

President's Report
2019 ICSOM CONFERENCE

Park City, Utah

Paul Austin, ICSOM President
Wednesday, August 21st

SLIDE 1

Good morning. It truly is an honor to serve as ICSOM President. Thank you for trusting and supporting me in this important role for our organization.

This has been another busy year for ICSOM, and I want to highlight some of those events.

SLIDE 2

One year ago, I shared with all of you the good news that many ICSOM orchestras had settled their negotiations with progressive contracts. It continues to be a fact that the majority of ICSOM orchestras whose contracts expired this past year have settled with positive, non-concessionary agreements. In fact, nearly two dozen ICSOM orchestras experienced successful bargaining in the past two years.

SLIDE 3

Since the ICSOM conference last summer in Cincinnati, this list has grown to include The Cleveland Orchestra, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the Virginia Symphony. Congratulations to the musicians of those orchestras, their committees and AFM Locals, who worked hard to bargain a fair contract.

However, since we last met, three ICSOM orchestras have faced serious labor actions in order to protect their jobs, hundreds of jobs, in our industry.

SLIDE 4

Two ICSOM orchestras were on strike this past season, and both of them were in Chicago. The Lyric Opera Orchestra of Chicago had a 6-day strike last October, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra had a 7-week strike in March and April, the longest in CSO history.

I visited Chicago in October and March, during both strikes, to walk the picket lines, deliver a speech at a rally, and address the media. I was pleased to provide an ICSOM presence in Chicago for both the musicians of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and the CSO.

Thanks to everyone in the ICSOM family who stepped forward in our Call to Action for the musicians of the Chicago Symphony, which amounted in over two hundred thousand dollars.

SLIDE 5

Today we face a lock out of the Baltimore Symphony musicians, imposed by their management on June 17th. Actually, I was in Baltimore the day when it was announced, during a meeting of all musicians, that in 4 days they would be locked out. The musicians received this difficult news just 3 hours before performing a concert in Meyerhoff Auditorium, their home. Today you can find them outside of Meyerhoff, walking a picket line.

SLIDE 6

I am proud to say that ICSOM's Call to Action for the locked-out musicians of the Baltimore Symphony has raised over a quarter of a million dollars. The Call to Action was announced in June at the 101st AFM convention in Las Vegas, and many AFM Locals pledged their donations from the convention floor.

Thank you to all who have made a contribution to the BSO musicians during their lockout, now in its 10th week.

SLIDE 7

Here I want to make mention that ICSOM updated our website this past year, as it does tie in to the Baltimore story. I encourage you to visit ICSOM's website at icsom.org. One new feature is at the home page; the left column displays recent news stories that are updated at the beginning of every week and then archived after three weeks.

So, if you select Orchestras, look at the far-left column to find and click on Baltimore. Then locate "News. ICSOM website news" and click on "news about this orchestra".

By doing so, you can trace in chronological order the stories that led to the lock-out, everything from the musicians securing 3.2 million dollars in state funding, followed by a story days later of the BSO management canceling its summer season, and then news of the BSO Musicians' holiday concert last month for their community.

SLIDE 8

Think about it. That concert last month, which the BSO musicians produced, promoted, and performed, provided a Fourth of July concert in the place where *The Star Spangled Banner* was written over two hundred years ago.

Please join me right now, in a moment of hearty applause, to recognize the brave and courageous musicians of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

SLIDE 9

This past year, I worked with ICSOM web designer Martha Warrington to update our website, and I encourage you to check in at least once a week to view current news stories from ICSOM orchestras at icsom.org.

In addition, we have added information about your players' associations at our website. ICSOM's website now include links to the websites, Facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram accounts of your players' association, plus the *Senza Sordino* and website news items pertaining to your orchestra.

I ask for you to check the entry for your orchestra this week and let me know of any updates to this information. Just select ORCHESTRAS from the home page menu and then locate your orchestra in the left column.

SLIDE 10

Another important project of ICSOM's involves our social media presence. I am especially proud of ICSOM's Twitter account, which celebrated its 10th year of existence a few months ago. Established by former ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge in 2009, this is the place to find current news items about orchestras, opera, classical music and the arts, with an aim to promote unity among musicians everywhere.

