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Fred Bronstein: Welcome back, everybody, for our third panel today. This is a panel of funders, and I want to bring them on, beginning with Anita Contini, the arts program lead at Bloomberg Philanthropies – welcome, Anita; Ben Cameron, the president of Jerome Foundation – welcome, Ben; and Susan Feder, the arts and culture program officer at the Mellon Foundation. Welcome, Susan, and welcome to all of you. Thanks for being here with us today. I think one of the really interesting things about you as a group is you represent very deep, long, deep experience in the arts. Well, in the funding world and, of course, in the arts funding world as well. As we talk about and grapple with the issues of Covid, a lot of what we're trying to talk about today is long-term impact as opposed to the immediate impact we all know has been devastating. But the long-term impact is, I think, a really important question.

We'll do this the way we did the other panels. We'll do 15 minutes or so, or however long it takes, for us to do an opening question. I would love to get your thoughts on a couple of things. And then we'll do some other questions, have some conversation, and then the last 15 minutes of the hour we will take some questions from the participants. Let me frame this first question for you, which is, "How has the experience of the last year impacted the funding priorities of your organizations, and do you think this will be a framework for what you do in the years ahead and why?" It's kind of a two-part question in a way. And again, asking you to think immediately and then how you see it impacting long term. Anita, would you like to start?

Anita Contini: Sure. Thank you so much for having us here today and for bringing up such an important question. I just wanted to start by saying the number one priority for Bloomberg Philanthropies and many funders has been how to provide immediate and flexible funding to institutions, especially those small and mid-sized arts organizations that don't have access to the same funds that many others do. We've also seen that innovation really starts with small arts organizations because they have the flexibility to take risks and to advance their mission. For us, ensuring the immediate and long-term survival of arts organizations has also been a priority. The culture sector has always had to be nimble and kind of punch above their weight when it comes to finances and resources. Due to Covid-19, there's been many, many cancellations of galas and fundraisers and other revenue sources, and that's made the long-term outlook for many more difficult, especially those that don't have sufficient financial safety nets.

That's a concern because they do not have savings or endowments or business interruption insurance, and the lack of confidence and prepared managers also is an issue. We looked at what we can do to be helpful. I also like to think about what Mike Bloomberg, our chairman, often says - that philanthropy cannot replace the scale of government, but it can experiment and test ideas to prove actually what works. In our arts initiative, we try to fill unmet needs that may have been overlooked, where we can actually bring our expertise to make real issues that are out there and to create real important impact like our arts innovation and management program. This is a program we also called Aim, and through the management training component of Aim we help organizations build expertise and confidence that they need to sustain themselves. During Covid

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this type of guidance has been really important so much more than ever. We put together not only short-term but long-term a number of initiatives. Because there's been such a negative impact on the organizations' earned income, particularly admissions and ticket sales and memberships, we decided to immediately release and distribute multi-year funding through to 2021, and we also created greater flexibility on reporting and how to use those funds.

We launched programs and funds to support institutions, including providing digital tools to our Bloomberg Connects app to help institutions actually stay connected, not only internally to their organizations, but outside their walls to their audiences. And we then decided that it was really important during this time to work with other institutions, particularly other funders, and we've done that in a number of different ways, both with the American Cultural Treasures and the Covid-19 Response Impact Fund which has supported 800 different cultural institutions in New York. We really believe that partnerships are the way of the future, and we think that's extremely important. Just before I close, I want to say that our Aim program really focuses on ensuring organizations have long-term strategies they need to meet the unforeseen challenges like what's happened with the pandemic, and we've been working with over 744 organizations that are small and midsize to help them. In addition, many of these organizations really need to develop, and we've been working with them to develop their long-term strategy plans so that they can make smart decisions for the future. We really believe in partnerships and investment in these organizations. That's immediately what our thought is, Fred.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you, Anita. Ben.

Ben Cameron: I stand in awe to follow Anita and with Susan on the panel as well. I want to begin by saying I'm actually calling from Minneapolis, Minnesota, which is the land of the Dakota and the Ojibwe whose ancestors and descendants are in the past, present, and future. I want to acknowledge and honor, even while I hope all the participants on the call will do a similar acknowledgment wherever they're calling from. I want to say two things. One is, Fred, to the framing of your question, maybe wrongly, I heard a larger curiosity about how funders are changing their priorities toward the arts in this time at all.

And observationally, I would say that for most of the foundations I'm watching, I'm seeing very few shift towards arts funding, not because they don't care about the arts or because they don't realize how important it is, but because the same degree of distress and pain and anguish that we're seeing in the arts, they're seeing in the fields to which they are equally passionately dedicated. It's not about resistance to the art as much as it is a kind of a larger scale of pain that permeates the nation right now that makes shifting into the arts for somebody that hasn't been there a difficult proposition.

