

Senza Sordino

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A Broader Perspective on Orchestra Diversity

By Member-at-Large Paul Austin

For many reasons, an orchestra needs to represent and support its community. Viewing the mission statement of our organizations provides proof of this. Most include

a phrase such as: “We strive to inspire, enrich and serve our community.” A study of demographics shows that our country has become more diverse over the years, and will continue to do so, with the Census Bureau reporting that already in 2012, a majority of children under the

age of one belonged to minority groups. Musicians could benefit from stepping back for a moment to ask how our organizations rate in terms of diversity.

I’m certainly not alone in thinking that we in the orchestra world should be working on issues of diversity. Several orchestras and related organizations are already taking action—just looking close to my home, three projects come immediately to mind: the new orchestral training program in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (<http://cincinnatisymphony.org/orchestra/fellowship/>), the Sphinx organization in Detroit (<http://www.sphinxmusic.org/sphinx-competition/>), and the “Mosaic Scholars” program in the Grand Rapids Symphony (<https://www.grsymphony.org/mosaic-scholarship/>). And these three cover a number of different facets: professional orchestral experience, a solo competition, and pre-college music training. But I wanted to escape the narrow confines of my own perspective, to gain a better understanding of what’s working and what more needs to be done.

To gather information, I turned to four ICSOM musicians who live across our country, in Philadelphia, Kansas City, Houston, and Los Angeles. I started the conversation with the request, “What can be done to improve diversity in orchestras?”

Joseph Conyers, Philadelphia Orchestra (Bass) and invited speaker at the 2015 ICSOM conference

To me, diversity in American orchestras means diversity in every aspect of who we are and what we do. I actually don’t

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JERRY JOHNSON

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President’s Report

By George Brown

Diversifying the Discussion

The lack of diversity in the orchestral world is frequently, and increasingly, lamented. The subject has been a topic at the League of American Orchestras (LAO) over the past several years, where it has been a point of growing concern. In comments on the subject last spring from the LAO’s website, League President Jesse Rosen was correct when he observed, “If the arts community is to accelerate progress in the areas of diversity, inclusion and equity, we must all, especially national leaders, be prepared to navigate difficult conversations. When it gets uncomfortable, you’re probably in the right place.”

In addressing these issues, much has been written about the ethnic diversity of our orchestra musicians, and this is an appropriate place to begin. However, if our industry is to effectively take on the issue, it must be as part of an overarching look at orchestras’ relevance to their individual communities (and with an eye towards expanding the audience base). To effectively make a difference, we need to venture beyond just orchestra personnel and examine additional opportunities where orchestras could diversify. For example:

- The ethnic diversity of the composers that make up our various concert series. For well over a century, there has existed a plethora of published symphonic works by composers from the Americas that we rarely hear about, much less perform. Concertgoers in these countries enjoy the European masterworks as much as we, but they also enjoy works by composers from their part of the world occasionally added to the mix, which could work nicely here, as well. All too often however, these composers have gone almost completely unnoticed in the USA.
- Over the years, we have often heard it asserted that our Pops, Summer, and Education outreach concerts also act as feeders to the box office for the Masterworks series. This outreach should apply to all our communities. Adding in a

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BRIAN ROOD

Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

ICSOM at IOC

The 4th International Orchestra Conference (IOC) took place in Montreal at the beginning of May, hosted by the *Guilde des Musiciens et Musiciennes du Quebec* (GMMQ), Local 406 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. The IOC is a creation of the *Fédération Internationale des Musiciens* (FIM) which is the only global organization for musician trade unions, guilds and associations. In attendance for ICSOM were myself, George Brown, Paul Austin, Peter de Boor, and Kevin Case. ROPA was represented by Naomi Bendorf-Frisch and Karen Sandene. Attending for the AFM were Ray Hair, Alan Willaert, Jay Blumenthal, Tino Gagliardi, Rochelle Skolnick, and Debbie Newmark. Keynote speaker Allison Beck, former US Director of Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, opened the conference with a call for solidarity and vigilance on the part of our musicians' unions worldwide.



Diane Alvarado Photography

The purpose of this conference is to give symphony orchestra and opera musicians an opportunity to collectively identify the numerous challenges that face our profession and to share experiences and concerns that affect their livelihoods. In addition to the musicians, union representatives, management and administrators were invited to participate in panels and open discussion. Twenty-nine different countries were represented by almost 300 delegates at the conference. The majority of the discussion took place in English, but there were simultaneous translations available in French and Spanish (and English for the occasional non-English presentation).

