ThoughtLuck #9: *Solidarity*

Solidarity statements abound, and yet what do we envision when we think of solidarity among BIPOC artists? How do we address structural anti-Blackness in the arts?

With the above questions posed, one member introduced a youth music festival that valued and sought to create a well-represented student body. The question of funding came up--where does one find funding for the arts in general, especially when one is trying to create something new?

The discussion turned to the idea of cultural memory, and it was stated that "the problem with classical music is many feel like they rely on established institutions, which are immovable." To this, another responded; "they're immovable because of where the money comes from," and it was suggested that change can only happen at the grassroots level, where money comes from all manner of sources. But what does "grassroots" mean? What parties are involved?

By contrast, the process of change in a large orchestra was described as intricate and slow-moving, involving three separate orchestra committees and considerations of "quality" and donor relations. Doug Shadle's research on "excellence" as the raison d'etre of many arts organizations in the early 20th century was cited, and this led to a discussion of what "excellence" and the "good" actually represented and what standards they were measured against.

Another point that the group discussed was the importance of representation (esp. Black and Latinx representation) in performing groups and the processes by which organizations could expand representation. For some, tokenization might be considered collateral damage in pursuing the larger cause of hiring changes--"do it first and see what happens." For others, change must be slow because of various institutional obstacles. With regards to motivating rigid institutions, one offered "the only way to move establishments is to make them jealous." How? " Demonstrate. If you believe in something, do it. Make the thing; don't point to it. Once other presenters trust you, and they see what you're doing, they will trust you."

Transitions are uncomfortable. Security is alluring. Immobility is death.

"Classical music is an ethnic music with an enthusiastic pr team." --Melissa Panlasigui.
https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_panlasigui_decolonizing_musical_hierarchy

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