The other thing I wanted to just acknowledge at the top is that the question for me about priorities invites a real focus on strategies. And frankly, as a foundation we're the peanut in this

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group. By the time I leave my foundation in several years, I won't have given away in total what Susan has in a year. We're very small, but we've been centered less in strategies than we have in values. And I want to just lay this as a backdrop. In 2016 we challenged ourselves to define what our core values are, the things that had nourished us most in the history of the organization, and that represented the sort of central moral and ethical premises that we would dedicate ourselves to in the future. We said our core values are diversity, innovation, and humility. Now humility for us meant in part that we think the arts community knows more about what they need than we know as professionals. It led us to make some dramatic changes. We reached out to the field. We got 1,200 artists to respond. We got 400 organizations to respond. And based on that kind of shift, we shifted our grants from staff-curated grants to panel adjudication in all cases. We shifted from single-year grants to multi-year grants for artists and for organizations. We shifted from emphasizing project support to supporting sustained programs at organizations who shared alignment on at least one, if not all three, of those values. Our priorities became organizations who could demonstrate achievement, not just aspiration, in either humility or innovation or diversity, if not all three. It shifted already who we funded. Even before Covid and the George Floyd murder, 85 percent of the artists we were funding were BIPOC, 35 percent of the organizations we funded were BIPOC led, and 65 percent of the programs within those institutions were BIPOC led.

It led us to shift the structure of our grants. Every grant in addition to general administrative overhead was allowed to take 25 percent of their grant for gen op. It led us to significant changes in the grant application and, not incidentally, it led us to shift and change how, why, and for what we recruited our board - a shift to recruiting to the board for positions, like we need an arts person, we need a drama person, a theatre person. We now recruit our board for values. We have shifted the emphasis on our board from meeting current problems to when we recruit a board member, we say you're gonna be with us for nine years. What's the board that will call into being the world we hope to see in nine years, not who's going to solve the problems of today. And that led us to shift our emphasis that the board's job is not oversight. It's insight and foresight. It's led us to shift our vision from being funders to being facilitators and stewards of resources. What that's all meant is that in the thrust of these I'd say "triple pandemics" - because I would say racial inequity, I would say Covid, and I would say the deep underlying distrust and division that we're seeing at play in our political system right now - it's been less for us about change than asking the question, how can we lean more deeply into these values? Within two weeks of Covid we had devoted all of our funds to gen op entirely, we had extended our organizational commitments for every grantee by two years. We have now awarded grants to all finalists as well as our grantees. And inspired by Ford and Mellon and others who've said, we're going beyond the 5 percent, we found a comparable pool of money for our resources that's as big a scale as those. And we've said, we're going to spend that over five years, but we're actually going to deliberately spend the bulk of it in years 3, 4, and 5, because we remember that in 2008 when there were special initiatives around the recession those lasted about a year or two and then disappeared before the real problems were solved. We've earmarked that, but deliberately

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delayed the mass manipulation of it in recognition of other initiatives disappearing. The last year, as I've said, it's been more about leaning in. It's a grounding approach that led to really reaffirm our values. But that said, our expectation is that if we hold those values, and if we continue to listen and respond, our strategies have to change even though our values will remain constant.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you, Ben. Susan.

Susan Feder: Thank you, Fred. It's such an honor to be on this panel. I'm calling in from the unceded land of the Lenape and Wappinger in the Hudson Valley of New York, named after Washington Irving. I'm about to violate rule number one in arts philanthropy panel participation, which is never speak after Ben Cameron. You know why. But I will add to that, never speak after Ben and Anita, my two very wise colleagues.

I'll try not to duplicate the things they said. I agree with all of them. For the Mellon Foundation, I would say last year represented an intensification rather than a change in our priorities. In terms of activity, we characterized it as juggling while on a roller coaster. Immediately after lockdown we engaged in our own version of scenario planning where we identified what in our current budget for calendar 2020 we could defer or eliminate to make room for emergency grant making. Right after that, we got permission from our board to convert 30 million of those dollars, I think is what we collected, and got authorization to be able to make emergency grant making - urgent response grants in between our board meetings. What we next did with that was to get permission from our board to convert most of our grants to general operating, which was a first for the Mellon Foundation. Those were just in April of last year.

The board then met and decided, as Ben alluded to, that we should be distributing more than our normal 5 percent. Our grant-making budget last year started across the foundation, not just arts and culture, at \$300 million. Our board committed to an extra \$200 million in grant-making dispersals, and that's where we get to the juggling on the roller coaster. We then moved into our hometown of New York and established with our colleagues at New York Community Trust, Bloomberg, and I think 15 other foundations, the New York City Covid Relief Fund that made both emergency general operating grants and a loan fund that was established with the Nonprofit Finance Fund modeled on a program that we've had with the Nonprofit Finance Fund since the 2008 recession.

