



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

The following Resolutions were adopted at the 60th Anniversary ICSOM Conference in Grand Rapids, MI on August 27, 2022:

Remembering former ICSOM Secretary Nancy Page Griffin

Whereas, Nancy Page Griffin, who faithfully served ICSOM as its Secretary from 1980 to 1988 when, following the September 1988 decertification of the Seattle Symphony from the AFM, she was forced to resign from that position; and

Whereas, Her contributions as Secretary and contributions to, and organization of, the George Zazofsky ICSOM Archives were acknowledged in a 2015 ICSOM Resolution upon her retirement after 54 years as a member of the Seattle Symphony; and

Whereas, Nancy's long career and interests also included working as a freelance bassist in Chicago and for the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as showing her poodles, who won various obedience and agility awards; and

Whereas, Nancy passed away at the age of 90 in April 2022; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference celebrating 60 years of its own history to the orchestra industry and its members, honor the passing of Nancy Page Griffin, and remember her service and contributions to the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians with immense gratitude.



Honoring the passing of Patrick Varriale

Whereas, Patrick Varriale (Pat V) spent nearly 50 years of dedicated service with the American Federation of Musicians in the Electronic Media Services Division, including his final seven years as its highly regarded Director, fighting for the rights of recording musicians everywhere; and

Whereas, Pat V's immense knowledge of the AFM's collectively-bargained recording agreements was respected by recording musicians across the country; and

Whereas, He was admired for his incredible work ethic, and praised and beloved by those current and former AFM staff members whom he mentored and supported, and whose good work he was always sure to acknowledge; and

Whereas, Pat V's life was suddenly and tragically cut short on May 13, 2022, while still in the process of training his successor to assure the AFM's recording department would be prepared upon his anticipated retirement; and

Whereas, Musicians and Employers are mourning the passing of a dear and compassionate friend; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 Conference of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians express their immense gratitude for Patrick Varriale's lifetime of dedication in service to all musicians, and especially to recording musicians, across the country; and, be it further

Resolved, That the entire membership of ICSOM extends their deepest sympathies on the sudden passing of Patrick Varriale to his wife Patricia and son Nicholas.



Condemnation of the Symphony Society of San Antonio adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, In September 2021, the Symphony Society of San Antonio declared an impasse in negotiations with the Musicians' Society of San Antonio, AFM Local 23, representing the musicians of the San Antonio Symphony; and

Whereas, Upon declaring impasse, the Symphony Society of San Antonio imposed draconian contract terms that would have decimated the orchestra complement and reduced salaries below subsistence level; and

Whereas, The Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony went on strike rather than work under such terms; and

Whereas, In subsequent meetings and in mediation, the Symphony Society of San Antonio continued to insist on concessionary contract terms that reflected a vision totally at odds with the economic growth and wealth of the San Antonio area; and

Whereas, The Symphony Society of San Antonio threatened to declare bankruptcy if the musicians did not agree to those concessionary contract terms; and

Whereas, On June 16, 2022, the Symphony Society of San Antonio filed a petition for Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation, thereby dissolving the orchestra; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference unreservedly condemn the Symphony Society of San Antonio, which chose to enter Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation rather than bargain a fair contract with the musicians of the San Antonio Symphony; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference also condemn the practice of using threats of bankruptcy as a negotiating tactic in collective bargaining; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference urge all orchestra managers and board members to remember that they are stewards of a public trust, and that they fail in that duty, dishonor the efforts of their predecessors, and deprive their communities of a vital cultural asset if they make a deliberate choice to dissolve an orchestra.



Support for Musicians of the San Antonio Philharmonic adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, the Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony are members of the outstanding ensemble that has existed in San Antonio since 1939; and

Whereas, The Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony showed extraordinary courage during their season-long strike, fighting for a living wage for the entire orchestra; and

Whereas, In the wake of the Chapter 7 bankruptcy filing by the Symphony Society of San Antonio, the Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony have committed to form a successor organization, the San Antonio Philharmonic; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference offer their heartfelt congratulations and unwavering support to the newly-formed San Antonio Philharmonic.



Honoring ROPA President John Michael Smith adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, John Michael Smith (Mike) has served as President of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA) for the past six years; and

Whereas, Mike continues to lead the ROPA Media Committee in the Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) negotiations; and

Whereas, Mike has been an integral and deeply valued member of the AFM Player Conferences Council (fondly referred to as the "Five Families"); and

Whereas, Mike's affable and effective leadership will be sorely missed by ROPA, ICSOM, OCSM, RMA, TMA, and the AFM; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference offer their heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude to Mike Smith for his many years of service to the musicians of the American Federation of Musicians in his role as President of ROPA, Chair of the ROPA Electronic Media Committee, and member of the Player Conferences Council.



Ticket Sales

Whereas, The COVID-19 pandemic has depressed ticket sales in ICSOM orchestras beginning in March 2020; and

Whereas, Congress has provided multiple rounds of aid to employers throughout the pandemic, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Shuttered Venue Operating Grants (SVOG), and the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC), all aimed at helping employers retain employees and maintain their compensation and benefits; and

Whereas, SVOG in particular was directly intended to assist performing organizations and offset their loss of earned revenue as they weather and recover from the pandemic; and

Whereas, Most ICSOM employers received millions of dollars of SVOG, PPP, ERTC and other aid, yet some spent a large portion of those funds on items unrelated to performing activities or musicians' terms and conditions of employment, including, for example, paying off longstanding lines of credit or funding a frozen defined-benefit pension plan; and

Whereas, Ticket sales continued to be depressed during the 2021-22 season, and many orchestra managers, based on unscientific "studies" from paid consultants, are predicting depressed sales for the 2022-23 season and beyond; and

