



STATION RESOURCE GROUP

## CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING

### Next Generation Strategies for Classical Music Radio

Classical Music Rising is a collaborative project of leading local and regional public media stations to shape the future of classical music radio as the field confronts evolution in delivery across multiple broadcast and digital platforms, demographic and cultural change, and significant disruption throughout the music industry. The initiative centers on strategy, innovative tactics, and collective action – all informed by ongoing research and analysis.

With guidance and active participation from local classical stations, working together with coordination by SRG, **CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will pursue three broad outcomes:

A new strategic vision for classical music radio – anchored in public service, designed to reach more diverse audiences, and bridging the enduring strength of broadcast radio, the growing power of digital media, and the direct connections of in-person activities.

Development, adoption, and implementation of focused, results-oriented tactics that lead to stronger public service for individual organizations and the classical music radio field as a whole.

Partnerships and collaborations – more robust interactions within communities, better connections among local efforts across the country, and alliances within and outside public media that foster effectiveness and efficiency.

SRG's mission is that America's strongest public radio stations better serve the public and thrive in a period of radical change. Our special competency is to inspire action and change by integrating wide-ranging findings and addressing complex issues in a fashion that resonates with both local and national leaders. We enable top station executives to be effective change agents within their organizations, helping them lead toward a stronger future. As advocates and organizers, we shape the larger context for public media and create shared solutions to advance the field.

CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING will benefit audiences for broadcast radio, digital services, and live music performance and strengthen classical music communities across the nation, producing a broad-based plan of action for public media organizations to ensure that classical music's beauty, emotion, and power will reach an even wider and more diverse circle.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has committed \$400,000 to support this work over a two-year period. Five participating stations that are leading the effort have each committed \$20,000, bringing an additional \$100,000 to the project.

## PROJECT RATIONALE

Public media's nonprofit stations are now Americans' principal source of classical music<sup>1</sup>. Every week over 11 million listeners tune in classical music on public radio. At any given moment around the clock, seven days a week, an average of 218,000 people are tuned to a "full-time" public radio classical station and tens of thousands more are listening to classical music on stations that mix classical music with other content.<sup>2</sup> The audience includes significant representation of five generational cohorts and classical music is a principal point of public media's connection with Latino and Asian listeners.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> NEA, How a Nation Engages with Art, Highlights from the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

<sup>2</sup> The 11 million weekly listeners to classical music public radio are distinct, "unduplicated individuals," twelve years-of-age or older, who listen at least once per week for at least five minutes. Each person is counted only once for a given week, no matter how many times he or she tunes in. Some people listen a little; some listen a lot. The average listener to public radio's "full time" classical stations tunes in for five hours per week.

The original source of this data is The Nielsen Company, which measures radio listening at the individual level, not the household level, as it does for television. In the 48 largest markets, measurement is through a "portable people meter" that an individual wears throughout the day. In the remaining 224 markets for which Nielsen reports, individuals complete a weekly diary of their listening. SRG compiled the total from individual station reports prepared by AudiGraphics, Inc., which works directly from Nielsen's proprietary database of both metered and diary responses.

The weekly audience of 11 million includes listeners to the stations' broadcast service – the overwhelming majority of listening – or a stream that exactly duplicates that broadcast service. Again, a given individual is counted only once, regardless of which way they heard the programming or whether they listened to both the broadcast and the stream.

The 11-million-listener total audience does not include listeners to streaming services that are not duplicates of a broadcast service. Examples would include New York Public Radio's *Q*, the *Second Inversion* stream offered by Seattle's KING, and *VivaLaVoce* from Washington DC's WETA. These "second" streams are not measured by Nielsen, but by other sources such as Triton Digital, using different technologies and usage metrics. At this time public radio researchers do not have a way to determine which of the listeners to these additional streams have or have not been counted in Niensens's data and for this reason SRG has not included them in the 11 million total. This quandary exists for all other forms of on-demand audio as well.

