working with great musicians who are experts with their instruments (Hart 1973). Yet, when musicians perform with conductors, players are not allowed to fully express themselves creatively and to enjoy true artistic collaboration. Moreover, performing with guest conductors means playing music that is either intrinsically simple or well known to musicians because orchestras have limited rehearsal time. In such a situation, besides not getting
good financial rewards for their jobs, musicians are often deprived of non-material rewards as well.

A recent study of musicians that measured their job motivation and job satisfaction found that musicians are not very satisfied with their jobs. The survey results show that although orchestra instrumentalists are self-motivated by their own pride and professionalism, they have very low levels of satisfaction with their job and with opportunities for continued growth and development, compared to other occupational groups (Allmendinger, Hackman and Lehman 1996). Musicians’ subordinate position in the orchestra increases their dissatisfaction with the organizational structure of contemporary symphony orchestras, which may prevent them from expressing their concerns freely.

This study indicates that working in a professional symphony orchestra does not provide musicians with rewarding work settings that inspire them to perform at their fullest artistic potential because they feel that their opinions are not taken into account. Explains Mary (02/13/2006):

I think there is a tremendous frustration….I think there is a high level of frustration because people go in to do something that is so creative and expect to remain creative, and then they find that they are punching the time clock like a factory worker. And I think that person’s frustration is higher than someone’s who is a factory worker and knows what they are doing.

Nonetheless, musicians’ low job satisfaction does not negatively affect the quality of their performance. Researchers have found a very low negative association between the quality of orchestra performance, assessed by the panel of experts, and musicians’ job satisfaction (Judy 1996). This finding may mean that regardless of what they think about the orchestra or their conductors, musicians are highly motivated by their devotion to the
art of music making and by their commitment to give great performances. Thus, musicians’ job satisfaction may be more likely to be negatively affected by depression symptoms and a feeling of alienation.

To summarize, even though having a conductor on the podium can help orchestras give great performances, baton-holders can also make musicians unhappy with their position in the orchestra and with their direct working environment. Musicians often feel that they are being controlled too much during rehearsals and performances and are not given enough opportunities to fully express their talents and show their musicality.

**Regaining Control: Strategies of Coping with Powerlessness**

So what do musicians do to cope with the sense of powerlessness and to regain some artistic freedom and control over their work and music identities? Research shows that orchestral players have developed a number of coping strategies that help them adapt to the realities of performing in symphony orchestras. First, musicians try to separate their public and private lives and ensure they are in control of the latter. Second, instrumentalists try to have multiple jobs so that they have a chance to regain power in some aspects of their professional lives as well. Third, musicians have negotiated and enforced the imposition of certain limits on conductor’s power through unionization. Finally, some players have chosen the alternative method of music making that directly addresses the cause of musicians’ powerlessness in the orchestra – the concentration of power in conductors’ hands – by performing without a baton-holder.

When musicians feel that they are constantly being controlled at work, they may try to regain control in the activities that are not related to their professional occupations. A sense of having control over one’s life is crucial for emotional well-being. One of the
strategies of acquiring control in private life is choosing hobbies that can provide musicians with the power to make decisions independently. A large number of symphony musicians have hobbies that give them high level of control over what they do. Among the most popular musicians’ hobbies are non-team based activities, such as reading, writing, photography, gardening, swimming, and home improvement (Levine and Levine 1996; Piperek 1981). Surprisingly, but “it [also] appears that far more musicians hold pilot licenses that one would expect in a randomly selected group with similar incomes and educational levels” (Levine and Levine 1996: 22). Having hobbies that are not related to music making can be viewed as an attempt to create multiple identities that, according to Thoits (1983), help reduce the psychological distress associated with social isolation and anxiety many musicians experience at work.

Nonetheless, even though such hobbies may help musicians regain control over the activities they are engaged in during their free time, they also have a tendency to deepen the differences between musicians’ public and private lives. Psychologically it might be hard to switch mentally between being a good member of an orchestra who is supposed to silently follow conductors’ directions and being an independent decision-maker who is solely responsible for his or her actions in non-job related activities.

Musicians tend to enjoy the variety in their professional lives. Many players hold multiple jobs. Besides being members of symphony orchestras, they join chamber ensembles, perform as freelance and solo musicians, teach music, and even become conductors. Although one should not eliminate pure economic reasons for having multiple jobs, such multiplicity of different professional roles can also be viewed as a strategy of coping with a low degree of control over their direct working environment in
symphony orchestras. Indeed, students of mental health have suggested that multiple social roles are protective to mental health and can help people cope with a sense of powerlessness in some aspects of their lives (Maclean, Glynn and Ansara 2004; Simon 1995).

Moreover, to improve the quality of their professional lives and to defend their economic interests, musicians have formed a national professional trade union, the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) (Hart 1973). The AFM “exercises complete control over professional musicians in the United States. A musician who is not in the union normally cannot earn a livelihood by playing an instrument” (Leiter 1953: 7), which made the union an extremely powerful player in the music industry. The AFM was established in 1896 and was later chartered by the American Federation of Labor. Its primary goal is to organize musicians and to provide them with more control over their professional lives. Unionization has significantly reduced the arbitrary use of power by music directors and helps musicians bargain contracts to improve their wages, health and pension benefits, and work settings, such as limiting the length of rehearsals, negotiating the number and timing of breaks, and providing adequate lighting as well as clean and safe rehearsal space. It also provides them with an optional retirement plan and disability insurance (Levine and Levine 1996; Schure Gilbert 2007).

Originally musicians decided to unite not for economic reasons, but primarily because they wanted to get the rewards of participating in the artistic aspects of orchestral decision-making. According to Hart (1973: 98), musicians “wanted the artistic satisfactions of performing great symphonic music in a manner possible only with such a joint effort” that is often impeded by conductors’ inability to provide orchestras with an
effective leadership. Later, however, economic motive became as important as artistic aspect of music making because musicians were concerned with their job security and stability.

Although trade unions help musicians defend their interests, they do not always give them enough power to have a meaningful voice in orchestra decisions. In some cases, unionization of musicians may even worsen their position as it reduces the status of highly educated instrumentalists trained in broad aspects of music making to that of unionized craftsmen who should comply with union rules. Moreover, unionization does not solve the root cause of many problems associated with conductors’ control in the orchestra because the musicians’ union is not directly against the position of a conductor.

Performing without a conductor is a strategy that some musicians employ to gain the fullest possible control over all aspects of decision-making in the orchestra. Many symphony musicians are also members of chamber ensembles, which are smaller groups (usually not more than 10 players) that perform “intimate, carefully constructed music, written and played for its own sake” (Bashford 2001: 434). One of the ideas behind chamber ensembles is to give musicians an opportunity to experience joy, as well as social and artistic pleasure, of making music together within a small group of highly committed and well-trained musicians. Musicians often look at chamber music as therapy sessions that provide them with artistic fulfillment, restore confidence, and reaffirm their love of music (Schure Gilbert 2007). The privacy and intimacy of interaction during chamber concerts are what symphony orchestras cannot provide musicians with because they are too large and impersonal. Chamber ensembles are organic wholes where
musicians directly impact each other. Says Karen (01/19/2005), a violinist who often performs with both symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles:

I enjoy playing music with other musicians and collaborate with them….I feel like chamber music incorporates reacting on every level to musicians that you are sitting next to. You know, it is like a flock of birds that you watch. There is a formation - they are going in the sky - and all of a sudden, without any warning to any of us, they switch the direction, and they make these beautiful patterns. Chamber music is a little bit like that because you are following every person in a group.

A story about the legendary Kolisch Quartet, whose members always performed music from memory, is a good example of what it means to perform with a chamber group. Once, during a concert, Eugene Lehner, the group’s violist, had an unexpected memory lapse and forgot his solo lines. Yet neither concertgoers nor other quartet members who played with their eyes closed noticed that Lehner stopped playing. It was the second violinist, Felix Khuner, who started playing Lehner’s part

… coming in without missing a beat at the viola’s designated entrance, the notes perfectly in tune and voiced like a viola on an instrument tuned a fifth higher. Lehner was stunned, and offstage after the performance asked Khuner how he could have possibly known to play. Khuner answered with a shrug: “I could see that your finger was poised over the wrong string, so I knew you must have forgotten what came next.” (Zander and Zander 2002: 77)

Such unity among musicians can rarely be achieved with the help of conductors’ control because musicians are not expected to think about or be ready to perform someone else’s part.

Chamber ensembles date back to the sixteenth century, where they were created to give concerts at courts or private homes of the wealthy. These ensembles are called “chamber” because they could literally fit into a small room, which adds to the intimacy of a chamber performance. Chamber ensembles allow each player to shine as an individual, to be seen and heard, which can be viewed as a way to combat alienation.
associated with performing in large symphony orchestras. Because chamber ensembles are small, they do not need a conductor to coordinate musicians by standing in front of them and indicating what they should do. For the same reason, however, chamber orchestras are limited to a specific repertoire written for small groups of musicians and therefore cannot perform symphonic music that requires a large number of different instruments. Musicians who perform in chamber ensembles are faced with a trade-off between the ability to experience full artistic freedom and the confines of performing a specific repertoire.

The advantages of chamber ensembles, which include personal involvement of every musician in music making, collaborative and democratic decision-making, and personal accountability for the decisions made by the group, have encouraged some musicians, who did not want to lose the opportunity to perform the symphony repertoire, to apply chamber music ideas to performing in a large orchestra. Instead of rehearsing and performing with a conductor, such orchestras encourage all their members to participate in creative decision-making, divide up their work, and share leadership roles. The idea behind performing without a baton-holder in a large orchestra is to give every player an opportunity to show his or her creativity and to experience artistic freedom without losing the benefits of performing symphonic repertoire.

Conductorless performance is, to some extent, a return to the original approach to music making in orchestras, where the first violinist performed the functions of a conductor while simultaneously performing on his or her instrument. Although concertmasters perform an important role in conductorless orchestras, their status in the orchestra during a performance is no different than other musicians. All members of such
orchestras are responsible for the orchestral performance and have to be willing to accept the decisions made by the group as a whole. Moreover, any large orchestra that decides to perform without a conductor faces a number of technical challenges, which include the issues of tempo, balance, and coordination. They also have to find a working alternative to conductors’ control that would make rehearsals rather orderly without limiting musicians’ freedoms and that would resolve organizational problems without leading to the dictatorship of the masses. Although challenging, such participatory approach to music making can potentially allow musicians to better cope with the problems of alienation, infantilization, and dissatisfaction with their jobs by creating a feeling that they literally own their orchestra.

In the pages to come, I analyze how two most prominent conductorless orchestras - Persimfans (Pervyi Simfonicheskiy Ansambl’, or The First Symphonic Ensemble in Russian) in Moscow during the 1920s and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in New York starting from 1972 – have been able to perform without conductors. Persimfans is famous for being one of the most interesting and innovative products of the Soviet Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in the art field. While it inspired many other groups across the world to try a conductorless approach to making music, Persimfans became a victim of a totalitarian government. Although most Orpheus members have not heard about Persimfans, they formed their own conductorless group, which is the largest currently performing conductorless chamber orchestra. Orpheus became a metaphor for collaborative decision-making and power-sharing not only among orchestras, but also in the business field.
Second Movement: Two Experiments with Leadership

“A headless horseman is galloping around Moscow” (Stites 1989: 138).

If I were to write your thesis, I think what Orpheus wants to get out there is that we are not a conductorless orchestra. We are a bunch of musicians making music. In fact, the group is very tired of hearing: ‘Oh, the conductorless orchestra.’ I think the way the group works is not like that. It is not a conductorless orchestra, but a bunch of musicians in collaboration with one another towards higher art, towards music. (Laura, an Orpheus musician)

Symphony orchestras are often viewed as the last resort for authoritarian leaders (Seifter and Economy 2001). Orchestras are slow to change. Therefore, instead of trying to change conductors’ leadership style, members of Persimfans and Orpheus decided to change the organizational form itself. The appearance of conductorless orchestras can be viewed as the most radical reaction to conductors’ control in symphony orchestras. While they are performing without conductors, orchestras are not against conductors or strong leadership per se. Instead, Persimfans and Orpheus are against the arbitrary use of power and control by conductors and underutilization of musicians’ skills and talents in typical symphony orchestras. Although conductorless orchestras have declared a war on hierarchical control, they are in no way leaderless. Instead, they have many leaders who share leadership roles. Musicians realize that a symphony performance requires coordination and strong leadership. Nonetheless, they do not think that having an authoritarian conductor is the best way to make good music.

As with any innovation, conductorless orchestras did not become successful right away. When Persimfans and Orpheus first appeared, they could not capitalize on their conductors’ fame and reputation because they did not have any. They could not invite
star soloists because they have not yet established their names in the orchestral world.
Persimfans and Orpheus did not have a musical niche, and thus had to compete with both symphony and chamber orchestras for the attention and appreciation of concertgoers. On the one hand, Persimfans can be classified as a symphony orchestra because it consisted of more than 100 musicians. Yet it did not have a conductor like all other symphony orchestras. On the other hand, Orpheus is a relatively small group with only 29 full-time members. Nevertheless, besides performing standard chamber repertoire, it also performs symphonic music that usually requires a conductor.

In this movement, I present brief histories of both orchestras. I use the analysis of documents about Persimfans, interviews with Orpheus players, as well as observations of their rehearsals and performances to explain how these two orchestras were able to move beyond the conducted model. Although a strictly comparative study of these two orchestras is methodologically difficult because they performed in different countries and during different time periods, it is interesting to note that there are many similarities between the two orchestras. Both orchestras faced similar problems: they had to prove that performing without a conductor was a viable alternative to a conducted orchestra, to find a way of sharing typical conductor’s responsibilities, and to deal with financial and logistical problems part-time orchestras usually face. Besides, Persimfans and Orpheus were products of their time and arguably could not have been created in any other historical period. Members of both orchestras looked at the idea of a conductorless ensemble as a refuge from authoritative conductors. Finally, Persimfans and Orpheus musicians played with their orchestras because of their devotion to the chamber approach.
to music-making and desire to be actively engaged in all aspects of organizational
decision-making.

**History of Persimfans**

Soviet Persimfans was the first attempt by a full-size symphony orchestra to employ a
conductorless approach to music making. It is still the largest symphony orchestra (more
than 100 musicians) that has performed without a conductor on a permanent basis. The
group performed in Moscow between 1922 and 1933 and consisted of the best musicians
who were full-time members of the leading Moscow orchestras, music professors, or the
most talented students of the Moscow Conservatory. Besides performing both classical
and contemporary repertoires, Persimfans wanted to bring symphonic music to the
masses by giving concerts not only in concert halls, but also at workers’ clubs, factories,
and other non-traditional venues.

Members of Persimfans were against the exaggeration of a conductor’s role and
underestimation of instrumentalists’ potential and abilities. According to the orchestra’s
official statement, Persimfans “rejected the conductor’s impeccability and monopoly over
power and rejected the need of conductor’s presence during concerts, when a musical
composition had already been learned and prepared for performance” (Persimfans 1926a:
1). Musicians should be given an opportunity to express their own interpretation of music
during rehearsals, to discuss their colleagues’ interpretations, and to collectively come up
with a musical interpretation that would reflect the group’s vision, rather than the
individual’s vision.

Such an approach to music making was based on the chamber music philosophy
that stresses the balance between individual players and the whole ensemble. To
underscore the importance of chamber approach to music making in symphony orchestra, the group’s name contained the word “ensemble,” which in French literally means “together.” Even though Persimfans was a large orchestra, musicians preferred the word “ensemble” to stress the importance of true collaboration that is seldom achieved in traditional symphony orchestras.

After Persimfans gave its first all-Beethoven performance in February of 1922, the idea of a conductorless orchestra became a topic of heated debate. Some music critics were thrilled by it and claimed that, compared to conducted orchestras, musicians in a conductorless orchestra should have higher levels of job satisfaction because there was no hierarchy and no conductor’s supremacy over musicians. Others, however, were skeptical about the future of a conductorless performance because it is hard for a large orchestra to perform without a strong, visible leader (Sabaneev as cited in Tsukker, 1927). Although critics doubted the long-term success of Persimfans and thought that performing without a conductor was a utopian idea, the orchestra performed successfully for 11 years, premiered many new musical pieces, and even received the title of an Honored Collective of the Republic from the Soviet government.

The history of Persimfans was full of success and failure stories. The orchestra was able to perform difficult programs without a conductor. For instance, it performed Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, which required a full orchestra, a large choir, and four soloists. It also premiered new music compositions by Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and Myaskovsky, which were considered risky and technically difficult. Persimfans also gave conductorless concerts with over 150 musicians on stage. At the same time, however, Persimfans was faced with multiple logistical problems, such as the absence of its own
rehearsal and performance halls, financial difficulties, and the part-time status of the group.

In 1925, Persimfans received a government subsidy, which enabled it to schedule the first two subscription concert series of 10 performances each. The first series of concerts included the Moscow premiere of Prokofiev’s *Scythian Suite* and already well-known pieces by Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Bach, and Beethoven. In 1926-27, each subscription series included 15 concerts and consisted of a large number of new compositions that were considered hard-to-perform even with a conductor.

Besides performing in traditional venues, Lev Tseiltin, the founder and the concertmaster of Persimfans, wanted to make classical music more accessible to the masses. This idea was fully realized on January 9, 1927 when the orchestra gave its first concert at a factory cafeteria. It was so cold in the room that musicians had to wear their fur coats. The acoustics were very poor because the cafeteria was narrow and long. The factory management warned musicians that it would be very hard to get workers’ attention, and that they should not expect silence from the audience. Yet, to everyone’s surprise, workers enjoyed the concert and did not want to leave when the concert was over. The concert-in-the-factory soon became a popular alternative to the concert-in-the-concert-hall (Ponyatovsky 2003; Stites 1989).

These concerts made a strong political statement intended to show that the proletariat could also enjoy classical music, which was traditionally perceived as high bourgeois culture. Workers and farmers could enjoy classical music if orchestras instilled a new habit of listening to classical music. The fastest way of doing so was to bring the music directly to where people work and spend most of their time. Moreover, symphonic
concerts without a conductor also sent a strong symbolic message to mass audiences. The ideas of collectivity and equality, as well as rejection of authoritarian leadership and dictatorship, resonated well with the workers, who were trying to implement similar principles in their work places.

Concerts-in-the-factory became so popular that the orchestra started receiving requests from various organizations not only to give concerts for their workers at the job sites, but also to sell them tickets to concerts held in traditional venues. In one of the letters, metalworkers who attended a Persimfans concert wrote that they were afraid that they would not understand classical music and were skeptical about the idea of attending a symphony concert, but the pre-concert talk that opened the program helped them better understand the music (Persimfans 1927b). According to the orchestra’s estimates, they received 18,000 requests for tickets from workers for the performance of Beethoven *Fifth Symphony*, but were only able to accommodate 3,000 requests because of the size of the concert hall (Bergman 1928).

Persimfans continued its educational outreach activities through publishing its own journal, called *Persimfans*. Originally a bi-monthly publication, the journal was published between 1926 and 1930, when, due to financial difficulties, the orchestra decided to publish only one page-long programs. Starting with just 500 copies, the journal’s circulation was later increased to 3,000. The first issues of the journal looked like an extended version of concert programs and consisted of about 6 to 16 pages. The orchestra’s emblem and the journal’s title were placed on the front page, musicians’ names and their instruments were listed on the second page to allow the audiences to know who performed during the concert. A typical issue of the journal included a small
On the wave of its success, Persimfans published a book entitled *Five Years of Persimfans*. Arnold Tsukker, the book’s author and a member of the orchestra’s artistic committee, tried to explain the Persimfans’s philosophy and to describe the accomplishments of the first five years of the orchestra’s history. Besides summarizing the main arguments for performing without a conductor, Tsukker actively attacked those who criticized Persimfans. To some extent, the book was a political statement against the tyranny of conductors, but Tsukker was careful to specify that musicians were only against the dictatorship of mediocre conductors who treated them as components of a large orchestral machine (Tsukker 1927).

Persimfans became a model for other orchestras that wanted to perform without a conductor. Similar orchestras appeared in numerous cities of the USSR (Petrograd, Khar’kov, Odessa, Baku, Kiev, Vorozhezh, and Tiflis) and across its borders (Leipzig, Wurzburg, Bern, Warsaw, and Geneva) (Nikitina 1991; Ponyatovsky 2003). Even some American musicians became inspired by the popularity of the idea of a conductorless
ensemble. In 1928, the American Symphonic Ensemble gave three concerts at the Carnegie Hall. The program of its first all-Beethoven concert (Violin Concerto in D major, Symphony No. 3 (Eroica), and Egmont Overture) repeats the program of the first Persimfans concert, which symbolizes close ties between the two orchestras. In 1929, the American Symphonic Ensemble was renamed to the Conductorless Symphony Orchestra and successfully performed seven concerts at the Carnegie Hall in the 1929-30 season (Downes 1928a; 1928b; 1929).

To popularize the idea of a conductorless performance among the future generations of musicians, Abram Yampolsky, the orchestra’s violinist, taught 11-12 year olds how to perform without a conductor. The orchestra called “Little Persimfans” was formed in 1923 and performed successfully Bach’s Brandenburg’s Concerto, Gendel’s Concerto Grosso, Mozart symphonies, and other music by using the chamber philosophy. In 1930, Tseiltin gave a solo performance accompanied by members of Little Persimfans (Ponyatovsky 2003; Tsukker 1927).

Persimfans’s success was formally recognized when it received the title of an Honored Collective of the Republic from the Soviet government. It was the first orchestra to receive this title in the USSR. On the day of Persimfans’s fifth anniversary, Anatoly Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Public Education, said:

First of all, I salute you because you are a wonderful orchestra. I salute the high degree of your performance perfection, both when you perform well-known masterpieces and when you bring new chef d'œuvres to life. Second, I salute your sense of democracy because you are moving in the right direction … by not turning your back to the regular concertgoers whose opinion and support you clearly need and by introducing the proletariat to symphony music….Third, I salute you as a collective without a conductor. You have proved that a good orchestra does not need a mediocre or even a good conductor. Many say that a great conductor together with you could create something better. Let’s assume that he could give you something. But he would also take something away from you
because the distinctive feature of your orchestra...is that the liveliness and energy of your ensemble is equally shared among all cells of your musical organism....Such characteristics cannot be found in a perfectly orderly performance, especially when this order is dictated by an outsider’s will. (Persimfans 1927a: 6-7)

Upon receipt of this award, Persimfans received even more invitations to perform in various cities around the Soviet Union and abroad. The period between 1927 and 1929 was very fruitful for the orchestra: it performed regularly in Moscow, toured the country, and was quite stable financially.

Unfortunately, Persimfans’s artistic success was always accompanied by various logistical problems. Right after its remarkable debut in 1922 and throughout its history, the orchestra experienced multiple crises. Persimfans did not have its own stage and performed primarily at the Bol’shoy Theater on Sunday afternoons and Monday nights when the Bol’shoy did not have its own performances. Many Persimfans players were full-time members of the Bol’shoy orchestra, who had to work seven days a week to be able to rehearse and perform with both orchestras.

To cope with financial problems and to get a rehearsal room, Persimfans joined the State Philharmonic on a condition that it would perform one concert with a conductor and one without. These conducted concerts not only allowed Persimfans to temporarily resolve its financial difficulties, but also gave musicians an opportunity to perform with such great maestros as Ippolitov-Ivanov, Blumenfeld, Cooper, and Glazounov. Conducted concerts were performed only in 1922, and after that Persimfans always performed without a baton-holder (Ponyatovsky 2003).

Beginning in the 1929-30 season, Persimfans was in a steady decline. First, the orchestra did not receive the subsidies for its subscription concerts promised by the
government earlier that year. Second, the orchestra had to compete not only with the Bol’shoy Theater orchestra, but also with new orchestras created by the Radio Committee and the Moscow Philharmonic. Third, Persimfans was not able to perform as many new programs as it wanted to due to the difficulties with scheduling rehearsals. Consequently, musicians ended up performing old programs that did not require many rehearsals. Fourth, its musicians were not always paid for their work. Even when they were getting paid, their salaries were below the average salary of a Soviet citizen. Fifth, all orchestra musicians were employed full time by other orchestras, which made it hard for them to play with Persimfans.

The meeting of the Commissariat for Public Education in July of 1933, to a large extent, determined the future of Persimfans. Mr. Akradiev, one of the officials of the Commissariat for Public Education, opened the meeting by saying: “We just have to decide whether Persimfans should continue performing or whether it should be liquidated” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 39). The major argument against the orchestra was its inefficiency in using rehearsal time. One of the conductors present at that meeting accused Persimfans of needing about 12 rehearsals to prepare for each concert. All of the orchestra’s rehearsals took place in a room it rented in the Moscow Conservatory. When that room was taken away from the orchestra because the Conservatory claimed that it needed extra space, Persimfans was left without rehearsal space. Moreover, Persimfans also lost an opportunity to schedule its subscription concerts because the government introduced a five-day workweek – a seemingly unrelated reason, but it was a five-day workweek that technically prevented Persimfans from having its traditional Monday
night concerts. According to that law, Monday became a workday for the Bol’shoy Theater musicians, who made up the majority of Persimfans players.

The difficulties experienced by musicians during these years significantly undermined their enthusiasm for the idea of performing without a conductor. According to Stites (1989: 138), “[t]he players were definitely overworked and underpaid.” Although theoretically it was a great approach to orchestral performance, practically it turned out to be very difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to apply the chamber approach to making music in a large symphony orchestra where musicians also had other obligations. After one unsuccessful concert in 1933, Persimfans’s musicians got together and collectively decided to dismiss the orchestra. They argued that “it was better to dissolve the orchestra than to play like that” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 41).

To summarize, the organizational model of Persimfans was not perfect, and reliance on chamber approach to making music in a large symphony orchestra turned out to be problematic. Although logistical problems greatly undermined Persimfans’s long-term success, political, economic, and musical reasons can also be blamed for the orchestra’s dissolution in 1933 (Ponyatovsky 2003; Stites 1989).

Politically, the idea of performing without a conductor fit well with the ideals of the Proletariat Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin. Giving all musicians creative freedom to fully express their talents in a field that was traditionally dominated by dictators who usurped orchestral power was very tempting not only for musicians but also for the Communist Party leaders. A collective approach to making decisions and empowering those people who were previously excluded from making them was one of the originally proclaimed goals of the Soviet Revolution. At the same time, however, the story of
Persimfans shows that democracy and the absence of a formal authority figure in a Soviet orchestra were too idealistic and utopian for a society that never had true democracy. Persimfans clearly did not fit Stalin’s model of a Communist society in general and a symphony orchestra in particular. Although the ideas of cooperation, collectivity, and equality were very socialist in nature, some public officials felt that musicians in conductorless orchestra experienced too much artistic freedom, which could potentially lead to dissidence and disobedience.

From an economic point of view, it is more efficient to perform with a conductor (Sabaneev 1926; Virkhaus 1997). Critics of Persimfans argued that a conductor could have achieved similar artistic results much faster and would never have demanded so many rehearsals. They also claimed that although it is possible to perform a well-known classical piece without a conductor, and that some conductors even give their orchestras an opportunity to perform some programs without their direct guidance (Tsukker 1927), learning a brand new program without a baton-holder is impossible. When every musician is expected to come up with valuable suggestions, rehearsals would inevitably become too chaotic. One of the best strategies to reduce the number of rehearsals is to disagree with other musicians only on the most crucial aspects of performance. But which aspects are the most important? A one-line solo can be the central part for an oboist in a whole concerto, but violinists who have no notes to play at that time may not consider this line crucial for the success of the whole performance.

Finally, musically, it was hard for more than hundred musicians to perform without a leader. Critics were skeptical about the idea of suppressing musicians’ egos to achieve a coherent and well-balanced performance. In smaller ensembles, such as
quartets, it is theoretically possible for every musician to show their individuality and for the audience to notice it (Murnighan and Conlon 1991). In a large symphony orchestra, however, expressions of musicians’ individuality may easily result in a cacophonic and uncoordinated performance. A constant self-suppression of artistic individuality for the sake of the greatness of the orchestral performance may be even more frustrating and psychologically difficult than following conductors’ orders. Such a heavy reliance on musicians’ self-control and the ability to informally coordinate the soloist-quality instrumentalists increases the risks of performing without a conductor.

To ensure the uniformity of all Soviet orchestra, a series of competitions among young conductors was established in 1932. “This practice established a Soviet ‘school’ of conducting characterized by firm discipline, one-man control, strict division of labor, the traditional pattern of orchestral and audience deference to the easily recognized central figure” (Stites 1989: 139). The growing number of young Soviet conductors increased the number of orchestras that were fully state-sponsored and provided their members with full-time employment. Consequently, it became very difficult for musicians to play in several orchestras at the same time. After Persimfans ceased to exist, Lev Tseiltin and a large group of his colleagues became actively engaged in creating a new flagship Soviet Orchestra - the USSR State Symphony Orchestra, which is now called the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Russian Federation. The USSR State Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1936. Although it had a conductor, Alexander Gauk, Lev Tseilin was its original concertmaster (Ponyatovsky 2003).
History of Orpheus

Compared to Persimfans, Orpheus is a less ambitious project because it was never meant to be large. Orpheus members understand that conductorless performance is associated with many technical difficulties, such as the need to hear all group members, which are only amplified when the orchestra is too large. Although Orpheus’s repertoire is limited by the size of the orchestra (typically no more than 40 musicians are on stage, which, according to musicians, is a tipping point at which an orchestra becomes too large to operate without a single leader), this ensemble performs music that many conductors view as difficult and risky. Performing without a conductor in smaller chamber groups might be easier than in large symphony orchestras that usually have about one hundred players, but musicians still have to solve all the problems based on the democratic principles of chamber philosophy.

