

COHESION OF TEAMS IN COMPANIES AND IN ORCHESTRA : SAME PLANS, SAME PROBLEMS, SAME MODES OF MANAGEMENT ?

What are common notions between a production team of micro processors and an orchestra ? Presence of a chief, useful harmony, rhythm or rhythms, energy deployed for a same goal are indeed present in the direction of orchestra as in the management of team.

A recent study ⁽¹⁾ undertaken with more than 200 musicians of 22 German symphony orchestras, shows the following results:

-the style of direction of the leader directly influences the artistic quality of the orchestra;

-a good team-spirit and a mutual regard between musicians are the guarantors of the artistic quality of the orchestra;

(and)but more clearly still, the bond between these three(two?) criteria is shown:

*- cohesion and the co-operation between the members of an orchestra are an essential criterion with the artistic quality of the unit. The best leader will obtain only weak **results** with an orchestra where the team-spirit is not very present!*

*There are parallels, it is indubitable. But it persists fundamental differences of environment, stakes and objectives; it is (**true**) the reality. But it's left by bridges between these two worlds which seem so remote one of the other one, in particular as regards the notions of cohesion of team, it is the question which, if we answer it, can open new ways of management, both in company and in musical direction.*

Comparative characteristics of a team in company and in an orchestra

The people who compose it

Company world

A team is defined as a group of persons gathered around a common task. It consists of a leader and identified team members working all in a well defined perimeter of action. The leader is not necessarily hierarchical. On the other hand, he has a position power definite and accepted by the team. People composing a team in company have appropriate and differentiated competencies and the distribution of the tasks ensues from it. Besides, common rules of functioning, traffic of information, grip of decision and delegation are defined and known by all. People composing the team work for applying their competencies in the benefit of the team, removing from it personal material profits - salary, promotion or different advantages - or immaterial gratitude - exchanges, employability -in the respect of defined rules. When we compare the business world with the sports or musical world, fundamental difference is stated in term of individual motivation. The passion often animates indeed the musicians professional as the high-level sportsmen and this constitutes a real difference. On the other hand, it's not certain that this difference always constitutes a trump card, as we shall see it farther. What matters in fact for the cohesion of team is not so much the task and the interest or the passion which can animate the people for the fulfilment of this task than the quality of the relational link collecting the individuals of this team. Whether it is to increase the 5 % productivity in an industrial team, to face a grain in full ocean for a crew or to make a success of the interpretation of the symphony n°1 in Ut minor of J.Brahms, no matter

the task: if competencies are there, the success of the group will be made by its cohesion

Musical world

Orchestras are large till very large **groups**. Their number varies between 16/20 people in small chamber orchestras up to 120/130 in larger symphony orchestras. The members are highly qualified musicians, playing masterly different instruments: string-, brass- and woodwind-instruments, percussion and harp. All of them studied for a lot of years (8 to 16 or more) in order to reach the needed level of performance required for a such complex job. Each of them is able to play both solistically and in chambermusic groups. In fact, in order to get a position in an orchestra, each musician has to participate and to win a small competition called audition. The number of applicants for one position in big orchestras can easily reach some 2-300 people.

It's very important to remember the very high musical qualification of the members of the orchestra-team in order to understand the dynamic of such a group especially in connection with the leader, the conductor .

The collective and individual objectives

Company world

It is extremely interesting to notice that at the moment a common objective is determined and that all the members of the team adhere to it, the cohesion is made in a natural way: the individual objectives pass in the background. Let us remind ourselves that "Cohesion" comes from Latin *Cohaerere* who means "adhering together ". The particularity of a group consists in adhering to the same objectives to be able to put itself in movement. A group forced by a leader who gives his orders without looking for the adhesion will work without cohesion, with a link of dependence even of against-dependence towards the leader. Team adhesion in an objective is sometimes made in a natural way, adaptation of a rule in a particular or specific environment. On the other hand, adhesion becomes more delicate since it is about objectives of company which come to impact the usual in a definitive way, the workload, the distribution of the roles or the contents of the task. These different configurations will ask for different modes of intervention and may be adapted to the team maturity and thus its level of cohesion.