We went from there to work with U.S. artists on a collaborative funding initiative, to speak to Anita's point about collaborations, to establish the U.S. Artist Relief Fund which was making \$5,000 dollar grants to individual artists on a weekly basis, I think from June through September when the money ran out. I believe there was \$20 million in that pot, of which Mellon contributed \$10 million. We recognized that fund was supporting artists of national stature, but there were also artists working at the community level that were extremely important to their communities and to the ecosystem. But we're not going to be competitive in that program, so we established

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with our colleagues at National Association for Latino Arts and Culture, the First Peoples Fund, Alternate Routes, PA'I Foundation in Hawaii, and Sipp Culture, who together run an Intercultural Leadership Institute. We established the ELI Fund for individual artists.

Looking across the country at small and mid-sized arts organizations that were really, really hurting and that were not in our portfolio, we worked with the six regional arts organizations that are affiliated with the National Endowment for the Arts, and we created the Regional Arts Resilience Fund. They each received about \$2 million, with this depending on the size of their regions so that they could make rapid response relief funds within their regions. And we asked for organizations that had regional impact, that were punching above their weight, and that were small to mid-sized. We learned that small to mid-sized in New York - which is organizations of under 10 million - were large organizations in most of the rest of the country. So, you speak about humility, and what we were learning, and we got very respectful pushback from the regional arts organizations saying \$250,000 should not be our bottom cap, that there were organizations in the \$25,000-\$150,000 range that were very, very important in their communities and beyond, and that we should be respectful of that. We made grants that were all out the door by September of last year. We discovered for our friends at the William Penn Foundation, that Mellon is the second largest arts funder among foundations in Philadelphia. This was news to us. We just had not looked at the numbers that way. We took their urgent response grants that they ordered in November that amounted to about \$4 million, and we matched that so we were able to make an additional 37 grants within the city of Philadelphia. We did something similar in New Jersey.

That's sort of a panorama within Arts and Culture, some of our use of that \$200 million. And then we proceeded with our quarterly grant-making cycle where our base budget is around \$90 million in Arts and Culture. We were able to do some very significant grant-making there as well. One I'm proudest of is the Black Seed Initiative which came to us from Indira Etwaroo at the Billie Holiday Theater in Brooklyn, who proposed that black theaters band together and create work that would be of, by, and for them to include commission funds, technical assistance, co-production funds, and a pitch to individual donors interested in black theater. We seeded that with a \$5 million grant. They are well on the way to getting to their \$10 million goal, and we hope this will just change the landscape of black theater, which has been neglected for too long.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you, Susan. Anita, were you going to say something?

Anita Contini: I just wanted to mention one thing here. First of all, this is so amazing and it's so great that we all support unrestricted grants. But I wanted to talk really quickly that we have seen many BIPOC arts organizations serving their communities during the pandemic, and they have also become funders. A good example is what's happening in New Orleans with the Ashe Cultural Center. This is an anchor black-led organization spearheading the Pandemic Response Initiative that they've done, and they've really been supporting local artists and creative

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practitioners with over \$600,000 of relief funds. I think it's amazing how the field has also itself stepped up and been helped. I just wanted to bring that up.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you, Anita. I want to prod you all. Obviously, there's a lot of work that's been done by your various foundations to help to shore up some of the immediate needs of arts organizations. What I'd like to ask is – we had a lot of conversations in the last couple of panels about change and the need for change and how that change is taking place in a field that has been largely in many ways change resistant. The question I'd like to ask is, what kinds of changes do you think you'll look for performing arts organizations to be making to meet the future? There are a lot of things we could talk about on this issue, clearly diversity is one of them. And we know that in the world of classical music diversity has been a huge challenge and continues to be a huge challenge. We at Peabody have been doing a lot of work around recruiting black and brown faculty and students and have had many conversations now with Susan about the work that goes on there. But I think that the question is this is change that comes slowly. I think our last panel was a really good example of that, where senior levels of leadership across our industry are not very diverse clearly. That's my question for you, and I'm kind of fusing the question of changes you'd like to see with the diversity question, but it can also be linked with other things as well in terms of how you think about what you do and the community work that you do. I'd like to hear your thoughts on that. Anybody?

Ben Cameron: Well, you know I'll just be totally frank about things. When I'm looking out at the arts organizations that we're in touch with, and indeed, in some of the panel discussions held earlier today as part of this institute, I see two kinds of different mindsets. I see the mindset about how are we going to get through this. How are we going to resume what we were doing before? How do we get back to that thing we've all loved, and we're going to get the curtain up and we're going to do this. How are we going to rehire? And it's really a mindset that's driven by a passionate commitment to an art form and the predominant concern with how do I get that out in the world.

There's a different mindset that I'm seeing now from artists and organizations that are saying, “What is it in the world that my community needs?” They need safety. My community needs housing, my community needs food. My community needs joy, my community needs help. What is in the larger world that my community needs, and how can I attach myself and my organization to those things in which my community is desperate to attach? My sense is organizations that are truly going to reinvest are the ones that are starting from the premise of, “What is it in the outside world that's going to mandate me to go forward?” It's just that it's a different mindset, and in light of that kind of thinking, among the two things I find myself thinking about, number one is “What if we look at this as a moment of opportunity?”