The average audience of 218,000 for "full time" classical stations is a similar compilation of Nielsen data, reporting the number of individuals listening within a 15-minute period, in this case averaged over the full day.

<sup>3</sup> Of the 50 public radio stations with the largest Latino audiences, 11 are classical stations (Nielsen, Audience Research Analysis). Nielsen does not report Asian listening as a separate category. But local station surveys of classical audiences often discover higher proportions of Asian listeners than in the general population.

This is a remarkable resurgence. Public radio's classical music offerings had declined for years as stations replaced music with national and local news programs. As the availability of classical music shrank, so did the audience. But then two critical factors converged. In many major markets, commercial classical broadcasters abandoned the format. Concurrently, a number of local public media organizations attained sufficient strength to acquire an additional station, allowing the presentation of a full-time news service on one channel and a full-time music service on the other. As these services gained in strength, they added additional stations that would repeat their programming in additional communities.

Although this pattern began to emerge in the late 1990s, it accelerated significantly in the past seven years. Since 2008, 14 public media organization have begun providing an "all classical" service and at least as many repeating stations were launched to extend the reach of classical programming to new communities.

Yet at this time of unprecedented success – and even larger aspirations – these same stations are deeply uncertain about the future of their broadcast franchise and concerned that they are insufficiently prepared to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of rapid changes in media technology, demography, and the music and cultural ecosystem of which they are a part.

The shared sense among the leaders of top classical stations is that they and their classical music radio colleagues are at a point of strategic inflection, a time of disruption and new competition across almost every area of their work. They believe the same to be true at public radio stations working in other music genres and at many of the performing organizations and music venues in their communities.

By making smart, informed choices now, public media's classical music stations can maintain and build upon their renewed broadcast strength, develop creative content and delivery options that respond to the evolving environment, and enlarge and diversify their audiences. The opportunity at hand is to grow as significant institutions in their own right and to be better able to nurture the larger music and cultural life of their communities.

There are, however, two additional challenges that arise from the path that brought classical music radio to its current juncture.

First, public radio's classical music stations have worked largely in isolation. Boards of Directors and General Managers of classical stations have little experience in collaborating with other stations on the challenges that pose either a threat or opportunity to the ability to serve the community. Public radio's national networks and professional support organizations have

focused their principal attention on news and public affairs. This isolation leads to less efficient results, more costs, a lack of coordinated brainpower, and, often, no effort to solve problems.

Second, the resurgence of classical music radio through new, or newly noncommercial, stations has introduced its own challenges. When previously commercial stations transformed into nonprofit operations – usually through incorporation into an existing public broadcaster – personnel who had built careers in commercial broadcasting needed to adjust to new sensibilities, incentives, skills, and professional networks. When public broadcasters purchased frequencies on which to create new, full-time classical stations, some of the work proved more difficult than anticipated – creating distinct station identities, developing self-sustaining business models for music, and building relationships with new personnel and new partners. Moreover, many of these acquisitions required significant capital investments and long-term debt, introducing new responsibilities in fiscal control and management.

Most of these projects are moving along relatively well. But not all. In Miami, several years following a costly acquisition, the public media organization sold the station.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will directly address the challenges and opportunities of disruption, technical change, isolation and organizational transition. We will mine the power of shared learning and the leverage and work toward economies of scale. We will help stations support one another by strengthening the connective tissue of information, knowledge, and personal relationships. Public media classical music organizations are ready to “up their game” through collaboration, collective action, and mutual expectations for higher standards of service and organizational strength.

Our primary focus is some 60 public media organizations – a third of them SRG members – that operate 145 stations presenting a full-time classical broadcast service.<sup>4</sup> Their weekly listenership ranges from 12,000 in Ashland, Oregon to over 700,000 in Los Angeles. Their annual budgets mostly fall between \$1 million and \$6 million, though a number are part of larger, multi-station operations, such as New York Public Radio.

