

Management and Arts, 4e ©

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Chapter 8 Leadership and Group Dynamics

SUPPLEMENTAL CASE STUDY

The *Tosca* Crisis

As General Manager of the Red Rocks Opera Company, you typically end up dealing with problems that can't be resolved by your staff in the normal course of things. Late last week, Eileen, your Company Manager who in her late 20's and who has worked with RRO for six years, was in your office to discuss Frederick, the Music Director and Marcella, one of your principle artists in your upcoming production of *Tosca*. Evidently, there was a "moment" in rehearsal last week with Frederick and Marcella, the soprano hired to sing the lead in *Tosca*. You ask what the "moment" was, since you don't remember reading about any problems in the rehearsal reports from stage management. Eileen tells you, "Well, they got in a shouting match over tempos. He called her out on slowing down the tempo in her first aria and she promptly told him she was sick of being rushed through the whole show." She said something to the effect, "You're obviously still learning the craft and she knew better."

Frederick is a young (35) up and coming conductor in the regional opera circuit and Marcella is not one to share her age publicly. You know she's 55 and isn't known for her patience. Your artistic director, David, who is also stage director for this production of *Tosca*, wanted Marcella for the role because she knew it well and the rehearsal schedule was short. He also wanted Frederick because his fee is still within reason and he and David did a *Tosca* together two years ago for another regional opera company.

You inquire why Eileen is bringing this conflict to you now. Eileen says, "Marcella came to see me late last week and said she was not satisfied with her housing and she felt her dressing room was too cold. I told her I would do what I could, but now I don't know how to proceed. We don't have any other housing options to offer her and her dressing room isn't any colder or hotter than any of the other principal singers. Today, Marcella came in to my office yelling and screaming about her apartment and the dressing room again. My guess is she had another run in with Frederick and frankly, I'm not taking her crap anymore. I told her to leave my office and when she calms down, we will talk about the apartment and dressing room. She called me a 'stupid bitch' and stormed off yelling about quitting. I thought you should know because my guess is she's probably in David's office now making threats and raising hell."

You know Eileen to be a steady force as a Company Manager and for her to be in your office means all is not well. It's Monday and *Tosca* opens Friday and you really don't have the luxury of time to resolve these conflicts. What a way to start the week.

How would you go about quickly addressing the myriad of personnel problems inherent in this situation using the various leadership approaches you have read and studied thus far? Provide a detailed action plan for getting through the rest of the week.

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