What are we learning in this that we don't want to lose when we go back? We cracked open streaming and internet as the obvious example. What else have we begun to crack open we don't

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want to let go of? How is it we think not just of rehiring - how do we think about it in this moment of restructuring? And for me, I'm starting to think, maybe we really have four kinds of capital. We have product capital; it's the concert. We have social capital of what happens when people come together. We have financial capital. We have process capital collaboration. In our staffs and in our workforce we've segregated people into saying, you specialize in one of those. We have forced our workforce from the very people they serve. We said our administrative people come from 9 to 5. The audience is going to arrive from 8 to 10, and you're never going to see them. As we restructure, what would it mean if we began to hire the workforce to say everybody has a responsibility in all four of those dimensions so you can't just be about the product. You also have to have a stake in social and financial.

It's just a moment that's rife for the asking of questions and for the new self-awareness of unpacking the gospel we've taken to date. This will be the last thing I'll say, but it's really interesting in the earlier panels about extending invitations to people to come to orchestra concerts. I found myself thinking, okay, what are we inviting them to? We're inviting them to an orchestra hall. We're expecting them to come to us. We're bringing them into our lobby where we tell them nothing what we care about. We're going to hand them a program that's page after page after page of fine print of people that have given massive amounts of money and ads for products they can't afford. We're going to shush them when they try to applaud between movements. What are the things that are so ingrained in our culture that we need to unpack? Writ large for me, I'm most interested in who's asked the most penetrating questions and been the most aggressive and intentional about aligning their mutual behavior with their future aspiration.

Fred Bronstein: Anita, Susan, any?

Anita Contini: I would like to bring up another point that we have been really noticing, and that is what's happening in cities, and we've been working very closely with cities across the country and encouraging them to really get involved with the arts sector because we feel we have the opportunity to push that. That's been really amazing, because they're beginning to realize the importance of how arts can actually not only deal with their economy, but it's the spirit and the life of the cities. And I just want to give you one example, actually right in Baltimore, Maryland. There's a local arts organization called the Neighborhood Design Center in the city of Baltimore, and with the John Hopkins School of Public Health got together and decided they needed to do something to help the small businesses. They worked with the Neighborhood Design Center to come up with what they called a Design for Distancing Guide. And what's so amazing about that is that this small arts organization came up with something by working with the local community to really develop a very innovative public program to maintain safety and social distancing within services and including retail and food services. It's this kind of partnership. It's like crossing lines and taking one industry and working with another. I think cities really need to look at the opportunity for how artists can help their communities in a broader way, and we have seen this beginning to happen now. I think it's important to encourage that as we go forward.

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Fred Bronstein: Thank you. Susan, you'll know why I'm looking at you for this question initially. Certainly, you've been interested in this issue of the relationship between the artist and the institution. In the orchestra world we thought a lot about this and spent a lot of time with organizations around this issue. I asked one of the earlier panels this question. How do you see Covid - and not just Covid but the trends that we've been grappling with, generally speaking, both before and post - changing the relationship between arts institutions and the artists they employ, or do you see that changing?

Susan Feder: That's a great question. And I think that the easy answer is that the institution has to want to change, that it can't be forced on it by philanthropy. We've had a number of programs over the years, perhaps most successfully our National Playwright Residency Program. Unlike fellowship programs, which exist in the orchestra world and have existed for 40 years, this places the artists on salary at the institution for a three-year period that can be renewable, so that you get a period of time that will allow for sufficient, I like to say, infiltration and disruption within an institute. But it has to be genuine and the authenticity that comes from it we determine by a jointly crafted proposal that has crafted by the artistic director, the institution, and the artists themselves so that we understand what that relationship is going to be. It really is about relationships rather than transactions. The goal of this program is not a product, although there has to be a commitment to produce at least one play while in the program, but what is the artist going to do by being at the table, and how do you change that power balance. One of the things we've tried to do in that program is not just have a salary at senior management level, but to give the artists some funds of their own so that if they want to have a workshop, they don't have to worry about what the impact on the organization is. If they want to hire other artists to work with, to collaborate, if they want to go on a research trip, they are empowered with that funding. I worry when you put an artist at a table in an institution, whether it's an arts organization, or it's a city government or regional government, that the artist is the immigrant at the table, and they have not been given the skill set to deal with the power dynamics of where they're sitting. It's a complicated answer to a great question.

Fred Bronstein: It is a complicated issue, but I think a really important one, particularly in some parts of our industry.

Susan Feder: I look at the composer residency program back in the 80s, which emerged as I was becoming a professional. And again, those were multi-year residencies and the emphasis was on residency, you had to live in that community. Composers either were of that community or moved to that community. That program over the years has evolved so it became less robust on the orchestra side. We were a longtime funder, and I came to the conclusion a couple of years ago that it had run its course, and that unless orchestras were going to decide that having a composer in residence was as important as having a marketing director, and some orchestras have to their credit - Baltimore Symphony was one of them for many, many years with Chris Rouse, the late lamented Chris Rouse - that there had to be skin in the game on the part of the

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institution. And of course, in a Covid moment, the one we're in when there is no extra money for anything, this becomes harder, but the organizations that believe in this as a value, as Ben has just said, will find a way.