Established in 1972, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is currently the world’s largest conductorless orchestra and employs 29 permanent musicians and multiple substitute players for concerts, tours, and recordings. The name of this orchestra comes from the Greek God of beautiful bittersweet music who enchanted audiences with his songs and his lyre. By the beauty of his voice and music, Orpheus was able to wheedle the rocks and trees and to charm the wild beasts. His music often helped him succeed where others failed. Orpheus’s music, for instance, saved the Argonauts from the luring songs of Sirens, who wanted to steer their ships into the rocks and wreck it (Graves 2001).

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra rehearses, performs, and records without a central authority figure, which allows its musicians to share leadership roles and to reach
a deep personal artistic commitment that helps create strong emotional connections between the composer’s ideas and the audience’s perceptions of music by eliminating any barrier between the listener and the music. In addition to touring the United States, Europe, and Asia, it performs an annual series of five concerts at the Carnegie Hall. Orpheus has also recorded nearly 70 albums, received the 1998 “Ensemble of the Year” award by *Musical America* and the 2001 Grammy Award for “Shadow Dances: Stravinsky Miniatures.” Besides performing with the most prominent soloists, such as Joshua Bell, Yefim Bronfman, Sarah Chang, Richard Goode, and Barbara Bonney, Orpheus commissions new music as a member of Cheswatyr New Music Initiative.

The way Orpheus musicians rehearse and perform became so popular that it formed the *Orpheus Institute*, which intends to bridge conservatory education and the professional music field. Located at the Manhattan and Juilliard Schools of Music in New York City, Orpheus musicians offer a year-long seminar on conductorless performance as well as leadership and administrative skills that will enhance their students’ ability to participate fully in the organizations that will later employ them.

Similarly to Persimfans, Orpheus’s name does not contain the word “conductorless,” but for many years it was a “master status” of the orchestra because the group was marketed as an “extraordinary chamber ensemble” that performs *without* a baton-holder. Its 1976 brochure explains that extraordinariness of the group lies in the fact that all members participate equally in artistic decision-making, which allows them to rehearse and perform without a conductor. When the group became too large to be called an ensemble, it was renamed to an orchestra.
One of the Orpheus posters featured a broken baton to help differentiate the group from other orchestras. Musicians, however, did not want to stress that they were a conductorless orchestra because it sounded like they were revolutionaries fighting against conductors. The word “conductorless” emphasized that they did not have something instead of saying what they did have. According to one Orpheus musician, “the group is very tired of hearing: ‘Oh, the conductorless orchestra.’ I think the way the group works is not like that. It is not a conductorless orchestra, but a bunch of musicians in collaboration with one another towards higher art, towards music” (Laura, 03/15/2006).

Nowadays, the Orpheus management tries to align the way musicians see themselves with how the audiences perceive the orchestra. As one of the orchestra managers explained,

> For a very long time the group’s identity was: “We are the group without a conductor. We are a good orchestra without a conductor.” When I got here three years ago, the position of my supervisor changed to: “We do not want to be a great orchestra without a conductor, we just want to be a great orchestra”…. I definitely embraced that we just want to be a good orchestra. Then all of a sudden you market the orchestra that way, and you got an elephant in the room. We do not have a freaking conductor. There is no getting around it: we are a great orchestra, and we still do not have a conductor. Navigating that has been difficult in marketing the organization as a whole and its identity. We are still sort of getting our way through it. (Joshua, 03/15/2006)

The original reasons for creating Orpheus were very idealistic - the desire to change the world of music, to experience artistic freedom, and to give each musician an opportunity to show his or her talent. Musicians were young and idealistic. As recent music school graduates, they were ready to enjoy artistic freedom and various artistic opportunities available in New York City. Julian Fifer, the orchestra’s founder, wanted to create an orchestra with an organizational culture that would allow musicians to find a new way of making music. As one of the original violinists recalled:
The idea was to have an alternative. Because we were all in a chamber music framework, we wanted to play where you had your own part, your own voice, like in a string quartet, which is usually quite egalitarian. Supposedly in such groups the weakest link will bring the group down…. So we wanted to have all equally strong people. The dialogue in the performances and in rehearsals is supposed to engage everybody, and that what chamber music is. Orpheus is a chamber music type group, which is about equality and dialogue. So we were just trying to expand the chamber music paradigm to ten, twenty, thirty people, and even beyond. (Jane, 12/10/2004)

Initially fueled by idealism and enthusiasm, Orpheus survived its first years by

…meeting at Chinese restaurants, rehearsing in churches, and performing at public libraries and housing projects, because city-owned property cost nothing to rent. Eventually, the group got a few annual grants from New York's arts commission, created a demo tape, and, in 1974, booked a small hall at Lincoln Center for its debut performance. (Lieber 2000: 286)

To preserve the democratic ethos, all members used to participate in every decision-making process, and the group looked for unanimous decisions. Consequently, orchestra rehearsals were very long and chaotic because all musicians wanted to try their interpretation. Yet when Orpheus members started their own families, they could not afford to have numerous long rehearsals and became more concerned with the financial side of their jobs. They were less willing to give free concerts in churches and libraries or go to six-week long tours to Europe and South America, which actually made Orpheus a world famous orchestra. As one player summarized it: “Few of us were married. Very few of us had children. Few of us had affiliations with conservatories and universities. Few of us had any kind of full-time jobs in standing orchestras. We were young, and it was the perfect time for that” (Fred, 04/05/2006).

When Orpheus became a commercial success, some musicians started feeling that the orchestra suffered from the so-called founder’s syndrome, “when the group grows beyond its founders…and needs to move on or needs more help” (Fred, 04/05/2006).
They felt that Julian Fifer, the founder, president, executive director, and violinist of the orchestra from 1972 to 1999, and Norma Hulburt, the executive vice president of the orchestra until 1998, had monopolized organizational decision-making. Although musicians were actively engaged in artistic decision-making, they wanted to have a say in all aspects of organizational decision-making because they did not feel that the management acted in their best interests. Musicians were not represented on the board or the management, as it has traditionally been the case in all American orchestras. As Fred (04/05/2006) explained, Julian and Norma courted the board, so that “the board’s loyalty, affection, and emotional friendship were with the management. The board was closer to the management than to musicians.”

After Julian and Norma left Orpheus in 1999 and 1998 respectively, Harvey Seifter, a theater professional, was invited to become the orchestra’s executive director. During his 4-year tenure, Mr. Seifter was able to improve Orpheus’s financial situation and introduced the so-called “process demonstrations” that showed business professionals how Orpheus’s participatory decision-making strategies and flat organizational structure could be applied to other organizations. According to Andrew (01/10/2005), a process demonstration “is actually rehearsing a piece and arguing about it for a while and trying to make it better” in front of the audience that asks questions at the end of the rehearsal. Seifter wanted to generate more cash to help the orchestra financially. Additional money was meant to be spent on encouraging full-time members to play more with the orchestra because they only had to play 35% of the season with the group to keep their status. Besides generating cash, process demos also allowed Orpheus
to save on the cost of rehearsal space because they had an opportunity to rehearse new programs during these demonstrations.

Unfortunately, musicians did not like to act as business consultants and were unwilling to turn down other projects or teaching for the sake of participating in process demos that were often scheduled in addition to regular rehearsals. Says Robyn (09/15/2005),

I do not find an advantage of having to verbalize what we do. Nobody verbalized what we did. We would not even know how to answer these questions. We did not even know what to think about those questions that they were asking during the process demos. We started to think about the answer and came up with some stock answers of what we were supposed to do even if we didn’t of course.

Although many musicians opposed the idea of process demonstrations and were tired of the same kinds of questions they got from the audience, they agreed that these process demonstrations helped the orchestra learn from its own experience and change the way they rehearsed. Continues Robyn (09/15/2005),

We would go and play for a school or business organization, and they would watch us work, the flat management kind of model. And musicians would start to answer why we do this, this, and this. It was not very true, but I think that we repeated that so much that we started doing it more….I find that it helped the group. I think that the group also had discussions, mostly informally, about just letting the core\(^4\) take more control and actively try to make interpretations happen. I think there was a very subtle shift over the last few years.

The general feeling among musicians was that Mr. Seifter was thinking more about his own career than about the orchestra. Moreover, his business approach to managing the orchestra was not fully compatible with the Orpheus’s culture that values freedom and participation. Many musicians mentioned that there was no trust between the management and players. As one musician put it:

\(^4\) For a discussion of core groups See pp.93-94.
For quite a long time, [there was] no trust...between the office and the orchestra. There has been no good communication for a long time. For example, if anything bad happens, like if a tour is cancelled, we would never be told. It is like a fear of disappointing people, a fear of being a messenger of bad news. So we all thought we would get this grant, and our salaries would go up. And then a year later we asked: ‘Did we get it?’ They would say: ‘Oh, no, no.’ But we just wanted to know what was that grant for, and why we did not get it...We are not dumb, we can handle this. (Jane, 12/10/2004)

In 2002, Mr. Seifter left the orchestra and became the executive and artistic director of Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts in 2003. Although musicians praised his managerial abilities, they felt that the leadership in the orchestra was overly concentrated in his hands. Explains one of the orchestra’s violists:

Harvey is a very smart man...and in a situation where one would want a very strong executive director, he’d be the man for the job. But Orpheus works in a certain way. It was started by the musicians, and it has always been our goal to keep the musicians and the board active in the decision making and the running and the planning, and we felt that the management should reflect those goals and that kind of working relationship. (Kozinin 2002: B9)

After Seifter’s resignation, musicians decided to take the organizational leadership into their own hands. They wanted to make sure that power in Orpheus is not concentrated in the hands of one individual. Players were afraid that such a structure would be too similar to a structure of a conducted orchestra. So, their solution to the power concentration problem was to involve musicians not only in artistic decision-making, but also in managerial decision-making. They also separated the duties formerly performed by the executive director among two people, one of whom is an orchestra instrumentalist and another one is a professional manager.

This brief discussion of the orchestra’s history and structure shows that Orpheus began with a musician-leader who performed with the group and made important organizational decisions at the same time. Soon, however, he stopped playing with the
orchestra, which might have been one of the reasons for musicians’ unhappiness. Then, players invited an outsider to manage the group, a strategy that did not work out either because of the lack of trust and communication between musicians and the management. At that time, the participatory ethos of the group was not part of the Orpheus’s managerial culture. The current period of the orchestra’s history is characterized by the fusion of artistic and organizational decision-making with musicians included in all aspects of orchestral decision-making.

**Not That Different after All**

Although I never intended to conduct a comparative analysis of these orchestras, it is hard to ignore the fact that they are both similar and different at the same time. The main difference between the two orchestras is their size. While Persimfans is a large orchestra, even compared to some conducted symphony orchestras, Orpheus is a much smaller ensemble. Performing without a conductor in Orpheus is in a way easier because musicians could hear and see each other better than in Persimfans. Hearing and seeing your colleagues during rehearsals and performances helps musicians achieve coherent and coordinated performances.

Moreover, Soviet and American orchestras are based on different governance models. While Soviet orchestras were fully financed by the government and consequently did not have boards of directors, American orchestras have to build a strong network of donors with a help of rich and well-connected board members. Therefore, during the times when Persimfans was favored by the Soviet government, it did not have any financial problems. Things changed when the political thaw of the 1920s in Soviet Union
was over. Even though Persimfans suffered from financial difficulties, it was still a self-governing orchestra where musicians made all decisions independently.

Although Orpheus did not have to deal with the government to the extent that Persimfans did, the former had to find board members as well as managers who were willing to apply its approach to music-making to organizational decision-making. This task turned out to be rather complicated. Managerially, Orpheus is not a self-governing orchestra because its board is not dominated by orchestra instrumentalists. Artistically, however, the decision-making process during Orpheus rehearsals is similar to the democratic approach to making decisions in worker cooperatives.

Finally, while Orpheus is largely a touring orchestra that gives more concerts outside of New York than at home, Persimfans did not tour much. Orpheus members often joke that they are more popular abroad than at home. It is easier for Orpheus to go on tours because this orchestra is much smaller compared to Persimfans. Moreover, Orpheus’s membership is also more fluid. It is common for Orpheus to change players during a tour, which means that one oboist plays with the orchestra during the first part of a tour and then is substituted by another oboist during the second part.

As different as these orchestras may be, both of them are rather homogeneous part-time organizations that employ only highly trained professional instrumentalists devoted to the art of collaborative music making. By virtue of their location, Persimfans and Orpheus were able to recruit the cream of the crop musicians who were technically well prepared to take on such a challenging task as performing orchestral repertoire without a conductor. Because of their professional training, members of both orchestras
were familiar with various interpretations of standard orchestral repertoire, which helped them make informed artistic decisions by using a collaborative approach.

Moreover, both Persimfans and Orpheus were products of their time. Persimfans, for instance, was formed during the early years of the Soviet state, which, in the art field, were characterized by the attempts to revolutionize the musical life and the way music was performed. The aesthetic emblem of that time was stylistic pluralism and innovative artistic ideas, such as the avant-garde movement. This movement encouraged musicians to fully express their talents and gave them freedom to experiment with various music styles and techniques. Moreover, the government was interested in attracting new audiences to the concert halls. Persimfans was an ideal orchestra for the Soviet government to stress the role of collectivism and the power of the masses (Shakhnazarova 1992).

Similarly, Orpheus is a typical product of American society of the 1970s, which were characterized by the rejection of central authority and admiration for collectivist principles. The orchestra founder hoped to “provide an environment in which the musical judgments of each of its members would be equally considered and respected” (Orpheus concert brochure, 1976). According to Baer, a music columnist for The New York Sun, Orpheus members realized the goal of many music students of that time who did not want to pursue a career in symphony orchestras, which did not want to risk performing contemporary music and were dominated by conductor-tyrants:

Our collective goal was not to play in the Philharmonic, but lose ourselves in a tight-yet-free maximalists’s chamber-orchestra interpretation of Copland’s “Appalachian Spring,” Stravinsky’s “Puntenella,” or a work of Mozart. The members of Orpheus, a blend of New York’s best musicians (of which nearly all deserve solo careers), were our idols. Their spirit was intoxicating, their sounds
virtuoso. And they hadn’t kowtowed to the so-called “man,” enlisting in a symphony that would color them slaves. (Baer 2003: 16)

The ideas of collectivism were as popular in the USA in the 1970s as they were in Soviet Union in the 1920s. Orpheus was not alone in its desire to ensure that rank-and-file employees have an opportunity to influence how they perform their work. Cooperative organizations, self-managed teams, and quality circles became popular in the 1960s-80s, exactly when Orpheus was formed.

It seems that musicians in both orchestras performed out of their love for classical music and their devotion to the idea of a conductorless performance. Thus, they were eager to try something new. Neither orchestra, however, could pay good salaries to its members. For the first three years, Persimfans musicians did not get paid regularly. Only after receiving a government subsidy was Persimfans able to pay its members on a regular basis. Even when musicians were paid, their salaries were equal to 60 rubles per month (approximately $30 at that time), which was below the average worker’s salary of 70.5 rubles. In comparison, the ticket prices for Persimfans concerts ranged from 1 ruble to 4.5 rubles, while the subscription for 8 concerts cost approximately 6.2 rubles (Persimfans 1929). Such a low salary is one of the reasons why Persimfans was never a full-time job for its members, except for its concertmaster.

Similarly, Orpheus’s full members were not paid during the early years because the orchestra could afford to pay salaries only to substitute players and guest artists (Daniel, 03/18/2005). As one of the Orpheus wind players explains:

In the very beginning people were not working and playing [in other groups] very much because we were right out of school. We loved the idea of [performing without a conductor] and adored music. Although we made no money from it, we had time on our hands. We could talk about that phrase or tempo for hours, but it would just get so nuts and frustrating after a while because we went on and on. As
time went on, people started to play in other places, to get married, having families, and needed to earn a living. So Orpheus started being paid for concerts, but that took a while before it happened. It was early enough for us to have a really interesting time and just be totally pure in the music no matter what (Sharon, 03/14/2005).

Even now Orpheus is not a full-time orchestra and pays only a fraction of what other chamber orchestras pay. According to some of the musicians I spoke with, they make about $10,000 - $15,000 per season, depending on how many concerts they perform. Oftentimes, their Orpheus salary does not have a large impact on their tax returns (Fred, 04/05/2006).

To summarize, while Persimfans and Orpheus provide their musicians with an opportunity to enjoy artistic freedom and make music collaboratively, performing without a conductor is not necessarily an ideal solution to the excessive baton-holders’ reliance on control and is also associated with a number of problems that traditional symphony orchestras do not have to deal with. First, when musicians rehearse and perform with a conductor, they always know who is in charge. In contrast, when an orchestra performs without a conductor, the leader is not always visible. Second, conductorless orchestras have to find a way of resolving the problem of inefficiency of performing without a baton-holder, who has a potential to quickly resolve a lot of technical issues. Third, dealing with peers may be more difficult than accepting the authority of a conductor who, by definition, has more power than orchestra players. Finally, democratic and consensus-based decision-making may be negatively influenced by the groupthink. Consequently decisions made using this strategy might be of second-rate. Various solutions to these and some other problems associated with conductorless approach to music making are the focus of my discussion in the next movements.
Third Movement: Challenges of Making Music in Conductorless Orchestras

“Performing without a conductor is freedom. Rehearsing without a conductor is insane” (Tessa Gross, a student at the Orpheus Institute at the Manhattan School of Music).

“Orpheus is about this mutual goal towards creating something beautiful, it is about excellence. It is about labor of love” (Fred, an Orpheus musician).

Sociologically speaking, both Persimfans and Orpheus redefine the notions of power and control in organizational settings. In a traditional understanding of power as the ability to employ sanctions to influence other people’s behavior regardless of their resistance, the assumption is that power holders expect nonconformity from their subordinates and thus should be prepared to use some type of control to achieve cooperation (Wrong 1979). To a certain extent, power holders assume that their subordinates would not be willing to comply with what is expected from them, and thus cooperation would not be voluntary (Bachmann 2003). Such a negative assumption about their subordinates’ motivation leads power holders to exercise high levels of control and dominate their employees. Reliance on control is intended to restrict subordinates’ freedom and align their behavior with organizational standards in the pursuit of some desired goal (Das and Teng 1998; Leifer and Mills 1996). Like other power holders, conductors tend to control musicians thinking that it is the best way to ensure players’ cooperation during performances.
In conductorless orchestras, however, power is not viewed as the ability to dominate. In contrast, power is viewed as the capacity to mobilize resources and organize people to get things done or to achieve a common goal effectively. Power as resource mobilization requires high levels of flexibility, ability to listen to what others have to say, and willingness to compromise and delegate. Instead of limiting the behavior of others directly, power holders try to benefit from talents and skills of all organizational members. Such a reliance on other people suggests that this vision of power is based on the assumption that power holders voluntarily make themselves vulnerable to the behavior of other organizational members, trusting that they will help them achieve certain goals effectively (Kanter 1981).

Moreover, power is no longer concentrated solely in the hands of one person. Rather it is shared among multiple individuals. While one person may still have more power than others, power is not a dichotomous variable (you either have it or not). The question is how much power A has over B when it comes to X. Therefore, instead of talking about power concentration, it makes more sense to talk about power distribution and sharing in conductorless orchestras. Power sharing can be advantageous to the organization because it benefits from unique talents, knowledge, and skills of multiple individuals.

Although both Persimfans and Orpheus reject the traditional vision of power, they have developed different approaches to power and control. On the one hand, as a large self-governing or cooperative orchestra (Cheney 2006), Persimfans was at the forefront of what is now called participatory, or democratic, leadership (Katz, Maccoby and Morse 1950; Lewin, Lippitt and White 1939). This approach to leadership is based on the
assumption that subordinates are capable of and are willing to contribute to the organizational success. Indeed, Persimfans players were actively engaged in all aspects of orchestral decision-making through their membership in different committees. At the same time, however, both the size of the orchestra and its reliance on the participatory leadership model call for a strong leader who is able to inspire subordinates to use their talents and skills instead of just controlling their actions (Kanter 1981). In Persimfans, Lev Tseitlin, the group’s founder and concertmaster, was in charge of the orchestra. He not only performed with the group, but was also ultimately responsible for the orchestra’s future. Therefore, while musicians were encouraged to voice their opinions and disagree with each other, the concertmaster still had more power than other musicians.

On the other hand, Orpheus is not a cooperative organization because its members do not make up the majority of the board of directors and the managerial team. Compared to Persimfans, it also employs a different approach to organizational power and governance. Instead of having a single leader, Orpheus is based on the idea of multiple or shared leadership (Pearce and Conger 2003). When it comes to artistic decision-making, musicians rotate leadership roles. In terms of managerial decision-making, power is shared among several elected players and professional managers. There is also a functional division of labor: musicians are solely responsible for the administrative decisions that are directly related to artistic issues, and managers have a final say in day-to-day organizational and financial decisions.

Organizationally speaking, both conductorless orchestras illustrate a shift towards more flexible organizational structures that Heckscher (1994) calls post-bureaucratic. A post-bureaucracy is an interactive type of the so-called alternative organizations that
reject a top-down model of power, control, and leadership. As such, post-bureaucracies do not have rigid organizational structures that prevent employee participation in the decision-making. On the contrary, they have more permeable organizational boundaries that are made possible by the project-based nature of employment, which makes the idea of a life-long career within an organization obsolete (Grey and Garsten 2001). Post-bureaucracies also emphasize the importance of building trust among employees that facilitates risk-taking behaviors and becomes an important coordination mechanism within organizations (Adler 2002).

When Persimfans and Orpheus started their move toward a new model of post-bureaucratic organizations, they had to find a new governance model that would help them balance creative freedom and democratic ideals of chamber philosophy with organizational effectiveness. In this movement, I use an organizational framework to focus on the process of music making in conductorless orchestras. I discuss how Persimfans and Orpheus members make organizational and artistic decisions, resolve conflicts, and ensure necessary levels of organizational effectiveness. I start with the analysis of three main principles of the musical collective reflexology – diffusion of authority, equality of rights, and importance of collectivity – that make up the philosophical foundation of a conductorless performance in a large orchestra. Then, I discuss the extent to which musicians in both orchestras are engaged in artistic and managerial decision-making and analyze two consequences of employee participation in organizations – the confrontation vs. compromise paradox and the leader-democracy paradox.
The Process of Music Making in Conductorless Orchestras

Rejection of conductors’ control not only calls for the search of a new governance strategy, but also redefines the nature of music making in orchestras. A conductorless performance changes both the form and the content of music making. On the surface, conductorless orchestras are different from traditional symphony orchestras because they do not have a baton-holder at the podium. The substance of a conductorless performance, however, changes as well. When musicians perform in a conducted orchestra, the most important thing that conductors typically expect from them is to play their own parts impeccably. Players are not expected to think about the piece of music as a whole or work with others on the questions of balance, tempo, or coloration because these issues are in the conductors’ jurisdiction. In contrast, in a conductorless orchestra, every musician is expected to know the score and be able to work on a collective interpretation of the piece. Such a truly collective approach to music making brings additional flavor, sparkle, and energy to an orchestral performance (Tsukker 1927). Players are attracted to conductorless orchestras primarily by the opportunity to express their creativity, artistic freedom, and personal accountability in artistic decision-making. They enjoy playing the orchestral repertoire in a chamber music-like setting where there is high interdependence among all players.

Musicians in conductorless orchestras work as a group, which allows them to achieve high artistic results, because performing without a conductor requires that musicians pay attention and respond to what all of their colleagues are doing. During performances, players have to be constantly alert to what is going on in the orchestra because orchestra rehearsals provide only the technical basis for how the orchestra will
perform at the concert. Emotions and artistry are rarely rehearsed ahead of time: musicians may feel differently every night, different people come to concerts, and concert halls have different acoustics. All of these factors make every performance a unique artistic creation, which, consequently, makes every concert unique.

Persimfans created a new method of music making based on the ideas of maximum participation, egalitarian division of labor, and collaboration among musicians. The working principle of the orchestra is the so-called “musical collective reflexology” (Tsukker 1927: 205), which is based on Bekhterev’s ideas about the relationship between an individual and a group. As a forerunner of social behaviorism, Vladimir Bekhterev was very interested in the idea of a conductorless performance because it illustrated his theory of collective reflexology. He defined it as “an important area of sociology that is often called societal or social psychology, which is based on a strictly objective basis and employs experience-derived and observational data without being subjective” (Bekhterev, as cited in Tsukker 1927: 207). Bekhterev argued that an individual is a product of society, which, in turn, is characterized by the sum of its members. The development of an individual ultimately leads to the group’s development. Thus, an individual and a group mutually influence each other, but at the same time are irreducible to one another (Bekhterev 1921).

While Persimfans was a great empirical case for the Bekhterev’s analysis of individual-group relationships, his collective reflexology approach was also a perfect theoretical foundation for a conductorless orchestra. Based on Bekhterev’s theory, leaders of Persimfans argued that when musicians feel that they are not just little parts of a large orchestral machine, but play off of each other and are personally responsible for the
whole score, the quality of the orchestral performance increases significantly: “When every orchestra member has to listen to all other players and the orchestra as a whole, when he cannot be inert even for one second and cannot relax his attention, only then a musician can fully devote his talent to the orchestral performance” (Tsukker 1927: 209). Reliance on the musical collective reflexology increases musicians’ personal accountability for both the orchestra’s success and failure. This is particularly important in music because orchestral playing can be viewed as an additive task, where the group’s final product is the sum of the group members’ contributions (Baron and Kerr 2003). Moreover, such personal involvement of all players in the process of music making increases their level of professional development by allowing them to learn from colleagues.

Although Orpheus players do not use the term “musical collective reflexology” and are not familiar with Bekhterev’s ideas, they employ the same principles in both artistic and managerial decision-making. The musical collective reflexology paradigm is based on three main assumptions: authority diffusion, equality of musicians’ rights, and importance of collectivity (Stites 1989).

The diffusion of authority in conductorless orchestras means sharing typical conductors’ responsibilities and power among orchestra players, which includes both artistic and managerial decision-making. In Persimfans, three groups of people, the vast majority of whom were orchestral players⁵, were actively engaged in organizational decision-making. Five to seven orchestra musicians⁶ formed the artistic council (khudozhhestvennij sovet) responsible for artistic decision-making, such as repertoire

⁵ There was only one member of the managing committee, Arnold Tsukker, who was not an orchestral player, but who was responsible for working on the public image of the orchestra.
⁶ The number of musicians varied from year to year.
selection and music interpretation. Seven to thirteen musicians were members of the managing committee (pravlenie), which consisted of two commissions – administrative and financial. The administrative commission (administrativnaya komissiya) was responsible for payroll, scheduling, and guest artist management. The financial or auditing commission (finansovo-khozyajstvennaya or revizionnaya komissiya) was responsible for financial decision-making (Tsukker 1927). Members of both the artistic council and the managing committee were elected annually by “the most authoritative musicians” to encourage membership rotation (Ponyatovsky 2003: 42). In reality, however, many members kept their posts for more than one term, which did not allow all members to participate equally in the decision-making.

The role of the artistic council can be used to illustrate the idea of authority diffusion in Persimfans. For a new piece of music to appear in the orchestra repertoire, musicians had to make a suggestion to the members of the artistic council. Upon a careful study of the whole score, members of the council had to decide whether the piece should be included in the repertoire. If a piece was approved, council members would meet before the first orchestra rehearsal to develop a coherent performance strategy by working on technical aspects and questions of musical interpretation. During the full-orchestra rehearsals, all members of the orchestra were expected to express their suggestions and comments about the orchestra’s sound, tempo, and articulations. As one musician out it: “It was once difficult for me to perform my part in Skriabin’s symphony because I did not hear cellos well enough. So I asked the cellists to play a little louder, which they agreed to do. They understood me and agreed with me” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 49).
Compared to Persimfans, Orpheus musicians have developed a more elaborate system of authority diffusion that literally encourages *all* members to participate in organizational decision-making by electing representatives to the managerial team and the board of directors. All full orchestra members elect a program coordinator, a personnel coordinator, and an artistic coordinator from their own ranks. These three musicians, called artistic directors, share some of the typical conductors’ responsibilities by planning future programs, inviting musicians to perform with the orchestra, and coming up with new artistic initiatives. They are salaried employees and work for Orpheus all year round. While artistic directors regularly perform with Orpheus, they also play with other orchestras, freelance, and teach. Artistic directors combine formal leadership roles with rank-and-file participation, which allows them to better represent musicians’ interests while making decisions.

Orpheus also has two senior level director positions: a managing director position, occupied by an elected musician who is ultimately in charge of the organization, and a general director position, occupied by an appointed professional manager who supervises a team of administrative employees. Similarly to artistic directors, the managing director also combines formal leadership role with being a rank-and-file orchestra player.

Moreover, Orpheus members elect their representatives to serve on the board. In this orchestra, the board defines the orchestra’s mission, exercises fiduciary responsibility, and ensures that the orchestra remains financially viable. On the one hand, musicians love their board. As one musician put it, “we have an incredible board….We have these people who came and physically rescued us not just with money, but with
their time. They helped run the office and put finances together” (Jane, 12/10/2004). On the other hand, musicians also realize that while the board is genuinely interested in the orchestra, “they have their own fish to fry” (Fred, 04/05/2006). Thus, Orpheus musicians elect their representatives to serve on the board to ensure that orchestra members have a say in the decisions made by the board of directors who are primarily businessmen and not professional musicians. Explains Neil (12/05/2005), an orchestra musician and a board member:

We [musician-board members] understand what musicians need…so we have the representation. As a voting member, I give them our view of things. If I hear them talking about something I do not agree with, I will speak up. And they listen. It does not necessarily mean that they will do what I ask, but they listen. It is our job to get some of this information to the orchestra. So there is communication. We did not have open communication before. We became almost like other organizations, but we do not want that. A lot of that communication was stuck in the middle.

