

MAJOR VISION STATEMENTS 2019 AND BEYOND

A BOARD/STAFF RETREAT TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

SEPTEMBER, 2019

MAJOR VISION STATEMENTS 2019 AND BEYOND

A PERCEPTION OF PRIORITIES

Board members were asked to reflect on a True Concord future that realizes the major vision statements and to place them into a priority for moving forward.

True Concord is performing regularly in regional, summer music festival, and international performances.

- Importance of this initiative to True Concord's future: 40
- Have this initiative underway before the end of this season: 48

The True Concord Board of Directors and staff have been expanded and diversified well beyond Tucson, Arizona.

- Importance of this initiative to True Concord's future: 49
- Have this initiative underway before the end of this season: 39

True Concord is routinely making professional recordings, enjoys frequent radio play nationwide and has received multiple GRAMMY nominations.

- Importance of this initiative to True Concord's future: 53
- Have this initiative underway before the end of this season: 40

True Concord has a permanent home venue (for both performances and administration), recognized as being primarily True Concord's venue.

- Importance of this initiative to True Concord's future: 24
- Have this initiative underway before the end of this season: 21

Facilitator's note: While this was an interesting exercise, I do think the two questions – importance to the future and getting things underway - are distinct. I believe the first reflects how board members see the value of the subject and, to a degree, their ability to see the path to accomplishing the vision. So, while touring rated third in the first question, it rated first in the second question because I believe there is a general sense there is more to be done in terms of organizational knowledge to be able to accomplish it.

SHOULD WE BE REVISING THESE STATEMENTS? ARE THERE OTHERS THAT SHOULD BE ADDED?

In general, the group felt these statements were appropriate, however, by the end of the meeting, there was considerable consensus that a fifth vision statement dealing with True Concord's role in audience engagement and education should be added to the list.

Through the group process and discussion, it appears that the notion of a permanent venue (and what that means) requires further clarification for it to be a higher priority.

Some board members suggested that, although it is inherent in our mission, a vision statement articulating our desired relationship with Southern Arizona audiences should be considered. By including that statement, there would be vision statements to articulate the present and the future.

VISION: True Concord is performing regularly in regional, summer music festival, and international performances.

The touring initiative was a high priority for the board, especially considering that True Concord already has some experience with there-and-back run-out engagements.

What do we need to learn to pursue this goal?

What homework do we need to do?

Learn more about touring circuits.

- Among traditional cultural presenters, what kinds of communities are presenting work like ours?
- When do they present performances? How far ahead do they book?
- Is there particular repertoire that may enhance our ability to secure touring engagement?
- Are there opportunities for us to tour to Mexico?
- Should we be trying to attract an agent?
- Should we be looking at trying to develop a reciprocal relationship with a festival?
- What about churches, schools and community arts councils? Are these potential hosts for us for touring engagements for us?
- What about MIM in Phoenix? Is this a potential engagement for us?

Learn about fee structures that are generally involved in touring

- Do we want to consider any touring that is self-presented? What are the potential risks/benefits of this kind of touring?
- What is the range of fees that groups like us are getting for engagements during the traditional academic year season and/or for being in music festivals?
- Do fees include hotels and meals or just the performance fee?
- Are there sources for grants or other funding specifically focused on touring?
- We need to also learn more about tour budgeting and contract types.

What else we will need to have to support touring engagements.

- What kinds of education and audience engagement activities can we develop to enhance our touring potential?

- What about press kits, advertising copy and imagery, photography (the tools a presenter will need to promote our engagement).
- We will need to make new friends who can help open doors for us.
- We will need new organizational skills sets, such as...
 - o Audience engagement/education: we will need a staff member undertaking these activities locally if we are going to be able to take them on tour with us.
 - o Tour management will be necessary to manage the aspects of touring
 - o Additional production skills to develop our touring technical rider, lighting plot, etc.
 - o Additional fundraising assistance to help us find tour funding.
 - o If we are interested in touring to Mexico, we will need some fluency on staff and and possibly a bilingual website.

Are there further decisions to be made to help us move this forward?

- Are we primarily looking at undertaking more there-and-back run outs or are we looking at multiple engagements further away from home?
- There are many kinds of tours: the there-and-back runouts, overnight run-outs, short regional tours involving more than one location and several nights of hotels; longer regional tours that could involve engagements in several states, festival engagements (often one-offs) and national tours. What kinds of touring do we imagine would work for us?

Are there new relationships we will need to develop to move this forward?

- This initiative ties directly to the initiative about board expansion. Having board members (or satellite boards?) in other communities would likely be an asset for us.
- Are there current fans/friends of the organization who are seasonal residents who might help us in other communities?
- If we interested in Mexico, can we develop a relationship with the consulate?
- If we want to expand our opportunity for run-out engagement though churches or community arts councils, are there current board members or others already in our circle of friends that could help open doors for us? If not, who could help us in these areas?