A secondary target is another 48 organizations that offer a mix of classical music and public radio news over 154 stations. Taken together, this is a significant constituency with substantial reach and resources and genuine opportunity for growth.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> SRG defines “full time” classical service as those that commit 70% or more of their full-week schedule between 6am and midnight to classical music.

<sup>5</sup> This secondary target includes services with at least 30% but less than 70% of their schedules devoted to classical music.

To ground our work in stations' realities, we surveyed leaders of the full-time classical stations. We asked about various activities through which the stations engage with their audiences and communities and their sense of the effectiveness of these activities in meeting goals such as increasing or diversifying the audience, achieving impact, or raising revenue. We also explored where the stations feel their strength is greatest and "what keeps them awake at night."<sup>6</sup>

Among the "top line" findings from the 41 stations that completed the survey:

- Stations have pride in their core broadcast services, particularly the strength of their local hosts and their connections with their community. Their concerns reflect a mature enterprise – developing new on-air talent, competing against emerging, non-broadcast sources of classical music, and managing a complex technological infrastructure.
- Stations are far less confident – indeed, they are alarmed – with their digital services. Few stations report pursuing more than the digital "basics" of a live stream, some web features, and social media. Everyone is aware of global competition for attention. Capturing revenue to cover an expanding digital portfolio is elusive for everyone.
- Community outreach activities – educational programs with schools, support for emerging classical artists, in-person events – are widely scattered.
- Very few stations have carried out a major marketing or awareness campaign, although those that have done so give their efforts relatively high marks for effectiveness.
- Stations are tough graders of their own work. Relatively few activities score a solid "A" against one or more key station goals. Many get less than a "C."

The survey responses have been helpful in the iterative process of sharpening **CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** priorities. We presented initial findings to a meeting of two dozen station leaders in July 2015. They fleshed out the issues, added context and additional issues from their respective operations, and concluded with a ranking exercise of potential activities for this project.

The Steering Committee took this work, together with perspectives gleaned in prior meetings and one-on-one interviews, to fashion the plan presented here.

---

<sup>6</sup> The survey instrument, which was fielded in late spring/early summer 2015, is provided as an addendum.

## **WHAT WE EXPECT TO ACCOMPLISH – OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS**

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will focus on five key areas identified by station leaders.

### **1. Revenue and Business Models for the Next Generation of Service**

Public media's classical music is supported by three primary revenue streams – gifts from individuals, business and foundation sponsorships, and tax-based support. Some stations are licensed to educational institutions and receive funds or indirect support from the institution.

All of these revenue sources are subject to significant disruption in the years ahead. Changing patterns and platforms of listening, evolving competition in the audio marketplace, and continuing severe pressures on public sector budgets at all levels of government are among the principal factors. Perhaps as important will be new sensibilities about charitable giving, evolving patterns of spending on personal media consumption, and the position of public media on a cultural landscape with new entrants and frames of reference.

We will identify and share opportunities for improvement in current revenue development by identifying key performance indicators across stations, promoting best practices with respect to different revenue streams, and creating benchmarks against which to assess local efforts.

We will also look to new approaches, such as giving on mobile devices, tracking listener behavior through the massive streams of behavioral data that go hand-in-hand with many digital delivery systems, integrating social media more directly in our fundraising work, and experimenting with in-person events for different kinds of connection along the donor and sponsorship spectrum. We will look for innovative success stories in the larger classical music field and elsewhere in public radio that might be adapted for classical music radio.

In these newer areas the project will promote shared experimentation and learning to reduce the risk for any single organization and accelerate the adoption of successful and promising innovations.

Successful fundraising, whether through legacy channels or new techniques, requires a clear understanding of the value and benefits classical music radio delivers to its constituencies – from the personal satisfactions experienced by individual users and families to the impact on the classical music eco-system and the larger community that are important to philanthropists, foundations, and public institutions.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will work with stations to more effectively document and articulate their individual and collective value propositions.