Despite vast differences in funding and governance, there is much that our orchestras share in common. Over the course of three days, eight panels of participants explored a variety of topics relevant to our industry. What has become known as the "Oslo Call" from the 2014 IOC, "Support for symphony and opera music, which is a precious and fragile part of our cultural heritage, is a prime responsibility of national, regional and local governments," was further explored in the first panel moderated by Jay Blumenthal, *Public Value of Orchestras*. It was determined that advocacy for orchestral institutions is essential within the political framework and it should be the right of every citizen to have access to live orchestral music. Orchestras, which are part of our common cultural history, can play a prime role in promoting social cohesion in a fast-changing society.

Former ICSOM MAL, Jennifer Mondie, and the Executive Director of the Jacksonville Symphony, Robert Massey, both spoke on the next panel, *Business Models of Orchestras—What's working?* While there is no "one size fits all" business model, transparency and accountability are vital to good governance. There is a balance between financial and artistic imperatives; decisions need to be made with musician involvement. Though orchestras will remain non-profit enterprises, it is vital to recognize their positive economic impact, which extends far beyond the concert hall.



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Orchestras Integrating Digital Tools and New Approaches explored the use of digital access of performances and its varied success. The Berlin Philharmonic has been able to increase both its live audience and digital subscriber list, while the New York Philharmonic has just released a major portion of its newly digitized archives. Australian orchestras have successfully used streaming for performances and teaching across great geographic distances. Obviously, these digital tools cannot replace the unique experience of a live performance and there remains the issue of monetization of these new formats in which musicians must be fairly compensated.

Responsibility and Accountability: The Role of Musicians on Orchestra Boards. While an ever-increasing number of orchestras have musicians serving on their boards, they should not overlap the authority of the union as the legitimate negotiating party. It was agreed that the voice of musicians is irreplaceable in shaping the future of their orchestras, both artistically and practically, but there remains the potential for conflict of interest amongst the musicians themselves and between musicians and their union.

SSD Director Rochelle Skolnick moderated a panel on *Bullying and Harassment—Respective roles of the Union and Management.* It is not enough to have an established policy against bullying and harassment in the workplace—effective training in interpersonal communication and early intervention are necessary where conflict arises. Both management and the Union must be prepared to ensure a workplace that is free from harassment and have the skills to represent musicians, who may be more vulnerable to the imbalance of power that exists in the close collaboration and emotional engagement of the orchestral workplace.

It would seem that the only countries left in which orchestras do not have to continually justify their very existence are Germany, Austria, and Canada. Elsewhere, the *Practical Aspects of Outreach and Education* are being used to connect with new audiences and educate our public, both young and old, in the tradition of orchestral music. Aspects of accessibility, programming, school concerts, and the increasing use of social media and networking were shared, with the caveat that they should not undermine the core musical mission of our orchestras.

President Ray Hair moderated a panel, *Recorded Broadcast and Rights of Musicians*, which explored the economic value of media, that needs to be shared fairly with performers, in relation to the promotional value of media to the orchestra as a whole. We must be vigilant that new forms of online music distribution will generate fair revenues for performers through statutory rights to equitable compensation.

Finally, *The Role of Unions in Safeguarding the Future of Orchestras*, moderated by IEB Member and Local 802 President Tino Gagliardi, highlighted the role that unions play, not only in improving working conditions and salaries, but in preserving the very existence of orchestras that find themselves in crisis. Cuts are never caused by quality issues. In times of economic crisis, unions can play a crucial role in ensuring equality of sacrifice and in educating politicians, decision makers, and the general public about the value and importance of a positive future for our orchestras.

In addition to musical interludes offered by several Canadian chamber groups during our breaks, two concerts were pre-

sented at the new Maison Symphonique de Montreal on Place des Arts. On one evening, the Montreal Symphony played with competition winners from the Concours Musical International de Montreal. At the close of the conference, the Orchestre Metropolitain played under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who was designated Cultural Ambassador to the IOC. In his words, “We must not forget that the more we gather together, the stronger we are. It is important to be represented so that our rights are respected in the various aspects of our work.”

In the concluding remarks of the conference, it was noted that although some orchestras have seen improvements in their economic standing, many are still experiencing declining funding and loss of relevance within their communities. International solidarity campaigns are an essential tool to address these challenges and FIM is a platform to help orchestras worldwide in their struggle to remain viable and intrinsic to our way of life.