When could we expect this to be accomplished?

Participants suggested the following:

19/20 Season:

- Prepare and “test” some audience engagement programs
- Develop press kit look and voice (brand image)
- Work on finding opportunities to increase back-and-forth run-out engagements for 20/21 season. (Identify potential communities, do homework on them and make friends that can help.)
- Undertake homework as listed above.

20/21 Season

- Undertake additional audience engagement activities
- Expand the number of run-outs we do and possibly undertake a small regional tour that includes overnights in hotels.

Other comments/questions

Is there a market for local choir competitions?

MAJOR VISION STATEMENTS 2019 AND BEYOND

VISION: The True Concord Board of Directors and staff have been expanded and diversified well beyond Tucson, Arizona.

Issues/Caveats

It is important that we identify the skill sets we need so that we are not just recruiting board members from people we know but getting people we need.

- What will be our process to get someone we need but don't know? Does that person need to be a regular attendee to be interested in being a board member?
- Among the skills needed are good financial skills, fundraising expertise, banking experience, accounting experience.
- When it comes to board recruiting, should we be giving greater consideration to the capacity to donate?

We need to develop board members in places where we are going (or planning to go) with regular run-out engagements.

- Who can help us identify these potential people?
- Would they be board members (necessitating video chat or other tools for our board meetings) or would we create an advisory committee for them?

We need to identify resources that could help us recruit.

- Do we have contacts/relationships at Davis/Monthan, Ratheon, at resorts or other hospitality outlets that could play this role?
- Are there other potential companies/organizations we could look to for help?

If we are looking at engagements along the border or across the border, we need to have the Latinx community represented on our board.

- How many Latinx board members or donors do we currently have?
- How can we get referrals for this specific need?

It is about having the right board member at the right time. With our board positions, we are looking at a nine-year horizon. We need to be evaluating the skills set they bring and be recruiting their replacement well before they term out.

- Could the terming-out board member be tasked in helping us find their skills replacement?

Can we capitalize on our snowbird board members and donors to help us recruit skills we need in other locations?

- What are the skills we seek for our out-of-town board members? Community knowledge? Promotional skills? Fundraising skills? Other? Will the skills priorities change based on the performance relationship we desire in that community?
- If are going to solicit and engage out of town board members, it would be important to have it so that the board member would need to attend in person, possibly twice a year.

In addition to board recruitment, we need to think about staffing.

- Either we have to reconcile that our staff will be short term or we need to create an environment that would encourage greater longevity.
- How can we raise enough money to compensate staff and to provide benefits that would encourage longevity?
- We need Spanish speakers on staff. Translation on our web site would be an asset.

TO-DO LIST

(Note, instead of developing a formal year-by-year timeline, these two groups identified some of the tasks necessary to move forward on this vision.)

Develop a board grid.

- The grid would help us see the roles our current board members play and help us determine the specific skills we need.
- This is an ongoing process. We will always have to work on building the slate.

Review and rework the board manual

We need to formulate an equity, diversity and inclusion statement that is not just a statement but an action plan.

- This would help in moving staff and board diversity forward.

The hardest thing about this is not identifying the skills we need, but the process of actually recruiting someone with those skills.

- Develop and distribute an “Elevator speech” and succinct collateral about being a board member that could help those working on recruiting.

Other related comments:

There is work to be done on the Idea of formalizing the relationship with the musicians. The musicians on the board should be encouraged to be involved in these conversations about board and staff.

MAJOR VISION STATEMENTS 2019 AND BEYOND

VISION: True Concord is routinely making professional recordings, enjoys frequent radio play nationwide and has received multiple GRAMMY nominations.

The idea for recordings would be to have a series of recordings leading up to the 250th Anniversary of Independence. The recordings would collectively be “The America Series”.

What do we need to learn in order to pursue this goal? What homework do we need to do?

We currently have funding to support recordings, but new sources of funding will be required to achieve our recording goals. These will need to be significant.

- Should we develop a distinct fundraising committee for recording?
- How can we encourage others to donate to the recording program separate or above annual gifts? What is the message?
- An original aspect of our recording funding is that we would be able to use this to inspire others to fund us. How can we be more active in this?
- Can we be pursuing funding for this not just locally, but nationally?
- Who among our community leaders could be on board to be the champions for our recording (not necessarily funders). If not a funder, what would we expect them to do on our behalf?

We are in the enviable position of having a label for our recordings, so marketing them falls primarily to them and their connections and resources.