Fred Bronstein: Let me go in a little different direction although related to the community piece. I'm sure you all saw the Brookings study that came out in August, and you know I've referenced it today a couple of times. But there've been other studies, Deloitte did a study, and there are a number of them now. Obviously, the immediate assessment has been it's [Covid] been devastating for the industry as it has been for many industries. One of the questions that that's been raised - I'm just interested to get your take on this - is around one of the statements they make that recovery is going to require a massive infusion of funds into the industry writ large, funding performing arts in order to not just advance it, but just to stabilize it, really. We've all seen the articles that have appeared, there were a couple of articles in The Times, about where that is going to come from. Can there be another WPA type of initiative in this country? Personally, I'm very skeptical of that, not because I don't think it would be a great thing, but because we have no evidence of that level of government support in the last 80 years in this country. How do you see all of this? At Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor Bloomberg, I'm sure, has thought a lot about these issues about government funding, or across any of these organizations. Then there's another part of my question that I'll wait on. What do you think about that? Is that something the organizations ought to make an effort around, or is that just a waste of time?

Anita Contini: I can jump in quickly. First of all, that's such an amazing question and an important one right now. And for us, we really believe, as I said before, in partnerships and bringing people together. I don't think any one institution can solve anything; we seem to be doing so much more when we partner with other foundations and even governments that can make things happen. And I think back about what ArtPlace America did a number of years ago where Jamie Bennett was great at this. He would put the agricultural department in the government together with an arts organization in a rural community to create works of art. It was funded by the agricultural budget, which was a very big budget. I think we need ourselves to facilitate and help to look outside of our own silos to bring people together and to work together. Right now, we've been working in a number of cities and trying to help these cities develop with public art programs.

We have one that's going on now called the Asphalt Art Initiative in which we brought 16 cities together to help develop projects on their streets and in their plazas. We've given them just a small amount of money, but they've been able to leverage that money quite a bit with other agencies within their own community, and that brings the public back together in the public space. We really totally believe in partnerships, because that's the strength of where we can go. As I said before, no one institution and, as you said, our chairman Mike Bloomberg likes these kinds of partnerships and believes in bringing government together to make it happen. And we

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work with cities every single month. We bring city mayors together to have conversations with each other and to learn from each other about how they can work with not only the arts, but with public health and with other issues like the environment. They share back and forth both what's working and what isn't. I think it's important as we move forward to not stay within ourselves, but to talk to others, and as both Ben and Susan said, to listen to the field and bring them in for this discussion so it's not just us talking to each other.

Ben Cameron: I was just going to say, and I think what's important, which we've already suggested in these conversations, is that in making these partnerships we listen to what's most urgent for the people we're speaking with. These aren't conversations about "let's talk to the agriculture department to figure out how they can give money to the arts." It's what is it that the agricultural community deeply needs that the arts can help them achieve. It's in that line about authentic relationships. It was interesting that the big New York Times article people are buzzing about on the WPA framed that as a jobs program. It was not framed as the country needs more art - we have enough art, especially when you take all the streaming and everything - but what's the common cause that leads us to this. And I'll just share one local example people here are finding very powerful and very supportive. Penumbra Theater, which has for more than 40 years been one of the country's leading theaters for the African American artist and the African American tradition, has announced it will no longer be Penumbra Theater. It will be the Penumbra Center for Racial Healing, and then in line with that they are taking on wellness programs and facilitation and mediation. And yes, they will continue to do art, but they are grounded in racially healing a very divided community, and, not surprisingly, many people who thought they would never contribute to the arts are actively and enthusiastically getting on board to help support. It's about partnerships, but authentic partnerships based on common goals and common needs and common values.

Susan Feder: I just wanted to add. Thank you, Ben. Mellon's honored to be supporting Penumbra in that effort. I wanted to raise the point, Fred, of the disproportionate power that foundations yield. According to Giving USA, foundations in 2019 gave 17% to philanthropic giving and individuals gave 69% in philanthropic giving. As devastating as this pandemic has been for artists and first responders and restaurant workers and entertainment industry, it has also shown the income inequality in this country. You've got the stock market, which is not the economy, but the stock market is at all-time highs. I think that we have got to find individuals of wealth to be more generous in funding things that may be less shiny than a big building in a big city and to make connections between individuals of wealth and the communities that we care about that have historically been underserved by philanthropy, whether it's come from institutional funders like us or by individuals.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you for saying that. I think the other thing the Brookings study spoke to was this question of the importance post-Covid - and we've been talking about community for a long time in our field - but the increasing importance of the relationship between artist and

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community. Despite what we say about it, the work of institutions peripherally supports it, but it's not the primary purpose. I would say that most of the major arts institutions do. I'm putting that forward as a premise, which you can agree or disagree with, but it seems to me that part of the question is how do you make it more systemic? How do you make it more urgent for arts institutions in terms of how we train future artists, the whole community engagement framework, and the way of seeing the kind of work that artists do?

