

Charting the Future of the Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra

Establishing mission-based benchmarks, and clearly defining goals and objectives are crucial to the success and sustainability of organizations. Fresh off its 35th anniversary celebration, the LSO is actively reviewing and enhancing its strategic plan to ensure Lynchburg can enjoy the orchestra for many years to come.

The planning process is being facilitated by Hugh Ballou, an accomplished musician with more than four decades of experience directing choirs and instrumental ensembles. Ballou combines his knowledge of conducting with leadership principles that help organizations, like the LSO, strategically chart their future.

"Strategic planning is where you want to be and how are you going to get there," said Ballou.

Ballou's approach as a conductor is a good match for the LSO. "In musical terms, strategic planning is a system for building your ensemble," Ballou said

With a map, organizations avoid conflict. "Too many individual concepts of where to go wastes time and money, and pits people against each other," said Ballou. He illustrated his point by noting it is like 80 musicians showing up for a concert and asking them to play something.

According to Ballou, it is important to work on skills, which comprise

the bulk of strategic planning efforts. He added that discipline and commitment are essential in implementing the plan.

Situations, personnel and economic factors can change over time, so Ballou recommends that organizations revisit their strategic plan semi-annually. "The dynamic process keeps the plan organic and the team engaged," he said. "It prevents the plan from becoming credenza-ware." He said that is a plan placed on the credenza, where it gathers dust and becomes outdated and ineffective.

For the LSO, the strategic plan involves defining metrics, engaging participants in the process and operation of the organization, and connecting the LSO's committees to organizational goals. "Through that process we prevent silos," Ballou said. He added that the ultimate effect energizes each other. "Each success impacts the success of others," Ballou said. "It opens opportunities for collaborative thinking, building consensus, building and enhancing relationships, and taking relationships to another dimension."

Equally important is that strategic planning helps the Lynchburg community to better understand the value of what the LSO offers and how the community can participate. "It's more than people attending concerts," said Ballou. "Instead, it

lets the community understand how diversity creates harmony, the same way it happens in an orchestra."



Hugh Ballou is a Transformational Leadership Strategist™ and owner of SynerVision International, Inc.