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Zemon

LEADING THE OCTAVES

**-An Evaluation of a collegiate a cappella
group's leadership.**

**Matt Zemon
Dr. Ciulla
Sr. Project
4/15/94**

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INTRODUCTION

Collegiate a cappella music comes from traditional a cappella music which is defined in the New Oxford Dictionary as, "In chapel style...unaccompanied." A cappella music originated in the Gregorian Chanting found in the Jewish heritage and then expanded on by the Catholic Church. Collegiate a cappella music, according to the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America (CASA), began in a few selected colleges around the country. This collegiate a cappella music came as an extension of the more traditional chorus music that the colleges offered and differed primarily in that the groups goals combined the performance of a show choir, the musicality of a more classically based group, and the excitement of singing more contemporary pieces.

Over the years collegiate a cappella music has taken off. Currently there are almost 400 groups licensed by CASA in America alone. This paper is going to look at different methods of leading these a cappella groups and reflect upon my four years as an a cappella group's Business Manager.

Trying to gain a wide perspective before writing, I began this paper by looking at some general leadership situations in music groups, including a careful analysis of the leadership in the Detroit String Quartet. After learning of some of the peripheral issues, I focused on collegiate a cappella by interviewing members of three collegiate a cappella groups (one women's and two male). Next I wrote down a basic history on my group, the Octaves, and followed that by interviewing nine of the members in the group. I finished the paper by evaluating the different leadership structures and styles that I encountered and discussing my feelings of the leadership most appropriate for Octaves at different stages of group development.

GENERAL RESEARCH

There are many things that make or break a music group, other than the music. Appearance, reputation, backing, timing, and economics are just a few. In a recent article Peter Nero, the famed leader of the Philadelphia Pops, reflects about the start of his illustrious career. It was 1960 and Nero was deciding whether to pursue a career in classical music (where his training lied) or in pops and jazz (which he preferred.) RCA helped make up his mind.

They were looking for a pops pianist they could promote the heck out of...In those days a record company could make a star out of anyone they wished, and they felt they needed one at the piano.

The book "Glenn Miller and His Orchestra" spends the first third talking about the , "Band that failed" and the second two thirds discussing "the band that made it". Even U2, a popular group for the last decade, has had its shares of ups and downs, related to non-music issues more often than not.

THE DETROIT STRING QUARTET

Tory Butterworth did a careful analysis of The Detroit String Quartet in J. Richard Hackman's book, "Groups that work (and those that don't)." This group, like the a cappella groups I will be examining later in the paper, was a part time effort for the members of the group. Three of the members were also members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit String Quartet was designed to be something they enjoyed, not a necessary source of income.

The Detroit String Quartet consists of four musicians: Jim, Inez, David and John. Jim is the founder and idea man of the group. Jim is also the person who does most of the organizational work behind the group. Inez is in her forties and the only member not in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. David is in his fifties

and is a very serious, pensive man. John is the only non-original member of the group but has had considerable experience with string quartets from other string quartets he has played with.

Rehearsals begin within ten minutes after the last person arrives. They run smoothly and professionally and an "air of ease and bonhomie pervades... Decisions [are] made and executed almost invisibly, without explicit discussion. (209)" The group is managed in a very low-key style. Jim performs most of the organizational work because he is the one most concerned with how they are done. When there are small problems in the group, for example an individual arriving late, a single member talks to the tardy person and the problem resolves itself. Never in Butterworth's research did he hear a group member scold another for not doing an adequate job.

The quartet does not aspire to be a "world-class" quartet but it constantly performs better than expected, especially considering that the quartet is a part time effort for its participants. It would be impossible for the DSQ to perform at the level of the world's best quartets because three of the four members play 20 hours a week with another group. This not only takes time away from the quartet's rehearsal time, it has a significant impact on the players' musical style. While being a part-time group has its disadvantages, the quartet is able to focus on their commitment to musical excellence and not concentrate on the commercial success. The members of the group have been playing in large ensembles for many years, the quartet provides a small, intimate musical outlet for them. Concerts done for commercial purposes only are treated lightheartedly and not given the attention that a challenging Debussy would require.

The Detroit String Quartet wants to be a group that "got along" with each other. This goal of interpersonal harmony is recognized by all of the members. The DSQ also wants to be an entirely self-governing body. Members of the

group feel a sense of personal responsibility for both cohesiveness and functionality. Each member is competent, committed, and a dedicated musician. Also, being an out-reach of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra allows the group a number of advantages. First, each of the members have a steady source of income that is not dependent on the success of the quartet. Second, there is a ready talent-pool on the occasion that they need to replace a member. Third, there is an automatic, and rather extensive, referral source. Many leads for concerts come from the other members of the symphony.