## 2. Understanding Classical Music Radio's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Audiences

The continued success of public media's classical music service requires a sharp understanding of the current and potential audience in a time of significant demographic, cultural, and technical change. We know that audience behavior and expectations are in flux across all age groups. Successful service tactics must speak to each generation on its own terms while maintaining a coherent, shared appeal for all.<sup>7</sup> The individuals that connect with our organizations increasingly expect a personalized service, both in terms of our relationship with them and in terms of our organizations as a resource for information about other organizations they care about.

Over-the-air broadcasting is the foundation of public media's classical music service now and for years to come. Broadcasting is the electronic media path that reaches the overwhelming majority of classical music listeners. It is the springboard and economic engine for all of our other activities. Long-term success requires continuing excellence in knowing and serving our broadcast audience.

At the same time, the long-term arc for audio delivery, use, sharing, storage, and retrieval is digital. Classical music is no exception – classical listeners already find some of their classical music online from a variety of sources. But hearing the cadence of change is complicated. To paraphrase Bill Gates on the pace of digital technologies, we tend to overestimate the speed of change and underestimate the eventual impact.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will gather and synthesize the substantial body of existing research about classical music's broadcast audience and donors – some of it previously held on a proprietary basis – and make critical findings accessible to all classical stations. This will include focus group studies, surveys of listeners and donors, and advanced statistical analyses of syndicated audience data from sources such as Arbitron and Nielsen.

We will also organize a collaborative element for future broadcast research to reduce costs to individual organizations and increase the impact of the work.

Looking beyond broadcasting, we will examine emerging data and analytics surrounding use of classical music on digital platforms, using syndicated data from sources such as Triton Digital, comScore, and Nielsen, commercial tools such as Google Analytics, and in-house systems SRG is helping stations develop. We will collect research and analysis from sources such as Jacobs Media's *Tech Survey*, Edison Research's *Infinite Dial* reports, and the work of individual stations' "new media" committees. We will identify key patterns of listening, the use of other digital

---

<sup>7</sup> LaPlaca Cohen, Culture Track 2014

services and products, and the characteristics of public radio classical music’s digital audience. We will give particular attention to opportunities for shared investments and collaboration – first in learning and then in shared actions based on new knowledge.

Knitting together prior and contemporary studies and looking to the broadcast/streams/apps patterns of use that are evolving as the new consumer norm, we will be able to see more clearly who uses public media’s classical music, how these users move across increasing public media channels and platforms, and how they move in the larger digital space. This will help organizations deploy resources to serve individuals and communities more effectively and more efficiently – in content choices, content delivery, marketing messages, and fundraising. By better understanding the behavior, interests and connections of individuals now at the edges of our audiences, we can create smart, responsive services and products to engage with a larger, more diverse circle of users.

Working with leading experts in audience analysis and classical music programming, we will explore and recommend realignments in programming, production, and delivery infrastructure that will strengthen classical music broadcast and digital services and improve the productivity of individual and collective spending for the most important activities. We will evaluate competing choices to pursue audience growth – programming changes, marketing, events, engagement and outreach activities, and alliances with music and cultural organizations – and develop recommendations for the field.

### **3. Digital Experimentation**

SRG’s survey of classical music station activities revealed relatively modest digital efforts at most stations. Offering an Internet stream of the station’s broadcast service, postings to social media (Facebook, Twitter), and online features presented on the station’s web site, such as playlists and feature stories, were the most common. Yet station leaders have a sense of urgency about moving faster and deeper into digital services, even as they have serious concerns about how to achieve a return on such investments in order to sustain them. Some typical statements:

“We are behind the curve in diversifying our content into multiple niche digital streams that can be bundled and marketed.”

“We aren’t using digital to expand the engagement opportunities with audiences who really love the format and the genre.”