Anita Contini: But Fred, don't you think that often that comes out of the artist itself? I think of Gina Gibney Dance Company and how she has been working for quite some time, not only to her own group of professional dancers, but she's reached out to battered women and brought them in and started to bring them into the fold. I think it's just, as Ben said, we need to listen and understand not only what the needs are, but also artists are extremely aware of what's going on around them, and they're looking to make these kinds of connections. It's just us listening to them and being supportive of some of their programs that might be outside of our norm of thinking what a dancer or a musician or theater person should do. I think that's where we're moving right now.

Fred Bronstein: I don't disagree with that at all. I'm saying that in the classical music world writ large, I think getting people to see that to be as valuable a proposition as the core skills they're developing is something that I still think needs work.

Anita Contini: I agree with that.

Ben Cameron: I think the question always is, again, what are you trying to achieve and what do you value, and what are you going to stop doing to make the time and energy and resources to dedicate to the urgent work at hand. One of the key benchmarks of a resilient organization, we've known for a long time, is that not just the CEO and the CFO but the top layer of decision makers and the department heads are deeply embedded in the surrounding communities. Is that important enough that we're willing to give up a morning a week and say it's legitimate use of your work time not to be here at the orchestra hall, but to be at the battered women's shelter, or at the YMCA, or to be wherever making those relationships and listening? If that's so important, what are we willing to set aside to really make that happen so that the organization really is deeply embedded in the surrounding community beyond the putative leadership who hold the top two titles?

Susan Feder: I think it's also a sense of generosity and humility that can't be forced on an organization or an individual, but it exists in abundance. I think of Marin Alsop taking her MacArthur Foundation Genius Award and starting OrchKids in Baltimore. I remember visiting OrchKids a couple of years ago and hearing the musicians of the Baltimore Symphony who volunteered to be part of that organization saying that OrchKids had changed them more than they had changed the kids. It's openness and the value that is inculcated by leadership in an

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organization but rises from all levels of an organization and having that openness. Pittsburgh Symphony musicians have been in hospitals for years and years and years doing wellness work. You hear about artists now trying to take a lead on making statements about climate change, where art can promote the crises of our time. These are very positive outcomes and they just need to be valued within the institutions. It happens much more in theater than it does in classical music because you're dealing with the spoken word, and you can talk about subject matter much more easily, but I don't think it's nonexistent.

Fred Bronstein: Let me ask one more question. I'm sorry, Anita, were you going to say something?

Anita Contini: No, I was just going to bring up how food, since there's such a need for food in many cities around the country, has become a very big issue with a lot of artists. We're seeing this with one of our programs in Jackson, Mississippi which is a food desert. It's considered one of the fattest cities in the country, and how the artists there have gotten together to develop all these projects around food. They've recently reached out to poll the black farmers in the community because there wasn't enough food going around. They were producing so much food that they went to these farmers and brought their food into the community to help them. I think that there is a lot going on. It's just we aren't always there to see right now. I think there's a lot that artists really care about. I don't think it's prescribed. I think they're reacting to what they see around them. And Jackson is a really interesting example of what's happening to that right now because it's in the south, but it's also in a very desperate area where people are really starving in a number of different ways.

Fred Bronstein: Thank you. That's really interesting. So maybe what we can do is see if we've got any questions from our participants. We've got 15 minutes left. "How do we build funding opportunities less siloed and encourage collaboration of arts organizations and other social (education, housing, etc.) organizations within communities?" This goes back very much to what you were talking about, Anita, earlier. Do you want to start?

Anita Contini: Thank you for that great question. And I think that's really at the core of what we're all trying to do - is not to stay siloed. We need to listen to people out there and understand what the needs are, as Ben said. What do people really care about? What do they really need? We try to do that all the time with the work that we're doing. We bring people together to work with us and have good meetings and talk to them about what they care about before starting down a particular path. I think our work, which we've been doing with lots of other funders, has been really helpful to us. I think partnerships are really important as we move forward, particularly during this time. And I think it's a trend, going to the future.

Fred Bronstein: Anita, what makes a good partnership? The reason I ask the question is because I think it's one of the hardest things for institutions actually to do and to do really well.

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Anita Contini: I would like to say something I heard Lonnie Bunch say a few days ago, and that is “Just listen, just listen to the people around you.” Don't go into a meeting and determine what somebody might have on their mind or what you think might be good for them. You need to really listen and understand and let other people around you have the dialogue and be part of the dialogue. I think we learn a lot by that.