Musical world

The main collective goal of such a musical group is to prepare and perform musical masterpieces. No need to say that such a large group playing difficult compositions needs a coordinating person, who plays the part of a controller on an airport, showing with gestures the precise sequence of take-offs and landing in the musical traffic named e.g. a symphony. Orchestras playing operas enjoy the privilege of accompanying human voices, having therefore to finely coordinate their play with the singers on stage. The person responsible for this additional coordination is also the conductor.

Each player has complex individual tasks and objectives. Mastering the own part of a musical piece requires high technical and musical skills. Mastering this part in connection with the smaller group (e.g. first violins, french horn group,) and with the larger group (the whole orchestra –and singers) requires other kind of skills, listening and flexibility skills ("playing with the ears").

The existence of a competition between the different instrument groups and also inside of each instrument-group itself can be hardly denied. The wish to play perfectly is really huge in the musical world. And it's consequences are both astonishing –when it leads to great performance- and frightening – if some musicians ruin their health not being able to cope appropriately with it.

The collective moments of an orchestra –and of the audience attending a concert – have sometimes an almost transcendent quality. Music has a huge power and even if any of the performing musicians can enjoy the music the same way somebody in the audience does - the sound leaving the stage merges and changes its quality - the strong feelings the music expresses unite the musicians in an unique and inexplicable way.

The personality and the charisma of a conductor, inspiring the musicians can undoubtedly increase the intensity of such moments.

Values, mission and vision

Company world

The values of very fashionable company in the last decade had the advantage to promote the aspect of the good functioning of the company. Today, in every big group, values are shown: professionalism, reactivity, creativity, innovation, customer sense, solidarity, ... The commitment of the actors to respect these values, to put itself in movement compared to the reason for being of the company - what makes that it exists -, of its mission - what it is supposed to carry out- and of its vision - what it wants to become- allows then a bigger cohesion of the actions, in the so defined operational frame. These values declined for every team in the company determine individual behaviors in cohesion with the group.

In the same way, **to define the mission -"what is the goal of this enterprise ?"- and the vision -"what does it want to become ?"- of a company allows** the deployment of action plans where everyone knows what he have to do.

Musical world

The same problem also settles for an orchestra under the responsibility of the same conductor for one or several seasons: new repertoire, annual artistic programmation (**planing**), definition of orchestra identity, **higher artistic quality** ... Leading the whole orchestra in the same dynamics of work can sometimes represent an ambitious wager for the conductor. To define together the values which underlie the functioning of an orchestra, the mission which it sets and the vision of what it will be in a few years would be perhaps first actions for an optimal cohesion and effectiveness.

The situations of tension

The pressure of the environment creates indubitably pressure inside the system constituted by the team, as atmospheric pressure on a soap bubble. To avoid that this bubble bursts, a cohesion of the system is indispensable. Another example: try to break a raw egg by tightening it very strongly in your hand : you will not succeed ! The shell is built in such a way, that it becomes more and more resistant as an external pressure increases. The pressure is transformed into "positive" internal tension and the system remains intact.

What are the events creating of internal tension ?

Company world

The urgency creates of pressure and can destroy any team. She can paralyse a whole system by making lose the individual abilities.

Dysfunctions, disregard of rules or commitments, bad decisions, individual errors worsen the cohesion of the team. In these events each can become more individual and resume his independence charging the others.

The incurred risks and the opportunities created by an event or a situation generate certainly pressure. The leader can have a certain picture of it, fed by information only known by him for example. This will lead to **negative** tension with dissensions even conflicts, fold or indifference.

Managers, at last, transmit directly the pressure from market, environment or shareholders, by the use of objectives -action plans-, reorganizations or restructurations.

Musical world

By trying to play perfectly their instruments, musicians react unusually strong to their own mistakes and even stronger to the mistakes of their fellow musicians. Add to this tendency the spirit of competition mentioned before and we get a feeling of the possible tension which accompany the act of music making in an orchestra. Even if each person tries to give his/**her** utmost during a performance, making even the slightest mistake will lead sometimes to small but noticeable reactions in some other orchestra members. The cohesion of the group will suffer on a long term therefore.