To summarize, having a personal input in artistic and managerial decision-making is very different from the way conducted orchestras work. Allowing musicians to voice their opinions in all aspects of the orchestral decision-making shows that authority in conductorless orchestras is diffused, which enables players to experience collaboration while making music. Instead of having one leader – a conductor – multiple musicians share typical conductors’ duties and perform on their instruments at the same time. On the one hand, authority diffusion allows as much musician representation as possible. On the other hand, it helps them manage multiple roles they have to perform. While all members are encouraged to participate actively in the organizational life, both Persimfans and Orpheus have a musician-leader who is ultimately in charge of his organization.

Equality of musicians’ rights is the second characteristic of the collective reflexology paradigm. In both orchestras, musicians’ equality includes equality of pay
and opportunity to lead the orchestra. Persimfans players were often not paid for concerts and performed with the orchestra because they believed in its philosophy and were passionate about the chamber approach to music making. When musicians were paid, their salaries were equal. The equality of pay was meant to encourage every musician, regardless of his or her position in the group, to contribute to the orchestra. It also showed that everyone was treated as being equally capable of doing so. According to one of the French horn players, the idea of paying all musicians the same salary improved significantly the quality of musicians’ performance because every musician felt equally responsible for the orchestra’s success or failure (Ponyatovsky 2003).

Although there are only 29 full members in Orpheus, it relies on a wide network of substitute players who join the group when full members are unable to perform or when the orchestration exceeds the group’s membership. While substitute players are not technically orchestra members, they are treated as if they are. Musicians on the sub-list receive the same salary because everyone is paid by the piece, go on tours, and record with the orchestra. Equal treatment is supposed to send a message to substitute players that they are viewed as valued contributors to the group’s success and are encouraged to participate actively in the orchestra’s life. Orpheus members clearly recognize that they tend to perform with the same people over and over again, and that their future members come from the pool of substitutes. So treating substitute players well from the beginning may ensure that they will be willing to stick with the group until they are invited to join the orchestra as full members.

Equality in conductorless orchestras also means that there is no rigid hierarchy among musicians. Usually, if a musician is a second stand violinist, he or she will never
perform as a third stand player because it is considered a demotion. In both orchestras, however, many musicians are leaders of their musical sections in other orchestras, but when they perform with either Persimfans or Orpheus, they are willing to sit in the back of their sections. Similarly, talented young musicians are likely to be leaders of their sections, which rarely, if ever, happens in conducted settings. These examples illustrate that conductorless orchestras actually reject some aspects of the musical hierarchy of a traditional symphony orchestra in an attempt to build a more equitable orchestral culture based on the ideas of sharing and participation.

Moreover, in Orpheus, equality is closely related to responsibility sharing. Because there is no division into first and second stand players, musicians decide among themselves who is going to lead their musical section. Explains Sharon (03/14/2005):

> In Orpheus, you are considered equal and divide everything. One year you get to play a concerto, and the next year the other person does. This year you do this recording, and the other person does it next year. And usually we try to balance it out through the season. Even within a concert, we try to divide the program, so that it is equitable. Sometimes we do it depending on what the person’s schedule is. I call Kelly [another flutist in the orchestra] and I say: “You know, I really cannot make it to the first rehearsal of such and such piece. Are you available?” And that will sometime just determine who would play what. It is a very interesting dynamic.

Finally, all musicians are expected to be ready to lead the orchestra by performing conductors’ duties when they have solo lines in the score. The choice of musical leaders is naturally dictated by the score. While this is also true about conducted orchestras, soloists in traditional symphony orchestras still have to coordinate their actions with the conductor’s baton. Nonetheless, as one of Persimfans musician put it: “the musician who was leading the orchestra at any given moment was considered a conductor. All others were supposed to listen. And this attractive aspect of performing with the orchestra drew
many talented musicians to Persimfans” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 49). Members of conductorless orchestras do not reject the need for a strong leadership because somebody has to lead musicians during rehearsals. What they want, though, are leaders who also perform with the orchestra as instrumentalists and therefore are able to relate to and better understand their colleagues.

The idea of *collectivity*, which is the third characteristic of the musical collective reflexology in a conductorless orchestra, can be illustrated by the way musicians are seated on stage and how they manage rehearsals. When an orchestra has a conductor, all musicians can see the baton-holder who stands in front of the orchestra on a raised podium. The eye contact with the conductor is often more important than the eye contact with other musicians. Instrumentalists are constantly looking at their conductor to know when they should enter, slow down, speed up, or finish playing. Because musicians often cannot hear well what their colleagues are playing due to sound delays, they become lazy and just rely on conductors’ directions without thinking about the whole score or how their part is linked to that of other instruments (Tsukker 1927). In such a situation, looking at a conductor is extremely important for a coherent orchestral performance.

Instead of facing a conductor, Persimfans musicians faced each other. Originally, string sections formed a full circle on stage, while all other sections were positioned inside that circle. This arrangement not only insured good eye contact among instrumentalists, but also allowed for a better rhythmic synchronization and balance achievement in the orchestra. Although seating in a circle allows all musicians to see each other, some musicians could not see the audience, and the concertgoers could not see their faces. Eye contact with the audience, however, was so important for Persimfans
musicians that they decided to seat themselves in three-quarters circle with the back and sides of the circle raised so that all musicians could see each other and have an unmediated contact with the audiences (Persimfans 1926b).

All Persimfans musicians were also required to know their parts by heart so that they could listen to and pay attention to all other musicians without being distracted by the need to follow the notes or to flip pages. According to Anton Usov, one of the French horn players in Persimfans, the rule in the orchestra was that everyone “had to listen to each other regardless of his or her position in the orchestra and not to interfere with the sound of the main voices as is customary in chamber orchestras” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 44). Musicians relied extensively on non-verbal behavior to coordinate how different sections performed their parts. According to a French pianist Henri Gil-Marchex, who attended several orchestra rehearsals in Moscow, “each member of the orchestra has his own important part to play, and glances, raising of the brow, and slight motions of the shoulders … are done by each instrumentalist, but so discreetly that the listener … seldom notices it” (as cited in Schwartz 1983: 47).

The notion of collectivity is also evident in the way members of conductorless orchestras interpret music. Instead of excluding instrumentalists from artistic decision-making, which tends to de-professionalizes players and to reduce the creativity of orchestral performance, Persimfans musicians argued that “the ultimate goal of a musical performance, and therefore of the artistic interpretation, is to transmit the composer’s ideas with maximum precision, energy, and depth. [The best way to achieve this goal is to rely on] conscious interaction among all members of the ensemble, their artistic potential, and the group’s combined energy” (Tsukker 1927: 185).
To reinforce the importance of musicians’ involvement, let’s look at how Orpheus members rehearse. During rehearsals, the score always lies on the floor, in the center of the room. This is a place where the conductor’s podium would be situated. Placing the score on the conductor’s place is a very symbolic act that signifies musicians’ loyalty to the score and their readiness to achieve collective interpretations instead of relying on a conductor’s vision of a musical piece. Musicians take turns listening to how the orchestra sounds by paying attention to how well different sections of the orchestra play together. They leave their seats, take the score, and pretend to be impartial observers or critics. Sometimes they take notes, but usually they just wait until the movement is over and voice their suggestions and comments. A typical comment is about balance as it is much easier to evaluate by listening to an orchestra from a side. I often heard comments about balance that were phrased in the following way: “Winds should go shorter, sharper. The winds are behind.” Or “I’m a little concerned with the overall balance. I feel that the string section is too small for this piece. The wind section and percussions have to play softer.”

Instead of making comments to a particular individual, Orpheus musicians tend to address their suggestions either to the whole orchestra, to a specific section, or to a specific instrument. Even if the comment is personal, the person who suggests something would say: “I think the English horn should play louder,” instead of saying, “John should play louder.” It is an important way of showing that the comment is not personal, but is about music and trying to make the orchestra sound better.

Making artistic decisions collectively also means that one or two sections may perform several difficult notes together in different ways with all other sections listening
to them playing and then choosing the best version. During one of the Carnegie Hall
dress rehearsals, basses could not decide how a particular passage was to be performed
and asked other players to listen to them. Two musicians went to the hall, while others
remained in their seats. After trying two different ways of playing the same passage, the
floor was opened for a discussion. While two musicians who were in the audience liked
the first version, one of the bassists insisted on the second interpretation. Apparently
there was no consensus among musicians. To resolve this problem, the concertmaster told
the bassist: “Just trust their opinion” – referring to two musicians who listened to the
orchestra from the side. Although the concertmaster’s solution is likely to be based on the
fact that acoustics on stage make it difficult for musicians to judge the quality of their
own performances, it also underscores the importance of relying on and trusting each
other while making decisions collectively.

These three principles of the musical collective reflexology in conductorless
orchestras help their members to be engaged in the process of music making not only
while on stage, but also offstage, through participation in managerial decision-making.
Being responsible not only for their own parts, but also for participating in the decision-
making that directly shapes the orchestra’s long-term future, can reduce musicians’
alienation, which they often experience in conducted orchestras (Levine and Levine
1996). Such a personal engagement in all aspects of music making allows musicians to
bring in their personal selves during their work role performance (Kahn 1990), which
makes conductorless concerts very emotional. Collaborative music making promotes not
only close connections to the work process, but also close connections to colleagues who,
by working together, give every member of the orchestra an opportunity to show off his
or her talents. Consequently, performing without a conductor significantly increases the interaction intensity. Musicians have to be very careful not to offend their colleagues and be very civil while making comments and suggestions to their peers.

**Conductorless Performance: Democracy and Inefficiency**

Musicians’ collective participation in all important decision-making processes in conductorless orchestras clearly has a positive impact on their performance because players feel that they are indeed “making music together” (Schutz 1964), experience a sense of togetherness (Misztal 2000), and feel that they psychologically own their orchestras. At the same time, however, it is very time consuming and often inefficient to involve all musicians in every instance of decision-making. Therefore, musicians in both conductorless orchestras elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Instead of having direct democracy, musicians moved to representative democracy. This transition led to two paradoxes – the confrontation vs. compromise paradox and the leader-democracy paradox (Murnighan and Conlon 1991).

*The confrontation vs. compromise paradox:* Conductorless orchestras are based on the chamber music paradigm, which is traditionally used in smaller ensembles. Both Orpheus and Persimfans are much larger than typical chamber ensembles that perform without conductors. The size of the orchestra is clearly an important factor in choosing the most appropriate approach to making decisions (Young 2004). While it is possible to create a string quartet based on the principles of direct democracy when all musicians vote for the best solution, and the solution that gets the majority of votes is chosen, it is difficult and time consuming to use direct democracy in Orpheus and even more so in Persimfans.
Indeed, because musicians have their own opinions and want to share them with each other, the search for a satisfactory solution can take a lot of time. Persimfans musicians needed more rehearsals than any conducted orchestra. For instance, they had nine 90 minute-long rehearsals for its first all-Beethoven concert. Later Persimfans players needed about five rehearsals for new programs and were able to play the old ones without additional rehearsals (Tsukker 1927). Nonetheless, according to one Persimfans musician, these rehearsals were not a big burden to orchestra members:

During rehearsals, conductors try to achieve the concert-quality sound from the orchestra. In Persimfans, we did not even talk about the sound because we all were confident that all musicians were high-caliber professionals and knew how to play. Nowadays, conductors do not trust their instrumentalists and therefore make them waste a lot of energy during rehearsals. The orchestra gets tired and does not experience increased productivity and creativity as it was the case in Persimfans. (Ponyatovsky 2003: 53)

While conductorless orchestras do not depend on musicians’ acceptance of conductors’ power, they are based on everyone’s commitment to work closely with each other and willingness to give up the benefits of efficiency for the sake of being personally engaged in the collaborative process of music-making. Interpersonal differences among players and musical differences among various sections of the orchestra lead to lengthy discussions about how the orchestra should play a particular piece. According to Stites (1989: 138), Persimfans experienced such conflicts, which he argues were responsible for the decline of the orchestra: “S. Frederick Starr in the 1960s heard stories in Moscow about ideological fights between the string section and the winds that exploded into scandals and brought dissolution to the orchestra.”

During the early years, Orpheus musicians were also very idealistic and tried to search for the ideal interpretation of each piece, which often caused tension among them.
They needed “an infinite amount of time” and “were yelling and screaming at each other” (Daniel, 03/18/2005). “Every person in the orchestra would say: ‘Can we try it my way? Let’s just do it a little slower, a little bit more like this.’ And we were very flexible trying everybody’s way….But this was very frustrating because some people did not like rehearsing that much” (Jane, 12/10/2004). For their first Alice Tully Hall performance, Orpheus musicians had about twenty rehearsals (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b). Players were young and contentious, which significantly increased the length of rehearsals. As they grew older, maturity allowed musicians to be “more flexible,” “less attached to their own ideas,” and “to see other people’s points” (Megan, 03/21/2005). Explains Neil (12/05/2005): “[At that time,] we were very angry with each other. People would not speak with each other. Now that’s really rare, and only if you get really annoyed.”

Unanimity in artistic decision-making is hard to achieve in a group of highly trained musicians with strong personalities. Therefore, Orpheus musicians sometimes vote for the best solution when negotiation does not seem to work. Although democratic on the surface, the majority rule often leads to choosing decisions that satisfy only the dominant faction of the group yet leave many others unhappy. The idea of majoritarianism only assumes that a chosen solution satisfies the entire group, and that the whole group accepts its legitimacy. According to Guinier (1992), majority rule can be used as a tool for manipulation and as a source of conflict.

Similarly to Persimfans, Orpheus musicians never devote 100 percent of their energy to rehearsals in an attempt to avoid major artistic clashes. Orpheus does not have its own concert hall and rehearses in a room that has bad acoustics. Musicians use
rehearsals to develop a performance skeleton. They come up with an overall structure of a piece, decide who is going to lead at any given period of time (this is dictated by the score), but never work on musical nuances such as coloration because players prefer to improvise during the concert. They realize that the orchestra’s sound depends on the concert hall, so what works in one room will not work in the other. Even if there are multiple ideas about musical interpretation and consensus is not reached during rehearsals, musicians do not become desperate because they tend to perform the same piece slightly differently every night they play it. Reading concert reviews the next day is one way of knowing what worked well and what did not work.

According to the confrontation vs. compromise paradox, artistic conflicts among musicians can be both detrimental and helpful for an orchestra’s success. On the one hand, musical conflicts resolved through compromise may lead to mediocre performances. The democratic approach to artistic decision-making where everyone is expected to participate is risky because “the dictatorship of the masses” can lead to second-rate performances as the group may not be able to reach a satisfactory decision about how a certain piece should be performed. Explains Robyn (09/15/2005), a frequent Orpheus concertmaster:

For a while it was a problem, when someone would have an idea, and somebody else would disagree with it and say no. So then someone would put forward an opposite idea, and they would still say no. And then you have ten more ideas, and you would have ten more no’s. That would be the end of the rehearsal time, and we would be going to the performance not knowing how to play. And we will end up a little mediocre.

The process of democratic decision-making can also be very inefficient and time consuming because all musicians are expected to participate. As one bass player put it, “sometimes I do not think we are as prepared for a concert as we could be because of the
fact that we are talking too much rather than rehearsing sections, rehearsing transitions over and over again until it just becomes natural” (Jason, 03/28/2005).

On the other hand, artistic conflicts are helpful as they can lead to more creative and innovative ways of performing music. Even though it leads to inefficient use of rehearsal time due to the possibility of conflicts, personal involvement in artistic decision-making empowers Orpheus musicians to experience artistic freedom they feel they lack in conducted orchestras. This feeling of empowerment “feeds the energy and excitement of the whole group because they have the vision that they are not just serving someone else’s vision” (Mary, 02/13/2006). In Orpheus, musician participation creates such a strong commitment to the orchestra that they are ready to do anything it takes to accomplish their goal of being able to perform without a conductor. As Fred (04/05/2006) put it, “We will continue to accept and sacrifice rather than give up what we find to be the most important… I do what I do because I love it… Orpheus is about this mutual goal towards creating something beautiful, it is about excellence. It is about labor of love.”

Musicians’ strong commitment to the philosophy of conductorless performance makes the orchestra’s sound distinctive, which does not go unnoticed by the audiences. Scholars who have studied Orpheus argue that relationships among orchestra musicians give “rise to a special quality in music that no conductor could ever duplicate” (Sawyer 2001: 119). Critics also tend to agree that “a zestful spirit, an ability to change moods on the spot, excellent intonation and handsomely shaped interpretations” are some of the Orpheus’s defining characteristics (Ward 2002: 9). Musicians also agree that Orpheus has a distinctive sound, which they can easily recognize. Explains one of the orchestra violinists:
There is some quality in the sound. It is very identifiable in the strings and in the winds. There is a certain energy….When Orpheus used to be on the radio a lot, 99% of the time I could turn them on in the middle [of the piece] and say that’s Orpheus. I just recognize the sound and recognize the energy. (Robyn, 09/15/2005)

It is hard for an orchestra without a conductor to achieve coordinated performances and mediate conflicts between its members who have to deal with and rely on each other. When there are so many musicians on stage, it might be very tempting for a player not to contribute to the process of artistic decision-making to avoid confrontation (Young 2004). This strategy may be helpful in the short run as it reduces the number of voices that speak at a given moment. In the long run, however, non-participation is detrimental to the group. When some members avoid participation, it creates free riders (Olson 1965), who do not contribute to the group but still enjoy the benefits of orchestral success. Non-participation also differentiates members into those who contribute and those who do not. Such differentiation may not only complicate the establishment of true collaboration in the group, but may also make all performances of the orchestra similar to each other because all musical decisions are made by the same people.

In an attempt to reduce the number of rehearsals required by the democratic and consensus-based approaches to the decision-making, musicians may try not to voice their opinions if they are very different from those of other musicians. Such desire not to participate may be caused by groupthink, which is “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, [and] when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (Janis 1972: 9). Due to the members’ tendency to give in to the group, decisions made in a group setting may be of a poorer quality than those made
by a charismatic leader who may suggest a controversial, yet potentially successful solution. Groupthink is closely related to what Good (2000) calls “cognitive inertia,” when individuals tend to focus on the evidence that confirms “actions, decisions, and judgments of others rather than weigh the evidence more carefully” (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005: 29). Consequently, individuals become victims of a strong confirmation-seeking bias that prevents them from trying new and creative solutions to the existing problems and therefore makes them “deploy well-tried strategies even though they may not be the most appropriate way to approach a novel problem” (Good 2000: 41).

According to Murnighan and Conlon (1991), a good solution to the confrontation vs. compromise paradox, at least in a quartet, is to perform the same piece of music slightly differently from concert to concert. This performance strategy reflects different approaches to music that may have been offered during rehearsals. While Orpheus tries to use this strategy whenever it can, Persimfans is a much bigger orchestra. Thus, there might be more interpretative approaches than performances during a year, which means that this strategy is not an effective solution of the confrontation vs. compromise paradox in a large conductorless orchestra.

*The leader-democracy paradox:* The pressure to make decisions efficiently creates another dilemma in conductorless orchestras, which Murnighan and Conlon (1991) call “the leader-democracy paradox.” Members of both conductorless orchestras argue that performing without conductors does not make their orchestras leaderless. On the contrary, conductorless orchestras require strong leadership, but it is of another kind. The dilemma that conductorless orchestras are faced with has to do with establishing a clear line between having a leader who is responsible for the group’s success and giving
all members an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making without making
rehearsals too inefficient.

To reduce the length of rehearsals and to speed up the search for consensus, Persimfans musicians were often divided into small groups that took turns performing a piece. Other groups listened carefully and offered their critical suggestions about that group’s performance. These suggestions were collected and carefully analyzed by the artistic council, whose word regarding musical interpretation was final, as if made by a conductor (Tsukker 1927). While members of the artistic council were supposed to act in the interest of the whole orchestra, not all musicians had the right to elect them. Only the most prominent and authoritative orchestra members were allowed to vote.

When all orchestra members rehearsed together, Lev Tseitlin stood in front of the orchestra so that all players could see his eyes, facial expressions, and body movements. Many critics argued that Tseitlin was leading the orchestra by giving invisible signs to musicians, and thus operated as a conductor (Tsukker 1927). Nevertheless, according to one of the orchestra musicians, he helped the orchestra to begin its performance but later was just performing on his instrument: “Tseitlin would slightly bend his head together with his violin, which was the sign for the orchestra to begin playing. Afterwards, there would be no signs” (Ponyatovsky 2003: 53-4). While outsiders viewed him as a conductor, musicians saw his leadership as being democratic in that it allowed them to voice their opinions. According to Belen’kiy, a violinist in the orchestra, Tseitlin was a great concertmaster who had a tremendous influence on all members of the orchestra and was able to provide the group with high-quality artistic leadership: “In Persimfans, Tseitlin’s primary responsibility was to work on tempo. He wanted the orchestra to ‘sing’
and encouraged musicians to clearly articulate all the notes. This is what he called ‘the
culture of orchestral playing’” that emphasized the importance of listening to how other
musicians play in attempt to achieve a coherent performance (Ponyatovsky 2003: 48).

Even though Lev Tseitlin did not have a conductors’ stick in his hand and was
performing on a violin together with other players, he was the ultimate leader of the
orchestra who had more power than any other player because he was the founder of the
orchestra as well as the head of both the artistic council and the managing committee.
Having a musician-leader is psychologically different than having a conductor who
occupies a much higher position in the orchestra and does not contradict Persimfans’s
philosophy because musicians did not propose “to dispense with a central direction but
only with arbitrary leadership” of tyrannical baton-holders (Downes 1928a: 100).
Musicians argued that conductors’ input during rehearsals is important for the ability of
the orchestra to play together and to maintain the right tempo. What they disagreed with
was the need to perform with conductors during the concerts (Tsukker 1927).

In an attempt to limit his own power, Tseitlin was the leader during rehearsals and
played as a rank-and-file musician during the concerts. To some extent, he can be viewed
as the first violinist in a string quartet. According to the study of British string quartets,
even such small ensembles have to have a leader (Murnighan and Conlon 1991). In
successful quartets, the first violinists are the leaders in both artistic and administrative
decision-making, but they should also be able to play well with other members of the
group and allow them to shine musically as well. This is exactly what good participatory
leaders are expected to do – to set up organizational goals and to allow subordinates to
choose the best strategies to achieve these goals.
Participatory leaders, however, rarely, if ever, do the actual work themselves. Combining managerial and artistic leadership with instrumental performance on a regular basis can lead to work overload. Tseitlin was clearly overwhelmed with his responsibilities and tried to formally reduce the amount of his power. In a letter to the orchestra, he wrote:

I am becoming disheartened. I feel that I am becoming not only useless, but also harmful to the orchestra during rehearsals and as the head of the managerial committee. To create a quiet atmosphere during rehearsals and to maintain relative usefulness of my position on the managerial committee, please relieve me of leading rehearsals. In the future, I also think it is very important to make the artistic council totally independent from the managerial committee… (Ponyatovsky 2003: 58)

When people know that they have more power than their colleagues and realize that reliance on democratic decision-making may take more time than reliance on dictatorship, command-and-control techniques might be unintentionally preferred in some aspects of organizational decision-making. It seems that Tseitlin realized it and wanted to limit his power in the orchestra. Power concentration violated the idea of authority diffusion, which was one of the primary components of the collective reflexology paradigm. Members of the orchestra, however, did not accept Tseitlin’s resignation, and he continued to be the leader until the last day of the orchestra. The true reasons for not accepting his resignation are unknown, but a quick look at the orchestra roster reveals that the majority of musicians were full-time members of other orchestras and did not have time to be as devoted to Persimfans as was Tseitlin.

Organizationally speaking, Persimfans had three major problems that prevented this orchestra from moving beyond a participatory leadership model, towards a closer realization of an ideal type of a post-bureaucratic organization. First, the orchestra was
too large for a decentralized approach to the decision-making. Its size required someone to lead rehearsals because the acoustics on stage make it difficult for musicians to hear each other. Second, as the founder of the orchestra, Tseitlin had a strong personality, which on the one hand, helped this orchestra survive for over ten years, but on the other hand, helped him concentrate too much power. Third, Persimfans was never a full-time job for its members. As committed as these players were to Persimfans and its philosophy, musicians had to juggle multiple jobs and various responsibilities. Consequently, they did not have as much time for Persimfans as did Tseitlin who had no other job besides Persimfans.

Instead of relying on one-man’s control, Orpheus musicians chose a representative form of democracy and a system of power sharing. All full Orpheus members elect their representatives to serve on the board of directors and to make administrative decisions. These representatives rotate every two seasons to ensure that other orchestra members have a possibility to perform these roles. Besides electing their representatives to the board of directors and the administrative team, Orpheus players elect the managing director from their own rank, who shares power with the general director. Together, they provide the orchestra with overall leadership. Although the managing director is responsible for the fate of the whole organization, he also performs, goes on tours, and records with the orchestra. Having a musician who is running the orchestra managerially as well as performing is, to some extent, a return to the original way of music making in Orpheus when Julian Fifer performed with the group. Nonetheless, musicians nowadays feel that they have more power in the orchestra because they elect the managing director, artistic directors, and board representatives.
Some orchestra managers, however, think that dividing decision-making responsibilities among several musicians is very inefficient because it diffuses accountability in the orchestra (Darley and Latane 1968). As a consequence, the orchestra sometimes lacks a clear direction. Explains Joshua, an orchestra manager (03/15/2006):

If you have two people and one has an idea for one program and another one has an idea for another program, [you have a debate]….If you have four people, if you include the general director [and three artistic directors] into the discussion…or five people, when occasionally a chairman gets included, holy smoke, at that point you ceased being democratic and start being inefficient in your decision-making. One of the reasons why I think [leadership sharing] artistically makes sense on the stage is that everybody has a guide. And it is right in front of them because it is the score. With this [managerial decision-making], they do not have a guide. And so there is no obvious direction. With one person, you have that…but there are too many cooks in the kitchen …. I think that things take too long.

As a manager, Joshua thinks that artistic and managerial decision-making processes are different in that the former is facilitated by the existence of the score, while the latter is complicated by the lack of a clear direction.

Orpheus players, however, are ready to accept such apparent inefficiency in their approach to making decisions. On the one hand, they want to have a say in every decision made in the orchestra. On the other hand, they realize that the representatives they elect may be overwhelmed with responsibilities for making organizational decisions, performing with the group, teaching at conservatories, playing with other orchestras, and taking care of other obligations they may have. Orpheus musicians argue that nobody in the orchestra would be willing to be responsible for all conductors’ responsibilities. Even if there were such volunteers, it would violate the orchestra’s philosophy.

Moreover, in response to Joshua’s criticism, musicians argue that the score does not fully specify how the piece should sound and is open to various interpretations, which
significantly complicate the search for consensus. What makes these two types of decision-making different is that all musicians have been trained to make artistic decisions, but most of them do not have any formal managerial training. Although Orpheus members try to elect very articulate colleagues who are either interested in, or have some knowledge of, managerial decision-making as their representatives to the managerial team and the board of directors, they still may not understand all peculiarities of running a non-for-profit organization. Musicians recognize the limits of their managerial sphere of competence and the importance of having professional managers. The orchestra has limited artistic directors’ jurisdiction by making them accountable for the managerial decisions that are solely artistic in nature, such as picking programs and inviting musicians. Other members of the administrative team consult with artistic directors if they have questions about artistic matters. Explains Joshua (03/15/2006):

I do go to musicians with artistic questions: “I am trying to convey this about this program, what do you think?” In that sense, they are a great resource. When it comes to very large endeavors like a website, marketing, or anything that is extremely public, I will go to them and say: “Hey, this is what we are doing, what do you think?” We do want their input because they are the heart of Orpheus. It should reflect them.

Nonetheless, if a problem is not artistic in nature, such as a question about budgets, staff members would not consult with artistic directors because it is not in their sphere of competence. Therefore, even on the managerial level, musicians are solely responsible for artistic decision-making.

In purely artistic decision-making, Orpheus tries to resolve the leader-democracy paradox by using a system of rotating core groups that provide strong leadership but for a short period of time and therefore ensure a more equitable system of power sharing in the orchestra. Core groups are teams of ten to thirteen musicians that are directly responsible
for creating a coherent artistic framework, developing musical ideas, and leading
rehearsals and performances of the musical pieces the orchestra has selected. Members of
the core represent different musical sections and decide how the music should be played,
work on stylistic aspects of performance, and choose who is going to show the downbeat
for a particular place. The idea behind the core groups, according to Karen (01/19/2005),
a substitute player in Orpheus, is to:

… try to establish some sort of a skeleton structure by which at least the other
members of the section are going to come to later and adhere to on the practical
level…. It seems like it is a practical way to rehearse when you have a lot of
people in the room playing different parts. It sort of organizes the general
architecture, intentions, and then when everybody else comes to join, you have at
least some sort of a structure from which to deal with problems in an organized
fashion.

The system of core group rotation helps Orpheus ensure that artistic power is
shared among different members of the orchestra without making the orchestra
leaderless. At the same time, every core group has a leader, who is always the first
violinist. To a certain extent, even Orpheus suffers from inherent inequality among
different musical instruments in the orchestra. Similarly to conducted orchestras and
Persimfans, Orpheus’s concertmaster has more power than other musicians. The
concertmaster in this orchestra, however, is first among equals, a designated leader
responsible for guiding the group through a collaborative process of artistic decision-
making and cueing the orchestra when it has to start playing (Seifter and Economy 2001).
Nonetheless, the concertmaster’s and core members’ position is only temporary.
Orpheus’s musical leadership changes on a piece-by-piece basis: leaders of the first
musical piece on the program will be sitting in the back of their musical sections while
performing the next piece. This allows each musician to perform the function of a leader and be in a role of the follower.