Ben Cameron: I totally agree with that. I would add: and so you're also not predetermining the outcome. You're basically saying, “This is what I do, and what of that might you make use of?” as opposed to saying, “Well, that's what you need, and this is what we'll do different.” I would say when we've seen partnerships most frequently fall apart, it's been because of a lack of transparency and deep understanding around true issues, around capacity, values, and motives. Where there's deep mutual understanding of why are we in this, what's our relative capacity, and what are our true ongoing values, there's less chance that the partnerships will implode.

Anita Contini: And also to take risks. If we expect others to take risks, we need to do and trust in those risks to let ideas develop.

Susan Feder: I think also a non-financial element of what we can do as funders is our convening power. When a Bloomberg or Mellon invites a group of people together, they tend to make the time to come. And they're now on Zoom. But we always try to make those unlike people, so that people are not talking to the usual suspects and the people that are in their circles, but what are the lessons that can be learned from other sectors, other institutions, other geographies, and to try to encourage less silos. But it has to be wanted. It can't be forced on anybody.

Fred Bronstein: Do we have another question? “As organizations attempt to create partnerships, how do they make sure they don't overstep and continue to serve the community in the best way possible?” Overstep. Interesting.

Susan Feder: I think it's the same answer. It's listening with humility and being open. I know in a good compromise no one is happy, and we've lost the art of compromise in politics, but maybe we can keep it in the arts and culture sector more effectively.

Anita Contini: And also, just to be open to listening to things that are unexpected, and actually have the opportunity to have a learning session where you figure out and listen to those same things to you that you may not be comfortable hearing, but may be important to how you move forward in the future.

Fred Bronstein: That's all very good advice. Another question? How long do we have? (laugh) “What needs to change to make the arts financially sustainable in the long term?”

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Susan Feder: I'll start, Fred. I think it's looking at capitalization differently. And this is something that arts funders have been doing actively for the last decade - led by none other than Ben Cameron when he was on the board of Grantmakers in the Arts – and that's to move from funding to deficit to funding to surplus, which is a hard thing to say during a pandemic, but it's not impossible. I remember being on panels some years ago where I made the suggestion and people said, "Well, we won't be able to get funding if we're not showing a deficit." It's precisely the wrong attitude. If you can show the surplus, you can show strength and you can show financial savvy, and that will make you more likely to get funding in this environment. I think that's a change in mindset, and it means a grantee trusting a funder and a funder making an opening to have those kinds of conversations. We have tried to fund in different ways than our normal multi-year project support, with things like cash reserves and a zero-interest loan fund that we make available to our grantees, and just expanding the kinds of funding made available that's not just project but it's capitalization.

So that's one aspect. There was a lot of talk about general operating support versus endowment when I first entered philanthropy more than a dozen years ago. I think that endowment has a very particular use for certain kinds of institutions. I think those are institutions with buildings and collections that need to exist in perpetuity. But for those institutions that don't fill those criteria, have them be more helpfully capitalized, having an artistic risk fund, having a facilities fund not part of your annual operating budget, that will help them become more financially sustainable. We've been running a program called Comprehensive Organizational Health for about five years now for small organizations that punch above their weight. It's been fascinating to find that combination of technical assistance and general operating support and recovery capital and change capital that has brought them to a point now in the pandemic where relative to other organizations in our portfolio these small organizations are functioning better because they understand their financial narrative. They understand how to articulate it. They know how to tell the story of their financial picture in a way that makes them more compelling to donors and funders.

Fred Bronstein: I'm sorry. I lost you a little bit. I simply dropped out, went away somehow. I'm back.

Ben Cameron: We took that moment to talk about you. (laughs) No, I agree with everything Susan would say. I would just make two observations. One is the arts are financially sustainable. We see it everywhere around us. It's that nonprofit institutions may not be, that's a different question, just to make sure that we're drawing that distinction. Number two, I would say that, for me, the question is slightly misplaced only to the extent I would say basically the real issue, if we want to make this sustainable in the long term, is we need to stop positioning things around excellence and stability, and start positioning them around relevance and adaptability and nimbleness. My own belief is, and people may hate me when I say this - Covid is an example of massive disruption, and it's the first example, but not the last. There may be Covid-27, there may

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be climate change, there may be terrorism. This idea about how we have viably adaptable and resilient organizations - I think how do we have relevant resilient organizations is the question, not excellent sustainable ones.

Fred Bronstein: I think that's an interesting question and conversation, because one of things we're really trying to teach our students - and it's not always welcome, frankly - is adaptability and flexibility. You use the term nimbleness. I think it's a huge issue in our business; I ran two large orchestras, and "nimble" is not a word I would use to describe institutions like that. Part of why I asked the question earlier about what are you expecting from larger institutions going forward is because I do think there is a real issue around being able to be adaptable and flexible and in preparing the people that are going to inhabit those organizations to have that mindset.