“We are not even close to tapping into the possibilities and creative ways to connect with our audience to help enhance the classical music experience.”

Success in the rapidly evolving digital environment requires moving to new approaches, business arrangements, and alliances. With so little “proven practice,” these steps will benefit from collective brainstorming, piloting and other forms of experimentation with rapid reporting, and projects in which risks can be distributed.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will foster and help with design and execution of digital experimentation projects among project participants. The objectives for this work are to:

- Define classical music services that we believe to be important and distinctive in the digital media space.
- Conduct a strategic analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to understand the competitive position of such services and those of other classical music and media providers.
- Highlight models and approaches that best manage shared risk and investment.

Music rights issues loom very large in the ability of classical music stations to create innovative digital services. SRG has established a separate music rights initiative to pursue these issues on behalf of public media organizations working in all music genres. The effort will be funded through a combination of philanthropy and station contributions, and recently received initial support from the Wyncote Foundation. SRG will assure coordination between **CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING**’s digital experimentation and pursuit of the larger rights questions.

#### **4. Talent Development**

Both in the spotlight and behind the scenes, classical stations seek to bring new voices, new perspectives, and a new generation into our organizations in our role as curators and presenters. This ambition is especially well-suited to collective action – shared work to publicize opportunities in the field, to recruit, and to mentor.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will explore specific collaborative steps that might improve the effectiveness of recruitment and development, such as publicizing the current energy within the field at college and university music programs, creating a shared “Opportunities in Classical Music Radio” job posting site, designing an inter-station mentorship program for new hires, etc. From such a list we will decide upon an action plan that presents the best prospects for results and sustainability for the participating stations.

We will also work together to better understand what changes in our on-air personalities and station staff will support our aspirations to reach new and more diverse audiences. The **CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** Steering Committee believes a central element of this effort will be to, in effect, disrupt ourselves. Classical stations need on-air and off-air personnel who are themselves of the emerging, diverse audiences we seek to serve, whose media experiences are native to the digital terrain, and whose passion for classical music plays out in a contemporary cultural frame.

Bringing such disruption directly into a station's principal broadcast stream has always been fraught with risks to audience loyalty and financial support. But the proliferation of digital channels – both broadcast and online – is liberating. Local public media organizations now have the ability to experiment with new talent and new content while continuing to provide their legacy services. Such experiments can both provide a chance for new personnel to learn and develop and surface new concepts that eventually find their place in core services.

Mounting such efforts is no small matter – it is likely beyond the reach of many individual classical stations. But through a collaborative effort focused on a few such projects around the country, it should be possible to provide more welcoming opportunities and a pathway into the field for the new talent we need. The Second Inversion project at Seattle's KING ([www.secondinversion.org](http://www.secondinversion.org)) is an example of this approach. We will encourage development of similar efforts at several other sites. We will urge the classical music radio community to celebrate the best initiatives as assets for the larger classical radio enterprise and explore ways in which these efforts might take on larger roles in both welcoming new talent and sharing their new programming perspectives.

## **5. Awareness and Engagement**

Recent audience research in multiple markets identified awareness of our services as a significant problem.<sup>8</sup> There are classical listeners who are not listening to our stations because they do not think of them when they are seeking the benefits of classical music. Traditional advertising vehicles require a large sustained investment; therefore, there are steps we want to take to ensure we are making maximum use of assets already at our disposal and ensuring that any new investments we make will be dollars well spent.

- What are our marketing assets and how can we maximize them (social media, relationships with other arts institutions, on-air promotion, etc.)?
- What lessons can we draw from stations that have undertaken major marketing campaigns? We know the stations to contact based on our activities research.

---

<sup>8</sup> Coleman Insights study for Radio Research Consortium, June 2013.