Group norms came from the original members and from the music. In a group as small as a quartet, an isolated mistake can ruin a work. Members were literally "at the mercy" of each other. "The basic task of the quartet-making music-stands high on all three of the factors that Hackman and Oldham (1980) identify as critical for work motivation and satisfaction: meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of the results. The work was extraordinarily meaningful to the members, both because each person cared personally about making music and because it required a level of skill that most people do not have..." (216).

Making beautiful music was far more important to the group than commercial success. Because they were not dependent on the finances of the group, they were able to take the extra time needed for musical perfection and not worry about scheduling concert tours. The DSG "did not need to take that one extra performance to make an extra dollar" (221). The DSQ is an example of a small musical group that worked well in meeting all of the members goals-musically and commercially.

OUT OF THE BLUE

Duke University's "Out Of The Blue" is one of the finest women's collegiate a cappella groups in the country. Their 1993/1994 album, Legacy won "Best Album" and a score of other awards. In the Spring of 1994 they were selected from hundreds on women's a cappella groups to perform at Carnegie Hall. The group has been together for 14 years and have released four albums. They do two major concerts on Duke's campus each year and approximately 45 smaller shows.

The formal leadership structure for Out Of The Blue consists of a President, a Business Manager and a Musical director. There are also smaller, more task oriented positions: tour manager, publicity, small concert manager, large concert manager, historian, social chair and alumni relations. Having ten officers for fourteen positions sounds like a lot, but the members of Out Of The Blue feel that it adds an additional sense of "personal motivation" to all the members. In addition to the officers, each member receives their own copy of the constitution each year that, "helps ground them in the tradition."

The members I interviewed seemed to like the leadership structure of the group. While some rules are strict (members are allowed only three excused absences a year) they feel that the power is "not centralized" and "well-distributed." The officers feel that the three main positions were task oriented but also ambiguous enough so that the individual person could mold the role to fit her. Two of the three interviewees complained about the role of the president. They felt that a presidential position was not really necessary in the type of group that they had.

The Business Manager handles the business end. The Musical Director deals with the music. The President has no concrete issues to deal with. It is difficult for the President to command respect.

The three members said that the group did have its share of break-downs in leadership. The break-down's came from two main areas: inner-main officers and inter main-officers and the rest of the group. The conflicts between the main officers were a result of a lack of clarity in the specific roles and power for each officer. During the course of the year some of the duties and power distribution overlapped and tensions arose. (For example, this year's President wanted to be Musical Director but didn't win that position.) While this is a structure issue, it is the personalities of these specific officers that let the tension build until there was a dramatic breakdown. The conflicts between the group and the officers were a result of a perception that the officers had "all the power." The officers claim that they worked hard to fight that perception but, in some cases, they do have more power just by the nature of the position. The officers also felt that a lot of this tension was a result of the newest members gaining more confidence and wanting more of a say in the group. The members felt the tension amongst the officers and just wanted to have a more even distribution of power, regardless of who held what title.

All of the members of Out Of The Blue enjoyed their experience and were grateful for the opportunity. It seemed that the older members were more appreciative of their experience but also ready to move on with their lives. One member said:

When I first joined Out Of The Blue I was completely enamored by it. Being Musical Director has certainly altered my relationship with the group. Part of that is also related to the turnover....I am not particularly close to these women....

As far as restructuring the group goes, Out Of The Blue seems pretty content with what they have. One common theme that runs through my leadership restructuring question is a clearer role description for each of the officers. A second was creating an assistant Musical Director to learn the ins and

outs of that side of the group. And, even with as smooth of rehearsals as they have, they also feel that there needs to be a better way to increase a person's personal commitment level to the group.

THE GENTLEMEN OF THE COLLEGE

The William and Mary Gentlemen of the College, like the Octaves, have been around for four years. The group consists of fifteen men who audition either in the Fall or Spring semesters. They do about one concert a week or 25-30 a year. The Gentlemen of The College have released one tape and have a second one coming out soon. The funding for the group comes from honorariums and concerts. The Gentlemen of the College take one major trip every Spring Break.

The "top" leadership for the Gentlemen of the College is unique in that it consists of one nominated officer and one elected one. The nominated officer is the Musical Director. He is hand picked by the Musical Director who is leaving. The entire group votes on the Business Manager who also acts as the President. The Gentlemen of the College also have three Junior Officers: Historian, Publicity, and Concert Manager.