Leadership sharing and rotation in Orpheus help increase legitimacy and fairness of the artistic decisions made based on the majority vote because the core membership changes for every concert series, while concertmasters rotate for every piece. As a result, long lasting coalitions in Orpheus are hard to achieve. Rotational leadership and shifting majority require that group members trust each other to reciprocate in the future: when your decision is not being accepted, you are cooperating with the current majority trusting that the current majority will cooperate with you when they lose on another issue. Consequently, it is shifting majority and the notion of reciprocity that allow for a fair system of mutually beneficial collaboration and cooperation among group members (Guinier 1992).

Nonetheless, even having such an elaborate rehearsal strategy does not fully solve the inefficiency problem because it still takes Orpheus longer than a conventional orchestra to prepare for a concert. Although musicians understand that they need to rehearse less, they do not want to jeopardize their artistic creativity and freedom. That is why musicians openly disagree with the core group’s musical interpretations, which would not be possible if the orchestra had a conductor. From the economic point of view, Orpheus’s approach to artistic decision-making is inefficient by design. Yet musicians enjoy the slow process of creating an interpretation that is both unique and innovative. Explains Barry (2/27/2006):

Creativity takes time. Everyone in that room, especially in the core rehearsal, has an extensive training. Musicians come to the room with ideas....Democracy takes time, and to use a strange analogy, totalitarianism is a lot more efficient – someone just tells you what to do, and you have no choice in the matter. But the
healthiest system and the one that makes players the most empowered would be more democratic. This is what Orpheus is trying to do. So it is by its nature inefficient if you were trying to talk about punching clocks and working at the factory. But because its mission is so specific, if you truly want to make a chamber music-type performance of a larger piece all self-led and all self-ideas, it will be inefficient. But the result has a potential, it is not always achieved though, to be far more engaged and far deeper musically that it could otherwise be with someone’s telling you how to play.

Efficiency, however, is not the most appropriate way of judging the artistic process of making music. Indeed, efficiency is not the criterion by which musicians evaluate the quality of their work. Orpheus members do not perform with the orchestra because they want to make extra money or to be able to perform difficult programs after a couple of short rehearsals. In contrast, musicians come to enjoy the process of music making as well as to be creative, responsible, and involved. Explains Jane (12/10/2004):

Efficiency is not the only way to judge the process. There are many ways to judge any process….We have our fights, you can even hate someone once in a while. Not all of us are friendly, but we all believe in the process; we are all involved in the process; we do not like to sit in the orchestra and be told what to do. It is not about expediency, but more about what individuals’ experiences in their corporations are. May be eventually you will become more expedient, that’s not the point….In Orpheus, we think about whether it is going to be an exciting concert. Some people have very prestigious jobs at Juilliard, Yale, NJSO, but they always come back to play with Orpheus because they really love it. There is something besides just expediency. There is culture, there is success, and there is involvement.

To summarize, the history of Persimfans can be viewed as a first attempt at moving away from hierarchical control in a large orchestras towards the ideals of a post-bureaucratic organization. Unfortunately, this orchestra was not able to move beyond the participatory leadership model. While Persimfans showed that it is theoretically possible, even for a large symphony orchestra, to perform without a conductor by relying on a chamber approach to music making, it did not give every musician an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of artistic and managerial decision-making. The first
conductorless orchestra was a much bigger success from a musical standpoint than from an organizational one. Musically, the behavior of each orchestra member was guided by the score, which helped the orchestra objectively determine formal leaders at any given period of time. Organizationally, the power was concentrated in the concertmaster’s hands, and only a select few musicians had the right to elect representatives to the artistic council and the managing committee. Although it may seem that participatory leadership in Persimfans was a successful solution to the leader-democracy paradox because all members of the orchestra subjectively felt that they had a voice in artistic decision-making but deliberately delegated more power to the concertmaster, the fact that the orchestra always had the same leader did not allow Persimfans to fully overcome the structural rigidity typical for large symphony orchestras.

When it comes to Orpheus, leadership rotation and power sharing in artistic decision-making help this orchestra benefit from the talents of all its players and ensure that no one becomes too dominant or too passive. Compared to Persimfans, such a flexible organizational structure brings Orpheus closer to the realization of the ideal type of post-bureaucracy. This orchestra also gains from the difference in musical interpretations different core group members have, which allows it to come up with innovative and creative ideas and to ensure some order at the same time. Power-sharing on the managerial level, however, is not so successful because it presupposes diffusion of responsibilities among several people, which is inherently inefficient and time consuming. While musicians recognize that their approach to running the orchestra is not efficient, they do not use the idea of efficiency in describing their artistic experiences. Orpheus for them is about being included in all aspects of the decision-making. They
realize that such involvement takes more time for the decisions to be made, but musicians also understand that they are the ones accountable for either success or failure of the orchestra. This sense of accountability allows Orpheus to take risks other orchestras are not willing to take. The risk taking behavior in conductorless orchestras is significantly facilitated by trustworthy relationships and various formal and informal control mechanisms musicians have developed over time.
Fourth Movement: Trust in Conductorless Orchestras

“Trust is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work”

(Bennis and Burt 1985: 43)

One of the important characteristics of post-bureaucracies is reliance on trust, which becomes particularly important for organizations in the absence of top-down governance strategies that have traditionally been used to control the behavior of employees in bureaucratic organizations. The literature on trust suggests that, compared to control, trustworthy relationships provide more opportunities for collaboration, flexibility, innovation, originality, and creativity of the decision-making processes because trust facilitates intra-group problem solving (Bijlsma-Frankema and Klein Woolthuis 2005; Misztal 1996; Zand 1972). Trust is also required for an effective problem solving in a group setting because it allows individual group members to voice their suggestions and accept criticisms from colleagues. In other words, trust helps group members to take up uncertainty associated with unpredictability of human behavior.

Because trust has the potential to make it easier for people to deal with uncertainty (Heimer 2001; Luhmann 1988), it is logical to assume that interpersonal relationships in conductorless orchestras are based on trust rather than on hierarchical control. In such settings, artistic goals are achieved through collaborative and participatory decision-making, and interpersonal relationships among musicians are based on honesty, openness, and loyalty to the idea of a conductorless performance. Even though the development of a shared vision of music may be very slow, it makes a
Research on jazz ensembles shows that creative collaboration among musicians requires a high degree of commitment to the improvised performance and readiness to depend on colleagues. Thus, trust is an important aspect of music making as it is “a fundamental ingredient in sustaining performative interdependence and social cohesion [among musicians, which creates]...a psychological buffer against errors arising from the experimental nature of improvisation” (Kamoche and Cunha 2001: 746). Although classical music is different from jazz, conductorless orchestras are rather similar to jazz ensembles organizationally in that they rely on close collaboration among all its members and their willingness to take risks by playing off of each other during live concerts. Musicians assume that their colleagues are trustworthy and therefore act as if non-cooperation would not be an option in conductorless orchestras.

While trust is important for conductorless orchestra because it helps musicians make decisions under conditions of uncertainty by accepting the possibility of artistic risks, trustworthy relationships also constrain musicians’ behavior. If players want to retain their image of trustworthy individuals, they will be less likely to engage in behaviors that can negatively influence their professional and personal reputations. Consequently, trust has a potential to enable and constrain musicians’ actions at the same time.

The notion of trust takes the center stage in this movement. I start my analysis of trust in conductorless orchestras with a discussion of the nature of trust. I explain what trust means, what role it plays, how it is created, and what consequences it has in
conductorless orchestras. I also argue that as a governance strategy, trust is a relational concept, which suggests that trust is always a two-way influence process that has an impact on the behavior of both parties involved in a relationship. The levels of trust may change over time. Therefore, I stress the importance of looking at the temporal aspect of the development and maintenance of trust, which allows for the study of trust not only as a variable but also as a process (Khodyakov 2007). Analyzing trust in musical settings offers interesting parallels between the process of building and maintaining trust and the process of music making because music is obviously a dynamic art.

The Process of Trust

Working so closely with other members of the orchestra and relying on them requires high levels of interpersonal trust among musicians. Participation in all aspects of organizational decision-making has a potential to promote trust because musicians work together for the common good and learn about each other’s personalities. Trust in a conductorless orchestra can be viewed as an indication of the group’s willingness to embrace uncertainty of performing without a baton-holder and be vulnerable to the behavior of its members. It helps musicians share their knowledge and exchange ideas and shows players’ willingness to be influenced by the actions and ideas of their colleagues.

I define trust as a process of forming positive expectations about and relying on other people regardless of the possibility of uncertainty and risk. Trust has a potential to create positive expectations about other people’s behavior because it is based on the assumption of the benevolent agency of others (Khodyakov 2007; Möllering 2005). While trust has a strong cognitive component (trust as an attitude of optimism about the
other person) (Jones 1996), it also depends on the actual behavior of both parties in a given situation, and therefore is ultimately a relational concept (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005; Lewicki, McAllister and Bies 1998). Whereas some people are more likely than others to have a disposition to trust (McKnight, Cummings and Chervany 1998; Rotter 1971), trust is developed in a relationship between individuals and depends on both parties at the same time. Negative experiences with a partner may reduce our level of trust in that person even if we deemed him or her trustworthy at first. Moreover, trust is always context specific (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005; Lewicki, McAllister and Bies 1998). In other words, trust in conductorless orchestras is typically limited to the process of making artistic and managerial decisions and may not necessarily be extended to other aspects of musicians’ lives. To illustrate, while musicians trust each other to make an informed decision concerning musical interpretation, they may not necessarily do so when it comes to buying a new car.

While I accept the relational view of trust, I do not think that trust should be viewed only as encapsulated interest, as suggested by Cook, Hardin and Levi (2005). According to the encapsulated interest model of trust, trustworthy relationships can be developed only if we think that our interests have become, to some extent, our partners’ interests. In other words, we can trust only those who we think will take our interests into account. The example of conductorless orchestras, however, provides some supports the encapsulated interest model of trust. While musicians in conductorless orchestras may have different ultimate goals, they are all interested in giving stellar performances because being artistically successful helps them achieve their goals. Substitute players, for example, may want to become full members of the orchestra and therefore are
interested in playing well, but permanent members may be more concerned with maintaining the group’s reputation. This, however, does not mean that trust in conductorless orchestras can only be developed when full members encapsulate substitute members’ interests because trust between them can be developed as a result of evaluating each other’s behavior as their relationships unfold. If, for example, a new substitute player is able to follow the group, to read and send clear non-verbal cues, and to make helpful comments, he or she is likely to be perceived as being trustworthy. Therefore, besides making inferences about each other’s interests and goals, musicians also evaluate trustworthiness of their colleagues based on their actual behavior (Molm 2006).

In a conductorless setting, players trust that other members of the orchestra listen carefully to everyone and take responsibility not only for performing their own parts, but also for the orchestra’s performance as a whole. According to one Orpheus player, musicians view trust as an assumption that their colleagues “are working for the collective good, and they are able to put aside their individual need, or wrap their individual need into the collective” (Jack, 10/29/2004). Trust consists of both positive expectations about other musicians’ behavior and actual reliance on them. This idea is well described by Neil (12/05/2005), one of the Orpheus violists:

You trust that your colleagues’ ideas and comments about the music are sincere [positive expectation]. In the concerts, you have to rely on each other. You trust that that person will be able to do their job well – either lead well, follow well, listen to you, fitting with you, or allow you to fit with them [reliance component].

While musicians may expect that their colleagues are trustworthy, they do not actually learn about it until they start playing with each other.
Having positive expectations of and reliance on each other allow musicians to experiment with music and help them play together, but they also make players vulnerable to the behavior of their colleagues who are expected, but are not formally constrained, to work for the collective good. In other words, while trust helps musicians perform music in an unconventional way, it also increases the chance of uncoordinated performances and artistic conflicts. Nonetheless, the more players interact with each other and develop positive attitudes toward one another, the more they are likely to form close ties. Social embeddedness, consequently, allows for greater flexibility, interdependency, and mutual support that have the potential to help musicians give stellar performances and experience artistic freedom and creativity (Uzzi 1997). Expects one Orpheus player:

Definitely, there is risk here. I mean we are walking out on the edge. It has always been risky. It adds that much more anxiety to the performance knowing that there is not going to be someone [a conductor] who has the score….Everyone has to be involved by knowing what is going on, or else it is not going to work. When you play in a concert with a conductor, you can relax much more. You know that there is going to be someone there. But what makes Orpheus so exciting is that there is no one there. People in the audience know that anything could happen. When it does not, people say: “Wow, that’s amazing!” (Jason, 03/28/2005)

Trust in conductorless orchestras is dynamic. While the decision to trust another person is always made in the present, trust is also affected by the previous relationships with, and reputation of, our partners, as well as by the expected future benefits, which can be both tangible and non-material (Khodyakov 2007). Analyzing how the past, the present, and the future influence musicians’ decisions to rely on one another provides some interesting insights into the process of establishing and maintaining trust in conductorless orchestras.
**The Past:** Trust in conductorless orchestras is rarely, if ever, blind. Musicians realize that relying on an untrustworthy individual is very risky in such an unorthodox musical setting. To minimize potential risks of non-cooperation, players are trying to make inferences about their colleagues’ reliability from their previous experiences with them in other settings. Thus, because of the part-time nature of both orchestras, familiarity and previous relationships among players are important for the development of trustworthy relationships among them.

Knowing each other personally helps players make music together when they perform without a conductor. Familiarity and repeated interactions have a potential to reduce unpredictability and uncertainty of live performances and to make it easier for musicians to rely on one another (Barr 2004). Many Persimfans musicians were full members of the Bol’shoy Theater Orchestra and therefore knew each other very well (Ponyatovsky 2003; Tsukker 1927). Similarly, Orpheus musicians also perform with different orchestras, such as the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and the New York Philharmonic. Many others join the American Ballet Theater orchestra when dancers have their biannual New York City performance series.

At the same time, however, familiarity can also prevent musicians from developing trustworthy relationships if their previous experiences with each other were not very pleasant. Psychological research seems to suggest that negative information has a stronger impact than positive information on decision-making (Taylor 1991). If a musician had negative experiences with someone in a conducted setting, he or she may be less likely to trust and rely on that individual in a conductorless orchestra.
Not all members of Persimfans and Orpheus may have known each other before joining these orchestras, however. Both orchestras employ multiple substitute players who are invited when a full member cannot join the orchestra. Substitute players are crucial for any part-time orchestra whose members have to juggle multiple jobs and therefore may experience schedule conflicts. Thus musicians in conductorless orchestras are faced with an interesting situation: they have already developed working relationships with some players but also have to perform with several new substitute players at the same time. Persimfans and Orpheus, however, are not unique in this respect. Temporary cross-functional teams, business consultants, and newly merged companies are faced with a similar situation. The idea of membership temporality suggests that organizational boundaries become more flexible. Indeed, permeability of organizational boundaries is an important characteristic of all post-bureaucratic organizations, which helps them adapt to the changing nature of external organizational environment (Grey and Garsten 2001).

In situations where musicians have not performed with each other before, the development of trust can be facilitated by their professional and interpersonal reputations. Some players may have a reputation for being specialists in the music composed by Mozart or Beethoven. Therefore, while an orchestra rehearses music written by these composers, players specializing in them may be given more decision-making power and are trusted because of their professional knowledge. Moreover, interpersonal reputation can also facilitate the development of trust if a new player is known for being fun to play with, having a good sense of humor, or just being an outgoing person. Reputation precedes individuals. If it is good, reputation can make the establishment of trust easier (Greif 1989).
Research in social psychology, however, suggests that some people, called high trusters, always assume that others are trustworthy unless proven otherwise. For them, having previous relationships with others or knowing about their reputation is not a necessary precondition for trust. In other words, trust for them is a default expectation of others’ behavior (Rotter 1967; Yamagishi 1998; Yamagishi, Kikuchi and Kosugi 1999). Having high default levels of trust helps people be more creative and take risks in uncertain environment. Thus, to be successful, conductorless orchestras can benefit from recruiting musicians with rather high trust stance – those who are intentionally willing to be vulnerable and dependent on one another regardless of whether their colleagues are trustworthy or not (McKnight, Cummings and Chervany 1998).

*The Future:* Trust is always future-oriented because by trusting others, we expect some benefits in return. In case of conductorless orchestras, the expected benefit is the ability to give great concerts without conductors and to enjoy collaborative music making, both of which require cooperation among all orchestra musicians. In such a situation, defection is not the most logical or rational strategy a musician can choose because his or her reputation is always at stake. The orchestral world is very small, and rumors spread quickly. If they want to perform with the orchestra again, they have to play by the rules and be proactive members of the group (Young 2004). Thus, my reputation not only helps others rely on me, but also internally motivates my own behavior and encourages me to contribute to the group’s success.

Human rationality, however, is very limited. What is rational for one person is irrational for another. Some musicians may think that non-contributing to the group but being able to benefit from its success, fame, and reputation may be the most rational
thing for them to do. If individuals think that way, the group can suffer. Indeed, public goods dilemmas suggest that individual rationality can be detrimental to the group’s success. When it comes to paying taxes, for example, the most rational thing for an individual to do is not to pay them. Even if an individual does not pay municipal taxes, he or she can still enjoy collective goods, such as local public parks, that are available for everyone (Kollock 1998). Non-cooperation can be particularly widespread in violin sections that are the largest in any orchestra, which makes it easier for musicians to free ride.

Trust has a potential to remedy the free rider problem (Coleman 1990). Reliance on one another in Persimfans and Orpheus is facilitated by the assumption of commonality of interest among musicians even if they are not high trusters, which suggests that musicians ignore the fact that their colleagues may defect. Players assume that all orchestra members are devoted to the idea of performing orchestral repertoire without a conductor. They think that because everyone is interested in showing audiences that it is possible for an orchestra to perform successfully without a baton-holder, other players are unlikely to act in a way that would be detrimental for the group’s performance. This assumed commonality of interests facilitates the development of trustworthy relationships because it creates a sense of psychological safety for instrumentalists (Edmondson 2004). The feeling psychological security, in turn, allows musicians to freely express their opinions about musical interpretation and share their thoughts on how the orchestra should perform a particular piece (Kahn 1990).

**The Present:** The issue of trust becomes particularly important in uncertain situations, where the behavior of other people is difficult to predict accurately (Sztompka
Individuals try to reduce the perceived risks of relying on their partners by evaluating their trustworthiness based not only on their reputations and professionalism as I have suggested earlier, but also on their actual demeanor and self-presentation. Although musicians are influenced by their previous relationships with each other and their expectations about future benefits, they have to decide whether a particular player will turn out to be trustworthy based on currently available information. Two lines of research, namely signaling theories and information processing theories, are helpful in understanding how the present influences musicians’ decisions to trust their colleagues.

According to signaling theory of trust (Bacharach and Gambetta 2001; Gambetta and Hamill 2005), a careful observation of how people act and how they look can provide an observer with valuable signs of perceived trustworthiness of another person. Actual behavior as well as body language, appearance, clothing, and posture are often treated as signs of potential trustworthiness. Musicians in conductorless orchestras expect certain types of behaviors from each other, which are considered to be properties of a reliable and a trustworthy player. Because during rehearsals musicians work primarily on developing a performance skeleton, a base from which to jump during concerts, players have to listen carefully and be attuned to all orchestra members. They also have to be ready to follow those players who musically lead the orchestra at any given time. Performance spontaneity cannot be rehearsed ahead of time; musicians have to be prepared to play music slightly differently from how it was rehearsed. In such a situation, musical flexibility is one of the most important markers of musical trustworthiness. The ability to follow others is also an indicator that a musician is able to cooperate and can be
trusted to go along with other players when unpredictable things, such as missed entrances, happen during performances.

Proficiency in using non-verbal behavior is another sign of trustworthiness. Musicians in conductorless orchestras are highly dependent on each other’s body movements because, as one of the critics said: “A stomping foot, a quick intake of breath, a lift of the bow serves some of the functions of a conductor” (Dyer 2005: C6). In Orpheus, for example, musicians who sit in front of their sections deliberately nod their heads and excessively move their bodies to help those who sit in the back and cannot hear the rest of the orchestra well to follow the flow of the music. According to Karen (01/19/2005), “musicians react to one another and probably smell the other person’s thoughts and their sweat….Moving, motion, and flexibility all show that you are a part of [musical] collaboration.”

Non-verbal interaction, and consequently the development of trust, is facilitated by emotional expressivity of musicians, which refers to the accuracy with which they display and signal emotions. Facial expressions and body movements allow musicians to communicate, react, and follow musicians whom they are sitting next to. The research shows that it is “easier to read” those people who are more emotionally expressive; at the same time, such people are also able to detect the cues of trustworthiness in other people faster (Boone and Buck 2003).

Musical flexibility and non-verbal behavior are examples of what Moulton (2007) calls relational proxies, or pieces of information that people use to evaluate potential trustworthiness of their partners. Relational proxies are “signs that initially stand for the kind of relational information about reliability that can develop only over time through
repeated encounters” (Moulton 2007: 311). Relational proxies are particularly important for evaluating trustworthiness of new orchestra players who may have never performed with conductorless orchestras before. While flexibility, the ability to follow others, and clear body language are signs of musical trust (See the next section for more details on three types of trust) because they make other players feel less uncertainty about the behavior of new musicians, relational proxies cannot insure members of conductorless orchestras against the risks of non-cooperation. Signs of trustworthiness are open for unintentional misinterpretation and deliberate faking, which makes reliance on relational proxies risky itself (Gambetta and Hamill 2005).

Besides musicians’ behavior during rehearsals, their appearance is also a fruitful source of signs of potential trustworthiness. Research in cognitive psychology can help better understand how people develop trust in those whom they do not know well. Cognitive psychologists have long argued that people tend to categorize information to process it more efficiently and to make decisions more quickly. Unit grouping is a type of categorizations that is particularly important for evaluating trustworthiness and developing trust in others. Unit grouping is a cognitive information processing strategy that puts other people in a group that the truster him or herself belongs to. Because people who are put in the same category are similar to one another on a given visible characteristic, they tend to perceive each other in a positive light and thus are likely to be deemed trustworthy. Those who are visibly different, however, have lower chances of being perceived as trustworthy individuals (McKnight, Cummings and Chervany 1998).

One of the most important characteristics that members of both orchestras share is their high level of professionalism. When musicians start playing, their instrumental
skills become clearly visible for other orchestra members. A large number of Persimfans members were graduates, advance students, or professors of Moscow Conservatory. Similarly, Orpheus players are either students or graduates of such elite music schools as the Juilliard, Manhattan School of Music, or the Mannes College. Some of them currently teach at these schools. Knowing and seeing that all musicians have acquired the necessary skills and musical stock knowledge makes it easier for players to rely on one another even if they do not know some musicians on a personal basis or are performing with them for the first time. Therefore, professionalism allows members to develop trust in each other.

Moreover, the original Orpheus members were a predominantly white group of musicians with several Asian players of more or less the same age because they all were recent conservatory graduates. Although rather superficial, race and age are two very visible markers that help people establish perceived similarity with each other (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005). Indeed, research on trust suggests that people are more likely to trust those who are visibly similar to them because perceived similarity enables people to rely on each other more easily (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Moss, Garivaldis and Touksati 2007; Uslaner 2002).

Nowadays, however, there is more diversity in terms of age among Orpheus musicians because the original orchestra members are approaching the retirement age and are concerned with the group’s future. Consequently, they are trying to invite conservatory students to play with the group and extend the benefits of full membership to younger musicians. When it comes to the racial composition of the group, the vast majority of Orpheus musicians are still white - only 3 out of 29 full members are Asians.
In terms of gender, two-thirds of players are men. At the same time, however, the only timpanist, all orchestra flutists, and half of all violinists and cellists are women.

Professionalism, race and ethnicity, gender, and age are status characteristics that are often used as proxies in the process of evaluating competence and benevolence of potential partners. Reliance on these status characteristics, however, has a potential to lead to the perpetuation of existing cultural stereotypes that people use to fill in for the missing data necessary to evaluate trustworthiness of their partners. People tend to make generalizations based on socially valued characteristics rather than on empirical evidence concerning performance and competence of another individual because it is difficult to evaluate them. Reliance on stereotype-based inferences, however, is risky because they rarely reflect reality and in no way guarantee that a particular individual will be trustworthy (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005). In such a situation, musicians who decide to trust their colleagues have to anticipate only positive outcomes from collaboration and should be ready to act under the assumption “as if” other musicians are worth of their trust (Gambetta 1988; Jones 1996; Khodyakov 2007; Uslaner 2002).

The establishment of trust, to some extent, is riskier that its maintenance. When trustworthy relationships among musicians are established, the incentive to trust is already built into their relationships. The substitute players’ willingness to perform with Orpheus in the future or the full members’ willingness to retain their status may be a good enough reason to encourage musicians to behave in a trustworthy manner. The desire to maintain Orpheus’s reputation of a high caliber orchestra in a highly competitive world of classical music may also be a strong incentive for musicians to rely on and trust each other. Therefore, “the shadow of the future” alone may encourage
musicians not to defect and act in the interests of the whole group (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005). This assumption, however, is only true if musicians want to continue their relationship with the orchestra. If a particular musician is no longer interested in performing with the group, the potential of future relationships is not a strong incentive for retaining trust.

To summarize, trust in conductorless orchestras can be viewed not necessarily as a product of organizational structure, but rather as an outcome of close collaboration among musicians and a product of the process of organizational formation. The process of trust development and maintenance is influenced by the past, the present, and the future. While musicians’ willingness to rely on each other is fueled by their desire to give stellar performances without conductors, they have to be particularly careful in evaluating trustworthiness of their colleagues. Even though previous experiences, reputation, and a certain degree of perceived similarity among players help them minimize the perceived of risks of relying on each other while performing without conductors, they in no way can guarantee musicians’ trustworthiness.

Types and Functions of Trust

Trust in conductorless orchestras is a multifaceted concept. Persimfans and Orpheus players rely on three types of trust – musical trust, self-trust, and interpersonal trust. While each type of trust performs its own function in conductorless orchestras (See Table 4.1), all of them are closely related to one another. Taken together, musical trust, self-trust, and interpersonal trust allow Persimfans and Orpheus musicians to embrace uncertainty associated with such an unconventional approach to music making.
Table 4.1. Functions of Trust

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<thead>
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<th>Types of Trust</th>
<th>Function of Trust</th>
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<tr>
<td>Musical trust</td>
<td>Allows players to take musical risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-trust</td>
<td>Helps musicians participate in the decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>Facilitates the search for consensus</td>
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Source: Author’s compilation

Musical trust: The first type of trust, and arguably the most important type for conductorless orchestras, is grounded in players’ professionalism, expertise, and experience. I call this type of trust musical trust. To some extent, it is similar to Jones’s (1996) account of competence trust, which allows players to form positive expectations about each other based on the assumption that their colleagues have adequate levels of professional training and expertise for a successful role performance (Kuhlmann 2006).

According to Sharon (03/14/2005), musical trust is about respecting

… your colleagues enough in the way that they play, the way they make you play, or the way that they physically show what they are going to do. If you can count on them, if you can trust them, then something will happen. When I get to the concert tonight, I believe I know that that person will do whatever it is that I need to do or see to make such and such happen …. In the musical process, it is purely on that level.

Trusting each other musically allows members of conductorless orchestras to be more innovative and creative. Persimfans, for example, performed not only the standard symphonic repertoire, but also modern musical pieces. Contemporary music is usually considered riskier than the classical repertoire, and many conductors prefer to perform familiar programs to avoid unpleasant surprises and bad press reviews. Persimfans musicians, however, deliberately wanted to try new programs because only in this case their interpretation of music was not affected by that of conductors whom they played
with in other orchestras. Their interpretation of new music also set high performance standards for other orchestras. Prokofiev, whose European debut of American Overture, op. 42 was performed by Persimfans, played with the orchestra as a soloist on multiple occasions and was very impressed with the quality of orchestral performances: “The conductorless orchestra coped splendidly with difficult programmes and accompanied soloists as competently as any conducted orchestra…[D]ifficult passages were easily overcome, for each individual musician felt himself a soloist and played with perfect precision” (Prokofiev, as cited in Schwartz 1983: 46-47).

Orpheus is also famous for performing new contemporary music. As a focal member of the Cheswatyr New Music Initiative that commissions a new piece of music from one American composer per year, Orpheus gives its world premiere at the Carnegie Hall. This performance is being broadcasted on WNYC and other NPR stations. Then, Orpheus takes this new piece on its U.S. and international tours. The first piece commissioned this way was Marc Mellits’s *Brick* (2006). To ensure smoothness of the *Brick* premiere, Orpheus asked the composer to send the score and parts three months (in contrast to typical few weeks) before the first rehearsal. Mellits also attended Orpheus’s rehearsals to help musicians with interpretation and other questions concerning the piece. During the Carnegie dress rehearsal, however, he did not say much and did not express any concerns. Before musicians started playing, he said: “Just relax and let it flow.” In his interview with David Garland on WNYC during the concert intermission, Marc Mellits praised Orpheus for its hard work:

Absolutely perfect; an incredible group to work with. It is not true that they do not have a conductor; they have about 40 conductors! If you watched the rehearsals, I did not have to give my usual speech about the music. Musicians
knew it already. The music was already there….They put countless hours of rehearsal time. They seem to really like it and enjoy it.