Susan Feder: Fred, I'd also argue there's a life cycle for every institution, and they don't all need to exist in perpetuity. I think of the example of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, arguably among the most important dance companies in the 20th century. Merce decided with the end of his life that the company should disband, and he figured out a way to do so with dignity and in a way that the dances themselves could be licensed so that other dancers could learn them. And I wish companies at certain points in their cycle would take that model and realize this is not declaring a failure, but it's understanding that the novel is ended. The book is ended, and it's time to close that chapter. I think we will be seeing more of that as a result of the pandemic. I think that some consolidation and some closures are inevitable, and some will be painful. I think we as funders can help with that dignity.

Anita Contini: I just wanted to bring up one other last point, that small is okay. The issue that we see sometimes is everybody wants to grow, and grow their budgets, and start building facilities they don't really need that have nothing to do with their mission. Also, the financial institutions don't want to support a lot of not-for-profit institutions because they don't have the assets to bankroll them. We really are concerned that we get people to realize that you don't have to be as big as your neighbor. It's what I think Ben is talking about - what your value is and what you're doing. That's what we want. That's what is going to be stable in the long run. And that's what people are going to care about, not how big.

Susan Feder: We funders have historically carried some of that culpability in asking for the next bright, shiny thing.

Ben Cameron: I would say, that as we are at this moment of ramping back up, it's the rare organization that's not going to be looking to bring people back on board on the far side of this. How is it we build a culture of common purpose and value? Because I have to admit through other sessions today, I've heard reverberations of a deep kind of antagonism between artists and staffs, and some of the questions from them about how staff is making all this money and artists are.... How are we going to build a culture of mutually supported forward direction, which I

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think is critical? I have to say the question that's also embedded in this for me - that I'm too old to figure out, frankly - is I'm deeply aware that a younger generation doesn't learn, behave, and make decisions the way I'm used to, and the leadership models within organizations about who's making decisions, who's making calls, especially as 20 and 30-year-olds come up through the ranks, is not going to be what it was. How an organization learns to embrace and shift to accommodate and truly be galvanized by different generational perspectives is going to be critical to the long-term viability of the organization. And again, I'm too old to know how to think about it.

Fred Bronstein: It's a great point. For anybody that's from an organization that has younger folks working for them, this is a really interesting conversation. We have time for one more question. "What do you think is the current status and future of corporate funding?" That's a great question for foundation folks.

Susan Feder: It's time for them to get out of politics and back into the arts.

Fred Bronstein: There you go.

Anita Contini: I want to second that, but since I used to work at a corporation and manage their funding, it was one of the most difficult things to get them to think about the arts. I always had to talk about it from an entertainment point of view or a marketing point of view, and it was pretty annoying to get people to buy into the particular artistic importance of it. Hopefully, some of these young people that are coming up through the ranks will have a broader view of how corporate funding for the arts should continue.

Susan Feder: I also want to add that the younger generation that's coming up through the ranks now and taking on leadership in this generational change is inheriting immensely more complicated institutions than the institutions were when I started. When I started at the San Francisco Symphony (this will date me), it was a \$5 million organization, and now it's a \$100 million organization or \$100 million plus, or it was pre-Covid. The kinds of issues that institutional leaders have to deal with now are immensely more complicated. Hats off to anyone in the younger generation that's willing to take these on, but these are immense challenges.

Ben Cameron: I would just say that, like Anita, I used to run a corporate giving program. Maybe it was true, Anita, where you were, but certainly at ours the two reasons that we funded the arts were, one, it was part of the culture and we had all been trained by the founding family of the corporation. We said the first time we have a CEO that wasn't trained by them, this is going to be on the table. The other reason was because the CEO cared about the arts, pure and simple. The customers didn't care, the workforce didn't care, the CEO cared. So, if we're serious about this - and I say this and people think I'm kidding - you should have student rush tickets for

The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University
THE NEXT NORMAL: Arts Innovation and Resilience in a Post-COVID World
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
Arts Funders Panel, 2:30 pm

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MBA's. Because if you don't get them when they're in college, it's going to be too late when they're the CEOs. If they're the CEOs and they don't care, the money ain't gonna flow.

Anita Contini: Well, one last thing is that because Bloomberg Philanthropies also is connected to the company Bloomberg LP, we work very closely with the company. And I have to say, as one company that's really doing a lot in involving their employees, working with arts institutions has been a really important thing. And what you're saying, Ben, you've got to get people engaged in those companies. I have to take my hat off to Mike Bloomberg. He's done a great job there for that.

Fred Bronstein: We are actually, believe it or not, at the end of our time. We could spend another two hours easily, I think, talking about these issues. Really, really great conversation, and I really appreciate your participating in this today. Thank you.

I also just want to say that for those folks that are watching, please do the survey in the link that is in the chat. I encourage you to do the survey so we can continue to improve what we do. If you've signed up for the design thinking session which is coming up next, you're going to go to your zoom link there.

I want to thank all of our panelists who participated today. I really think these have been rich, interesting conversations, but unfortunately, literally just scratching the surface, but nonetheless, a good start and certainly an amazing group of folks to have around the table talking about these issues. Thanks to all of you again, and everybody, please enjoy the rest of the day. Thank you.