From what I could gather, the members seem happy with the leadership structure. The "break-downs" in leadership that the group have is usually personality driven. According to both members I interviewed these break downs have no serious or long-term effects. The guys in the Gentlemen of the College seem to get along well. As is expected with a group of college men, some of them socialize together and some do not. They practice twice a week for two hours at a time and, for the most part, the rehearsals go smoothly with little fooling around.

One interesting item that came out of my interviews came from my discussion with this year's Business Manager. He explained that at the end of the year he would step down from the Business Manager position and just be an outside helper. This was not a decision he made because he was unhappy with

the group, he made it to keep the distribution of leadership going and to just take a break.

The Gentlemen of the College are an entirely self-led group and do certain specific things to ensure that everyone feels included. One of these things is in the annual formation of the attendance policy. Instead of giving the members of the group a mandate, each year the entire group votes on an attendance policy. For the last three years the policy has been two unexcused rehearsals and you are brought up to the group for dismissal. With a 2/3 decision you are then be released from the group. In the last four years only three people have missed two rehearsals; none were kicked out.

The Gentlemen of the College do have a constitution. Everyone receives a copy at the beginning of the year but it is not referred to often. According to both of the people I spoke with, "the constitution is really only used for election purposes...but it's nice to have."

The last of the original members left the group in May of 1993. He had been the Musical Director for three years. The transition was not as bad as they had expected it to be. He had designated a new musical director early in the year and they had worked out all of the things he was going to need to know. The new director has a very different style than the old one but has been doing a good job. The group feels that through the last four years they have established themselves and are confident that they will be around for many more.

THE BISON CHIPS

The Bucknell Bison Chips have just recently celebrated their 20th year anniversary. An extremely popular group on the Bucknell campus, the "Chips" consists of anywhere between 11 and 13 men who audition in the Fall of each year. (One of the members that I talked with came to Bucknell specifically to be a "Chip.") While the group road-trips often and performs numerous small concerts, they limit themselves to three major concerts on campus each year: two in the Fall and their standing-room-only "Chip-Fest" in the Spring. The Bison Chips have released three records, one CD and one seven inch Christmas Record that is "kind of funky." The funding for the group comes from the Chip-Fest (1300 tickets at \$5) and their album sales.

Having a twenty year foundation, The Bucknell Bison Chips are organized. While other groups claim to have a challenging audition, the Bucknell Bison Chips do and truly select people based on both musicianship and performance ability. They have an initiation process (similar to a fraternity) where they break down the person's confidence, scare them a little, and then accept them with significant amounts of alcohol. The members that I spoke with all considered this process as one of their fondest memories.

The leadership of the Bison Chips consists of a Musical Director who, "runs the show." There is a Business Manager who focuses on road trips, parties, fundraising, etc. There is also a treasurer who doubles as an alumni relations person. There are mixed feelings about their leadership. One member claims that "Everything seems to run smoothly." He felt that the structure was good and that while the leader runs rehearsal, he receives input from everybody. When talking with the current Musical Director, however, the attitude was different. He felt that the leadership is only as good as the people in the positions.

Last year, for example, we had an extremely religious, conservative musical director. This type of personality, in some cases, led to a conflict of interests. Also, last year's Business Manager was not as dynamic as this year's.

When asked how the group survived he answered, "Oh we managed, we just were not as good as we could have been."

Break-downs for the Bison Chips show themselves with the people's attitudes. "When we aren't accomplishing much, people's attitudes get bad." According to one member, when the group gets frustrated they get into a slump and it, "is just not as much fun anymore."

The Bison Chips have a constitution but it is not referred to often. With the members of the group being as involved in other activities, not having a constitution leads to problems with people missing rehearsal. The group does not like to have strict attendance policies and believes that "Once you are a chip, you are a Chip for life." At the same time, they do stress the importance of the Bison Chip experience and are looking for a way to ensure complete attendance at rehearsal.

Overall, all the members that I spoke to were very happy to be in the group. They loved the road trips and enjoyed the recognition they receive on campus. The one complaint that I heard from the officers is that it was hard to be in a leadership position of an organization whose primary goal is to have fun. This makes it difficult to ask for more time and to get "that little bit extra in cooperation."

Musically the Bucknell Bison Chips are confident and strong. This year they were able to sing music arranged by themselves exclusively, a large accomplishment.

THE OCTAVES

The Octaves have recently released their second album. This is a remarkable accomplishment considering that the group has only been around for four years. The Octaves consist of 12 men (usually taken from the University choir) who audition in the Fall of each year. According to their members they do somewhere between 30 and 60 concerts a year and their funding comes from album sales, donations, and concerts.

