

Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec Directors' Skills and Experience Profile

Corporation: Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec

Profile date: January 2011

Mandate of the Corporation

Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec are a chamber orchestra and chamber choir or combination of the two with a core group of permanent musicians. They produce concerts and recordings of classical music from all periods, but with a particular interest in late 18th to early 19th century repertoire. Les Violons du Roy is based in Quebec City, but is active locally, nationally and internationally. The organization addresses the broadest possible audience, both here and abroad, providing lively, modern interpretations and applying the most appropriate and historically informed approach possible to each repertoire. Les Violons du Roy relies on rigorous and effective management to ensure its survival and funding in collaboration with private and public partners.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors

The Board administers Les VdR and is accountable for the corporation before the law. It establishes VdR's vision and mission, of which it is the guardian; it adopts a strategic plan; it oversees compliance with and fulfillment of strategic plan and annual action plan objectives; it oversees business decisions independently, particularly with regard to the financial information received by the directors; it ensures that resources are allocated fairly and appropriately; it identifies and manages risk; it ensures effective communications with all stakeholders and sees to it that the organization has appropriate control mechanisms. The Board of Directors functions largely through the work of its various committees.

Strategic Direction Committee

The Strategic Direction Committee is responsible for strategic planning. In collaboration with the organization and its consultants, it develops the processes used to arrive at the product agreed on by all parties. It selects a methodology and ensures that work proceeds in a consistent manner. It regularly reports on progress and outcomes to the Board of Directors. Certain members have also been involved in presenting the content of this work to employees (musicians and management) and to government partners.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has two main areas of activity. The first is monitoring the organization's budget and producing two-year budget forecasts. Using documents produced by head office, it

acts as internal auditor and proposes more stringent monitoring methods. Its second area of activity relates to improving the presentation of financial data to facilitate better informed decisions, particularly through costing.

Funding Committee

This committee is charged with identifying the most effective fundraising strategies and the networks most likely to provide financial support for Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec. As such, it seeks sponsors for concert series and concerts, special events such as the Gala or Vintage Wine Tasting. Note that the proportion of private funding is particularly high (between 62% and 65%) in comparison with other cultural organizations.

Governance Committee

This committee is tasked with revising VdR internal bylaws and governance practices. It prepares the directors' skills profiles. It evaluates the operation and effectiveness of the Board and Board committees. It also evaluates VdR Board members. It plans out committee work for the year. It also deals with ethical questions faced by Les VdR.

Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources and Volunteers Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Board regarding the hiring or dismissal of the music director and the executive director. It is responsible for ensuring that Les VdR has an effective administrative structure, that it is provided with and implements consistent, integrated, documented, and effective business processes, and that it develops a set of staff and volunteer policies to make Les VdR an employer of choice and an organization open to volunteers. It is empowered to submit to the Board any recommendations relating to these questions, including the critical question of internal communications in order to maximize uptake of the Les VdR's strategic planning objectives.

The Board of Directors brings together skills in accounting, law, financial management, human resources management, communications, and planning. It incorporates significant representation from the Quebec City and Montreal communities in which Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec operate. Directors are expected to be firmly committed to the music of Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec. The Board of Directors meets seven or eight times in plenary during the fiscal year. Les VdR recently decided to open up to the community and, therefore, to hold an open general meeting and allow any physical person interested in promoting Les VdR objectives, and meeting the eligibility criteria established by the Board of Directors, to become a director. This strategic decision requires active monitoring of changing membership.

Challenges, Issues, and Initiatives

Les VdR and La Chapelle de Québec are internationally renowned for their artistry. They appear regularly in the United States, Europe, and Asia. They provide music lovers in Quebec City and Montreal with outstanding artistic programming. The main issue for the Board is to secure the funding necessary to support the groups' artistic development. With its principal base in Quebec City at Palais Montcalm, Les VdR operates in a restricted market with

relatively few corporate sponsors—Quebec City being an administrative region dominated by the presence of the seat of government. Les VdR and La Chapelle de Québec are approximately 65% self-financed. Government partners are needed therefore to supply the remaining 35% of income. However, government partners are experiencing a period of tight budgets in order to restore budget equilibrium after several difficult years for the economy in which all levels of government were forced to run up major deficits in order to keep the economy going. The corporation therefore relies on well-known directors able to convince the business community to get involved financially. It is also critical to maintain excellent relationships with government partners during times of tight budgets.

