



Leading Roles

Michael M. Kaiser

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Not-for-profit arts organizations struggled to survive the recent economic recession. In this increasingly hardscrabble environment, it is absolutely imperative that the boards of these organizations function as energetically, creatively, and efficiently as possible. Michael M. Kaiser's personal history with boards of arts organizations began when he served on the board of the Washington Opera (now the Washington National Opera) in 1983. Today, in his capacity as president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Kaiser recently completed a 50-state, 69-city Arts in Crisis tour. Board issues came up repeatedly as central to the success or failure of the organization. Drawing on these and many other conversations, nationally and internationally, Kaiser's book offers members of boards and staffs the information they need to create the healthy atmosphere necessary to thriving arts organizations. Organized in a clear, readable, question-and-answer format, *Leading Roles* covers every aspect of board participation in the life of the organization, including mission and governance; fundraising and marketing responsibilities; the relationship of the board to the artistic director, executive director, and staff; and its responsibilities for planning and budgeting. Kaiser addresses boards in crisis, international boards, and boards of arts organizations of color. Throughout, he emphasizes the importance of transparency and clarity in the board's dealings with its own members and those of the arts community of which it is a part, showing how anything less results in contentiousness that can immobilize an arts organization, or even tear it apart.

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