Another source of tension, and **mostly** the main one, refers to the relationship between the conductor and the musicians.

Each musician, as a person, relates to the conductor in his/her own way, applying his/her own strategy to receive recognition and assurance a lot of people need in situations where high performance has to be achieved.

Therefore the leading style of a conductor, especially if he **remains** the chief conductor for **some** years, has deep implications over the mutual relationships between the members of an orchestra. **Unjust decisions toward orchestra members, lack of sincerity or rude, offending behaviour of the conductor can damage the working relationship, which could be much more pleasant for all if based on mutual respect and sincerity.**

Nowadays, as the general financial situation of many theaters and orchestras is getting worse and a restructuring of the cultural landscape is taking place, more and more tension comes from this development. The fright of losing the own job became a cruel reality, unconceivable a few years ago.

Teambuilding

The stadiums of progress : from the conception to the autonomy

As a family, a team builds itself. Of the birth in the autonomy, the teams live, progress, become coherent by way of diverse stages. Every stage is the seat of stakes (risks and opportunities) which it is good to track down to remove all the advantages from it and avoid all the traps.

- **1st stage: THE CLUSTER** The magic words of this stage: individuals' collection, strong dependence towards the leader, one-way and top-down information stream, central and inescapable position of the leader. The link to the leader is very strong, the risk of "ape-like" reflexes is raised(**high**) (the team members ape the leader), the rate of turn-over is important. In the case of a crisis, this type is frequent and the adequate management a directive one. In case of team birth, the centring by the leader of common rules and distribution of the tasks is necessary.
- **2nd stage: THE GROUP** The magic words of this stage: semi-opened set, information begins to circulate by binomial, as in sibships, the link is made by small subsets. Against-dependence towards the leader, as a child in front of his parents, the opposition is not any more individual but "corporatist ". The leader plays then the role of a mediator, a rallying point on common bases of functioning.
- **3rd stage: THE COOPERATIVE** The magic words of this stage: comfortable and hermetic cocoon, multi-directional information stream, independence. Rules are known, the adhesion on the objectives real and complete, methods understood and well applied. The leader intervenes only on the dysfunctions between the persons, he pays his attention on the relations in the team and the longer term objectives. The risk is here the humming, the routine and the too strong reaction to the change, as a teenager looking for its total independence.
- **4th stage: THE TEAM** The magic words of this stage: a constellation of elements, capable of going away, but always in link with the team, information stream turns to the outside, the interdependence allows the arrival of new elements in the team, if they respect the values and common rules. The role of the leader is centred here on the strategy, he is an emancipator, in the sense that he favors the "liberation" of these elements to restart a new adventure with a new team. The risk lies in the explosion of the group, the loss of the power of the leader and the decision-making which does not pass any more by the leader (risk of putsch). Positive points are numerous there: dialogue, effective cooperation, flexibility, flexibility of adaptation, effort on the main part.

This four stages represent psychological stages. They describe general tendencies of teams on different steps of progress. **Each individual belonging to a team has his own stage of development, which influence the whole group. Much alike a human chain, which is as strong as its weakest link. Qualities as selfworth, competence and team-spirit can strengthen the whole group.**

Orchestra members belonging to the same generation share some common experiences, beliefs and values which often bind them. Even conflicts or unresolved personal differencies tie more or less **obvious** the people involved. One can say that different generations appear to find themselves on different stadiums of progress. And on long term they learn from each other.

Nevertheless the role of the orchestra board and most of all of the conductor are crucial for the establishing the best possible working relationship.

The control levers of action to reach the cohesion

Six complexes of actions allow to estimate the level of cohesion of team and, as a result, to decide on necessary actions.