Like the other a cappella groups I have looked at, the Octaves are a completely self-governing group and their leadership reflects that. The Octaves have a very flat level of organization that includes six officer positions: A Musical Director, a Business Manager, a Coordinator, a Treasurer/Alumni affairs position, an Assistant Musical Director and an Assistant Business Manager. The members of this group like the leadership but also recognize its downfalls:

One of my favorite things about the Octaves is that it is completely student run so we decided what we want to do...at the same time, when it is all students and there is no one director with the final say...it sometimes takes longer for things to get done- and it is not always a smooth ride- but it's worth it.

I think the leadership in our group is pretty good- just different. In choir of schola Erb says what is what and you keep your mouth shut. In Octaves everyone has an opinion.

Sometimes too many people think they have the Officer positions...I think it is more a personality than a structure issue.

While the Octaves do have break downs in leadership, it is very rarely in doing the tasks that they are supposed to do. Everyone I interviewed felt like the group had an amazing musical director and very talented business managers. At the same time, the group has a tendency to not pay attention when the

Musical Director is speaking or to ignore the Business Managers. Part of this is because the majority of the group does not understand what the business managers do to make the money or concerts happen and part of it is because of the part time nature of the group.

The different officers have different expectations for the group. The Business Managers goals for the group are probably the most demanding of anyone. While the musical director is aiming for musical perfection, the Business Managers are constantly striving to make the group more professional.

The group does not understand what the Business Managers do to get things. For example, arguing in public before a concert. If I try to get them to stop they say stuff like, "I don't care what the guy in the booth thinks." They don't realize that the guy in the booth helped me make the show possible.

The Coordinator position was created to enhance the communication between the group and the officers. The person who took this position was an informal leader in the group since the beginning and had hoped that this position would add a greater sense of validity or position power to his statements. In some ways it worked very well: the officers communicate often and there are very rarely any inner-officer arguments. The 1993/1994 year was the first year for this position and it is anticipated that the position will become stronger as the years go by.

While fighting between the officers is rare, fighting between the group is constant. Rehearsals are hard because we have 12 completely different types of people getting together with different goals. Some are doing it for "fun", others to "create music in a less-formal setting than choir", others to, "pick up women" and still others to "travel and perform." The different expectations of the group leads to large variances in the members' attitudes towards it. The individual personalities also create many conflicts.

The personalities are a big issue with us. With a school as small as ours and with URs musical history, we have been auditioning primarily for musical ability. We have not had the luxury of auditioning for personality yet. Leadership can only do so much.

The members of the group say that the effects of the break-downs in leadership are very short-term. They describe it as "healthy", "creating a work room that is temporarily less effective", and "short-term bad feelings." One member said, "it makes the group feel like a pressured business as opposed to a light hearted sing-a-long."

One of the problems that came up in all my interviews, was the group members lack of a sense of personal responsibility to the group. Many members miss numerous rehearsals, it is a norm to show up late to practice, very few people do the musical arranging for the group and some even have missed concerts. One member said, "I don't understand some of their motivation. We shouldn't be fighting to sing." Others suggest a "more focused/concentrated rehearsal" to be consistent with the importance of practice. The consensus of the group was, however, that people missed rehearsals because it was "their personality."

The Octaves are not something they do for credit and they know that they can miss a rehearsal or show up late and still record the CD and sing in the concert. We are not in a position to say, "no you can't" yet.

All in all, the group members seem happy to be in the group and optimistic about the future. They believe that musically they can sing with any school out there and that the performance questions will work themselves out over time. One member said:

Musically we come and go. Sometimes we can sing with anyone- other times we suck. We need to become consistent. But when you

*look at our album- that is when you realize the talent of the group.
Our first album was good and this year's should be in the top five in
the country. We just need to age some.*

The younger members of the group are looking forward to assuming more leadership responsibilities and the older members are glad they had the opportunities that they did.

The group taught me that guys that are very different can get together and have fun- you learn how well you can get to know someone.

It is cool to be a part of a group that is growing so quickly.

AN OBJECTIVE HISTORY OF THE OCTAVES

When Dr. Erb came to the University of Richmond there was a men's glee club and a women's glee club. Dr. Erb combined the two and created the University Choir and created the Schola Cantorum to be more of a select group. There has not been a male a cappella group on the University of Richmond campus since Dr. James Erb created the Schola Cantorum and the University of choir.

During the Fall Semester of 1990 I organized a group of men around the idea of creating a collegiate a cappella group at the University of Richmond. The Octaves was formed to provide a fun, musical medium for Richmond College men to express themselves that was different than the standard University music programs. It was also created with a mission of promoting the University off campus.