Musical trust in conductorless orchestras depends on the players’ abilities to avoid unnecessary musical conflicts and professional skills “to sense what the other person is doing and just go with this” (Robyn, 09/15/2005). A good sense of humor helps musicians avoid potential problems when they disagree with each other about musical questions. Once during a rehearsal, Fred (04/05/2006) who listened to the orchestra comes back to stage and says: “I think it is fantastic,” referring to how well the orchestra performed the movement from Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. His excitement, however, is greeted with some skepticism about the balance expressed by another musician. Instead of starting arguing with that musician, Fred simply said: “I did not say it was together. I said: ‘Fantastic!’”

Listening to each other is particularly important in the absence of a conductor who can guide musicians through the piece of music. Continues Robyn (09/15/2005): “You go mostly with what you hear. If an oboe decides to do something differently be it a little softer or take a little more time, you go with it. If somebody phrases something differently one night, and you have to imitate that phrase, you go with it. So it is much more based on what you hear.”

**Self-trust:** The second type of trust necessary for the development of collaborative relationships in conductorless orchestras is self-trust. Self-trust is a pre-condition for successful collaboration with others, development of a sense of personal autonomy, and self-respect (Govier 1993). Players should feel comfortable with their own level of musicianship, confident in their skills as professional musicians, realize that their contribution does influence the orchestra’s performance, and be able to emotionally
withstand possible criticisms. At the same time, having self-trust does not mean that musicians should go against the group and ignore what others are saying and doing. In contrast, self-trust enables a successful marriage between an individual musician and an orchestra. In other words, self-trust is about trusting yourself to be able to play an instrument very well and to be able to play with other musicians to achieve a coherent performance. As such, self-trust involves both beliefs and actions (Earl 1987).

Self-trust enables musicians to participate actively in artistic decision-making by communicating directly with each other. Persimfans, for example, “emphasized the need of a conscious participation of each instrumentalist in the preliminary work of the orchestra and the need of an artistic realization of every musician’s membership in the collective performance” (Persimfans 1926a: 1). In conducted orchestras, where the unspoken rule is that the conductor is “the absolute monarch of the musical kingdom” and musicians are “his people,” instrumentalists usually do not question baton-holders’ decisions or argue with them (Sabaneev 1926: 307). In contrast, musicians in conductorless orchestras are encouraged to think about music, have a rare opportunity to express their own vision of music, discuss their colleagues’ interpretations, and collectively come up with an interpretation that reflects the group’s vision.

In such a close-knit ensemble, all musicians are expected to commit to the well-being of the whole group. According to Robyn (09/15/2005), because Orpheus “is such a small group, everybody really has to play 100% committed. You got to believe in what you are doing even if you do not agree with it. [You have to] play it as if you own it. It has to be fresh every night.” Musicians should fully understand the group’s goals, values, and culture before criticizing someone or making suggestions. This is what one musician
referred to as “blending in” (John, 10/29/2004). During the blending period, musicians, especially substitute players, develop an understanding of their place in the group and establish a sense of self-trust. “As you deal with people,” says Sharon, “as you socialize with them, you learn how make comments to the group, how to speak up, how not to speak up, that is, in a way, how you learn to trust yourself” (Sharon, 03/14/2005).

Because musicians are very sensitive to the comments of their colleagues and critics, developing self-trust is also crucial for protecting their egos in a situation where everyone is expected to voice his or her opinions. Self-trust corresponds to what Jones (1996: 7) calls self-confidence: “To have self-confidence is to be optimistic about one’s own competence (in the domain in question) and to have the expectation that one will be able to bring about a favorable outcome.” Musicians have to become comfortable with the fact that other musicians may not like their ideas. They have to be able to suppress their true feelings and emotions when other musicians do not support their ideas in situations that are not very crucial for the orchestra’s success. In contrast, when their ideas are rejected but musicians feel strongly about that, they should have enough courage and self-trust to speak up and persuade others. The trick, however, is to know what is crucial for the success of the orchestra.

**Interpersonal trust:** Trusting oneself is the basis for trusting other people. Because our self-perception depends largely on how well we can work together with others and on how others perceive us (Cooley, 1922), the third type of trust in conductorless orchestras is interpersonal trust. Trusting each other is about having a “chemistry together,” which refers to the ability “to get along with everybody both personally and musically” (Robyn, 09/15/2005). To some extent, trust in others is similar to the notion of goodwill or
commitment trust that is grounded in “one’s good faith, good intentions, and integrity” (Das and Teng 2001:256).

Music making is a collective endeavor, which involves a close collaboration between multiple people all of whom are committed to the idea of a conductorless performance. Commitment to the orchestra requires that musicians carefully study not only their own parts but also the whole score. They have to know what role their part plays in the whole piece and how their part is related to that of other musicians. Knowing the score allows players to enter at the right time and to play well with other instruments. Persimfans and Orpheus musicians have to trust that their colleagues work hard not only during rehearsals and concerts but also before the orchestra even gets together by carefully studying the score. Moreover, in Orpheus, commitment to the orchestra requires that musicians are able to adapt quickly to role changes. Because musicians in this orchestra are both leaders and followers, their flexibility becomes particularly important. Neither conducted orchestras nor chamber ensembles require that players change their seats on a piece-by-piece basis, as is the case in Orpheus.

To some extent, it is easier to establish and maintain trust among polite and tactful people (Baier 1986). Therefore, one of the most important interpersonal characteristics that Orpheus musicians are expected to possess is civility. While searching for consensus in the group of equals, the ability to express ideas and disagree with others politely becomes crucial. Musicians try to resolve interpersonal and artistic conflicts “with tact and diplomacy. One thinks before one speaks. [Musicians have] to appreciate potential consequences of anything [they] say out loud” (Martin, 02/17/2006). Tactful behavior facilitates the development of trustworthy behavior among musicians. They try
to be civil and make sure that their comments are worded in a non-offensive manner. In such close-knit groups nobody wants other people to lose face. Comments of personal nature are not acceptable and considered impolite. Inappropriate comments undermine trust, which can make musicians reluctant to share their opinions in the future. Therefore, musicians are expected to choose words carefully while expressing their suggestions and disagreements during rehearsals. It is typical for Orpheus players to say: “George, will you consider more tempo?” or “I was wondering should we be less aggressive on the eight because we are overpowering the winds?”

Interpersonal trust is always a two way process; it is highly dependent on how other people react to your behavior. According to Andrew (01/10/2005),

> You trust that if you have an idea, a well-conceived idea, … you trust that when you are saying something, your colleagues will respect you, are going to listen to you, and will give it their consideration …. And that kind of trust that is extended now to staff. We have a feeling here that when you do something, you will really be recognized and appreciated by the people involved not only in your little corner, but in the whole orchestra. This is mutual respect and kind of trust that comes from that.

Trust in others facilitates the search for compromise. Interpersonal trust helps musicians in conductorless orchestras interact with each other by reducing future uncertainty because they expect to be treated respectfully even if others do not agree with them. Such collaboration is facilitated by the assumption that all musicians have a shared interest.

To some extent, interpersonal trust in Persimfans and Orpheus becomes an intersubjective social reality for players (Lewis and Weigert 1985), which exists only if all musicians know how to communicate and evaluate each others’ trustworthiness.

According to Hardy and her colleagues (1998: 70), interpersonal trust is a myth that “facilitates the sharing of information, subtle reading of signals, and informal interactions
that signal trustworthiness and which, in turn, lead to predictable social action; reduce the likelihood of conflict and opportunistic behaviour; and obviate the need for more formal, bureaucratic controls.” They further suggest that creation of such a myth might be significantly complicated by the fact that not all people share the same meaning of various symbols and cues used in the evaluation of trustworthiness. Besides, some people may decide to “hijack” the process of meaning-making and influence the process of artistic and organizational decision-making to satisfy their personal interests, which suggests that reliance on trust has its negative side in organizations. To resolve these potential problems associated with establishment and reliance on trust, conductorless orchestras also use a number of external and internal control strategies, which I will discuss in the next movement.

To summarize, the reliance on trust in conductorless orchestras becomes as important as reliance on conductors’ control in traditional symphony orchestras. While trust may reflect musicians’ intent to rely on each other and therefore is necessary for cooperation, working closely with colleagues who have a shared interest to give great performances without a conductor also allows musicians to build and maintain trustworthy relationships with each other. Therefore, the example of conductorless orchestras suggests that trust can be both a prerequisite and a consequence of close cooperation.

As a governance strategy, trust influences musicians’ behavior indirectly. On the one hand, because trust is based on the assumption of benevolent agency of other people, it is an enabling governance strategy. As such, trust allows musicians to take up uncertainty associated with a conductorless performance. If they did not trust each other,
it is very unlikely that they would be willing to make themselves so vulnerable to the behavior of their colleagues. In contrast, musicians expect that all orchestra members are willing to cooperate with each other to achieve a common goal.

On the other hand, trust can also be a constraining governance strategy (Grey and Garsten 2001), albeit a very subtle one. Because trust has a potential to increase predictability of social behavior through the development of a sense of community and group loyalty, it can restrict the range of desirable behaviors in an organization. Treating trust as a relational concept stresses the need to look at how trustworthy relationships affect the behavior of both parties involved in a relationship. For example, if I do not agree with my colleagues but trust them, I am more likely not to go against the group. I know that my disagreement with them will slow down the decision-making process and may not necessarily improve the quality of the orchestra’s performance. Therefore, my trust in others, to a certain extent, constrains my own behavior.

Although trustworthy relationships within the orchestra help musicians be creative and innovative by enabling them to embrace uncertainty, the processes of establishing and retaining trust can be very costly. The decision to rely on trust requires musicians’ commitment to give up such short-term profits as the ability to save on the number of rehearsals for the sake of long-term profits that include artistic freedoms, intensive professional development and opportunities to perform new contemporary music. At the same time, the absence of a single leader increases the chance of a free rider problem (Olson 1965) and may cause psychological distress among those musicians who may be unhappy about the time it takes to reach compromises (Steiner 1972).
Fifth Movement: Control in Conductorless Orchestras

“Trust but verify” (An English translation of a Russian proverb that Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Vladimir Lenin all liked to use)

Relying on colleagues and building trustworthy relationships in conductorless orchestras are inherently risky due to the ever-present possibility of unmet expectations and the lack of reciprocity. What if your colleague misses her entrance? What if she misinterprets your gesture? What if she decides not to go along with the group’s decision during a concert? Although trust creates positive expectations of other musicians’ behaviors, it is not a magic wand. Instead, it is a risky business that can provide additional rewards and create new unintended problems within an organization at the same time. To facilitate the development and maintenance of trust and to reduce the risks associated with it, players in conductorless orchestras have developed a number of different control mechanisms. Therefore, trustworthy relationships in conductorless settings are not based on interpersonal mechanisms alone, but are also facilitated by organizational control techniques, which, however, also depend on trust (See the sixth movement for more details on trust-control relationships).

Research on organizations has demonstrated that control strategies can speed up repetitive work, raise total output, and increase the predictability of employees’ behavior by making workers closely follow existing rules and regulations (Eisenhardt 1985; Fligstein 1990). Nonetheless, direct control often “stifles creativity, fosters dissatisfaction, and demotivates employees” (Adler and Borys 1996: 61), which may negatively influence the quality of the final product in conductorless orchestras. Although
traditional hierarchical control cannot be employed in such orchestras without violating the original principles of the musical collective reflexology, both orchestras rely extensively on a number of less direct control strategies.

While Persimfans and Orpheus both rely on control, their control techniques are not identical because they chose different alternatives to the conductors’ power and different solutions to the leader-democracy paradox. Due to the fact that Persimfans was a very large orchestra, it had a permanent musician-leader in both artistic and managerial decision-making. To a certain extent, Persimfans supports Michels’s (1961) argument that regardless of their original goals and principles, large organizations make the development of participatory democracy impossible because it ultimately results in leaders’ domination over subordinates, or oligarchy. Large organizations encourage only limited involvement among subordinates due to the strict division of labor. They develop psychological dependence on leaders, which can lead to apathy. They also compel leaders to rely on formal control to speed up the decision-making process, which ultimately results in domination. While Tseitlin had a noble goal to make music in a large symphony orchestra by using a chamber approach, the realities of running a large organization made it impossible to achieve equality among all orchestra members. So, when it comes to organizational control strategies, Tseitlin acted similarly to how good conductors who care about their instrumentalists act.

Compared to Persimfans, Orpheus is a much smaller orchestra, which makes it easier for its members to rely on a system of leadership rotation and power sharing. A system of power diffusion in Orpheus empowers musicians and encourages them to show their leadership skills and talents. Effective system of power sharing and musician
empowerment, however, requires the imposition of certain limitations on players’ behavior. These control mechanisms should be able to help create and maintain trust-based governance strategies instead of limiting musicians’ artistic freedoms.

In this movement, I discuss the idea of control in conductorless orchestras. I begin with a definition of and a description of a relational approach to control. Then, I discuss the difference between external and internal controls and describe how five different types of control strategies (input, behavioral, output, social, and self-control) work in conductorless orchestras. I end with a discussion of the consequences associated with reliance on control in conductorless orchestras.

The Nature of Control

I use a broad definition of control to include a variety of control techniques used in conductorless orchestras. I define control as a process through which the behavior of one person influences the behavior of other people in an attempt to achieve a specific goal. This definition echoes the discussion of power in post-bureaucracies in the third movement because control strategies are used by organizations to achieve the goals of resource mobilization and social organization. Instead of achieving the goal of domination, control in post-bureaucracies is intended to help organizational members reduce the risks associated with reliance on each other. In other words, control in post-bureaucracies helps create more bases for trust.

My definition of control does not imply a strong correlation between power and control. Instead, it assumes that control can be exercised by all organizational members because it should no longer be viewed only as a constraining governance strategy (Leifer and Mills 1996). By extending the relational approach to governance that I used in my
analysis of trust in the previous movement, control can be viewed as a two-way influence process where the behavior of both parties is affected. While control restricts the behavior of the object of control, it enables the subject of control to do things that would otherwise be perceived as too risky. The relational approach to control is particularly useful for the analysis of music making in Orpheus because this orchestra uses a system of leadership rotation. When objects of control become its subjects literally in a matter of minutes, domination, as a form of power typical for conducted orchestras, is more likely to be replaced with persuasion and compromise.

Control in post-bureaucratic organizations is rather different from control in traditional bureaucracies. Typically, organizations use control to manage risks by imposing structural constraints on employee behavior. Contracts and hierarchies are two traditional control mechanisms that organizations employ in dealing with risks (Williamson 1996). While contracts spell out the jurisdiction of all organizational members, hierarchies specify superior-subordinate relationships and consequently control employee career advancements. Leifer and Mills (1996) call contracts and hierarchies objective controls in that they are external and observable strategies used to insure that employee actions are consistent with certain measurable standards. Both contracts and hierarchies are supposed to turn social uncertainty into manageable risks because they are impersonal in nature (Rus 2005). Nonetheless, musicians in conductorless orchestras have deliberately decided to embrace uncertainty. Orpheus’s reliance on rotational leadership also makes contracts and rigid hierarchies obsolete because musicians go back and forth between being leaders and followers. Hierarchy in Persimfans, which had a musician-leader, was also quite different from that in conducted orchestras. While these
two conventional approaches to control in organizations are not very useful for
Persimfans and Orpheus, it does not mean that observable control strategies are no longer
employed in conductorless orchestras.

When employees accept uncertainty, they shift governance away from focusing
on risk calculation and formal performance monitoring to building strong relationships
with each other by converting “transactional uncertainty into relational certainty” that is
grounded in interpersonal trust (Rus 2005: 82). Such an emphasis on mutual dependence
requires a careful selection of organizational members, imposition of indirect limitations
on their behavior, and some regulation of the quality of the final product. At the same
time, however, these external control strategies in conductorless orchestras are combined
with internal control mechanisms that induce a change in employees’ values and beliefs
(Leifer and Mills 1996). These internal control techniques help both orchestras influence
the way musicians perceive organizational reality and evaluate their own behavior as
members of conductorless orchestras.

This mix of external and internal control strategies helps musicians balance
organizational goals of effectiveness with the challenges of dealing with uncertainty of
making music without conductors. As with any other organization, Persimfans and
Orpheus are bound up by the conditions of their external environments. They have to be
able to acquire and maintain all necessary resources for their competitiveness in the
orchestral market if they want to be artistically successful (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).
Therefore, reliance on both types of control strategies helps musicians in both orchestras
compete with traditional conducted orchestras that rely primarily on external control
strategies and with much smaller chamber ensembles that are likely to depend predominantly on internal control techniques.

Types of Control

Similarly to trust, control in conductorless orchestras is also a multifaceted governance strategy. Like traditional conducted orchestras, Persimfans and Orpheus rely on a number of external control strategies. Nonetheless, such strategies, at least in Orpheus, are based on the notion of power diffusion rather than power concentration, which suggests that there is no single person who is solely responsible for the implementation of external control strategies. Input control, behavioral control, and output control are three types of external control mechanisms used at different stages of music making in conductorless orchestras. At the same time, Persimfans and Orpheus also use two internal control mechanisms – social control and self-control - that are intended to ensure that players have a certain mind set that helps them accept the organizational culture and align their individual interests with those of the whole orchestra. While these five control strategies have their unique functions, they also help establish and maintain the required levels of trust in the orchestra (See Table 5.1).

*External Control Strategies:*

*Input control:* The process of control in conductorless orchestras, as in any other organization, starts with employee selection and recruitment. Because the risks of relying on unqualified musicians are very high, trust in new players is facilitated by the system of input control, which refers to the manipulation of resources intended to influence organizational performance (Cardinal 2001). Input control is used as a gate-keeping mechanism intended to effectively screen potential employees. To some extent,
recruitment procedures in Persimfans and Orpheus are similar to those used in social movements. Research shows that new members are recruited not only because they share the ideology of a particular social movement, but also because they are directly or indirectly connected to an existing member (Rochford Jr 1982; Snow, Zurcher Jr and Ekland-Olson 1980).

Table 5.1. Functions of Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Control</th>
<th>Functions of Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External controls:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input control</td>
<td>Performs the function of a gate-keeping mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral control</td>
<td>Ensures order and equitable distribution of responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output control</td>
<td>Performs the function of a quality check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal controls:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social control</td>
<td>Facilitates socialization into organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Helps create individual-group balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation

While conducted orchestras typically have blind auditions to ensure that the selection process is unbiased, conductorless orchestras cannot risk hiring musicians who do not possess certain interpersonal characteristics that are deemed appropriate and necessary for a successful conductorless performance. Blind auditions are supposed to be objective because candidates play behind the screen. Selection committee members are supposed to make a decision based solely on such objective factors as technical
competence and performance quality (Goldin and Rouse 2000). Blind auditions, however, do not provide any information about the candidate’s personality, which is as important for Persimfans and Orpheus as instrumental skills are.

In Persimfans, original members were carefully recruited by Tseitlin who was looking for high-caliber professionals willing to experiment with a new approach to orchestral playing. It was the right mix of musicians that allowed Persimfans to apply the chamber approach to making music in a symphony orchestra. The importance of choosing the right people is supported by the fact that orchestras in Leningrad, Kharkov, and Tiflis, which were modeled after Persimfans, did not last long. When the orchestra’s rehearsal process had already become institutionalized, its auditions became competitive to allow for a wider pool of candidates to perform with the group (Ponyatovsky 2003).

Thorough selection of players is also important for Orpheus whose membership is very fluid. During a recent tour to Europe, for example, there were only 9 full members and 21 substitute players. Orpheus uses a referral system and invites only those musicians who they think are “compatible” with the orchestra’s philosophy and culture. The group relies on a network of substitute musicians, whom they view as being highly skilled, good-natured, and possess an ability to listen to others. In addition, substitute players are expected to be unique in their own way. An ideal player is “someone who can really bring a lot so that it might shake things up a little bit … as long as things happen on a high level because we do not want it [music] to be just routine” (John, 10/29/2004).

In Orpheus, a full member of the orchestra often recommends someone he or she played with in other orchestras. Then, the personnel coordinator, who is an elected Orpheus member, adds that musician’s name to the roster of substitute players and can

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7 See Gladwell (2005) for an example of how blind auditions are not objective at all.
invite him or her on an as-needed basis. Although it may seem that Orpheus musicians are looking for players who are very similar to them, it is difficult to find any two musicians with identical experiences and approaches to musical interpretation. According to Hackman (2002: 195), musicians are different in that that each player “brings special talents and interests to the ensemble and also has some areas of relative disinterest and lesser strength,” which allows the Orpheus orchestra to benefit from diverse skills of musicians and create a necessary level of cohesiveness in organizational culture at the same time. The major benefit of having musicians with diverse sets of skills, experiences, and specializations is that it has a potential to increase the creativity of artistic and organizational decision-making in the orchestra (Roussin 2008).

Moreover, the behavior of substitute players is carefully evaluated even after they have been invited to join the group for a concert or a tour. During rehearsals and performances, Orpheus members look at how a new player can voice his or her opinion and show his or her leadership skills to ensure that this person is a good fit. Tours are often used to evaluate new players because they allow musicians not only to learn about professional characteristics of a new substitute player, but also to evaluate his or her interpersonal skills. If members of the orchestra do not like a certain substitute player, they express their hesitation to the personnel coordinator, who will not invite this player to perform with Orpheus in the future.

**Behavioral control:** Performance success in conductorless orchestras depends on the input of every member, regardless of his or her status in the orchestra. When many musicians with different musical ideas come together, artistic disagreements and personal animosities even among carefully selected and tactful musicians become unavoidable.
Although healthy debates are necessary, the line between constructive arguments and counterproductive disagreements blurs. To prevent numerous artistic conflicts and reduce the need for multiple rehearsals conductorless orchestras have to find a way of making their rehearsals more efficient. They have to find a behavioral control strategy that is suitable for a collaborative approach to music making. Behavior control, also known as structural or bureaucratic control, is usually based on the use of rules and procedures employed to monitor employee behavior (Eisenhardt 1985). Arguably, one of the main differences between Persimfans and Orpheus is their approach to behavioral control.

Because Persimfans was a very large orchestra, coordination during rehearsals was one of the most difficult artistic problems this orchestra faced. Lev Tseitlin always assumed the leadership role during rehearsals and thus acted as a quasi-conductor. Nonetheless, he was not a typical conductor. Instead of micromanaging his colleagues, his primary goal was technical coordination of different musical sections of the orchestra. As the head of the artistic council and the managing committee, Lev Tseitlin was also ultimately responsible for setting up artistic goals for the orchestra. Yet, he allowed musicians to achieve these goals in the way they deemed appropriate and encouraged them to voice their suggestions and comments during rehearsals. To a certain extent, he acted as good participatory leaders do: he controlled the overall architecture of the task, but trusted his colleagues to find their own means of solving organizational problems (Kanter 1981).

To ensure that all musicians were on the same page artistically, Lev Tseitlin had worked closely with the score even before musicians received their parts. He developed a special score notation method that drew musicians’ attention to particular passages,
thereby controlling their behavior indirectly. He used a color-coding system, where red
markings meant that musicians had to musically highlight particular notes and blue
markings meant that musicians had to play as slowly as possible. Lev Tseitlin also
employed a system of special symbols, originally developed by Sergei Koussevitzky, the
conductor of the orchestra where the former was a concertmaster before the latter’s
immigration to Paris and then to the USA, to indicate the parts of the score where
musicians had to slow down or to speed up (See Table 5.2). These signs drew musicians’
attention to tempo changes, which increased flexibility and vividness of the orchestra’s
performances and helped it to perform without a leader during the concerts (Ponyatovsky
2003).

Table 5.2. Score Notation Method in Persimfans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accelerando</strong></td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→→</td>
<td>→→→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ritardando</strong></td>
<td>←</td>
<td>←←</td>
<td>←←←</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crescendo</strong></td>
<td>◀</td>
<td>◀◀</td>
<td>◀◀◀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diminuendo</strong></td>
<td>▼▼</td>
<td>▼▼▼</td>
<td>▼▼▼▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sforzando</strong></td>
<td>◆</td>
<td>◆◊</td>
<td>◆♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenuto</strong></td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Ponyatovsky (2003, 51)

Nonetheless, Orpheus is a much smaller orchestra. Its relatively small size gives
musicians more opportunities for leadership. Instead of having a permanent leader, this
orchestra rotates leadership roles. Rotational core groups, which create temporary
hierarchy and impose subtle limitations on the behavior of musicians, represent the form
of behavioral control that allows Orpheus to structure the rehearsal process, identify
leaders of every piece of music, and resolve the coordination problem without allowing
any single member to accumulate more artistic power than any other member has. Core
group members are not only expected to develop a basic understanding of a piece before
the first full orchestra rehearsal, but they also decide how the orchestra should perform a
piece if musicians cannot seem to find a compromise during a rehearsal. Explains Robyn
(09/15/2005), a frequent concertmaster of the group:

The core group meets before the first rehearsal and if there is enough time, comes
up with a basic interpretation, basic understanding of the piece. Of course, when
you bring it to the rehearsal, everybody shoots it down, and that’s fine. Then you
go back and work with everybody. I think that when we get to the point where we
have tried several different interpretations, but we are not sure which one we are
going to play and no one can agree, somebody will say: “Let’s let the core
decide.” Then the core, principal players, will say how we are going to play.

Each core also has a leader, a concertmaster, who is a representative of the core
group designated to find a consensus between the group and all instrumental sections of
the orchestra. Says Megan (03/21/2005), a frequent concertmaster of the orchestra: “As a
concertmaster, my role is to make sure that rehearsal time is used efficiently because
there can be a lot of talking and discussing that are taking too much time. My role is to
tell others what core decided at the core rehearsal…It’s kind of me directing the flow of a
rehearsal.” Concertmasters, however, are not conductors who dictate their vision of
music. Concertmasters do not stand in front of the orchestra like conductors would do;
they always sit in the first violin’s chair and play with the orchestra. During rehearsals,
musicians do not necessarily agree with what the concertmaster says. Explains Jane
(12/10/2004): “We will say things across the group: ‘Paul, I wish you guys were playing
louder there,’ and you do not notice that you were talking to the concertmaster.”
Although every musician is expected to speak up, the core group and its concertmaster
are ultimately accountable for running rehearsals and leading the orchestra.
Rotational core groups allow for flexible leadership and prevent power concentration at the same time. In Orpheus, there is no division into principal players and those in second or third positions, as in the large symphony orchestras. Each section does not have a permanent leader, which means that musicians rotate into leadership positions on a piece-by-piece basis. During the concert, the concertmaster of the first musical piece on the program can be sitting in the back of the violin section while performing the second piece. Explains Barry (2/27/2006):

In Orpheus concerts, everybody is juggling many different things. The fact that the concertmaster goes from leading a piece to being a section player in the back of the seconds is terrific. It is exactly the way it should be. Nobody should get locked in those roles of leading the concert….If the concertmaster was locked into that chair, it would start to resemble too much a conventional orchestra….It would screw up the free will nature of it.

As a form of temporary hierarchy, rotational core groups illustrate what Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) call a semistructure and Kamoche and Cunha (2001) refer to as a minimal structure. Semistructure is an organizational design that provides employees with an overarching framework by setting up clear priorities and responsibilities, but also gives them freedom to innovate and be creative. Temporary hierarchy in Orpheus is not as rigid as a conductor’s control and does not prevent musicians from voicing their opinions, but it ensures that musicians do not become too dominant, or too passive, during rehearsals. Flexibility of this control strategy is insured by the system of leadership rotation, which gives musicians an opportunity to lead and to follow during the concert.

Output control: One of the advantages of performing without a conductor is that musicians feel personal responsibility for both successes and failures of their performances. As such, they are controlling the quality of their final output. Instead of
having conductors who usually tend to blame instrumentalists for artistic failures but take full credit for the orchestra’s success, musicians in Persimfans and Orpheus are fully accountable for the final product. This feeling of personal accountability is a form of output control, which can be defined as the regulation of results of activities in an attempt to achieve desired goals (Eisenhardt 1985).

Because there is no single leader in Orpheus, all musicians feel personal responsibility for the success of the performance. Explains one cellist: “In Orpheus, you don’t put it off…You do not displace your accountability. You do not say that’s someone else’s [fault] or that conductor is no good. In everything that we do, we depend on each other….If something is bad, that is because we are bad, it is us” (Jack, 10/29/2004). Not all Orpheus concerts are perfect, and musicians agree that some nights are better than others. Nonetheless, both players and critics concur that musicians’ passion, incredible energy, and openness are always present in Orpheus’s performances, which helps this orchestra differentiate itself from their competitors, achieve visceral beauty of music, and create a community.

According to Joshua (03/15/2006), an Orpheus manager, because musicians are the ones who control the quality of the final product, there is an ongoing collaboration between a composer, musicians, and audience members. There is no major barrier between “the musicians and the score, between the musicians and the composer, and above all else, between the musicians and the audience” because there is no conductor. Audience members feel “the liberating intensity with which these musicians listen to one another” (Dyer 2005: C6) because “the music is being created all over the stage, and every person is actively taking part” (Robyn, 09/15/2005). Music critics compliment
Orpheus on being “a first-class group…that displays the utmost professionalism coupled with an infectious love for making music;” its “performances have polish and spirit,” and its “tone is uniformly smooth and unforced” (Schonberg 1978: 48). They also praise Orpheus’s “internal cohesiveness” and suggest that “it is difficult to remain indifferent to the energy, beauty of tone, and gracefulness that this group typically brings to its performances” (Kozinin 1998: E1).