We will retain an outside marketing expert to evaluate our collective efforts to date, assess our assets, and offer recommendations for future work. In selecting an expert, carrying out our awareness and engagement tasks, and sharing our findings and recommendations, we will consult and coordinate with Greater Public, a nonprofit support organization for public broadcasting's fundraising and marketing professionals with which SRG has collaborated on previous projects.

Our overall objective in this area is to develop knowledge and tools for stations to manage current assets well, increase awareness of their work, and make the best possible use of marketing dollars.

### **LEADING THE PROJECT – KEY PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

SRG formed a **Classical Music Steering Committee** of top executives from leading public media organizations to develop this plan and guide the initiative. The Steering Committee will provide ongoing leadership, direction, and evaluation, meeting by conference call on at least a quarterly basis. The group includes:

Brenda Barnes, President, USC Radio, Los Angeles (Chair)

Judy McAlpine, Senior Vice President, International and Affiliate Content Partnerships,  
American Public Media

Graham Parker, General Manager, WQXR and Vice President, New York Public Radio

Jennifer Ridewood, General Manager, KING, Seattle

Tom Thomas and Terry Clifford, **SRG's co-CEOs, will oversee execution of the project.** They will work with the Steering Committee and Project Director to guide the trajectories and timing of the different project elements and integrate findings and recommendations across the key areas. They will give attention to the project's outreach activities, leveraging SRG's long-term partnerships, and strong relationships throughout the field. They will also look to the continuity and funding of key activities beyond the period covered in this proposal.

Thomas and Clifford have helped lead advances across almost every aspect of public media at both local and national levels, including key policies at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NPR, the FCC, and in Congress. They helped design and launch Public Radio Capital (now Public Media Company) to increase the number of stations licensed to non-profit public media organizations and PRX/Public Radio Exchange to create an online program marketplace for stations, producers, and the public. They have led national efforts including *Charting the Territory*, *Public Radio in the New Network Age*, the *Public Media Code of Integrity*, and authored or co-authored pioneering studies of audiences and revenues.

The **Project Director** will be the critical “point person” for the initiative – an organizer, convener, communicator, and manager. We will look for general leadership and partnership building skills, credibility and expertise in the project’s substantive areas, and a passion for music. The person will need to work as a peer with top executives of leading stations and serve as an articulate ambassador for the project both inside and outside public media. The person will need strong technical knowledge about the operations of a classical music station.

The Project Director will report to SRG’s co-CEOs and will be selected as funds are available. SRG and Steering Committee members have discussed a short list of candidates who are qualified for the position, likely to be available, and, in some cases, have volunteered an interest. We are committed to an open (but speedy) search.

The Project Director, in consultation with the Steering Committee and SRG co-CEOs, will select all other personnel for the project and supervise and support their work.

The Project Director will have lead responsibility for fostering and coordinating the various collaborative activities outlined in this proposal, recruiting station personnel to take responsibilities as appropriate, and securing additional station investments as needed.

The Project Director will coordinate and oversee the preparation, distribution and publication of all project reports, including the assembly of the project’s electronic distribution list and oversight of the project web pages.

The Project Director will be the leading spokesperson for the project.

We will turn to **Subject Matter Experts** for technical expertise that complements the capacities of the Project Director in critical areas. These experts may also take leadership roles in managing some of the collaborative endeavors. Examples of areas in which we may tap such experts and potential advisers include:

- Experimentation and evaluation of innovations in individual giving, such as advances with donations on mobile devices and integration of social media. For this we might turn to someone such as Richard McPherson, whose firm, New Donor Strategies, works with a range of nonprofits on advanced individual giving, or Mark Fuerst, a veteran public radio executive who, with support from the Wyncote Foundation, has recently been exploring new revenue models across all areas of public media.
- Organizing and managing a collaborative broadcast research project. For this we would look to one of the several research companies with which SRG has worked over the

years, such as George Bailey of Walrus Research, John Sutton of Emodus Research, or the Client Consulting unit at The Nielsen Company.