While we were holding our first practices I went through the University procedure of creating an official campus organization. This procedure involved writing a constitution, acquiring a faculty advisor, and receiving approval from the student-faculty committee. During that year we practiced a couple times a week and sang small concerts on campus.

Our second year was a little more organized than the first. With the organizational formalities behind us we decided to ask for musical help from a female student at the University. With her accompaniment on the piano and the musical direction of Chris O'Brien, The Octaves began practicing twice a week, every week. While we had held small concerts around campus, it was in March of this year that we had our first relatively big show in North Court. For this concert we invited the Bucknell Bison Chips to come down and sing with us. While we filled most of North Court and gave the best performance we could,

Bucknell humbled us and, at the same time, gave us a sight to set our goals on. The week following the Bucknell concert we did our first tour of the South. We performed for schools and town groups in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. During that week the group became significantly tighter musically and inner-personally. The year ended with our most successful performance to date at Bucknell University's Chip-Fest. We had come a long way since they sang with us five weeks earlier.

By our third year we were really moving. Now practicing six hours a week, we began the year with a performance of the National Anthem and Billy Joel's, "For the Longest Time" at Veteran's Stadium in Philadelphia. A sold-out parent's weekend concert in the Pier and road trips to other schools and for the Development Office of our school helped establish the group as another player on the collegiate a cappella circuit.. We recorded our first real album that Spring (released on CD and cassette) and finalized our entry into the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America.

Organizationally we made some massive changes this year. In the interest of complete independence we decided to attempt to release our two accompanists/assistant musical directors after the first concert. Due to their personalities and some of our group members strong personal feelings towards these two members, they were still involved with the group through our December concert. At this point there were more conflicts and problems with keeping the two members that the group unanimously decided to totally remove them from the group. While this was a hard personal decision to make, in retrospect it was necessary both in terms of our independence as a group, our confidence in our own ability, and our inner-personal relations. During this year we created assistant positions or a mentor-mentee relationship for training purposes. We created assistants for the Business Manager and for the Musical

Director. At the end of this year we also eliminated the position of President and re-created it under the new name, "Coordinator". This change was specifically designed to create a flat level of organization. As a group we felt that there were three leadership tasks to get accomplished: we needed to practice and learn our music; we needed to have places to sing; we needed to communicate information. If these three things happened, the rest of the tasks could basically take care of themselves. The Coordinator position was designed to facilitate communication between all the officers and the rest of the group. The person holding this position had been an informal leader since the beginning of the group. His opinion was highly respected and we decided he was a natural for the position.

1993/1994 was our best year. We had a "Fire Code Breaking" , completely sold out parent's weekend concert and two excellent shows at the Camp Theater in December. In January we had a fantastic tour of Florida, which included concerts for the Mayor of Orlando, Busch Gardens, Universal Studios, and USAir Vacations. During the Fall and Spring semesters we had the opportunity to sing with groups such as Duke's Out of the Blue, the UNC Clefhangers, and the Virginia Gentlemen, and the Princeton Tigerlilies. We also held an extremely successful concert over Easter weekend, again in the Camp Theater.

In April we released our second CD and cassette ("Groovedaddy") and in May, American Family Cruises will be hosting our first international concert tour. We will be singing on board their "American Adventure" cruise ship, which leaves from Miami and stops in Nassau, Casa dde Campo, Serena Key, and Key West.

CONCLUSION

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OCTAVES

A musical group, like a sports team, must function as a single unit to be effective. Larson and LaFasto spend a lot of time evaluating effective teams in their book, "TeamWork" and talk about high performance teams as having, "both a clear understanding of the goal to be achieved and a belief that the goal embodies a worthwhile or important result (27)." When they went on to talk about an ineffective team, they said that the majority of the time the, "ineffectiveness involved...the goal(27)."

The goal had become unfocused; the goal had become politicized; the team had lost a sense of urgency or significance about its objective; the team's efforts had become diluted by too many other competing goals; individual goals had taken priority over team goals..

For The Octaves, a young group in terms of age and organizational development, the goals were driven by the founding members and the officers.

While it takes many positions to make a musical group work, one of the most important positions in any musical group is fundamentally the Musical Director. The Octaves have gone through a few types of Musical Directors. The first Musical Director was a brilliant musician and a good singer but he was unable to play the piano and he was not a very effective leader. He did not have a "clear vision" for the group and he did not look at his position as anything other than a job in an extra-curricular activity. In a time when the group needed leadership, he provided musical management. Because of this the Octaves looked outside of the group for musical assistance and found it in the form of two Westhampton women.