Maybe this has happened to you already. Have you ever been faced with a situation in which a colleague, a manager, a donor, or even an audience member mentions to you how bleak things are in the arts? Your go-to place to find stories to counter this rhetoric is ICSOM's Twitter feed. There you will see plenty of good-news stories. To date, we have posted between 13 and 14 thousand tweets!

SLIDE 11

A fine example of a recent post is actually this retweet ICSOM did from the Americans for the Arts in June.

A cultural event happens every nine minutes in the Greater Boston area, according to ArtsBoston's new report. The report also states how arts and culture events serve about 21 million people a year in the Greater Boston area—nearly four times more people than attend Red Sox, Patriots, Bruins, and Celtics games combined. Along with bringing in people to events, the arts industry contributes \$2 billion annually to the local economy. The arts sector also creates more than 30,000 jobs in the area.

So, if you have a Twitter account, I strongly encourage you to follow us at ICSOM and retweet our good news stories. To share positive news about the arts, truly, is an investment in our future.

SLIDE 12

ICSOM also has an active Facebook account with daily posts. Each week we feature one of our ICSOM orchestras on social media, which is a natural fit since we have exactly 52 orchestras. We encourage you to follow ICSOM at all of our social media platforms, including our Instagram account ICSOM1962.

SLIDE 13

ICSOM has embarked upon an advocacy plan for which we are asking your assistance. This initiative would provide an easy way for ICSOM musicians and their supporters to voice their support to politicians regarding legislation of interest to our membership.

ICSOM has hired the digital advocacy marketing firm phone2action to assist our lobbying efforts. For example, ICSOM soon will be emailing a link to our musicians, providing them with a simple, convenient way to contact the US Senate to voice their support of the Butch Lewis Act, now that it has passed the US House of Representatives and heads to the Senate.

You may be aware that this bill will provide financial lifelines to union pension plans by providing low-interest, 30-year loans to cash-strapped, multi-employer pension plans such as the AFM pension plan. We have spoken to leadership in the other AFM players' conferences about our new relationship with phone2action, and they will be joining ICSOM in this project. Thank you in advance for your assistance in our important lobbying efforts.

SLIDE 14

We are so pleased to be in Park City, Utah, for this year's ICSOM conference, hosted by the musicians of the Utah Symphony and AFM Local 104. Later this morning we will have a Utah Presentation that I was pleased to organize so that their good work could be shared with all of you. There really is something special about them, as you will soon discover.

Speaking of the Utah Symphony, ICSOM's two e-lists, Delegate-L and Orchestra-L, have migrated from yahoo to groups.io thanks to the outstanding work of Utah Symphony violist Julie Edwards. She spent months in researching and accomplishing this task for ICSOM, and we appreciate Julie's dedicated work as the owner of our list serves and chief moderator of Orchestra-L.

Now in our 57th year, ICSOM continues to do good work. We have seen bridges built to other organizations thanks to the leadership of ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow. Our relationships continue to improve and the value of ICSOM is recognized. Thank you, Meredith, for all you do, and thanks to my fellow ICSOM Governing Board members for your dedication and service.

Our new delegate breakfast this morning welcomed a fine group to ICSOM and provided an orientation. Regardless if this is your first time to attend an ICSOM

conference, or if you are a seasoned delegate, I wish all of you the best for a meaningful conference this week as well as a successful season with your orchestras.

Thank you.

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Text of SLIDE 11 (not provided in report)

A new report shows Boston arts events draw more people than @RedSox, @celtics, @Patriots & @NHLBruins games—combined. The arts sector also creates more than 30,000 jobs in the area, almost as much as the retail industry. The arts mean business!

LINKS:

Friday, June 21, 2019

[Boston's Arts Sector Attracts More Visitors Than Sports Games, Report Says](#)

Source Name: WBUR

Author Name: Cintia Lopez

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/art-in-the-news/bostons-arts-sector-attracts-more-visitors-than-sports-games-report-says>

RollCall <https://www.rollcall.com/news/pricy-pension-rescue-headed-to-house-floor-next-week>

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