Whereas, Some orchestra managers are dealing with such pessimistic predictions by demanding cuts to musicians' pay and benefits; and

Whereas, Demand for high-quality, live symphonic and opera performances is undiminished but has always required constant thoughtful and innovative audience-retention and audience-development efforts, rather than passive acceptance of unfounded, dire predictions of a post-pandemic decline; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference urge that ICSOM employers confront the issue of depressed ticket sales as we emerge from the pandemic by examining actual evidence of audience behavior in their community and by identifying pertinent challenges and opportunities, rather than by cherry-picking data, relying on unscientific studies, or simply accepting smaller audiences as the "new normal"; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference urge ICSOM employers to properly view the federal aid they received as directly offsetting any existing or projected decline in ticket sales; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference urge ICSOM employers to redouble their efforts to actually bring audiences back to their halls instead of reflexively demanding unwarranted cuts to musician pay and benefits.



Support for Ukraine

Whereas, A number of ICSOM orchestras have Ukrainian natives in their memberships, and many of those Ukrainian natives have loved ones who live in Ukraine; and

Whereas, Russia began an illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022; and

Whereas, On March 1, 2022 the Kharkiv Opera House and Concert Hall were targeted and extensively damaged by Russian missiles and there are plans to use a Mariupol concert hall to hold and try prisoners of war; and

Whereas, The 2022 invasion has killed and injured tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians, caused millions of Ukrainians to flee their homeland, and inflicted untold amounts of destruction to property and culture; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference stand unequivocally united with ICSOM's Ukrainian-born members and their loved ones, and condemn this unprovoked and destructive invasion; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference express hope for a swift end to this tragic injustice and for the return of peace and order to the independent nation of Ukraine.



Establish a Single-Payer Healthcare System in the US

Whereas, Health insurance is a mandatory subject of bargaining for ICSOM orchestras, ROPA orchestras, AFM musicians, and Union employees across the US; and

Whereas, Healthcare costs in the US have historically risen and are currently rising at a rate that exceeds both inflation and wage growth; and

Whereas, The December 2020 study published by the Congressional Budget Office found that establishing a single-payer healthcare system, compared with our current private healthcare system, would both expand healthcare access and reduce healthcare costs for people in the US; and

Whereas, A single-payer healthcare system would allow ICSOM orchestras and collective bargaining units across the US to focus on wages and work conditions in their negotiations with their employers; and

Whereas, A single-payer healthcare system would reduce operating costs for employers who are currently required to provide private health insurance to their employees; and

Whereas, A single-payer healthcare system would reduce administrative healthcare costs, in part by abolishing restrictive and pointlessly expensive “networks”; and

Whereas, A single-payer healthcare system would eliminate medical bankruptcy, which is regressive and cruel; and

Whereas, For the above reasons, a single-payer healthcare system would materially improve the lives of ICSOM musicians, as well as workers across the country; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference call on the US Congress to establish a single-payer healthcare system in the US.



Black Orchestral Network

Whereas, Systemic racism affects the orchestras of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM), making it difficult for Musicians of Color to obtain positions in our orchestras and have a voice in the future of classical music; and

Whereas, ICSOM is committed to promoting and increasing equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in our member orchestras; and

Whereas, On May 2, 2022, the Black Orchestral Network (BON), which seeks to create an inclusive and equitable environment for Black people in the orchestral field, put out an Open Letter† to orchestral stakeholders, including the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM) and its Player Conferences, including ICSOM; and

Whereas, That Open Letter exhorts ICSOM to support Black orchestral musicians through a number of initiatives, including, but not limited to, hiring Black orchestral musicians, addressing barriers to fair and equitable audition and tenure practices, ensuring the presence of Black voices on artistic and/or legal bargaining teams, and adding questions addressing equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to ICSOM surveys; therefore, be it

Resolved, That ICSOM hears BON’s Open Letter and pledges to honor the values of fair workplaces and stand in solidarity with Black orchestral musicians in ICSOM orchestras; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM hereby encourages all of its members to sign on to BON’s Open Letter and work to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in their orchestras; and, be it further

Resolved, That the ICSOM Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee pledges to review ICSOM surveys and any other applicable documents and processes, in order to evaluate the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2022 ICSOM Conference pledge to prioritize and support the work of the ICSOM DEI Committee and to work with BON to help support Black orchestral musicians.

† (A reference link to the BON Open Letter was included: <https://www.blackorchestralnetwork.org/open-letter>)



Condemnation of the Supreme Court Decision on Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization

Whereas, In June of 2022, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, overturning long-standing precedent set by Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, which limited States’ ability to restrict American women’s rights to reproductive healthcare; and

Whereas, In response to this ruling, many States enacted legislation which severely restricted the reproductive rights of women, or such legislation previously on the books was “triggered”; and

Whereas, As a result of this decision and these state laws, many women across the country will no longer have the right to choose to terminate a pregnancy, no matter what the circumstances; and

Whereas, the rationale of the Dobbs decision has the potential to endanger other longstanding rights protected by the 14th Amendment which protect the liberty to make personal decisions about family relationships and bodily autonomy, including but not limited to, contraception, interracial marriage, same sex marriage, and privacy; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) stands against the Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision and stands with women in the United States who deserve reproductive freedom; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM hereby calls on the managements of our orchestras to ensure that all ICSOM musicians have access to necessary healthcare and agree not to take any adverse action against any musician who may suffer the consequences of new laws restricting reproductive rights; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls on the United States Congress to act to protect the rights of our citizens to reproductive privacy, contraception, abortion, interracial marriage, and same sex marriage.