The two Westhampton women, both good musicians, volunteered their time to help us learn our parts and to keep the rehearsals under control. With twelve

guys getting together to create music, it was necessary to have someone with "position power" and control to help motivate them and to keep them productive. Within two years the group matured to a stage where they were able to manage themselves completely from members within the group. At this realization they released the women from the group and the position of Musical Director was now left up to a very gifted Sophomore from Singapore.

I mention the Musical Directors age and heritage because both play a part in his ability to lead the Octaves. The Musical Director is beyond a doubt a phenomenal musician and the group respects him for that talent. At the same time, the Musical Director does not have the same pop-music background as the rest of the group and his opinions of a good song and a bad song are sometimes dramatically different from the rest of the groups. And while he always recognizes the purely musical value of a song, not having the American upbringing makes it hard for him to understand the emotional draw to songs that are not the most musically intricate such as Happy Days, Conjunction Junction, and Witch Doctor.

This Musical Director, similar to the first Musical Director, is not a disciplinarian. When it should be the Musical Director who is telling the members of the group to focus or to stop fooling around, this task is often left to the Business Manager. As this Musical Director has gotten older and more confident in his position, there has been a dramatic increase in his assertiveness, but still not to a commanding level. Part of the reason for this comes from this Musical Directors' motivation for being in the group. This Musical Director is in the group to learn about leading and conducting a small men's chorus and not because he loves pop music or for performance reasons. Keith would agree with Larson and LaFasto say that, "The loss of focus or concentration on the goal by team members...come from a variety of factors...the predominant factors are

politics and individuals agenda (37).” Keith’s goals are in musical achievement and it is not in his nature to get visibly angry. When the group has different agendas, he relies on the Business Manager to keep the group focused on concerts and he, slowly and steadily, works on the groups’ musical ability.

One of the reason the Octaves are an interesting study is because they were founded by a person who was a much better Business Manager than musician. In the Octaves, the Business Manager has been the same person for four year and has definite ideas as to where the group should be and/or could be. If he had his way, The Octaves would become a first priority for everyone involved. At the same time, he recognizes that not everyone has the same commitment level to the group and there are those who joined not realizing the demands he would put on them.

The Business Manager/Founder’s vision for The Octaves has pushed the group into producing two albums, generating the types of publicity they have produced, and performing the number of concerts they have done (about 50 this year). Since the beginning of the group, the Business Manager is the one who has coordinated every tour the group has been on and arranged for each concert. There are two major problem with this Business Manager, one that could effect any Business Manager and one that effects him just because of the nature of the group. The first problem is that this Business Manager has a tendency to run the show and not delegate responsibility. It was not until the end of the Octaves’ third year that the Business Manager made some efforts to find people to help him and, because the group was so used to having everything done for the, there was little cooperation. The second problem is that the Business Manager is the weakest musical member of the group. While that was not a very big deal for the first few years, as the group rolled into its fourth year the level of musicianship (especially for a school with an extremely limited talent pool) was

very high. Because the guys did not respect his musical mind, many times his marketing ideas were shot down. It became impossible for him to argue a point that the group deemed detrimental to the music, regardless of whether it actually was or not. (On a couple of occasions the group tried ideas that had previously been rejected, and they worked. The Business Manager feels strongly that there are more ideas that could have worked had they been given the chance.)

In retrospect, musically the Business Manager should have dropped out of the group before the start of the fourth year. However, part of the Business Managers motivation for working with the Octaves was the reward of performing in front of people. The Business Manager never wanted to be a musical section leader and recognizes his importance as a different leader of the group. As much as possible he tries to control his anger and frustration and set a positive example. He recognizes that everyone's vision for the group is a little different, but he does his best to communicate what he sees as possible for the group and when there is doubt, he tries to show how the doubts could be alleviated.

Robert Reich observed, "rarely do even Big ideas emerge any longer from the solitary labor..it requires groups...to discover new dimensions." The current Business Manager recognized his tendency to dominate the organizational work behind the group at the end of the 1992/1993 year and, at the beginning of this year, decided to ask the group about creating assistant positions that would train under classmen about the tasks relating to the positions. Unanimously the group decided to appoint an Assistant Business Manager and an Assistant Musical Director.