- Considering we can also make money from our own selling of the cd’s outside their normal distribution channels, how can we develop a more aggressive marketing plan?
 - o What local retail outlets might we be able to have our cd’s on sale that falls outside the outlets that our label will have?
 - o Could we equip our volunteers to be an active sales force (especially considering our new CD is holiday music that lots of people would enjoy playing during the season)? What materials do we need to create for this? What about the distribution method for them?

We need to firm up The American Series in more detail so that we are able to describe the concept in its entirety to a variety of audiences.

- How do we incorporate this bigger story into the marketing of the individual cd’s?
- Being able to put an individual CD into a larger concept is likely to be an effective tool to inspire recording-specific donors.

- Will our label consider making this bigger idea part of the marketing and packaging message for our cd's (or does that extend beyond the label's current contract commitment?)
- As we work to develop the message of The American Series we should ascertain how it resonates among our current supporters. (We have the opportunity to get feedback and refine the message.)

Our core constituents (board, donors, subscribers) have a lot to learn about True Concord and recording.

- There is a lot of stuff in Eric's head and we need him to articulate it so that it can be fully shared.
- Why are we going this? What are we trying to accomplish needs to be stated.
- We need clarity on how recording connects to our mission
- How can we effectively communicate about recording as a part of our ongoing activity? Articles in newsletters or house programs? Other ways?

We need to learn more about how the Grammys work.

- Are there things we could be doing that might help our cd's be in Grammy consideration or would we just get in the way of the work of our label?
- Is there anything we can do to promote national play? (e.g. Would it be helpful for snowbirds to be calling their local classical outlet asking them to play it or something like that?)

THE TO DO LIST: NOW

We need to be talking about it now – we need to be promoting a grand scheme for recording, planting the scene where we can.

- Clarify the “why's” so that we can all communicate effectively.
- Firm up and outline the planned projects for The American Series
- With the above in hand, develop an integrated marketing plan for True Concord promotion of cd's.
- Train volunteers to promote cd's among friends, coworkers and family.
- Take advantage of volunteer party, cd release party and other events to talk about the big picture of recording as well as about the current cd being promoted.

We will need to have additional funding in place for recording just a year from now!

- We need to create and empower the recording fundraising committee (a sub-committee of the fundraising committee).

MAJOR VISION STATEMENTS 2019 AND BEYOND

VISION: True Concord has a permanent home venue (for both performances and administration), recognized as being primarily True Concord's venue.

What do we mean by permanent venue? We need clarity.

- Is it a public box office? Office space? production storage? A performance venue? All or some of these? Other purposes? Are some of these higher priority (or of greater value?) to the effectiveness of our current operation than others?
 - o One clear benefit of having an office and box office space is that it creates more community presence.
- Are we assuming that we would no longer do performances at a variety of venues around the community? Would we still do run-outs or would we stop?
- Where would we locate ourselves? What location do we think our audience would prefer?
- Do we have the capacity to raise the kind of money required in a capital campaign?
- Do we want to build something? Buy something? There are a lot of issues to be discussed.

What does it do for us to have our own performance space?

- Will we be giving up some of our loyal audiences by not undertaking performances at locations that are convenient for them? Or will it actually increase participation when there is a permanent location that audiences know how to get to, how to park, where to go for a meal before and after the show, etc.
- For some potential audience members, churches are not the ideal performance venue: we are not a religious group and that space can be a deterrent for some.
- Not having ready access to the performance spaces that we use makes it very complicated to schedule a season.
 - o Guest artists sometimes need to be selected based on availability of a venue rather than on their importance to the artistic work and our artistic growth.
- Would we be looking at a strictly acoustic venue or electronic reinforcement?
- Should we just put more money into the equipment we need to move from place to place?
 - o There are some things we could such as musician's chairs and a portable supertitle system that would also enhance our ability to tour, specially to do run-outs.
- If we have our own venue, does that mean we will be significantly increasing the amount of programming we do? Will we need to entice other groups to be tenants? Would we only want acoustic tenants? Would we be a venue for other genres of music? Other performing arts disciplines?

- What about electronic venues (eg. Live-streaming concerts from Catalina High (listening would have a fee). Perhaps a virtual venue could be our new venue.

Without more clarity, it is difficult to know what we need to learn or to develop a plan and timeline.

- We need to clarify the vision and the options for a home for True Concord
- We could have a sub-committee that reaches out to other organizations in town. Perhaps we could put a group together that could become a lobbying group to try to get a building.
- We should do a cost benefit analysis between enhancing what we do now versus a new or shared hall.
- We should begin getting our radar up for buildings/locations that could become our space. For example, could an empty big box store be converted into office/rehearsal/performance space?

Respectfully submitted,

Lendre Kearns
Facilitator