

Good morning, delegates, fellow Governing Board members, Federation and Local officers & Staff, as well as our many honored guests. And WELCOME to Buffalo!

In the forty-some years I've been observing this industry, I have witnessed thirty of them from the perspective of inside an ICSOM orchestra. And the same year I joined the Utah Symphony, 1987, is also occasionally cited, by some in Management, as the year seeds were planted at the League which resulted in their multi-year search for a New Orchestral Business Model. These administrators actually point to remarks on the subject made by Earnest Fleischmann, the former CEO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, during a 1987 commencement speech which, some have mused, may have started this all off.

Since that time, a number of other words, phrases or slogans have "had their day" at the League. From Structural Deficit, to The St. Paul Model, To Relevance, to "Never Waste a Good Recession," Sustainability, Donor Fatigue, Restructuring: most seemed to be ways to address, or code words to represent, this concept of a new model. To their credit, an important lesson most learned along the way is that no national model would turn out to be that panacea for the entire industry and that what may be needed for one orchestra to increase its relevance at home may or may not have any bearing on what another ensemble does.

And though for a while some around the country seemed to almost scurry to embrace something new, some whose groups survived the downturn well, sometimes discovered that it didn't take upending any model or turning their Orchestra's mission on its ear. Often it simply took a sincere commitment from the CEO and Board to actually GROW the donor base, instead of just chronically bemoaning donor fatigue. Of course, coming out of a recession NEVER hurts. And in the last three to four years, it also helped greatly that musicians in a number of orchestras began assuming far more control over their own messaging at home, for this went a long way in countering dis-information campaigns about us by those who would (and sometimes DID) attempt to force restructuring down our throats.

As a result of these and other factors, this season has seen some positive changes of mood and tone at some various negotiation tables around the country with a number of more collaboratively collaboratively negotiated contracts ratified -- some with impressive growth over long, multi-year terms such as in Jacksonville and St. Louis -- St. Louis and some ratifying months to a year early, as in Indianapolis and Detroit.

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Yes, 'Restructure Fever' is certainly still with us, as we witnessed in Fort Worth and Pittsburgh this last season, but nationally, the fever now feels at least A LITTLE less 'viral.' Some of this may ALSO be owing to the fact that the Orchestra League recently has been re-focusing some of its attentions away from New Models and more upon the issue of diversity. I'm glad they're shifting their focus, for not only am I growing really weary from years of the New Model thing, but the subject of our diversity suddenly has more immediacy and urgency than ever now that elements within our nation emboldened feel emboldened to pedal America backwards

HARDER THAN EVER towards a darker time. On a personal note, the subject has actually forced me to look at MYSELF hard in the mirror a few times this past year and my thoughts about this have evolved somewhat in this process. They've continued to evolve even since my article about this appeared in the latest Senza Sordino

To the orchestra industry's credit, we have handled some of our equality issues between the sexes. Thanks to our standardized audition procedures, women and men have much closer to equal representation onstage, and women continue to work up the Senior Management ladder in many symphony offices nationally. Currently however, the League is more concerned with the ethnic diversity of our musicians onstage, particularly with regards to Latino and African American musicians.

But for all of us to make an impact on this issue, and for Orchestras to more fully share in the growing evolution of our communities, other aspects of orchestra life need to be honestly examined and addressed as well. There's the diversity of our repertoire & programming (an area by the way, where women composers are still struggling for better representation). There's the diversity of where we play in our communities, and of which groups of kids our orchestras will bus in to our halls. Also, the diversity of the conductors and soloists which our artist managements promote and that our symphonies engage.

There's ethnic representation inside our management offices and boardrooms. Without more diversity at the decision-making level, there is less diversity of thought, attitude and of life experience: input that could positively shape policies and ideas for keeping our orchestras vibrant into the future.

I applaud the efforts of those of our orchestras who maintain internship programs which give opportunities for grooming young adult Latino and African American musicians into the professional scene. I hope more orchestras will find a way to make this work for them, but I'd like to see these internships begun and expanded at the managerial level, as well. And while I have been assured that the League is, indeed, shining a light on all these various levels of inclusivity, I remain curious as to just how equally, and across the board, they are focusing their energies towards solutions.

Though there may seem to be fewer aspects about this that we as musicians can address than can our Managements and the League, we are hardly hamstrung in the matter. As a group, I think it may be an easy pitfall for us to think of ourselves as so inclusive and progressive, and particularly with our audition procedures, that this problem isn't even rightfully ours to fret about, when it's everyone's, really: or WILL be ultimately if it's not addressed.

ICSOM musicians in some cities have already been involved in mentoring talented young people in disadvantaged urban areas. But for these youths to have a shot at competing for work in our industry, they need much more. In addition to regular instruction, at a minimum they also need access to good instruments and supplies. They require access to groups where they can perform together and groups where they can listen and be inspired by live music. These were

things and conditions we took for granted in high school and college, and because of that, to young people without access to these, most of US can appear like we were born on 2nd base.

This is where private and corporate philanthropy can, if they have the will, collaborate with our industry to assist in filling a host of various needs, as in Boston where Symphony patrons started a program which pays for bringing more urban youth to Symphony Hall for concerts. Or with the music supply conglomerate D'Addario through their Foundation, which contributes to almost two hundred urban music education projects nationwide. This is where a larger segment of the music-industry "village" should consider coming together to work with the League and with our orchestras to further these goals. But most of these educational initiatives, even if greatly expanded upon and coordinated, are nevertheless, long term strategies, many of which will take years to see the desired results. That doesn't mean we shouldn't do them. It means we should have started this years ago and that it's more pressing than ever to move forward now. But it also means we'll have to be patient with most of these programs while hopefully addressing the various other inclusivity issues we encounter in our industry every day.

That's the official end to my diversity rant, though not necessarily to the continued evolution of my thoughts and feelings on the matter.

As many of you have read in Senza Sordino, this week marks the official end of my time as President, and of my ten-year active association with ICSOM. Without reservation, I can say that working with this esteemed body has been more impactful to me than, really, anything I can think of in my 43-year career. And though MOST of me feels that this is the right time to step away, another small part deep inside is still coming to terms with the decision. In addition, I am also stepping back from my position on the Board of our Local 104. This is all in order to devote more of my energies to my orchestra job -- for however many seasons I decide to stay on -- and to spend more time hanging out WITH my Wife, Shirley, instead of being isolated from her in the next room catching up on calls, presentations and emails.

As a colleague of mine recently told me, "It sounds as though you're cutting back to a mere 100%. (I kinda ENJOY saying that now!!)

My deepest appreciation goes out to the Governing Board and to everyone here, as well as to everyone who has passed through here during these last ten years. I only hope I've been able to assist with -- and give you and our colleagues at home -- half of what you all have given me.

Thanks everyone, and have a wonderful conference in Buffalo.