The Assistant Business Manager is a sophomore. He has been working with the Business Manager since the beginning of the year. The Assistant

Business Manager is very dedicated to the group, has a great vision of the group's future, and is also extremely intelligent (Oldham scholar). The man is also a good musician. All of these factors would seem to make the Assistant Business Manager an ideal leader for the Octaves. But, the Assistant Business Manager is also relatively young and so extremely smart he is eccentric. With the age group and maturity level of the men in the group, often times eccentricity is not accepted and the Assistant Business Manager is mocked. The Assistant Business Manager has matured quite a bit over the last year. One of the characteristics of his age, not knowing when to stop arguing a point, has gotten dramatically better and so has his ability to restrain himself from "making fun" of other people when he runs out of constructive arguments to make. The Assistant Business Manager has worked very hard to facilitate better communication than the Business Manager had done (partly because this year there was considerably much more stuff going on) and has also worked at doing everything in his power to make the group as successful as possible. For all intrinsic purposes, the Business Manager and Assistant Business Manger acted as co-business managers and there was easily enough stuff to keep both of them busy.

Some of the problems seen in the Assistant Business Manager can be seen in the Assistant Musical Director. The Assistant Musical Director is a Sophomore and an excellent musician. However, the Assistant Musical Director has a tendency to loose his temper and to be downright mean when he is in a bad mood. Part of these are adjustments to a leadership role that hopefully he will see over the next year and part of these are just an issue of maturing. While age will make the Assistant Musical Director an even better musician, we can not neglect the fact that he is an excellent director and that we are one of the few

collegiate a cappella groups that can function (even on an entire tour) without our Musical Director.

According to Larson and LaFasto, a "key factor in differentiating high- and low-succesteams is the structure of the team itself" (39). Being a musical group, the Octaves decided that there was not a need for the traditional President position but there still needed to be a person in charge of facilitating communication and to add a middle balance between the Business Manager and the Musical director. The Octaves also wanted to keep a very flat level of organization. With this in mind the group created the position of Coordinator

The coordinator position has been around for one year. The first person to take this job was an excellent musician and an informal leader of the group since the beginning. While this person was an excellent informal leader, as a formal leader there has been some problems. First, this person has a strong personality and can be insensitive and stubborn when he does not like what is going on, regardless of the feelings from the rest of the group. While he is frequently looked to for leadership, he often does not respond as a formal leader and tends to retreat back into his own world. The Coordinator also gets visibly frustrated with the group and tends to "give-up" when this happens- while this is bad from any member of the group, it is especially bad for a formal leader to have these types of reactions.

The treasurer of the group is a math major. The Business Manager handled the financial affairs of the group for the first three years until the duties became just too much and the Treasurer position was created. The current treasurer is very quiet and treats his position as a duty more than an as an active participant in the group's leadership. While the group now has an accurate balance and good ledger, the Treasurer does not play a significant role in the group's leadership.

The structure of the Octaves is good. They have a very flat, even structure that in theory promotes democracy and creativity. One of the problems with the Octaves is that they have been forced to audition for talent only due to the relatively small talent pool at the University of Richmond. Larson and LaFasto talk about competent team members as being:

members who possess (1) the necessary technical abilities to achieve the desired objective, and (2) the personal characteristics required to achieve excellence while working well with others.

The Octaves do have some very strong personalities in the group and, in the future need to audition for character as much as music. Doing this would eliminate many of the fights and discussions that happen.

The Octaves seem to be in good shape heading out of their fourth year. While they do have a good structure, The Octaves still need to flatten out more. One way to do this is to have the coordinator facilitate the communication between the Business Manager and other officers and the rest of the group. Goal clarity can be enhanced by re-writing the constitution and providing copies to each of the people auditioning and to the members of the group. Part of the problems in people not knowing about gigs can be alleviated by the combination of an attendance policy and the better communication from the Coordinator. In keeping with the flat level of organization, voting yearly on the attendance policy would be an effective participative idea.