At the same time, musicians in conductorless orchestras feel that they have some control over organizational decision-making as well. They have an opportunity to elect their representatives to three different committees in Persimfans and to the board and administrative team in Orpheus to ensure that organizational decisions do not violate their orchestras’ original principals of collaboration and artistic freedom but can also ensure long-term success. Election of representatives can also be viewed as an example of output control because musicians can directly influence the decisions made by the management. Output control is a quality check that enables musicians to psychologically “own” the orchestra and to be confident that their opinions are always taken into account. The feeling of ownership musicians have in conductorless orchestras is partly responsible for their artistic success.

*Internal control strategies:*

*Social control:* During the initial stage of working together, players are socialized into the values and traditions of the orchestra. This socialization process represents the reliance on social (or clan) control (Ouchi 1979). Social control mechanisms constrain employee behavior by encouraging them to embrace organizational culture, which consists of a system of values and norms intended to reinforce and reward certain
behaviors and punish others. As a result of such socialization, employees internalize organizational goals and use them as their guiding principles. Consequently, social control influences employee behavior indirectly by ensuring that their preferences coincide with those of other organizational members and management (Das and Teng 2001).

When new instrumentalists get a chance to play with Orpheus, they have to learn how to blend in and listen to others. Blending is the first step in organizational socialization so that all musicians can see that a new player can listen to other orchestra members. Those who can blend in are considered more reliable and therefore are more likely to be given leadership opportunities. John’s story is very illustrative of the “blending process” and shows how a substitute player becomes a full Orpheus member:

There was a particular set of recording we were doing. Very difficult cello writings, and it was just two cellos playing single parts. I have established myself at that point as being able to blend in at the highest level, and the member I was playing with just loved it. This helped establish trust that I could do it. After that I was given more opportunities to lead. When I showed that I had a potential, a potential to be a strong leader, it was enough to establish trust. It was blending followed by the leadership. (John, 10/29/2004)

New players learn about the Orpheus culture by performing with the orchestra, which teaches them how to behave appropriately and perform without a conductor. Orpheus’s organizational culture emphasizes openness and caring relationships among all orchestra members. Andrew (01/10/2005), one of the artistic directors of the orchestra, suggested that there is “generosity of spirit, when people want to hear what you want to say. It creates an environment and culture of caring [among musicians, as well as] generosity of giving and welcoming response.” Such a culture of generosity also governs the relationships among members of the board of directors and the administrative team.
The idea of openness is essential for the Orpheus’s organizational culture because, according to Andrew, it creates “a healthy spirit of the exchange of ideas among all members of the orchestra.” This is important for all organizations because employees develop social identities based on their bonds with co-workers and self-identification within the group.

Social control helps structure personal interaction among musicians and informs musicians about their rights and obligations as members of a conductorless orchestra. Substitute members typically have similar experiences during their first performances with the group, where they are expected to internalize the Orpheus’s way of making music. Explains Karen (01/19/2005):

I remember playing with them for a whole year before I said anything, before I contributed anything verbally to the rehearsal process. I am not a shy person. It is not that I did not have any ideas, but I wanted to soak in the way they do things and see how that works. Of course I was contributing as a player. I was contributing, reacting, and all that kind of things. If you are coming into something that has been going on before you, you just see how they work.

A careful selection of orchestra members and their socialization into the Orpheus’s culture makes this orchestra a very close-knit group of people who are similar to each other. When it comes to music making, homogeneity among musicians helps orchestra members achieve consensus faster. This reduces the number of rehearsals required for a good performance and therefore increases the overall organizational efficiency.

Although Persimfans relied more on external control strategies due to its size, it also used some forms of social control. This orchestra was not only an artistic experiment, but also a political one. Persimfans was “a [miniature] laboratory of communism” that was supposed to model the future of collectivist principles in organizations and inspire Soviet citizens to imitate its approach to organizational music.
making in other spheres of social life (Stites 1989). To indoctrinate others, Persimfans had to indoctrinate its members first. Today no one knows the actual reasons why Persimfans musicians joined the orchestra, although dissatisfaction with conductors, curiosity, professional development, additional income, and political propaganda are likely to be among them. To ensure that Persimfans players were on the same page, members of the artistic committee had to develop a coherent philosophy behind the conductorless approach to music making. *Five Years of Persimfans*, the book published by Arnold Tsukker, a member of the artistic committee, and *Persimfans*, the orchestra’s journal, were supposed to perform the indoctrination function. These publications spelled out the orchestra’s approach to conductorless performance and its philosophy. On the one hand, they helped audience members understand why this orchestra performs without a conductor. On the other hand, the book and the journal were used by new Persimfans members to grasp their new role expectations.

*Self-control:* Self-control, or self-management, is another type of internal control, which is crucial for giving successful and coherent performances in a conductorless setting. It is based on individuals’ personal dispositions and value orientations. Self-control influences not only how individuals view what is going on around them, but also has a direct impact on their behavior (Leifer and Mills 1996). Self-control helps people develop value congruency – the fit between organizational and personal goals. It also helps individuals work well with colleagues by protecting their reputation and image in conflict situations.

In conductorless orchestras, successful performance depends largely on the ability of the orchestra members to come up with new ideas and to carefully evaluate the
appropriateness of the ideas suggested by their colleagues. Musicians, however, are expected to give up their ideas if other members do not like them. Says Andrew (01/10/2005), an Orpheus player:

It is fun and interesting to hear other people's feelings about the piece of music and not to rely on one person telling you what to do all the time. Even if there is a different point of view, and this happens all the time to me, I might have a different opinion about the piece, and I hear someone saying something really different. Instead of thinking: “I am right and you are wrong,” I might say: “That's very interesting, that's better than what I thought. Let's do that.” Or there might be a little battle, where I try to defend my idea. I might lose that battle, or I might win that battle eventually....Disagreement can lead to a better performance because you are ultimately forced to consider somebody else's point of view.

When all musicians are expected to participate in artistic decision-making, not everyone’s ideas will be accepted: “You can say: ‘Well, I like to do it this way.’ Musicians may try it, and say: ‘No, thanks.’ And then you kind of lower down in your chair in a little pose….Or they can try your idea, and they like it” (Daniel, 03/18/2005).

To ensure that rehearsals do not become chaotic even in the presence of a concertmaster and a core group, each musician is also expected to control his or her own behavior.

According to Jack (10/29/2004), “you have to be reasonable; you have to back off when you are not helping the core….You have to build a consensus. But if that consensus is not there, you back off….We all understand that there are kind of unwritten rules….You can try your idea, but if it is not taken by the group, you don’t fight the core.”

Self-control is important because musicians understand that the orchestral performance is a collective endeavor, which requires multiple players to perform together and to be able to share a single interpretation. Group performance is not about showing off your individual talents, unless you are a soloist; instead, it depends on musicians’ abilities to control their egos for the sake of the group’s success. Kirill Kondrashin, a famous Soviet conductor both of whose parents were Persimfans musicians and who
spent much time with this orchestra during his childhood, argued that the reason why Persimfans lasted only for slightly over ten years was the musicians’ inability to put different fragments of the piece together. When there is a group of star players, it is difficult to ensure that they all agree on how the piece should be interpreted and are ready to execute that interpretation: “There were incidents where the solo flutist brilliantly performed his solo part, but the phrase that followed that solo was played by another musician who interpreted it differently” (Kondrashin 1976: 7).

To summarize, reliance on external and internal control strategies in conductorless strategies suggests that control in post-bureaucratic organizations is a complex phenomenon. While external control strategies are based largely on structural constraints, be it selection criteria, behavioral restrictions imposed by the score or rotational peer-leaders, or quality control mechanisms, internal control mechanisms assume a certain level of musicians’ agency in that they are intended to induce a range of organizationally desirable value orientations and behaviors. Therefore, similarly to trust, control can both restrain and enable musicians’ actions.

**Consequences of Relying on Control**

The main goal of relying on control, regardless of its type, is to ensure that employees are able to subjugate, to a certain extent, their personal desires and interests to the organizational will and collective goals. Organizational control requires that employees give up some of their personal freedom and autonomy in an attempt to reduce organizational risks. While this is certainly true about traditional bureaucracies, Persimfans and Orpheus are not exceptions because they both have organizational hierarchy. Although Persimfans is much closer to bureaucratic organizations in this
respect, Orpheus also does not reject the idea of organizational hierarchy as a risk reduction technique but has redefined it. Every piece on the program has its own leaders and followers whose statuses are temporary and fluid because they change on every piece. Changing leadership creates what some call “hierarchy of equals” (Seifter and Economy 2001: 90). On the one hand, organizational hierarchy and other external control techniques used in both conductorless orchestras help them build and maintain trustworthy relationships among players because they ensure certain level of homogeneity among musicians and make their behavior more predictable. On the other hand, even the reliance on more indirect control methods does lead to “the iron cage” of control, which is created by employees themselves (Arnold, Barling and Kelloway 2001; Barker 1993).

Even though Persimfans tried to empower all its members, it was too large to allow musicians to rehearse without a single leader by using only non-verbal behavior as its primary coordination strategy and performed too infrequently to use a leadership rotation system effectively. Consequently, Persimfans suffered from many problems large symphony orchestras experience, such as leader supremacy and group domination over the individual. Nonetheless, Orpheus musicians are not totally free either. The behavior of employees in smaller post-bureaucratic organizations may be even more restrained than in large bureaucracies as small organizations are more likely to experience concertive forms of control. Concertive control is widespread in self-managing teams because it is a by-product of working within close-knit groups. It is derived from value consensus and self-control, which are both more subtle and less apparent sources of constraint (Barker 1993). In an attempt to facilitate the process of building and
maintaining trust, post-bureaucracies may be trapped by their desire to invest in strong internal control mechanisms, which can negatively influence employees’ creativity and desire to innovate.

Following Barker’s (1993) logic, one can argue that Orpheus musicians do not possess real artistic freedom and actually suffer from a tighter control than their colleagues who perform in conducted orchestras. Instead of being controlled by one person – the baton-holder or the permanent concertmaster – Orpheus players’ behavior is controlled not only by their colleagues, but also by a system of value-based normative rules. In a group of equals, pressure toward uniformity of values and desire to achieve a compromise that reflects organizational will are likely to lead to groupthink (Janis 1972; Polley and Van Dyne 1994). Musicians’ desire not to offend colleagues or to reach consensus quicker may be detrimental to the quality of the group’s performance. Indeed, according to Barry (02/27/2006), having multiple interpretations of music sometimes makes musicians “end up with the middle of the road product because if you go too far this way or too far that way, you bother people.”

Strong permanent leaders who show concern for musicians and at the same time provide high quality artistic leadership can help an orchestra give outstanding performances and reduce the potential of interpersonal conflict and animosities among instrumentalists. In contrast, not having a single leader and relying on strong organizational culture may actually prevent organizational change, limit performance creativity, and encourage backward-looking attitudes among musicians. Musicians’ expectations about each others’ behaviors are influenced by the organizational culture and the history of their previous relationships, which can be viewed as a framework that
not only defines their roles, but also their reputation. Fred’s (04/05/2006) experiences as
a long-time Orpheus member are very telling:

Orpheus can be a very painful, politically painful, place to be. It does not happen
that much now, but in the earlier days, in the sort of groupthink situations, you
often look for the scapegoat. It is convenient for everyone. In the orchestra,
everyone can hate the conductor. So whom do we hate? If someone is being the
bad boy, everyone enjoys focusing on that person, sort of like in the doghouse.
We used to joke about it. The former oboist…was famous for being in the
doghouse. Once he was rehabilitating himself, and I said: “Do not put out some
clean towels for me, I am not interested in taking on the residence in the
doghouse.” So, even today, there is sort of baggage like that. I know I carry some
of it too. I know I do. I am not blaming anyone else for that. Some things that
happen now that might be seemingly unrelated to me, they relate to something
that happened twenty years ago.

Moreover, although Persimfans and Orpheus players argue that they
psychologically own their orchestra and thus have control over the organization, this may
only be an illusion. There is no doubt that hierarchy in Orpheus is temporary and in
Persimfans more flexible than in conducted orchestras. It is also true that players in both
orchestras have an impact on all artistic and some managerial decisions. Yet how much
discretion and power do they really have?

First, while all musicians participate in important artistic decision-making
processes, there is an overarching force that acts as a meta-structure: The Music. The
score defines who should indicate the beginning of each movement. The score defines
who is going to lead at any single moment during a performance. The score sets up a
standard of how the piece should be performed. Even though the art of musical notation
is not exact (how do musicians know how slow adagio should be performed or how loud
fortissimo should be played?), there are certain standards of good performance. While
these standards are also open for interpretation, they do exist. If an orchestra wants to
receive good reviews, it has to abide by, or stay close to them.
Second, the major goal of the leadership rotation system in Orpheus is to ensure that every musician has an opportunity to be actively involved in formal leadership and therefore has “formal” power. Nonetheless, total equality is impossible even in such a democratic orchestra. Every core group has a leader – a concertmaster – who is always a violinist, which makes Orpheus’s and Persimfans’s leadership structures during rehearsals very similar. The fact that concertmasters are always violinists makes it impossible for all other instrumentalists to perform the concertmaster’s role. This inherent status inequality among players can never be overcome in any orchestra. Concertmasters have the highest status, receive the highest salary, and possess more power than any other instrumentalist in the orchestra. Concertmasters in Orpheus are not an exception. Their salaries are higher salaries, compared to other orchestra members. Nonetheless, concertmasters receive higher salaries because they spend extra time working with the score before the core rehearsal.

Orpheus’s reliance on substitute players also poses certain challenges to equality. Even though there may be little or no difference in terms of the expectations from permanent and substitute players, full membership provides musicians with additional material and psychological benefits that substitute players do not enjoy. Besides getting medical insurance and enrollment into the pension plan, full members of the orchestra also have “the right of the first call.” Explains Laura, an orchestra musician who has played with the group for more than twenty years, but has just recently become a full member: “[as a full member,] you have the right to turn [the offer] down and not be afraid that they would never call you again. That is job security” (Laura, 03/15/2006).
Third, although leadership rotates, musicians have different personalities. Some of them are more vocal and dominant than others. As one player put it:

I am not always the easiest guy to get along with, I know that. I am opinionated. I can say things that I can regret that I have done it later on. I realize that I could have avoided some of the confrontation or that I was wrong. I am human. I try to see my mistake and learn from them. But in a group like Orpheus you are not looking for a bunch of wallflowers, so you are going to have a group of people that might not always get along. (Fred, 04/05/2006)

Intentionally or unintentionally, strong personalities often try to influence or even hijack artistic decision-making process, which inevitably creates conflicts and threatens to shift the existing informal power balance in the orchestra.

Finally, there is a difference between artistic and managerial decision-making in Persimfans and Orpheus. While every musician was able to participate in artistic decision-making by offering suggestions during rehearsals, the fact that not all Persimfans musicians could elect representatives to the artistic council and the managerial committee deepened power inequality among orchestra members. Similarly, although Orpheus musicians are solely responsible for artistic decision-making, most of them have a limited engagement in the managerial problem solving. With an exception of a managing director, musicians, who are responsible for managerial decision-making, are only in charge of artistic issues, such as picking programs and finding substitute players.

According to one of the Orpheus’s managers, although flat organizational structure and leadership rotation work in artistic decision-making, they are not suitable for managerial decision-making:

Rotating leadership does not work for management, it does not. The managing director is not going to do my job tomorrow, and I am not going to do his tomorrow, and then we are not going to switch for the next thing. This flat management structure has its good points and has its bad points. In our case [in the managerial decision-making], it is a little confusing even if it is clarified for
us. That is just a good idea, but it is not really going to transfer to the staff. It is just maddeningly idealist… The managing director is everybody’s boss; the general director is my boss. I am my interns’ boss. It is not flat, it cannot be. Decisions have to be made, responsibility has to be taken. The accountability is very important. Is there a flat spirit? Ok, sure. We like to say that there is. (Joshua, 03/15/2006)

While Orpheus tries to bring its culture of sharing to managerial problem solving, it does not always work well. Even though musicians can influence all aspects of organizational decision-making, professional managers have more power in day-to-day aspects of running the orchestra.

To summarize, the example of conductorless orchestras shows that reliance on the chamber paradigm can help musicians establish trustworthy relationships that facilitate music making and participatory decision-making in the orchestra. Nonetheless, the very process of creation and maintenance of trust requires that certain limitations be imposed on musicians’ behavior. Conductorless orchestras employ elaborate systems of external and internal control mechanisms that ensure necessary coordination among musicians. On the one hand, these control mechanisms make it easier for musicians to rely on each other and thus reduce the risks of performing without a conductor. On the other hand, even the use of internal control techniques can stifle artistic creativity and increase musicians’ frustrations in the orchestra. Therefore, musicians have to trust that their colleagues would not give in to the group pressure and be able to exercise self-control and the same time. Moreover, reliance on internal control strategies makes it difficult to differentiate between control and trust because as governance strategies in post-bureaucratic organization they both enable and restrain musicians’ behaviors.
Sixth Movement: Contrapuntal Governance: The Complexity of Trust-Control Relationships in Organizational Settings

It is hard to write a beautiful song. It is harder to write several individually beautiful songs that, when sung simultaneously, sound as a more beautiful polyphonic whole. The internal structures that create each of the voices, separately must contribute to the emergent structure of the polyphony, which in turn must reinforce and comment on the structures of the individual voice. The way this is accomplished in detail is what I am calling “counterpoint.” (Rahn 2000: 177)

The application of a relational approach to trust and control to the case of conductorless orchestras, which I described in the previous two movements, suggests that these two governance strategies have a lot in common: they can both constrain and enable musicians to do certain things, they influence the behavior of all orchestra members, and they often do so indirectly, especially when it comes to internal control and trust. Nonetheless, while positive expectations about the behavior of other people in the case of trust are based on embedded agency, in the case of control, these expectations are grounded primarily in structural constraints. Therefore, successful governance strategies in conductorless orchestras require that musicians are constrained only to a certain degree and are given personal freedoms that they are expected to use in non-detrimental ways (Möllering 2005).

Although trust and control are two separate governance strategies, they become intricately intertwined in conductorless orchestras, and the line between them starts to blur. To use a musical analogy, governance in such orchestras is contrapuntal in that it combines both trust and control. Counterpoint is an important organizational principle of musical composition, which involves a combination of two or more melodic lines that are
rhythmically independent but interdependent in harmony. The idea behind counterpoint is that the structure of each melody contributes to the newly emerging structure of a more beautiful polyphonic whole, which, in turn, reinforces and contributes to the structure of each of its constituent melodic lines (Rahn 2000).

Theoretically speaking, trust and control can exist independently of each other. Indeed, trust can be blind or unwarranted and thus does not necessarily require control (Flores and Solomon 1998). People either do not look at evidence or ignore it if they trust others. Trust tends to restrict the array of possible interpretations of other people’s motives (Jones 1996). Blind trust, however, can be harmful if the object of our trust has dishonorable motives. Similarly, control may not necessarily require trust either. Reliance on markets and hierarchies suggests that coordination can be achieved in the absence of trust. Formal control mechanisms thus make trust unnecessary as a safeguard that protects organizations from opportunistic behavior of their employees and partners (Williamson 1993).

Empirically, however, trust and control are intricately intertwined and need each other (Sprenger 2004). There is growing empirical support for the assumption that trust and control together help achieve results that neither of the governance strategies can achieve alone (Das and Teng 1998; 2001). While contracts as mechanisms of formal control can mitigate opportunistic behavior and therefore support the development of trustworthy relationships, they do not prevent conflicts. Trust in this case can increase the efficiency of contracts by fostering continuity of exchange among all parties involved in a relationship through the development of balanced reciprocity, which refers to the expectation of a timely return of favors, goods, or help (Ensminger 2001; Poppo and
Zenger 2002; Sahlins 1972). In conductorless orchestras, trustworthy relationships depend partly on how well control strategies work, and reliance on control depends on the extent to which musicians trust each other.

If conductorless orchestras use a two-prong approach to governance, and if there are multiple similarities between trust and control, what is the relationship between these two governance strategies in post-bureaucratic organizations? Will this relationship remain the same in traditional bureaucratic organizations? These two questions will guide my discussion in this movement, which uses a number of musical analogies to illustrate the complexity of trust-control relationships. I start this movement with a discussion of dissonance and consonance, the musical terms that illustrate two dominant approaches to trust-control relationships in organizations – the supplementary and the complementary perspectives. Then, I introduce another musical term – counterpoint – that not only incorporates both approaches to trust-control relationships, but can also explain the relationships between different types of trust and control in both conductorless and conducted orchestras, and by extension, in post-bureaucratic and bureaucratic organizations. Finally, in my concluding remarks, I return to the main question of this book: How can orchestras perform without conductors?

**Dissonance and Consonance**

Collaborative music making in the absence of a conductor is a complex artistic process that requires not only high levels of musicians’ commitment and professionalism but also an effective system of control. If musicians do not trust each other, they are likely to revert to a more traditional conducted approach to music making because it depends more on instrumentalists’ ability and willingness to follow the conductor’s baton than their
readiness to spend extensive amount of time rehearsing and searching for compromises. At the same time, if members of conductorless orchestras do not rely on control, their trust will be rather fragile, their relationships unstable, and their rehearsals chaotic. This suggests that while trust and control are two distinct governance strategies, conductorless orchestras tend to employ both and at the same time. As a result, reliance on both trust and control helps them reinforce the strength and effectiveness of each individual governance strategy.

Trust-control relationships in conductorless orchestras, however, are complicated by the fact that these two governance strategies are multifaceted concepts. The nature of trust-control relationships in conductorless orchestras depends largely on the type of trust and control involved. To use a musical analogy, trust and hierarchical formal control mechanisms create a dissonance, meaning that they lack harmony because the presence of one governance strategy reduces the need for another. In the absence of a conductors’ control, musicians’ creative freedom is not formally limited by any single individual. Instead, musicians in conductorless orchestras come together to experience the joy of a truly collaborative music making that they can rarely enjoy in other orchestral settings. Creative collaboration among musicians in this case is based on their willingness to compromise and build trustworthy relationships with each other (Henry 2004; Moran and John-Steiner 2004; Sawyer 2003). Many students of organizations argue that trust and formal hierarchical control are inversely related and are mutually exclusive. This approach to trust-control relationships is known in the literature as the substitution perspective (Bradach and Eccles 1989; Sitkin and Roth 1993).
In contrast, the relationship between trust and more subtle control strategies, which are important for conductorless orchestras, is more consonant or harmonious. Although there is no rigid hierarchy in Orpheus, it does not mean that musicians can do anything they want. Instead of being hierarchically constrained, players’ behavior is regulated, in a subtle way, through various external controls, such as core groups and election of artistic directors, and internal controls, such as socialization into organizational culture and self-management. These control techniques are intended to facilitate music-making in the conductorless setting and to help players form positive expectations about each other. Although there are many control mechanisms, players’ freedom is not fully limited, as that would contradict the original principles of chamber philosophy. Orpheus members quickly realized that reliance on these less formal control-based mechanisms is successful only if musicians trust that these limitations are imposed to facilitate creative decision-making and ensure the orchestra’s long-term future. Consequently, trust is a necessary pre-condition for successful reliance on control in an orchestra that has deliberately eliminated a conductor’s position. As such, trust and less direct control mechanisms complement each other because they reinforce one another (Das and Teng 1998).

Moreover, the Persimfans’s story suggests a certain functional division between trust and control that allows organizations to use these two governance strategies in different situations, which also supports the harmonious nature of trust-control relationships. Making a decision collaboratively that should satisfy a hundred players turned out to be a difficult task. Although personal engagement in organizational decision-making allowed players to exhibit their talents and creativity, coordinating such
a large number of musicians on stage and solving logistical problems of running the orchestra without a strong leader proved to be problematic. While trust allowed musicians to go beyond their self-interest by collectively deciding how to play music together, it made orchestra rehearsals very inefficient. Consequently, members of Persimfans decided to rely on the concertmaster’s control during rehearsals but employed trust-based governance strategies during performances. Even though Lev Tseitlin stood in front of the orchestra and gave cues to different musical sections during rehearsals to make them more efficient, he performed with the orchestra as a rank-and-file musician during the concerts. Therefore, musicians had to trust that their colleagues would listen to and play off of each other during performances.

Although there are functional differences in the roles of trust and control, reliance on control may be more effective when trust is also a part of the relationship, and vice versa. Musicians’ readiness to enjoy artistic freedom and experience collaborative creativity, which were grounded in trustworthy relationships among all orchestra members, did not reduce the need to use certain control strategies. Although power in Persimfans was concentrated in the concertmaster’s hands, Tseitlin’s influence was different from that of an orchestra conductor as he never stopped playing with the orchestra. Even though he had more power than other orchestra members, he was more attuned to the needs and interests of rank-and-file musicians. At the same time, orchestra players had more bases for trusting Tseitlin’s abilities to use this power wisely because he was an instrumentalist himself and performed with the orchestra during every concert. This example suggests that trust and control interact with each other by helping organizations build a more effective approach to governance.
To summarize, the analysis of the collaborative approach to music making in conductorless orchestras suggests that trust-control relationships can be both harmonious and dissonant, depending on the type of control. While formal hierarchical control may undermine trust in post-bureaucratic organizations because rules reduce employees’ autonomy to make decisions, as it is the case in many traditional symphony orchestras, less formal control strategies, such as peer-leader’s control or social control, may encourage the development of trustworthy relationships within an organization. Therefore, trust and control can be both substitutes and complements (Klein Woolthuis, Hillebrand and Nooteboom 2005).

**Counterpoint and Duality**

While the supplementary perspective suggests that trust and control are independent and discordant governance strategies, the complementary perspective argues that trust and control can be used together and therefore are interdependent and consonant. Nonetheless, according to the latter, the interdependency between trust and control is only potential because these two governance strategies are typically viewed as being theoretically distinct routes to risk reduction (Das and Teng 1998) and are not always used together. In the case of trust, risks of non-cooperation are reduced because of the existence of certain collaborative expectations from the behavior of all parties involved in a relationship; in the case of control, risks are mitigated because of the existence of a system of punishment for defection and a system of reward for cooperative behavior. Therefore, trust is viewed only as an enabling governance strategy, while control is viewed as a constraining governance technique.
Conductorless approach to music making, however, contradicts this assumption. Trust and control in such orchestras are always used simultaneously, depend on, enrich, and help realize each other, and can both enable and restrain musicians’ behavior. Consequently, the line between trust and control starts to blur, which makes it difficult to understand one governance strategy without looking at the other. Because interaction and social exchange are always two-way influence processes, as suggested by the relational approach to governance, both parties’ actions are affected. While trust and control are responsible for forming positive expectations about our partners’ behaviors, they also influence our own behavior. Orpheus musicians, for example, can trust each other because their behavior is not totally free. At the same time, trust helps reproduce the existing organizational structure and more subtle control strategies.

Moreover, it is often hard to understand whether collaboration is facilitated by trust or by control, which suggests that these governance strategies cannot be fully understood without considering the roles both of them play at the same time. When a good orchestra plays, different instruments blend in together to produce a pleasant aural experience. As a result, we hear not a collection of independent musical parts (sometimes we may not even be able to identify all the instruments that play at the same time), but a well balanced and agreeable composition. As governance strategies, trust and control function in a similar manner. They are always co-present even in situations that seem to be based either purely on trust or purely on control. In a conductorless setting, trust cannot be effectively employed without reliance on control because trustworthy relationships require the imposition of some restrictions on the behavior of all musicians to make rehearsals more efficient. Similarly, the use of control strategies depends highly
on trust musicians have in each other’s abilities not to become too conductor-like while being in a leadership position.

Such an intricate relationship between trust and control is analogous to counterpoint, a musical term that refers to a compositional technique of combining two or more melodic lines into a coherent whole. Good counterpoint has two qualities: (1) each individual melodic line has to be relatively independent from other lines (the so-called “horizontal consideration”) and (2) taken together, individual melodic lines have to create a harmonious relationship (the so-called “vertical consideration”) (Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2008a). A counterpoint analogy suggests that trust and control are similar to individual melodic lines, and a successful governance strategy in a post-bureaucratic organization is comparable to counterpoint. Indeed, trust and control have their unique characteristics and functions and thus can exist independently from one another. Yet, when used together, they make up a complex governance strategy, which in turn reinforces the individual strength of each governance strategy. Therefore, it is the relative autonomy and the practical interweaving of trust and control in post-bureaucracies that make the counterpoint metaphor so appealing.

The closest analogy of counterpoint in sociological theory is the notion of duality, which has been widely used by Georg Simmel and Anthony Giddens. According to Simmel, there is duality of persons and groups. On the one hand, people tend to join various groups, which consist of individuals who share certain interests, by bringing their unique talents to the group. On the other hand, the multiplicity of their group memberships tends to determine their personality, which, in turn, influences their interests and preferences. Therefore, it is impossible to understand individuals’ behavior
without taking into account various groups they belong to (Breiger 1974; Simmel 1955). The idea of the individual-group duality lies at the heart of the musical collective reflexology, which creates the philosophical foundation for the conductorless approach to music making (See the third movement for more details on the musical collective reflexology).

In turn, Giddens argues that to understand social action, one has to take into account the duality of structure and agency, which suggests that the behavior of social actors is not completely determined by social structure, but at the same time, social actors are not totally free either. In other words, while individuals are constrained by their social environment, they are able to choose the course of action they deem to be the most appropriate under given conditions. For Giddens, structure and agency make up a duality, meaning that they are analytically distinguishable yet closely related parts of social action. Social structure is both the medium and the outcome of individuals’ actions that it reflexively organizes. While individuals are acting within the framework of existing rules and resources, which make up social structure for Giddens, they produce and reproduce institutional practices in the course of their relationships. Therefore, social action and human behavior cannot be understood without looking at both structure and agency (Cohen 1987; Giddens 1979).