- Surfacing and aggregating data about classical music radio's digital audiences and helping stations integrate data that currently resides in "silos" within their organizations. Here we would most likely turn to a "big data" advisor, an example of which would be Polynumeral, whose founder, Max Schron, has done work with SRG members such as New York Public Radio.
- Evaluation of our efforts to increase awareness and engagement with our stations and recommendations for action. The possibilities here include firms that have worked with the few classical stations that have undertaken major marketing and awareness efforts and firms that have helped guide brand building and engagement work at other culturally-focused organizations.

Decisions about which areas would most benefit from investments in additional expertise – and from whom to seek it – will turn in part on our selection of the Project Director and the skills he or she brings to the position, and in part on the intended scale and focus of the various station collaborations we bring forward that most resonate with potential station participants.

We will convene several **Working Groups** – small teams of public media professionals and others with relevant expertise who will take up major topics over the course of the project. The topics will be keyed to the five areas of focus for the project and sub-sets of issues within them. In forming the Working Groups we will reflect the range of classical music stations in terms of types of licensees, communities served, and scale of operations.

A typical working group assignment will be to flesh out an issue area in terms of concerns and opportunities, ascertain current knowledge, sift through ideas and proposals for action in their area – perhaps connecting to others through call-outs, email, and surveys – and then prepare reports that include recommendations for activities and the supporting resources needed to carry them out. We expect Working Group participants to work on a volunteer basis.

Each Working Group will produce a final report that we will disseminate broadly.

Groups with more complex tasks will be assigned a **Working Group Leader** who will coordinate their work and meetings, oversee the production of reports, and address goals for wide-spread dissemination of the information. These Group Leaders will be compensated.

In addition to the Working Group reports we will publish additional reports throughout the project, mostly in the form of brief, single topic papers, complemented by occasional longer "white papers" or case studies.

Both the Working Group reports and other materials will be delivered electronically directly to a project list of key contacts at all public media classical music organizations, public media's national leaders, and other parties with an interest in the project. We expect this list to include some 250 or more individuals. We will also publish the reports on open web pages devoted to [CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING](#).

## **OUR APPROACH TO THE WORK**

**Organizing and Outreach.** One of the most important elements of [CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING](#) is the creation of an ongoing sense of collective endeavor and mutual responsibility across classical music radio. Throughout the project we will work to create a sense of shared purpose, collegiality, and partnership among the classical stations. We will work to extend that sense of mutual interest to the larger circle in which the stations work – artists, performance organizations and venues, and the music industry.

Our work will be transparent, inclusive, and participatory in order to benefit from a wide range of thinking and to build broad consensus in support of goals, targets and shared investments.

From the outset, we will ask station personnel, networks and professional support organizations, foundations, individual donors, and individuals working in adjacent fields (such as cultural institutions, performing arts organizations, and the recorded music industry) to share information with us, soliciting suggestions, recommendations, and feedback. We will make a point of including the full public media classical music community in our surveys of activities and views, seeking to capture the diversity of experiences, needs, and perspectives.

We will actively solicit opportunities to share our findings and recommendations in person with other public media organizations and at meetings and conferences that assemble public media professionals working in various disciplines such as management, programming, fundraising, and marketing. For example, at the annual Public Radio Programming Conference, SRG will present at and help lead a two-hour session of classical music program directors – sharing audience data, survey findings, and our plans for [CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING](#) and soliciting feedback and new ideas from the anticipated 50 or more attendees from a diverse array of stations at the session.

**Research and Analysis.** A hallmark of SRG's work is to lead toward action and change by bringing forward new knowledge and perspectives. This project rests on a significant body of local and national research about classical music radio. More recently, SRG completed a survey

of classical music station activities, concerns, and interests to inform this project and prepared a topline analysis of trends in station listening over the last three years.