Les VdR and La Chapelle de Québec recently decided to expand their presence in the Montreal market. Les VdR has therefore undertaken to establish permanent bases in two specific strategic Montreal venues in order to provide its audiences with high quality artistic programming throughout the year. Various partnerships have been established with well-established Montreal partners, which should improve annual subscription sales and reduce Les VdR's financial exposure.

The VdR Board will work closely with that the VdR Foundation, whose goal is to eliminate the organization's accumulated deficit and support the orchestra's artistic development. The two Boards are sometimes called on to work together in pursuit of their respective objectives.

Core Attributes, Skills, and Experience for All Board Positions

This section will deal with the core attributes, skills, and experience established for all board positions, which are linked to such qualities as integrity as well as the range of skills that all directors must possess.

- **Experience**

Potential directors must have at least ten years' experience in one of the fields of activity of VdR Board committees (i.e., management, finance, administrative or corporate law, accounting and/or auditing, human resources management, business management, or corporate communications).

- **Networks**

Ideally, future directors will be members of a business or professional network in which they are well known and influential for having recently held or for currently holding positions of responsibility.

- **Presence and Commitment**

Future directors must be prepared to show their willingness to get involved on behalf of Les VdR, to share their knowledge and know-how with their fellow Board members, and to make the efforts required to attend Board meetings, committees, as well as Les VdR's annual general meeting.

- **Judgment and Integrity**

Future directors must have a spotless career and professional track record guaranteeing a high degree of integrity and responsibility.

- **Interest in the Cultural Product**

Each director, with the exception of Volunteer Committee representatives, must demonstrate an interest in Les Violons du Roy through a financial contribution to the organization. This contribution may be made through purchase of a season subscription, an annual donation, or participation in one of the organization's fundraising events. Directors take part in the organization's fundraising and promotion activities.

Abilities, Knowledge and Specific Experience for Directors Sitting on Various Board Committees

This section specifies the sorts of abilities, knowledge, and specific experience that candidates must have in order to optimize the board's effectiveness. These include functional, technical, professional, and leadership abilities. These requirements are determined according to the abilities and knowledge that the board might be missing, and are designed to provide the corporation with a full complement of the abilities and knowledge it needs. They are listed by order of importance. In selecting future directors, the goal will be to secure, at a minimum, the following elements:

Audit Committee (two positions)

Future directors must have an undergraduate degree in administration and hold or have held the title of CA, CGA, or CMA. Ideally, members should be active members of a professional accounting firm or have ceased to be so no more than five years previously. They must be familiar with the generally recognized accounting principles in Canada. They must also be familiar with risk management and the various associated controls by having worked either in business or consulting. They must be committed to optimal resource management and be familiar with corporate accounting and auditing techniques. They must have a firm grasp of tax laws governing nonprofit corporations.

Funding Committee (three positions)

Future directors must be part of the Quebec City or Montreal business community. They must work or have worked in upper-level business management. They must be familiar with the financial community in general. Ideally, they should have experience with fundraising campaigns, having held specific responsibilities for a nonprofit organization, and should be familiar with the arts and culture community through previous board experience or through other involvement. They must have experience organizing or participating in various fundraising campaigns in support of various social or cultural causes. They must be active members of a business network or professional association in which they take on, or have taken on, certain responsibilities. They must be recognized in their field for their leadership and professional commitment.

Human Resources Committee (two positions)

Future directors must be familiar with human resources policies in business. They must also be familiar with best practices in the field and be aware of the importance of human resources in organization performance. They must have at least five years upper-level experience in the field. They must be aware of the importance of communication within organizations and constantly put this awareness into action. They must know the importance of recognizing employee and volunteer contributions to corporate performance and be able to put in place various mechanisms to support such recognition. Ideally, they should be involved socially as members or volunteers in other nonprofit organizations. They must have good communication skills and display authentic and credible insight and values.

Governance Committee (three positions)

Future directors must be familiar with the role of a director through sitting or having sat within the past five years on the board of directors of a for-profit or nonprofit corporation. They must show leadership, while their extensive management experience must allow them to approach strategic issues simply. They must know the importance of good management practices and be able to gauge the risks of various strategies and to express opinions in a respectful manner. They must have sound judgment and be able to provide their colleagues with good advice. Their wisdom and knowledge should inspire respect and their career success attest to their expertise and skill in managing organizations.

(2011-05-09)