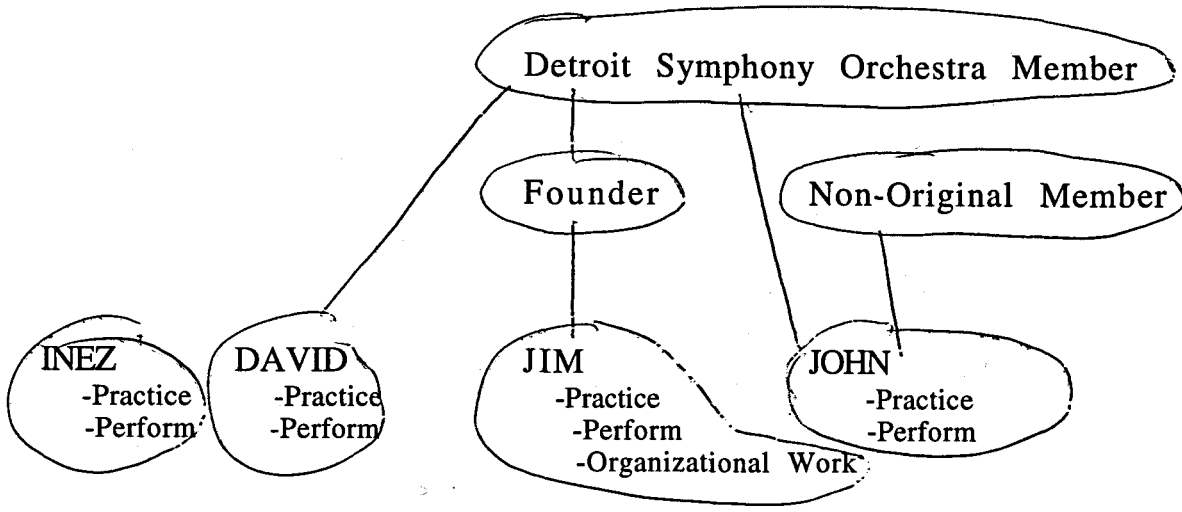
This paper looked at a few of the different ways to lead musical groups. It discussed the contextual factors and external influences that impact the group and hopefully revealed areas in which the Octaves have succeeded and failed. This paper is designed to be read, digested, and then utilized in a small musical group's leadership.

Appendix A:

Interview Questions For A Cappella Groups:

- 1. How long has your group been together?**
- 2. How many people are in the group?**
- 3. When are auditions held?**
- 4. How many concerts did you do this year?**
- 5. How many albums have you released? Were they CDs and/or cassettes?**
- 6. Where does the funding for the group come from?**
- 7. How many relatively large trips did your group make this year?**
- 8. How long have you been in the group?**
- 9. How did you first hear about the group?**
- 10. What were your first impressions of the group? At auditions? At the first practice?**
- 11. Describe the leadership of the group? What is the structure? Formal/informal?**
- 12. How do you feel about the leadership of the group?**
- 13. Are there break-downs in leadership? Is it a personality or a structure issue?**
- 14. What are the effects on the group when there is a break-down in leadership?**
- 15. How would you restructure the group? Why?**
- 16. What do you see as your role in the group for the upcoming years?**
- 17. How do you feel about the group?**
- 18. Musically are you happy with the group?**
- 19. How do rehearsals work with your group?**
- 20. What happens when someone misses rehearsal?**
- 21. Does your group have a constitution?**
- 22. Does the group refer to the constitution often?**
- 23. Do you have a copy of the constitution?**

**APPENDIX B
DETROIT STRING QUARTET**



No constitution.

**APPENDIX C
DUKE'S OUT OF THE BLUE
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

OFFICERS:

BUSINESS MANAGER
-financial duties
-fundraising

PRESIDENT
-leadership
-communication
-Responsibility

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
-Music
-Rehearsals
-Conducts

JR. OFFICERS:

Tour manager Publicity Small concert manager Large concert manager
Historian Social chair Alumni relations.

SINGER SINGER SINGER SINGER

Officers are elected for one year as stated in constitution.

**APPENDIX D
THE WILLIAM AND MARY GENTLEMEN OF THE COLLEGE
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

OFFICERS:

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

(picked by retiring musical director)

- Music
- Rehearsal
- Conducts

BUSINESS MANAGER

(Elected)

- Acts as President
- Financial Duties
- Fund-raising

Junior Officers:

Historian

Publicity

Concert manager

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

SINGER

**APPENDIX E
THE BUCKNELL BISON CHIPS
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

- Music
- Rehearsals
- Conducting
- Responsibility

BUSINESS MANAGER

- Parties
- Fund Raising
- Road Trips

TREASURER/ALUMNI

- Financial Duties
- Alumni coordination

SINGER

**SINGER
SINGER**

SINGER

**SINGER
SINGER**

SINGER

**SINGER
SINGER**

SINGER

**APPENDIX F
THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND OCTAVES
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

MUSICAL DIRECTOR	BUSINESS MANAGER	COORDINATOR	Treasurer/Alumni			
-Practice	-Fund-Raising	-Facilitate	-Financial			
-Rehearsals	-Publicity	communication	-Alumni letters			
-Conducting	-Management					
-Music	-Coordination					
Asst. Musical Director	Asst. Business Manager			Singer	Singer	Singer
-Learn role of Musical Director	-Learn role of Business Manager					
-Take over in absence of M.D.	-Take over in absence of B.M.			Singer	Singer	Singer

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(Names with-held for confidentiality.)