A contrapuntal approach to governance in conductorless orchestras is based on the following three assumptions:

- Trust and control help create and maintain one another.

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While Möllering’s (2005) duality approach to trust-control relationships suggests similar ideas, the counterpoint approach is more nuanced in that it differentiates between types of trust and control and assumes that these two governance strategies can both enable and constrain individuals’ behavior.
• Reliance on both trust and control helps organizations deal with the negative consequences of each individual governance strategy. Each is the fallback for the other when problems are encountered.

• Regardless of the closeness between trust and control, they cannot be reduced to one another.

First, trust and control in conductorless orchestras help create and maintain each other. Behavioral and output control strategies, for example, depend on all three types of trust. Core groups in Orpheus can perform their function only if musicians are confident in their own professional skills and abilities to interact with colleagues (self-trust), trust core members’ competence (musical trust), and believe that core members work in the interest of the whole orchestra (interpersonal trust). Although core groups limit musicians’ freedom, Orpheus members still have to trust that every musician will be professional, creative, and willing to take personal responsibility for the entire score. If they did not trust that core groups work in the interest of the whole orchestra, core groups would not have survived. Musicians would have simply felt that core groups were a collective alternative to the conductor’s ultimate authority in the orchestra and would be unwilling to go along with them.

Similarly, output control requires trust. In Persimfans, orchestra players had to have high levels of trust in their concertmaster who objectively had more power. They were willing to give up some of their rights and freedoms to voice their opinions during rehearsals and voluntarily accepted the final decisions made by Lev Tseitlin because they wanted to save time during rehearsals. Their readiness to accept their concertmaster’s decisions was facilitated by musical and interpersonal trust they had in him.
The development of interpersonal and musical trust, however, requires input and social control. The existence of gate-keeping mechanisms reduces the perceived risks of relying on new musicians. Players’ trust in the benevolence and professionalism of their colleagues is facilitated by a careful selection of new players. In Persimfans, it was one of the main duties of Tseitlin, who hand picked only the best and the brightest conservatory students and invited the most talented instrumentalists from the Bol’shoy Theater’s orchestra to perform with Persimfans. In Orpheus, a personnel manager performs the gate-keeping function. The personnel manager, who is a full member of the orchestra, is responsible primarily for the selection of those substitute players who can fit well with the group. Moreover, the behavior of substitute players during the initial stage of their careers is also socially controlled. Substitute players are rarely invited to become members of the core group right away. They are expected to learn the group’s culture first and be able to blend in before formally leading the orchestra. Thus, performing with Orpheus not only teaches substitute players how to be good members of the orchestra but also allows other musicians to form positive expectations about new players.

While trust is facilitated by the existence of control, it also helps maintain the existing control strategies. Trustworthy relationships in conductorless orchestras encourage musicians to control their own behavior. Leadership rotation in Orpheus allows players to learn what it takes to be a leader and a follower, and how different interaction styles facilitate or prevent the development of collaboration. Because civility is so important in both conductorless orchestras, musicians have to control their behavior by making sure they politely express their disagreement with others. They also have to think about when it is a good time to disagree with others because conflicts can easily
become counterproductive. Therefore, by trying to preserve an image of a trustworthy person, musicians actively engage in self-control.

Although I have suggested earlier that output control requires musical and interpersonal trust, it turns out that output control itself helps maintain interpersonal and musical trust. Electing representatives to the board of directors and the administrative team allows Orpheus musicians to have higher levels of trust in the decisions made by the board and the management. The role of these elected representatives is to act as intermediaries between musicians and the management. Musicians feel more confident that their interests will be taken into account when non-artistic decisions are being made because through these elected representatives, they participate in non-artistic decision-making as well. If musician representatives do not like a particular decision, they will let other members know about it and will speak up against that decision.

Second, trust and control in conductorless orchestras help deal with negative consequences associated with each individual governance strategy. Therefore, it is the reliance on both trust and control that helps musicians collaborate with each other in the absence of a conductor. In particular, interpersonal trust allows musicians to cope with risks associated with homogeneity among them, which is an unintended consequence of social and input control. Although it is easier to establish trustworthy relationships among musicians with similar backgrounds, such homogeneity can also lead to the development of concertive forms of control (Barker 1993) and consequently to groupthink (Polley and Van Dyne 1994). Musicians may experience the group’s pressure to choose a satisfactory but not optimal solution to a problem, follow routines without trying to search for new interpretations, or have a selective bias toward information favoring a particular course of
action during rehearsals. In such a situation, musicians trust that no one in the orchestra
gives in to the group’s pressure, and that everyone tries to make the orchestra’s
performances as good as possible.

Control also helps musicians deal with the negative aspects of relying on trust.
Having high levels of trust in others can lead to the development of “blinker ed vision”
that restricts our interpretations of others’ words and actions (Jones 1996). Trust has a
strong affective dimension, which helps a subject of trust cope with potential uncertainty
of interpersonal relationships. For example, if there is an unresolved interpersonal or
artistic conflict among Orpheus musicians, they may carry it over to the next series of
rehearsals and performances. Such a conflict may lead to musicians’ distrust and
consequently may reduce rehearsals’ effectiveness. If musicians no longer trust each
other, they will have negative expectations of each other, be unwilling to cooperate, and
will likely discount any cues or signs that contradict their expectations. To prevent long
lasting conflicts, Orpheus rotates its roster of musicians every concert. Literally, those
musicians who perform tonight may not play together for a year. Such membership
fluidity helps relieve any tension that has been created during rehearsals. Therefore, input
and behavioral control strategies help reduce negative consequences associated with
reliance on musical and interpersonal trust.

Besides, reliance on trust alone is rather inefficient. At first, both conductorless
orchestras needed numerous rehearsals because all musicians wanted the whole orchestra
to try their ideas. Persimfans, for example, had nine rehearsals for its first concert!
Originally, trust in Orpheus was achieved without reliance on hierarchical control
because musicians developed trustworthy relationships through open communication,
which enabled participatory and creative decision-making. Yet, the democratic decision-making that Orpheus currently uses assumes reliance on self-control and is facilitated by behavioral control. Rotational core groups allow Orpheus to save valuable rehearsal time and make rehearsals more orderly. In Persimfans, which was a much larger orchestra compared to Orpheus, trust could not be used effectively without control. The collaborative performance of 100 musicians required effective centralized coordination at least during rehearsals, so that musicians could be more confident in their colleagues during performances, where the orchestra performed without anyone at the podium.

Third, although the line between trust and control in conductorless orchestras starts to blur, these two governance strategies are theoretically distinct and mutually irreducible concepts. Having core groups does not necessarily mean that all orchestra members automatically behave benevolently and can always suppress their true emotions and egos when someone rejects their suggestions. Musicians always have the possibility to go against the group or act selfishly. That is why trust is still necessary even in the presence of various control mechanisms.

Analyzing trust and control separately is particularly important in the case of self-trust and self-control. These two governance strategies are both crucial for establishing well-balanced relationships between individual musicians and their orchestras. Regardless of the similarities between them, self-trust is about confidence in your own musical and interpersonal skills that helps musicians protect their artistic egos when others disagree with them, while self-control is about monitoring your own behavior while dealing with colleagues, which helps musicians identify the boundary between constructive and counterproductive conflicts.
Moreover, although it may seem that trust in conductorless orchestras is used as a mechanism of social control (Ouchi 1977) because it promotes norms of mutual obligation and creates a set of expectations shared by all musicians (Zucker 1986), trust should not be reduced to a form of social control. If that were the case, high levels of trust would not require various organizational control strategies and would allow both orchestras to function under the assumption that every musician is able to adequately control her own behavior. In Persimfans, there would be no need for Lev Tseitlin to stand in front of the orchestra during rehearsals to coordinate different musical sections. In Orpheus, there would be no need to have rotational groups and elected representatives on the board of directors and the managerial team to achieve artistic and managerial coordination. The feeling of empowerment that musicians in both orchestras experience as a result of reliance on trust would be enough to perform the function of coordination. This, however, did not happen either in Persimfans or in Orpheus.

An important characteristic of a contrapuntal approach to governance is that it does not invalidate the substitution and the complementary perspectives. By using the counterpoint analogy and differentiating between various types of trust and control, it is possible to find empirical examples where the emphasis is placed more on some form of control than on trust and vice versa, to support the assumption that trust and control can be both in dissonance and in harmony, and to show how the emphasis on control or trust may shift over time. Musically speaking, dissonance is an integral part of counterpoint. Dissonant moments in the music create a pleasing tension that feels like it must be resolved. Consequently, the presence of such dissonant moments adds dynamism to a musical composition. To create counterpoint, composers can follow a number of different
strategies. They can start from one melodic line and then superimpose other lines that are different rhythmically. They may have one primary melodic line and then add another supporting line. They may even mix different instruments or voices (Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2008a).

To return to governance in conductorless orchestras, while the counterpoint analogy suggests that trust and control are both used in Persimfans and Orpheus, it does not assume that these governance mechanisms are equally important for all post-bureaucracies. In contrast, the examples of these two conductorless orchestras demonstrate that the relative importance of trust and control can vary from one organization to another. While Persimfans has a more control-dominated governance where trust performs only a supporting role, Orpheus uses a more balanced approach. Although trust and behavioral control were in dissonance in the early years of this orchestra, they became more harmonious after core groups were implemented. Indeed, originally trust performed a title role, while control performed a secondary role. Later, however, trust and control formed a duet in Orpheus, where the roles of both governance strategies became equally important.

The Orpheus’s example also illustrates the major principles of a fugue, or a type of contrapuntal compositional technique where several melodies, often in different ranges and keys, enter in succession and systematically imitate a principal theme. A fugue is often viewed as the most fully developed technique of imitative counterpoint (Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2008b). Analyzing governance in post-bureaucracies by using a fugal9 analogy can provide interesting insights into how trust-control counterpoint is formed. In post-bureaucratic organizations, trust and control do not form

9 Fugal is the adjectival form of “fugue.”
counterpoint right away. Such organizations may start from either governance strategy alone and then add another strategy later in an attempt to achieve a more successful approach to governance that consists of a mixture of trust and control. In the next section, I explain how trust-control counterpoint can be created by using the example of different conducted orchestras.

**Institutionalization of Trust-Control Duality in Conducted Orchestras**

Even though conductorless orchestras are unique in their approach to music making, some conducted symphony orchestras have also realized the value of close collaboration between all orchestra members but choose different routes towards creating the trust-control counterpoint. The experience of some European symphony orchestras can illustrate how this process can start from trust-based governance, while the experience of some American orchestras illustrates how largely control-based model can transition to a mixture of trust and control. In this section, I describe the experiences of three European self-governing symphony orchestras (the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (VPO), and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO)) and two American self-governing orchestras (the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (CSO)).

There are two primary reasons why trust originally performed the title role in European orchestras, and control dominated American orchestras. First, while the largest American orchestras are primarily funded by private donations (on average, 39% of the annual budget) and concert income (31% of their budgets), European orchestras benefit more from government support and earned income from ticket sales and tours. The BPO, for instance, receives half of its annual budget from the city of Berlin and another half
from ticket sales and concert tours. The LSO receives 40% of income from tours and recordings, one third of its budget from the government, and 10% come from regular concert ticket sales. The VPO presents a different story as income from its concerts and tours covers 100% of the budget (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004a). Second, American orchestras tend to invite community members who have corporate connections to their boards and thus can attract financial resources to the orchestra. Although some orchestras have musicians as board members, orchestra players never constitute a majority of the board. In contrast, European self-governing orchestras tend to have boards that are typically dominated by musicians. Because the above-described European self-governing orchestras are able to either fund themselves through ticket sales or receive government assistance and because their boards consist largely of orchestra players, their members can focus on artistic issues and discuss problems that are directly related to the process of music making instead of trying to please their sponsors, which is an important task for American musicians.

*The London Symphony Orchestra:* To overcome the conflict of interests, which can hinder the development of trust (Lewicki, McAllister and Bies 1998), and to facilitate the intra-organizational cooperation, the LSO has elected a musician majority on the board, has appointed a former orchestra violinist as its managing director, and has made its principal conductor responsible only for those concerts that he conducts personally. These atypical for the orchestral world arrangements are meant to ensure that musicians’ interests are a top priority in the LSO. The managing director performs a crucial function in this orchestra because he is the leader of the orchestra who “sculpts the orchestra’s strategic direction” but has to reconcile the principles of a self-governing organization
and artistic interests of players with the business pressures of running the orchestra (Lehman 1999: 11). Clive Gillinson, the former managing director of the orchestra, was able to establish trust with the orchestra players through “frequent reports to the membership and an open office door [policy]” that enabled the LSO to take artistic risks and be different from other London orchestras (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004a: 40). Nonetheless, Britain’s Charitable Commission, which oversees possible conflicts of interest, is suspicious of the fact that the majority (two-thirds) of the twelve-member board of directors is comprised of paid musicians. Because several other self-governing orchestras in London now have non-musicians majority on their boards, it is possible that the LSO will have to make the same move. Having more community members than musicians on the board may shift the balance of power in the orchestra, which will consequently move the orchestra more towards the middle of the trust-control continuum (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004a).

*The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra*: Another example of the institutionalization of trust-control duality is the VPO. This is a cooperative European orchestra where musicians equally share the responsibilities for the quality of the final product. Although it is a part-time job for all its members who are employed full-time by the Vienna State Opera (VSO), this orchestra is fully funded by earned income from its subscription series of 25 concerts a year, festival appearances, and recordings. The VPO does not have an artistic director; its musicians make all artistic decisions and invite selected conductors to lead the orchestra. While there is an operating committee of twelve elected musicians that is responsible for the orchestra’s day-to-day operation, the head of this committee and another member, who has the title of business manager, are the leaders when it comes to
hiring conductors and choosing the repertoire. Nonetheless, the whole orchestra, through voting, makes all major decisions, including tour and personnel issues. As an example of a pure cooperative, the VPO has to make all decisions through majority rule. In such a situation, it is easier to achieve an agreement if orchestra members are similar to each other because this perceived similarity facilitates the unanimity of the decision-making process.

Indeed, the VPO is a highly cohesive group of musicians that closely protects its ranks and organizational culture by having an elaborate system of auditions, which is an example of reliance on input control. First, musicians have to become members of the VSO, and then they can join the VPO. To become a member of the VSO, musicians go through a formal audition process. Those who eventually join that orchestra are placed on a two or three year probation period with Vienna Philharmonic, which illustrates the importance of social control mechanisms. In the end of that period, musicians vote about a potential new player. According to the orchestra’s principal trombonist, “what the VPO’s members seek is ‘someone who will fit into the tradition and style of the orchestra in the same way that his or her predecessor did. They are looking for a single piece in a very big and complicated jigsaw puzzle, someone who is going to fit that empty space perfectly’” (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004a: 40). To some extent, musicians’ personality becomes more important than their professional skills. Reliance on input and social control mechanisms help the VPO establish trustworthy relationships and facilitate collaborative decision-making. Even though the use of control mechanisms enables musicians to come up with consensus-based decisions and facilitate trustworthy relationships among them, such concertive forms of control that are based on
collaboration among the members of self-managing organizations tend to further constrain rather than free musicians (Barker 1993). As a consequence of being such a close-knit group with a set of norms and behavioral standards, musicians of this orchestra, at least up until recently, have excluded women from their ranks.

*The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: The BPO is yet another example of a self-governing European orchestra that has recently gone through structural changes. Although it was originally founded on the idea that orchestra players are its principal shareholders and stakeholders who have the ultimate responsibility for the fate of the organization, the BPO had to modify its organizational structure in 2002 to deal with the financial difficulties caused by the threat of reduction in government funding. Consequently, the orchestra became “a foundation of public law” (The Berlin Philharmonic Foundation). This new organizational structure allows the orchestra to benefit from both the public and private funds and helps individual as well as corporate donors navigate a complex national tax structure that does not support private donations. As a result of this change, the Berlin Philharmonic Foundation has a board of trustees that consists of civic as well as political leaders, musicians, and community members. Besides having a board, there is a four-member foundation committee that is made up of a general manager, an artistic director (principal conductor), and two orchestra players who are responsible for personnel and general membership issues (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004a).

One of the most interesting aspects of the BPO’s self-governance model, however, is the way artistic directors are appointed. In contrast to the majority of symphony orchestras where musicians have no or a limited say in choosing their
principal conductor, starting from 1989, the Berlin Philharmonic’s musicians are able to select their own leader. Claudio Abbado was the first artistic director chosen solely by musicians. He was succeeded by Simon Rattle in 2002. To choose a new principal conductor, musicians have to be physically present during the voting. A two-thirds majority is required for a new leader to be elected. Such a system is largely based on the trust musicians put in their conductor. Yet at the same time, they have the right not to reappoint this person. Says one of the orchestra’s players:

This is a strange beast. We are an obstreperous bunch. Think about it: we elect our own music director democratically and then give him enormous authority. But we may also fight him along the way. We are fiercely independent, but we tolerate our conductors. How can they (music directors) live with this? Not all conductors can deal with this. It’s like the Roman consuls. They were given dictatorial power for two years and then were out. Not many conductors can handle this duality/dichotomy. (Lehman 1999: 17)

The trust-control duality in the BPO is grounded in its democratic principles. Democracy, however, cannot make everyone happy. Musicians in a minority group need to control their emotions and be willing to go along with the majority. As another musician put it, “good people often have strong personalities. Sometimes it would be easier to have people who would just go along. But all we need is a majority and the other 49 percent can be upset. This is a democracy” (Lehman 1999: 20). Self-control is necessary for the democratic decision-making as it enables musicians to trust that the decisions that they may not support personally but the ones that get the majority’s support will be ultimately good for the orchestra as a whole.

In contrast to these European orchestras, American orchestras cannot be purely self-governing organizations or cooperatives by definition because they do not receive financial support from the government to the extent that their European counterparts do
and thus have to depend on the ability of their managers and board members to attract financial resources. Consequently, American self-governing orchestras have to please their sponsors who want to have a say in how their money is spent. Historically, however, American orchestras have been attracted by the cooperative model that fits well with the ideals of participation that are characteristic of American society. Even the oldest professional American orchestra, the Philharmonic Society of America, now known as the New York Philharmonic, has been a cooperative for over 60 years. Its concertmaster took the musical leadership position, but the concerts proceeds were equally divided among all members of the orchestra. Nonetheless, in 1909, musicians decided to follow a more widespread trusteeship model that their major competitors such as Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago orchestras were using.

The financial difficulties many American orchestras experienced in the end of 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s forced some of them to search for alternatives to control by a community-based board. Orchestras that experience financial crises are more likely than those whose finances are intact to involve musicians in organizational decision-making (Judy 1996). In an American context, musician participation refers to their inclusion on the board, artistic and personnel committees, and music-related community and fundraising activities. Oftentimes, however, musicians are required to sacrifice some of their salaries to be able to influence organizational decision-making: musicians receive lower salaries but are allowed to elect their representatives to the board (Harmony 1997). Two prominent examples of orchestras that engage their musicians in organizational and artistic decision-making as a result of financial problems are the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. Therefore,
American quasi-cooperative orchestras can illustrate the process of institutionalizing trust-control duality that shifted away from largely control-based governance strategy.

*The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra*: The LPO example shows how this orchestra transitioned from purely control-based model, towards purely trust-based model, and then decided to rely on both trust and control governance techniques at the same time. The LPO was founded in 1990 after the New Orleans Symphony (NOS), which was a traditional conducted orchestra with a board of trustees and the managerial team, went bankrupt and ceased to exist. About sixty NOS players decided to form a new orchestra based on a cooperative model. Originally, musicians of the LPO fully owned the orchestra and its $4 million budget, “possess[ed] all the beneficial interest in the nonprofit corporation,” and did all the work themselves (Harmony 1999). Besides performing on their instruments, orchestra players took on the roles of the board and staff members. Musicians were excited about their new responsibilities and ownership of the orchestra. They felt a sense of relief from the burden imposed by a traditional organizational structure that reduces players’ input to solely performing on their instruments.

Nowadays, however, the LPO no longer uses the term “cooperative” and instead prefers “collaborative partnership” as it better depicts organizational realities of the orchestra. Soon after establishing a new orchestra, the LPO musicians hired a secretary to answer phone calls and to take care of the office duties when musicians were rehearsing. They invited community members to join their board to help with fundraising and recruited an executive director to assist in running the orchestra because they wanted professional advice in those aspects of running the orchestra where they did not have
much experience. Theoretically, the LPO is no longer a cooperative because community members make up about two-thirds of the board. Nonetheless, musicians still own the orchestra, which allows them to vote the board in and vote it out if need be. Musicians’ control over the board requires constant collaboration, trust, and information sharing. Consequently, musicians tend to spend a lot of time in various meetings to be able to find compromises with community board members instead of going through “rancorous labor-management issues” (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b: 33).

Similarly, musicians of the LPO have collaborative relationships with their music director who has a lot of influence on musicians but acts a participatory leader and tends to respect their opinions. As the orchestra’s executive director recalls,

> It happened last year, for example, that in setting the concert schedule, he [the music director] wanted to program several things, all of which were wonderful, and many of which we simply couldn’t afford. There is no way that the musicians or I would allow that to happen, and we explained that to him and said, “what do you think?” And he agreed that two out of three was better than nothing. (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b: 34)

Such collaborative relationships among all members of the orchestra require trust, which helps them listen to each other and be willing to change their opinions during decision-making.

*The Colorado Symphony Orchestra:* The experiences of the CSO are, to some extent, similar to those of the LPO. Formed in 1989 as a result of the Denver Symphony Orchestra’s bankruptcy, the CSO is an example of collaborative relationships not only among musicians and the board members, but also between players and their music director. Musicians tried to make all decisions themselves but soon realized that it is a difficult task to do without outside assistance. Thus, they decided to include community members into the decision-making structure, which is typical for most American
orchestras. Even though musicians cannot vote out community members of their board, they are widely represented on the board. Besides performing on their instruments, eight orchestra musicians serve on the board of trustees. The relationships between board members and musicians are very close. According to Marin Alsop, the Music Director Laureate of the orchestra, “there is a quality of inclusion and family dynamic there that is unusual. They’re all friends; the board members all come backstage at the intermission. They appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from musicians about what’s going on” (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b: 35).

The orchestra also has a president and a CEO, Douglas Adams, and a chairman, Kevin Duncan. Douglas Adams, who used to occupy the chairman’s position in the past, has a collaborative management style that fits well with organizational culture of the orchestra. Although he admits that organizational decision-making in the orchestra is not always quick as it takes place within the committee setting, multiple committee meetings ensure that the information is widely disseminated among all members of the orchestra (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b). One of the biggest challenges the CSO experiences is the potential burnout of musicians who have to perform multiple roles in the orchestra. On top of performing on their instruments, many orchestra musicians are constantly making difficult administrative, budget, and personnel decisions as members of various governing committees. In such a situation, it is important to find the right people who are eager to put extra effort and have the required skills to do so.

One of the most interesting aspects of the CSO, however, is its ability to couple behavioral control with trust. Besides having a CEO, a board, and a chairman that value musicians’ participation in the decision-making, this orchestra was formed under the
artistic leadership of Marin Alsop, the music director who supports the participatory leadership model. As a democratic and collaborative leader, she fully understands the benefits of musicians’ input in artistic decision-making: “I think that there are tremendous advantages in having the musicians involved. They feel much more rewarded through their involvement and I sense a vitality in their participation” (Pollack 1996: 45-46). By inviting musicians to participate, however, she does not feel powerless. It is true that the music director gets only one vote during the voting process in the CSO, but the real power of the artistic leader in a participatory orchestra lies not only in her ability to negotiate and avoid conflicts with players, but also in trusting players by allowing them to experience their creative freedom. According to Alsop, “…successful conductors need to give the musicians room to do what they do best and not restrict them” (Pollack 1996: 48).

Marin Alsop is willing to trust her players’ expertise in performing on their musical instruments because she understands that without players an orchestra cannot perform. At the same time, however, she controls the long-term artistic vision of the orchestra. According to Alsop, in a cooperative organizational structure, “[w]hen everyone is equalized, everyone is an expert. The musicians really are experts, but in my opinion, they are not quite experts in music directorship. Every musician has a vision of what he or she would like the orchestra to be and every vision is different” (Pollack 1996: 45). Nonetheless,

[have never had a real opportunity to suggest repertoire for the Denver Symphony, she says, players at first eagerly offered up their personal favorites for consideration – without an overarching vision for the season, a sense of how each program might flow, or any consideration of what might sell tickets…. ‘I finally evolved a system that worked for me. I proposed my basic program, leaving a lot of holes’ for discussion. Meanwhile, the musicians on the artistic committee
became the conduit for repertoire ideas from the rank-and-file. (Whiting, Wagner and Ward 2004b: 35)

Maestro Alsop’s innovative approach to programming has earned the orchestra the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Award for Adventurous Programming six times since 1996.

This music director clearly realizes that she has the right to formally control her players because of her position in the orchestra, but she chose a mixture of trust and control in her relationships with musicians as trust is a crucial aspect of that orchestra’s culture. By providing an overarching artistic framework, Alsop enjoys the dialogue with musicians and values their input in artistic matters. They are experts whose talents should be used fully in a collaborative orchestra. Says Alsop,

Our job as conductors is to get the musicians to be interested, intrigued, and inspired by our commitment to the composer, but we’re not the ones making the sounds. Somehow, by our words and gestures, we are trying to get musicians to play a certain way. That requires complete, total respect for one’s musicians. I think if you have that respect, you will have a collaborative venture. (Pollack 1996: 47-48)

Alsop’s philosophy supports the contrapuntal approach to trust-control relationships in that it shows that this music director clearly understands that her power over musicians will benefit from her ability to build trustworthy relationships with musicians and involve them in artistic decision-making. By being a pragmatic leader, she is not afraid to admit that instrumentalists collectively have more knowledge and expertise in technical aspects of making music than she does. Alsop benefits from her players’ talents, gives them freedom to make certain artistic decisions and yet controls the overall artistic direction of the orchestra.
Contrapuntal Governance and Conductors’ Power

Even though I analyzed trust-control relationships in rather unconventional orchestras, the logic of the contrapuntal approach applies to traditional symphony orchestras as well because they both share the same goal. They want to be on top of their game and be able to give outstanding performances. Although conductors tend to dominate their instrumentalists in attempt to reach these goals, there is a growing number of baton-holders like Maestro Alsop who have come to realization that collaborative approach to music making can be advantageous even in a traditional symphony orchestra (Pollack 1996; Virkhaus 1997; Zander and Zander 2002). Because music is expressed only through sound, the sound is produced by instrumentalists, not by conductors. Conductors are not as powerful as one may think because the actual determination of the expression of the music lies in the instrumentalists’ hands. Conductors can teach, inspire, ask musicians to play in a certain way, but baton-holders are totally dependent on players’ willingness to follow them (Barenboim and Said 2002). When musicians realize their power, they may no longer feel that they are only following conductors’ orders, but are an active and creative part of the process of music making.

Relying solely on hierarchical control in orchestras is not a very effective governance strategy. Control is successful only if conductors fully understand all the peculiarities of music making. But they rarely do so. For example, even though all conductors know how to play at least one musical instrument, it is hard for them to know the details of performing on all instruments. Thus, conductors cannot control musicians in this respect. Consequently, baton-holders have to respect and trust their players’ knowledge and skills when it comes to instrumental performance (Faulkner 1973). As
one Orpheus flutist put it, “no conductor ever told me how to play a solo. It does not happen. I have played the principal in the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and no one really told me how to play a solo” (Laura, 03/15/2006).

Conductors should not be afraid to lose control if they decide to rely on and trust their instrumentalists. Giving up some control voluntarily does not necessarily mean losing it. Research shows that if managers encourage employee involvement in the decision-making, they can treat trust, performance information, and incentives as substitutes for formal control (Spreitzer and Mishra 1999). In other words, trust in subordinates allows managers to reduce their perceived vulnerability and risks (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995); performance information acts as a form of output control (Eisenhardt 1985); and rewards that are tied to performance act as incentives, which are likely to help align employees’ interests with those of an organization (Miles and Creed 1995).

Indeed, great conductors never lose their power and control over the orchestra, but they make musicians believe that they are free to express their creativity. Leonard Bernstein, a famous American conductor, was able to replace a dictatorial leadership style with a more conciliatory and collaborative one that made his musicians experience more freedom. As one composer put it,

He [Bernstein] managed to convince his players they were free to innovate and express themselves, while convincing them to accept his vision for the music and to follow his direction. When that happens, the results can be magical. When it doesn’t …, many a conductor-orchestra relationship has been fatally wounded by a lack of respect on one side of the podium or the other. (Greenberg 2000)
Bernstein, like other participatory leaders, was able to control the overall interpretation of music, but allowed musicians to play their instruments as they deemed appropriate.

When conductors trust their instrumentalists, they become dependent on the players’ good will and readiness to cooperate during rehearsals and performances. Such trust is partly enabled by the fact that baton-holders realize that it is also in the interest of musicians to give a great performance because players’ own reputation is at stake. Trusting players’ technical competence, however, increases conductors’ vulnerability and performance risks because baton-holders cannot directly control how musicians execute notes written in the score. In such a situation, conductors, and especially guest conductors, have to act as if musicians could be trusted to know their instruments well, be prepared to play their parts, and be ready to follow the baton.