Ongoing research, analysis, and evaluation underpin all of the key areas of our work. We will update our understanding of the “state of play” within the field throughout the project, using surveys, interviews, and compilation of audience, financial, and technical data (mostly from third party sources). We will assess external perceptions of issues and opportunities through interviews with stakeholders and thought leaders in media and classical music. We will monitor and report important trends and developments in the changing media and music marketplaces.

**Action.** The project Steering Committee is a powerful and influential group within classical music radio and is committed to act together in the key areas we have outlined above. We will enlist other stations to join them as active participants in the project, encouraging organizations to act upon our findings and recommendations by widely publicizing our results as they emerge, communicating directly with key decision makers at local public media organizations and with other stakeholders who are in positions to support and advance their work. We will encourage participants to undertake “try it” pilots or experiments that can be executed and reported back within the scope of the project.

**Collaboration and Convening.** In developing the focus and core concepts of this initiative, SRG’s leaders have engaged with senior executives at some 40 public media organizations – brainstorming areas of opportunity and concern, evaluating prior projects, and setting priorities for jobs that need to be done. We saw this as crucial foundational work to anchor [CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING](#) in the organizations we seek to inspire and organize to work together.

Our “end game” is collaborative action that will build the capacity and public service of individual public radio classical stations and the field as a whole. Over the course of the project we will hold at least two in-person convenings – our experience is that complex concepts are best absorbed in a focused setting and that this experience motivates a higher level of engagement and commitment over time.

We will provide coordinated personal contact and networking regarding findings, targeting constituencies such as public media professionals, board members and licensee officials, and important funders.

SRG understands – and has repeatedly succeeded at – the follow-through needed to propel plans toward actions and to organize independent organizations for collective impact. In some cases, especially where local capacity is critical, SRG focuses on its members and a few others at the leading edge of the field. Spearheading early advances in seeking major gifts from

individuals would be an example of such work. In other areas, SRG has crafted solutions that work for public media as a whole. Designing federal funding guidelines that benefit rural and minority stations, securing an “all public radio” agreement for access to Nielsen audience data, and assuring public radio’s smallest stations are included in aggregated payments for music rights are illustrations of the latter.

**CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** will integrate both approaches in our next generation strategies.

### **OUR ORGANIZATION’S APPROACH TO DIVERSITY**

SRG and its member public media organizations have deep commitments to diversity across multiple dimensions, including race, ethnicity, gender, and age; perspectives and culture; and geography. We have pursued these commitments by advancing public policies that help sustain stations operated by people of color and serving rural communities, by developing and evaluating programming strategies aimed at reaching more diverse audiences in our communities, and by encouraging and reporting on the development of greater diversity in our governance and professional staffs.

Each of SRG’s member organizations posts on its website a statement of its commitments and approach to diversity.

Throughout **CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING** we will seek to understand more fully the diversity of reach and use among classical music radio listeners and to identify ways in which stations can increase that diversity going forward.

### **TIMELINE AND MILESTONES**

The following is a preliminary outline of project activities, which will be reviewed and adjusted when the Project Director comes aboard and updated as the project goes forward.

#### 2016 Jan - Mar

Engage Project Director  
Web site design  
Master contact list and communication plan  
Meeting schedule for Steering Committee  
Connection to SRG’s Music Rights Initiative  
Recruitment of additional station participants

#### 2016 Apr - Nov

Update station survey – activities, goals, vision  
Working group: digital strategies and experiments



Working group: revenue and business models  
Compile and synthesize broadcast and digital analytics  
Convening of project participants  
Presentations at public media conferences  
Report of the classical music audience

2016 Dec - 2017 Apr

Working group: talent development  
Working group: diversity and inclusiveness  
Music ecosystem: survey/interviews with external stakeholders  
Report on revenue and sustainability

2017 May - Sep

Music ecosystem: report on public media's role  
Working group: awareness and engagement  
Report on digital strategies  
Presentations at public media conferences

2017 Oct - Dec

Convening of project participants  
Final project report(s) and recommendations