The 2015 Musicians’ Health Survey Results

By John Beder

At the 2015 ICSOM Conference in Philadelphia we presented an online questionnaire to be distributed amongst ICSOM delegates and their respective orchestras called the 2015 Musicians’ Health Survey*. This would be the first time since 1987 that ICSOM musicians would take part in a survey regarding performance anxiety, and after 28 years enough time had passed that it was important to check in again.

I should mention how the updated survey came to be. In 2014 we started work on a film called *Composed*, a documentary about how classical musicians experience and address performance anxiety. The film is now complete and touring, with a wider release online planned for next winter. It was during initial research for this film that we came upon the 1987 ICSOM Medical Questionnaire**. This survey is often referenced when the subject of beta blockers arises. At that time, 27% of ICSOM musicians reported using beta blockers as treatment for stage fright. The study also asked questions regarding alternative treatments for performance anxiety and was concluded with the need for continued training and research in this field. Since then studies have been done in other parts of the world, but none as a follow-up to the ICSOM Questionnaire here in the US.

By the time the 2015 ICSOM Conference arrived, we had >



Paul Rock Productions

*The survey contains questions from the original 1987 ICSOM Survey, Prof. Dianna Kenny’s *The Psychology of Music Performance Anxiety*, consultants and our administrators. Consultants for the 2015 Musicians’ Health Survey include Professor Aaron Williamon, Dr. Noa Kageyama, Professor Dianna Kenny Ph.D, Dr. Julie Jaffee Nagel, and Dr. Molly Gebrian.

**Fishbein et al., “Medical Problems Among ICSOM Musicians: Overview of a National Survey,” *Senza Sordino* Volume 25, No. 6 (August 1987), <http://www.icsom.org/senza/issues/senza256.pdf>.

worked with mental health professionals from the US, UK, and Australia to create an updated survey that would be distributed in the fall and analyzed in the UK by the Royal College of Music's Centre for Performance Science. In November 2015 we closed the survey, then handed the results over to Professor Aaron Williamon of the Royal College of Music and his team for analysis.

Here now I am happy to present some of the key results of the 2015 Musician' Health Survey.

The total number of participants was 447 and is broken up below by instrument and gender.

INSTRUMENT	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Violin	41	77	118
Viola	19	37	56
Cello	27	18	45
Bass	32	7	39
Strings	119	139	258
Flute/piccolo	0	25	25
Oboe/English horn	4	13	17
Clarinet/saxophone	5	5	10
Bassoon	19	9	28
Woodwinds	28	52	80
French horn	21	12	33
Trumpet	22	0	22
Trombone	15	2	17
Tuba	6	0	6
Brass	64	14	78
Percussion	21	0	21
Harp	0	9	9
Keyboard	0	0	0
No response	1	0	1
Other	22	9	31
TOTAL	233	214	447

Women make up 48% of the sample (214/447), compared with 36% reported in 1987.

We also asked musicians to identify their role in the orchestra (i.e., Principal vs. Section)

POSITION WITHIN THE ORCHESTRA	RESPONSES
Principals (including concertmasters and assistant/associate principals)	178
Section members and other non-principals	269
TOTAL	447

Before asking questions focused on performance issues we asked musicians to rate their general health as well as how often they report exercising regularly (68%) which was up from 1987 (61%).

Regarding performance anxiety we found that 98% of participants had at one time or another experienced performance anxiety. The question was *How old were you when you first experienced performance anxiety?* Ages 11–15 was when most participants first experienced performance anxiety (32%), followed by ages 16–20 (27%) and ages 5–10 (15%). 11 people (2%) responded that they had never experienced performance anxiety.

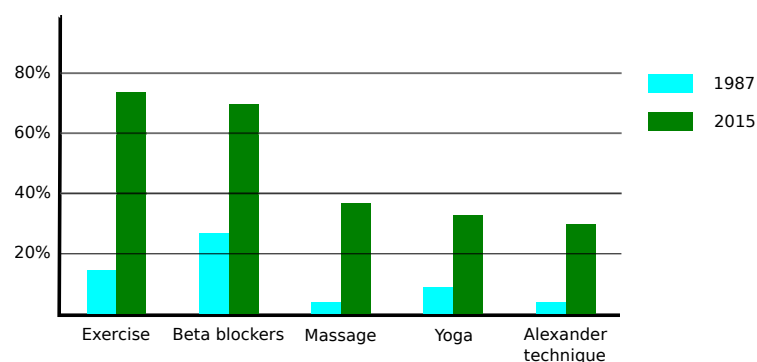
Another related question was: *If you experience performance anxiety, do you believe it negatively affects your performance quality?* With 60.6% responding *yes*, 22.2% *maybe*, and 17.2% responding *no*. In the 1987 article they made clear that 'stage fright' was a significant issue and it appears this is still the case: "Fully 76% of musicians performing with the 48 ICOSM orchestras reported at least one medical problem which was severe in terms of its effect on performance. Stage fright was the most prevalent medical problem."