Musician-conductor relationships are characterized by mutual dependency (Atik 1994) because players also rely on conductors’ abilities to interpret the score, give clear directions, coordinate different musical sections of the orchestra, and inspire instrumentalists to perform well. Players trust that what conductors do is in the service of music even if musicians do not fully share conductors’ interpretations. As one Orpheus musician put it:

Naturally we defer to the conductor’s wishes as much as we can, as long as it is in the service of music. We hope that a conductor is in the service of music…. I like to tell my students that my job is to make any conductor look like the level of Toscanini. I am proud to say I play in orchestras that are able to do that. We take what a conductor gives and hopefully we enhance that without distorting the wishes of a conductor. We all are very respectful to a conductor. We must be because that is simply the protocol we adhere to. (Martin, 02/17/2006, emphases added)

Musicians’ risks are particularly high when they perform with a new guest conductor. They have to act under the assumption that it is in the interest of a guest conductor to give
a great performance because they think that a mediocre performance would not lead to
the conductor’s future engagements with their orchestra. Musicians’ reliance on a
conductor is facilitated by the presence of the score in front of them. If they see that a
particular conductor is doing a disservice to the music, they may decide not to follow his
or her baton. Consequently, if players trust their conductors, it is easier for them to accept
the legitimacy of baton-holders’ power (Cook, Hardin and Levi 2005).

Therefore, great orchestral performances, whether they are conductorless or
conducted, are based on both control and trust that enable and facilitate each other. While
trustworthy relationships between conductors and musicians help players accept
conductors’ power, successful baton-holders have to trust instrumentalists’ abilities to
perform on their instruments. Even though baton-holders’ position in the orchestra gives
them some control over players, conductors should not take it for-granted. Players are
constantly evaluating the effectiveness of their conductors and are always ready to test
their leaders. In such a situation, conductors are often better off winning musicians’
acceptance than trying to dictate what players should do. Such mutual dependency
between conductors and players is facilitated by trustworthy relationships between them.
If a conductor is perceived as being trustworthy, instrumentalists are willing to follow his
or her baton even when they disagree with conductor’s artistic decisions. Players hope
that their conductor would act benevolently and take their interests into account. They try
to bracket the possibility of non-cooperation on the conductor’s part and subjugate their
musical ideas to that of a conductor.
Governance in Bureaucratic Organizations

There is no doubt that orchestras, regardless of their type, are unique artistic organizations. Nonetheless, conductors can be compared to high ranking organizational officials, while orchestras themselves are similar to large bureaucratic organizations that (1) depend on successful coordination of multiple highly-skilled people working on the same project but performing different tasks, (2) compete with other organizations that produce similar goods or services, and (3) rely on employees who work in a stressful environment and whose performance is closely monitored (Judy 1995b). Therefore, if the counterpoint model of organizational governance can be applied to traditional symphony orchestras, one can expect to find examples of other bureaucratic organizations that have started to initiate their own trust-control counterpoint.

One such example is the US Government. Some of its agencies are trying to modify the traditional hierarchical model of organizational governance in an attempt to become more effective in dealing with uncertainty. The US Coast Guard’s low-level, on-scene employees can nowadays over-ride the orders from higher authorities if they think that their decisions can improve the quality of the agency’s response to threats. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Coast Guard decisions concerning the personnel and assets needed for response were made in a more centralized fashion, while the operational command decisions were made on the local level based on the responders’ on-scene knowledge. According to a statement of Stephen L. Caldwell, the Acting Director of the Homeland Security and Justice Issues Government Accountability Office:

[D]uring the initial response to Hurricane Katrina, a junior-level pilot, who first arrived on-scene in New Orleans with the planned mission of conducting an environmental inspection flight, recognized that search and rescue helicopters in the area could not communicate with officials on the ground, including those
located at hospitals and at safe landing areas. This pilot took the initiative while on-scene – an operational principle – to redirect her planned mission, changing an environmental flight to creating the first airborne communication platform in the area. Doing so helped ensure that critical information was relayed to and from helicopter pilots conducting search and rescue so that they could more safely and efficiently continue their vital mission. (Caldwell 2006: 9-10)

In a nutshell, the Coast Guard officials acted like Leonard Bernstein, Marin Alsop, and other participatory conductors who set up the goal and allow their subordinates to choose the most appropriate means of achieving it.

It is interesting to note that flexible and collaborative relationships become more typical not only within organizations, but also between organizations. This is particularly true about the construction industry that has witnessed an increased interest in a design-build method of project delivery. “Design-build is a procurement method where one entity or consortium is contractually responsible for both the design and construction of a project” (Songer and Molenaar 1996: 47). In a design-build method, a client hires a general contractor to build a job. The general contractor then hires both an architect and specialty sub-contractors, both of whom report to the general contractor and make all decisions in collaboration with the general contractor, often on a construction site. Although such close collaboration between the general contractor, sub-contractors, and the architect reduces unnecessary project delays, it requires more coordination and trust among all parties involved in the project.

A design-build type of procurement system also eliminates often-unnecessary layers of bureaucracy that are typical in more popular design-bid-build projects. In a traditional design-bid-build project, a client hires an architect, who designs a project and provides all drawings, and a general contractor, who hires sub-contractors to do the job. Although the general contractor manages the job, it is the architect who has to approve
any changes suggested by the general contractor. The design-build method is known to reduce the overall project time, decrease project cost, reduce the number of claims (change orders associated with design changes), and increase constructability and creativity of the project all because of the general contractor’s early involvement in the project as a coordination force that has direct knowledge of the field conditions (Chan 2000; Songer and Molenaar 1996).

To summarize, the examples of the U.S. Coast Guard and the design-build approach to project management suggest that the rigid hierarchy within and between organizations should no longer be taken for granted, and that even the text-book examples of bureaucratic organizations are trying to be more flexible. Organizational flexibility, however, calls for an input of all employees, which, in turn, depends on successful coupling of control and trust based governance strategies. Used together, trust and control help organizations achieve goals that neither governance strategy can reach in isolation.
**Ending Reflections**

When conductors control orchestra instrumentalists, they are trying to minimize performance uncertainty. By developing a coherent musical interpretation, explaining to instrumentalists how the piece should sound, and coordinating different sections of the orchestra conductors think that they can be fully prepared for a concert and avoid unpleasant surprises of live performances. What conductors do is try to transform unmanageable uncertainty into manageable risks by carefully controlling musicians’ behavior (Clarke 1999). Music making, however, is a very dynamic art. It is impossible to be fully prepared for a live concert because many things cannot be rehearsed ahead of time. When conductors carefully monitor players’ behavior, they limit musicians’ creative freedoms and make them feel as if they were technicians.

To cope with this feeling of powerlessness, some musicians decided to perform traditional symphonic repertoire without conductors. So, how can they achieve coordinated performances without anyone at the podium? Instead of relying on rigid hierarchical control, conductorless orchestras emphasize the role of trust that allows them to embrace performative uncertainty and make artistic and managerial decisions collaboratively. Nevertheless, trust is only a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for successful governance in conductorless orchestras. Besides establishing and sustaining trustworthy relationships among musicians, orchestras without conductors have to find a way to share baton-holders’ responsibilities. This task involves the development of a system of less formal control techniques that facilitate the development of trustworthy relationships and allow musicians to experience creative freedoms without turning conductorless orchestras into organizational disaster.
As governance strategies, both trust and control are important aspects of a relationship between two or more individuals who intentionally and unintentionally influence each other’s behavior within a specific context. Trust in conductorless orchestras emerges out of high interdependency among musicians, their familiarity with each other, competence, and commitment to the idea of a conductorless performance. As such, trust helps musicians experiment with a conductorless approach to music making by allowing them to take performative risks but subtly restrains their behaviors at the same time. Because reliance on trust in itself is risky, control techniques used in conductorless orchestras help players build and maintain trustworthy relationships. Similarly to trust, control techniques restrain musicians’ behaviors, but they also allow them to do things that otherwise would be considered too risky, such as leading the orchestra as core group members. At the same time, reliance on control is successful only if musicians have high levels of trust in each other because control does not take their decision-making power away, which means that non-cooperation is still possible.

As a result, the reliance on trust and more subtle control techniques blurs the line between these two governance strategies, which makes it difficult to see where trust ends and control begins. This process is reminiscent of creating contrapuntal music, which involves a combination of different musical voices that are independent rhythmically and motivically but form a pleasant whole. While one voice can dominate another, they constantly refer to and create each other. Control helps create trustworthy relationships by establishing more bases for trust (i.e., careful selection of new players). At the same time, trusting colleagues makes it easier for musicians to accept the decisions made by their peers who are currently in the leadership role. A counterpoint analogy suggests that
in organizations, trust and control cannot be employed successfully without each other. This is not only true about conductorless orchestras that illustrate a post-bureaucratic type of organizations, but also about conducted symphony orchestras that are similar to traditional bureaucratic organizations. Good conductors are not afraid to make themselves vulnerable to the behavior of instrumentalists who are encouraged to participate in artistic and often managerial decision-making. Additional research, however, is needed to test this assumption empirically in the non-orchestral world and to learn how contextual factors, i.e. internal and external organizational environment, can give rise to different combinations of trust and control.

While my study of Orpheus and Persimfans provides interesting insights into trust-control relationships, these two conductorless orchestras are rather atypical organizations. They consist of highly professional musicians who are hand picked for their devotion to the idea of performing symphony music without conductors and certain interpersonal characteristics like flexibility and civility. All their members are highly specialized and therefore cannot replace each other during a concert. At the same time, however, musicians are equal in status in that there is no division into first and second stand players. These characteristics make it rather difficult to find direct analogies of conductorless orchestras because organizations typically use more transparent and open means of recruitment (at least they claim so), have employees who are more or less interchangeable, and are characterized by intra-organizational competition either for promotion, higher pay, or preserving one’s job at the expense of others. The closest analogy of conductorless orchestras may be professional workplaces like law firms and
consulting companies, improvisational theaters, and fashion industry firms, which can also be classified as post-bureaucratic organizations (Heckscher 1994).

Moreover, as exciting as conductorless performance may be for musicians, there are not that many large orchestras that perform without conductors. Even though Persimfans inspired other large orchestras all over the world to try a conductorless approach to music making, none of them survived in the long run. Nowadays, Orpheus has a world-wide reputation. Its success has inspired many smaller ensembles to try to perform without a conductor on a permanent basis. The New Century Chamber Orchestra, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, the String Orchestra of New York are some of the examples of contemporary American conductorless chamber orchestras. All three orchestras, however, consist only of string players and have fewer musicians than Orpheus (17 musicians in the East Coast Chamber Orchestra and in the New Century Chamber Orchestra and 15 in the String Orchestra of New York). Another example of a world-famous conductorless orchestra is the Australian Chamber Orchestra, which also consists of 15 string players. This orchestra, however, employs a traditional governance model with a non-musician board and administrative team, internal hierarchy among players, and a permanent concertmaster who is also the orchestra’s artistic director.

Some traditional American symphony orchestras were also inspired by Orpheus’s success. For example, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, which employs several Orpheus members, gave two series of conductorless performance, but decided to abandon this idea because not all orchestra members were comfortable with playing without a conductor. Arguably, musicians had a hard time switching between the mindsets of a good player in a conducted and a conductorless orchestra. Some of them wanted to be led
Instead of leading themselves. Collaborative music making requires a new set of skills that chamber musicians are more likely to have than symphony players. Listening to and playing off of each other in the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra when it performed without a conductor were complicated by its size and inexperience in dealing with sound delays in the absence of a usual leader. Some musicians did not like to spend more time rehearsing without a conductor and just wanted to have someone to tell them what to do.

Clearly, performing without a conductor in a large group is not easy: rehearsals are inefficient, interpersonal relationships are often strained, and performative risks are very high. Conductorless performance does require musicians’ commitment and high levels of professionalism. Persimfans’s and Orpheus’s experiences show that the following five characteristics are likely to help an orchestra that wants to try a conductorless approach to music making achieve a long-term success:

- First, reliance on both trust and control can help conductorless orchestras achieve long-term success. Using both governance strategies allows such orchestras to capitalize on strengths and reduce problems associated with each individual governance technique.

- Second, a successful conductorless orchestra is likely to be relatively small to prevent the development of a rigid hierarchy. Rigidity of an organizational structure was a problem that Persimfans faced even when it tried to give all of its members an opportunity to participate in organizational decision-making.

- Third, a successful conductorless orchestra is likely to be very selective when it comes to its members. Such an orchestra has to select only those musicians who are
highly professional, committed to the idea of a conductorless performance, and are able to give up their individual interests for the sake of a group’s success.

• Fourth, the membership in a successful orchestra without a conductor is likely to be rather fluid. Because interpersonal and artistic conflicts in conductorless orchestras are unavoidable, it is important to have a wide pool of players who are ready to perform with the group. It is the looseness of musicians’ network that can help conductorless orchestras relieve some of the tensions caused by intense interpersonal relationships.

• Finally, successful conductorless orchestras are likely to rotate leadership roles periodically. A system of leadership rotation helps ensure equitable distribution of responsibilities among musicians and teaches all orchestra members what it takes to be a leader and a follower.

As exotic as conductorless orchestras are, the same five characteristics are relevant for other post-bureaucratic organizations that want to achieve success in what they do by benefiting from the talents and skills of all their employees. A contrapuntal approach to governance is important to balance advantages and problems of relying on either trust or control. Using both allows post-bureaucracies to couple agency and creativity with structure and order. The competitive nature of contemporary market forces organizations to be flexible. It is much easier to be flexible if an organization is relatively small. If an organization is small and wants to be competitive, it is likely to be very careful in hiring new employees. Organizations have to ensure that a potential hire fits well with the organizational culture and brings skills and talents that current employees do not have. Therefore, post-bureaucratic organizations are interested in building a wide network of potential employees who are capable of and willing to join the organization
when it needs them. Post-bureaucracies do not assume that their employees will stay with them for a very long time. Because many post-bureaucracies are project-based organizations, they provide only temporary employment to most of their employees. Finally, to be able to benefit fully from the talents of all organizational members, post-bureaucracies have to rotate leadership roles. Leadership rotation sends a very powerful message to organizational members. It says that the organization trusts not only a select few, but all its employees by treating them as being capable and talented to provide high quality organizational leadership.
Appendix 1: Research Methods

I use a qualitative approach to explore the intricate nature of trust and control as well as their relationship in conductorless orchestras. This approach is particularly useful for the study of unique cases because qualitative data allow researchers to develop context-specific explanations. Qualitative methods provide a set of tools to better understand how musicians in conductorless orchestras rehearse and perform without conductors, collaborate with each other, and solve artistic and interpersonal conflicts. Because both Persimfans and Orpheus rely on trust and control, I use them as my cases.

The case study method is particularly appropriate for an in-depth analysis of conductorless orchestras because it provides an opportunity to explore the processes of artistic and managerial decision-making from a perspective of multiple individuals through different data collection techniques and various data sources (Salminen, Toini and Lautamo 2006). Case study is the best research strategy when the researcher asks “why” and “how” questions and has little control over his or her subjects. While there are different types of case studies, I chose an explanatory case study approach for my research because it allows for the development of theoretical assumptions about trust-control relationships in post-bureaucratic organizations (Yin 2002). Building theory based on one or more cases has recently become a popular research strategy among students of organizations (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007; Roussin 2008; Siggelkow 2007)
Case Selection

I used theoretical sampling, which is a purposeful sampling strategy that allows for selecting interesting cases that provide rich empirical data. Theoretical sampling enables researchers to focus only on cases that meet specific criteria and illustrate characteristics or themes that are of a theoretical importance for a given study (Neuman, 2003). I fully understand that these orchestras are not comparable with each other (Persimfans was a large symphony orchestra in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, while Orpheus is a large contemporary American chamber orchestra). My goal, however, is to develop a detailed theoretical understanding of trust-control relationships in organizations, rather than to compare and contrast these orchestras (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007).

Two factors influence the selection of these orchestras. First, I chose organizations with different organizational structures. Persimfans is an example of a large cooperative or self-managing organization (more than 100 musicians) that was founded on the chamber music philosophy and the idea of a conductorless performance, but had a relatively short history. Orpheus is also a conductorless orchestra, but it is much smaller in size (29 permanent musicians) and has existed for more than 30 years. Although Orpheus does have some characteristics of a cooperative organization, especially when it comes to artistic decision-making, from a managerial point of view, it is more similar to a traditional organization with some musician representation on the board and the managerial team.

Second, the analysis of trust-control relationships requires selecting organizations that actually use both governance strategies. Such organizations have to show clear indications of their reliance on trust and control mechanisms. Persimfans and Orpheus
both meet this requirement. Although musicians in both orchestras increase their artistic and organizational risks by performing without conductors, they have also developed a number of control strategies that not only serve the function of coordination, but also help musicians facilitate and maintain trustworthy relationships. Control strategies used in Persimfans and Orpheus, however, are not the same, which makes it more interesting to study two orchestras.

**Data Collection**

To increase the richness of my research findings, I rely on multiple data sources. My study of Persimfans is based primarily on the analysis of documents pertaining to the history of this orchestra. I conducted extensive library research in Moscow and was able to get access to a variety of publications about Persimfans. First, I analyzed the *Persimfans* journal, which was published between 1926 and 1930 by the orchestra and distributed during the concerts. Its functions are similar to those of the modern *Playbill*. A typical issue of the *Persimfans* journal includes a small description of the concert program, notes on the history of the orchestra and its philosophy, short bios of composers and soloists, a list of the orchestra members, a discussion of the original composer’s ideas, the latest news about classical music, and advertisement related to the music industry. In contrast to the *Playbill*, the *Persimfans* also emphasized the educational aspect and tried to explain the orchestra’s values as well as merits of a conductorless performance.

Second, I also analyzed the book, *Five Years of Persimfans*, written by Arnold Tsukker, a member of the orchestra’s artistic committee. This book explains the Persimfans’s philosophy and describes the first five years of the orchestra’s history.
Tsukker used the book not only to highlight the advantages of a conductorless performance and explain the ideas behind three main principles of the musical collective reflexology, but also to attack those who criticized Persimfans. This book, as well as the *Persimfans* journal, are good sources of information concerning the public face of Persimfans.

Third, I also used interview data with Persimfans musicians, which came from *Persimfans – Orchestra without a Conductor*, the book written by Stanislav Ponyatovsky. Although this book was published in 2003, the author was able to collect rich qualitative data about the orchestra’s history by interviewing some of its members when they were still alive. Most of these interviews were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s and are a valuable source of information concerning musicians’ perceptions of and experiences with Persimfans. Musicians talked about their rehearsal process, decision-making, and problems the orchestra faced. This book complements the previous two sources of information in that musicians reflect on the history of Persimfans years after it stopped performing. While they may suffer from recall bias, the time gap allows them to look at the orchestra more critically because they are no longer its members. My inferences about trust and control in Persimfans come primarily from these interviews.

Finally, I carefully analyzed newspaper and magazine articles about Persimfans published in Soviet and US periodicals to obtain information about the public perception of the orchestra and critics’ reviews. In particular, I looked at such Soviet periodicals as *Contemporary Music, Proletarian Musician, Soviet Music, Music Culture, Music, Music and October, Music and Revolution, Soviet Philharmonic*, and *Music for All*. Moreover, I also looked at the articles published in the *New York Times*. While many articles
published in the *New York Times* are about Persimfans’s American cousin, the American Symphonic Ensemble, which was later renamed to the Conductorless Symphony Orchestra, a number of articles discuss and criticize the process of music making in Persimfans.

In my study of Orpheus, I use in-depth interviews with orchestra musicians and managers, observations of orchestra rehearsals and performances, and analysis of documents, which include newspaper and magazine articles, as well as concert programs. In total, I conducted 18 in-depth interviews with Orpheus musicians. I interviewed 11 men and 7 women, 9 string players and 9 wind players, 12 permanent musicians and 6 substitute players. Two of these musicians are artistic directors and two others are board members. One musician I interviewed is also a conductor of another orchestra. With an exemption of one musician, all my interviewees were white.\(^\text{10}\) I also interviewed one manager and had informal conversations with two other managers all of whom were not orchestra instrumentalists. Each interview lasted for approximately 70 minutes, with some lasting up to 100 minutes. I taped and transcribed all interviews. I recruited musicians by using snowball sampling or referrals from orchestra management. During the interviews, I asked open-ended questions about musicians’ experiences, their vision of the Orpheus philosophy and culture, relationships with other players and opinions about intra-group conflicts. I did not ask specifically about trust and control until musicians would mention them (See Appendix 2 for a copy of my interview questions). After each interview, I recorded my impressions, which I later used in the data analysis.

I also observed 10 Orpheus rehearsals and 6 performances. I observed the core group, the full orchestra, and dress rehearsals. Each rehearsal lasted for two and a half

\(^{10}\) To protect confidentiality of my subjects, I am not indicating the race of my interviewees.
hours with one 20-minute break. I also attended orchestra concerts at the Carnegie Hall, Trinity Church, and the New Jersey State Theater. During my observations, I focused on how musicians divided the conductors’ responsibilities, shared leadership roles, solved artistic conflicts and came up with decision-making compromises. I also focused on how new substitute players signaled their trustworthiness and became accepted by the full members of the orchestra. Finally, I paid special attention to control strategies used in Orpheus, such as relying on rotating core groups.

Before I started conducting interviews with Orpheus musicians and observing their rehearsals, I attended six rehearsals of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, interviewed four its instrumentalists (3 of whom also perform with Orpheus) and a cover conductor. Each rehearsal lasted between 3 and 4 hours. I observed how Neeme Järve, the music director, and 4 different guest conductors led the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. During these observations, I paid special attention to how conductors interact with players, present themselves, and run rehearsals. I also focused my attention on how musicians interact with each other.

I decided to begin my study of orchestras by visiting the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, a conducted orchestra, to better understand how music is made in traditional symphony orchestras and what problems musicians face. This orchestra is a particularly interesting case because it employs many musicians who play with Orpheus and it tried a conductorless approach to music making twice in the past, but without much success. I use the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra as a test case for the applicability of a conductorless model to large symphony orchestras.
Finally, my analysis of American and European self-governing orchestras is based primarily on a careful analysis of the articles published in *Harmony*, a professional journal that was published by the Symphony Orchestra Institute between 1995 and 2003. This journal was devoted to the management of symphony orchestras. The journal’s goal was to help symphony musicians, managers, board members, and conductors better understand the complex dynamics and problems that all contemporary orchestras faced (Judy 1995a).

**Data Analysis**

To explain the nature and roles of trust and control, as well as their relationship in conductorless orchestras, I use the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This case-specific research methodology provides a set of tools to better understand how musicians perform without a conductor, solve artistic and personal conflicts, and collaborate with each other. By using grounded theory, I developed a system of indicators of trust and control (See Table A.1), which I later used to formulate assumptions about trust-control relationships in other post-bureaucratic organizations.

Because my definition of trust consists of both attitudinal and behavioral components, I developed a set of indicators of trust based on what musicians told me and what I observed during rehearsals and performances. As a result of a careful analysis of my interview transcripts and post-interview notes with Orpheus musicians, the notes I took during my observations of their rehearsals and performances, and interviews with Persimfins musicians conducted by Stanislav Ponyatovsky, I developed the following indicators of trust: the presence of open communication between orchestra members, civility of interaction, readiness to take risks, ability to listen to and follow other
musicians, willingness to take initiative and express personal opinions, readiness to be personally accountable for decisions and actions, openness to considering alternatives and admitting mistakes.

**Table A.1. Indicators of Trust and Control**

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<tr>
<th>Indicators of Trust</th>
<th>Indicators of Control</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open communication</td>
<td>Presence of organizational hierarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civility</td>
<td>Presence of rules and regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to take artistic risks</td>
<td>Domination of one or several musicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to listen to and follow colleagues</td>
<td>Careful selection of new players</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to be accountable</td>
<td>Election of musician representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of alternatives</td>
<td>Insecurity about expressing opinions</td>
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Source: Author’s compilation

Based on the same data sources, I also developed a number of indicators of reliance on external and internal control mechanisms. I treated such factors as presence of organizational hierarchy, rules and regulations, domination of one or several musicians during rehearsals, careful screening of new players, electing musician representatives to the board and the managerial team, and evident insecurity about expressing ideas as indicators of reliance on control.

**Research Limitations and Future Directions**

My analysis of trust and control is based on a case study of two conductorless orchestras, Persimfans and Orpheus. Because they performed in different countries and at different time periods, I do not have comparable data on both orchestras. While I rely primarily on interviews and observations in my analysis of Orpheus, I use the analysis of documents in
my study of Persimfans. Although unavoidable, the difference in data sources used in the analysis poses certain limitations. For example, because I observed the orchestra in action, I know more about how trust and control work in Orpheus than in Persimfans. While I have to make inferences about governance in Persimfans, I have interview and observational data pertaining to governance in Orpheus.

Moreover, as with any other case study, the results of my research may have limited implications to other organizations because of apparent differences between these two conductorless orchestras and other organizations (George and Bennett 2005; Simons 1996). While the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra tried to perform without a conductor for two series of concerts, its attempts at doing so were not very successful. Besides, there are only a few other orchestras that I know of that perform without conductors. The Australian Chamber Orchestra is a conductorless ensemble, but it uses a traditional governance model with the board of directors consisting of non-musicians, internal hierarchy among players, and a permanent musician-leader who is the orchestra’s concertmaster and the artistic director. The New Century Chamber Orchestra, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, the String Orchestra of New York are some of the examples of contemporary American conductorless chamber orchestras. All of these three orchestras, however, consist only of string players and have fewer musicians than Orpheus (17 musicians in the East Coast Chamber Orchestra and in the New Century Chamber Orchestra and 15 in the String Orchestra of New York), which makes it easier to rehearse and perform without a conductor.

Nonetheless, instead of searching for direct analogies of and parallels between how music is made in Persimfans, Orpheus, and other orchestras, I suggest looking at
conductorless orchestras as a metaphor (Morgan 1980) for an ideal type of post-bureaucratic organizations (Heckscher 1994). As such, Persimfans and Orpheus offer interesting insights into how structure and governance of post-bureaucracies may be affected by their size. Moreover, the literature suggests that the results of my study may hold true not only in other post-bureaucratic organizations, such as self-governing orchestras, but also in more traditional bureaucratic organizations, such as conducted symphony orchestras and government agencies.

Additional empirical studies are needed to test the main assumptions of a contrapuntal approach to trust-control relationships in both conductorless and conducted orchestras, and by extension, in post-bureaucratic and bureaucratic organizations. Further research should also explain how contextual factors, such as internal and external organizational environment, can give rise to different combinations of trust and control. Moreover, my current research is based primarily on qualitative research methods. Although in-depth interviews with musicians provided me with interesting insights into organizational governance, they were rather limited in terms of a sample size. While I stopped conducting additional interviews with musicians after reaching the saturation point where I started feeling that I was receiving the same information from different subjects, these interviews did not in any way represent the opinions of all Orpheus players. In the future, I plan to survey Orpheus musicians to learn more about their perceptions of trust and control. I also plan to survey musicians in conducted orchestras to test the validity of my findings about trust-control relationships in traditional orchestral settings.
Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Orpheus Musicians

1. How long have you been performing with this orchestra?

2. Why have you decided to perform with/join Orpheus? What is so attractive/special about this orchestra?

3. Is it a typical chamber music orchestra? How is it different from other chamber orchestras and regular symphony orchestras?

4. How can you characterize Orpheus with one phrase? Why?

5. What is Orpheus’s philosophy?

6. Have you ever performed with the conductor-led orchestra? Are you performing with one now?

7. Can you please compare your experiences?

8. In your opinion, what is the role of a conductor in the orchestra? Is he or she the boss?

9. Who is responsible for the decision-making in the orchestra with a conductor? How is it different compared to Orpheus?

10. Can you please describe your typical day with Orpheus?

11. How is the orchestra able to perform without a conductor?

12. Who decides what to perform, how to perform, and who is going to perform?

13. Can you describe how Orpheus members come to an artistic consensus?

14. How do you select the repertoire?

15. How do you select the first violin for a piece?

16. How do you select soloists?
17. What happens if someone disagrees with the decision?

18. How often do you rehearse?

19. Is there a division of labor within the orchestra?

20. What is the role of body language during the performance?

21. Do you trust all other musicians in the orchestra? Why? What is the basis for your trust? [This question is asked only if musicians mention trust themselves]
Interview Questions for Orpheus Management

1. How long have you been working for Orpheus?

2. Why did you decide to work for this orchestra? What is so attractive/special about this orchestra?

3. Have you ever worked with other orchestras? Can you compare your experiences?

4. In your opinion, is it a typical chamber music orchestra? How is it different from other chamber orchestras and regular symphony orchestras?

5. Can you please describe the organizational climate in the Orpheus orchestra?

6. How can you characterize this orchestra in general with one phrase? Why?

7. What is Orpheus’s philosophy?

8. Is there a formal organizational structure in the orchestra?

9. How is the orchestra managed?

10. Is there a division of labor in the orchestra?

11. Does the management interfere with artistic decision-making?

12. Who is responsible for artistic decision-making?

13. Why do you think Orpheus musicians are able to perform without a conductor?

14. Are there any artistic conflicts? How do musicians resolve them?

15. How is repertoire selected?
Acknowledgment of Previous Publications

Some material presented in this manuscript has previously appeared in my article entitled “The Complexity of Trust-Control Relationships in Creative Organizations: Insights from a Qualitative Analysis of a Conductorless Orchestra,” which was published in Social Forces, Vol. 86, Number 1, pp.1-22. Copyright © 2007 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

The theoretical framework of analyzing trust as a process that I used in the fourth movement was originally formulated in my article entitled “Trust as a Process: A Three-Dimensional Approach,” which was published in Sociology: A Journal of the British Sociological Association, Vol.41, Number 1, pp.115-33.
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Publications