- **Decision-making** : How are made the decisions? In a one-sided way, by preliminary consultation of technical leaders, by dialogue. On what? The environment of the team, the behavior (rules of functioning, actions, bans / permissions), capacities (the skills, the abilities, the complementarities), the values (the common systems of representations and faith, the values of team), the identity (who are we?), the missions and the strategies. And for what? In the service of the leader, of the objective, the individuals, of the system ...
- **Contribution** How are determined, distributed and measured the rates of each to the team? How the individuals feel responsible for the failure or for the common success? How are taken into account the necessities of evolution of the individual skills?
- **Functioning** What is the level of formalization of the rules of functioning? How is controlled the activity of the members of the team?
- **Links** Except the functioning in common governed by the environment what are the occasions in linking team members? Are this ocasions create by the leader, by all or any of the team, by the system?
- **Feelings** How are managed the success and the failure within the team? Is the emotion accepted? Is it too present? At what level can we place the pleasure to work together?
- **Sense** Has the group a common ambition? Does it act in the heart of a system of common and posted values? At what objective does it aim? Does it know why?

The indicators of cohesion: communication, atmosphere, interdependence, functioning of the group, the position of the leader.

The control levers of action to reach the cohesion: decision-making, contribution, functioning, links, feelings, sense.

Constitution of an orchestra

Orchestras have an hierarhical structure. Decisions concerning the artistical programm will be taken in most of the cases by the main conductor of the orchestra. His intentions and criterias about his musical development and that of his orchestra will decide which musical masterpieces are going to be played. And as each person, each orchestra has its own profile, which has to be taken into consideration when visioning the program of the next season.

Coconductors leading smaller opera-houses have mostly also some administrative and management tasks. They will be supported by the orchestra inspector, who **monitors** the presence of the musicians, **engages** temporary player if somebody is sick, and so on..

The excutive comitee (board / vorstand) of the orchestra takes the decisions in the sphere of:

- respecting the internal functioning rules of the team, defined by the trade union of the classical musicians (DOV)
- representing the orchestra in dialogue with the conductor and the management

- mediating the conflicts between orchestramembers or between them and the conductor
- planing the rehearsals for the coming season, and so on.

Also linking the members outside of the orchstra service in order to strentghen the cohesion of their team and give them a common team-identity and a common **purpose would represent one of their main task.**

The tools of cohesion

The presupposition is that working in cohesion is more effective than in split. Claude STEINER, psychologist clinician and psychothérapeute is one of the specialists of the Transactional analysis of world reputation. He notably worked on the notion of cooperation. He speaks about three factors representing brakes to the cooperation and three directives allowing to reach there.

Brakes in the cooperation

The individualism: "if I made a success it is thanks to me and if I fail it is because of me! "

To refuse the positive or negative influence of some on the others entails us towards the isolation. By the individualism, the individual is encouraged to act in an independent way and therefore isn't responsible any more in front of somebody else.

Competitive spirit: our education directs us to the competition and not much to the cooperation. The school, notably, but also the sports or musical practice, direct us to the competition: competitions, notes, evaluations. The competitive spirit engenders the individualism and conversely. To be "lower" is unbearable!

Power games: the power games are schemes to obtain from somebody something that I would not have had otherwise. A power game can be rough or manipulator. If a power gamer is implemented in a natural or usual way by the members of the team or, especially by its leader, these processes will be considered as being a part of rules of functioning, making the cohesion of the group burst.

Directives for coopération

No power games: if someone in the group doesn't manage to obtain what he wishes, he avoids using power game. This directive applies to all the team members, including its leader.

No lie: real or by omission (retention of information for example), lie is prohibited. Sincerity is of setting, favoured constructive criticism, opened circulation of information.

No rescue: what Steiner calls it rescue is the response to the power games ; somebody should not give or make more than his share or something which he does not want to do. "I will not accept doing something because I feel forced or because no one else want to do it. I will do it because it's usefull for the group".

These models pulled from works on the family functionings offer a(**are of**) big interest when we transfer them in the world of the company or musical one, with the consideration of the positions of each (presence of hierarchical roles), of the environment (competition, objectives, profitability) and lived situations (crises, difficulties or usual functioning). Consciousness of the brakes agianst cohesion means a step toward its building, set up a stimulation spirit without engaging the team members in competition, knowing how to decide as leader without using of power games, making that each makes its contribution to the group on its own will, with no obligation and without constraint.

Will SCHUTZ, another American psychothérapeute, has developed a model, which also offers axes of action aiming at the cohesion of group. Its bases are three human fundamental needs which, if they are satisfied, allow us to live in relation in a spread way.

Am I important?

Am I competent?

Am I appreciated?

If I feel important for the group and if the group recognizes me as such, if I feel competent and recognized as such and if I am capable of knowing if the others are competents, then maybe I am going to accept as an element of this group by appreciating the others and by being appreciated by them. SCHUTZ says that in a successful team, all the team members answer these three needs for themselves and for the others.

When there is a deficit of the first one (**Am I important?**), it is necessary to lead a work of **Inclusion**; has each his place? Is each free to speak? Is each invited to give his opinion during decisions concerning him?

When there is a deficit of the second one (**Am I competent?**), the actions are oriented on what he calls **Control** (taken care, masters); definition of rules and common values, gratitude of the skills, organization by projects.

When there is a deficit of the third one (**Am I appreciated?**), actions of **Opening** will be necessary; resolve the relational problems, develop the consciousness of the personal value of each team member and of the group.

The tools of cohesion of team applied to the orchestra direction

Taking part in a concert as listener, people are amazed how beautifully and harmonious so many musicians can play together. The audience perceive the **magic** moment of musical interpretation, where the whole orchestra celebrates the music. No trace of individualism, of conflicts, of competition or power games. Therefore many people think musicians must be like that all the time.

Well, that's not the case. Fortunately!

As in any group or team you have individuals working **sometimes very near** (that is the case **in most orchestra pits** for example), playing the same instrument **on a high level and many of them-the tutti-having the same task, to play the same notes!** And all of them striving for perfection!

No need to say that individualism, power games and competition **accompany steadily the musical career of not few of them.**

But, orchestra musicians have a real chance to overcome these breaks in cooperation and to develop their personality. Playing in an orchestra represents a high school of learning to accept **him/herself, to accept** others and to cooperate with them! The Knowledge of the breaks **in** cooperation and the modalities to improve it (like using a personal or a team coach) can lead to a general well-being, healthy relationships and success inside each team.

Companies are conscious that their main capital are the people working **for them.** They use frequently modern knowhow, professional external or internal coaches and supervisors to take care of state of mind of the employees, to minimize conflicts and to create the best possible working atmosphere. **They know that** no outer competition can damage a company so strongly as the lack of cohesion and motivation of its own members.

The methods used to reach this goal are numerous: Neurolinguistic Programming, Lateral Thinking (De Bono), Systemic Structurepositioning, Schutz' Model, Transactional Analysis (Theory of Organizations **by** Eric Berne) **offer the professional coach** a rich spectrum of possibilities for more effective communication and for strengthening the cohesion of teams.

Orchestras and theaters are expected to develop some company-like qualities the years to come. Not only giving best musical performances, but also selling more of their musical "products" and making more profit will assure their future on a long term basis. **They can count on their potential, on the high-qualified musicians who compile them only if these will be fulfilled, healthy and radiate their joy of performing music over the audience.**

Teams are groups centered around a common goal.

A wonderful example of how successful a no-name team with high team-spirit can be, showed the whole world the greek football team coached by a german trainer a couple of years ago by entering the European Championship as outsider and finishing it as it's winner.

***NO STARS,
JUST TEAM-SPIRIT !***

1. Sabine Boerner/Christian von Streit: "Charisma und Teamgeist" – Zur Symbiose zwischen Orchester und Dirigent- in "Das Orchester" 12.04.

2. H. Schmale/H. Schmidke , S. 37, - "Der Orchestermusiker, seine Arbeit und sein Belastung"-
show that the main cause of the difficulties inside of the orchestra is the connection
(relationship) between its members (14,2 %)

3. W. Schutz

4. C. Steiner