With regard to beta blockers (e.g., propranolol), the survey shows that 70% of ICOSM musicians have tried using beta blockers for performance anxiety. Out of that group, 90% said they would consider using them for auditions, 74% would consider them for solo or featured performances, and 36% would consider them for orchestra performances. By comparison, in 1987 a reported 27% of ICOSM musicians had tried beta blockers. Also in 1987 of those who'd tried beta-blockers 72% said they would use them for auditions while only 4% would use them for orchestra performances compared to today's 36%.

Additionally, when asked about their current usage of beta blockers, with 424 responses, 36% of respondents said that they had tried beta blockers but were not currently using them, 31% said they were currently using them, 31% said they did not use beta blockers, and 2% said they were considering using beta blockers but had never tried them.


With regards to alternative methods to address performance anxiety, there were a few categories that also showed increases in usage. 74% of respondents used *physical exercise* to address performance anxiety up from 17% in 1987. Additional increases were found in *massage* (37%) up from 4%, *yoga* (33%) up from 9%, and *Alexander technique* (30%) up from 4%. *Experience* was the method used by most respondents at 87% and was also found to be one of the most effective means of addressing performance anxiety with 36% of respondents believing it was *somewhat effective* and 44% believing it to be *very effective*.

In our last questions about the issue of performance anxiety we presented the question: *When do you think musicians should be educated about the strategies which address performance anxiety?* Participants could choose multiple answers that included *Initial introduction to music* (9%), *High school years* (29%), *Higher education* (46%), *Post-graduate education* (23%), *Professional settings* (21%), *During all stages* (37%), *It should not be discussed in these settings* (2%), and *other* (4%).



Percentage of respondents who had used the particular technique for managing performance anxiety.

Thirty years ago it was clear to researchers that additional resources and training were necessary to the success of ICSOM's musician community: "Given the proportion of professional musicians reporting medical problems severe enough to affect performance, there can be little doubt that music medicine is a field which deserves serious attention from health professionals. There is an urgent need for techniques to treat and prevent a variety of occupation-related medical problems. Information on these problems should be disseminated to musicians and their physicians, teachers, and other concerned professionals. ICSOM has done much to open up the issue of music medicine. Clearly, the magnitude of the problem warrants continued work in the field." Today we have a plethora of resources available for musicians to seek, but the community at large still finds this a difficult topic to discuss openly. Our hope is that this information and other resources become commonplace in both our training and professional lives.

Our sincere thanks to the ICSOM Governing Board, delegates, and member orchestras for taking part in this survey. Their participation helps inform this current and future generation of musicians looking forward to improved performance resources and experiences. 

Note: The Author is the director and producer of Composed. Learn more at composeddocumentary.com.

Symphonic Diplomacy

By Jane Bowyer Stewart

We in the National Symphony Orchestra live in a city of politicians and diplomats; they populate our neighborhoods and our audience. We play in a venue named not for a donor but for a statesman, John F. Kennedy. Despite our name, we have no official government role, of course. But the NSO's visit to Russia in late March of this year, during a troubled period in US-Russian relations, had the feel of cultural diplomacy. We also connected powerfully with our orchestra's own past.



Scott Steinhilber

The first American orchestra ever invited to take part in the annual Rostropovich Festival, the NSO gave two concerts at the Moscow Conservatory and one in St. Petersburg's Great Hall. Olga Rostropovich, Ms-

tislav ("Slava") Rostropovich's elder daughter and the founder and director of the eight-year-old Rostropovich Festival, said it had long been her dream to bring "my father's orchestra" to honor his 90th birthday at the Festival. (The NSO was the first American orchestra Slava conducted, in 1975, and from 1977–1994 he was our Music Director. He died in 2007.) She was delighted that, when approached two years ago, the NSO agreed without hesitation, expressing no concern about election outcomes or logistical challenges.

The orchestra's two previous Russia visits did entail challenges. In 1990 Slava brought the NSO with him for his high-profile homecoming concerts, after sixteen years of exile from his homeland. Our rooms at the Soviet-era Rossiya Hotel fea-

tured scratchy toilet paper, roaches, and nibbling mice. Instruments were damaged at customs, and the quality of the concerts suffered under the broiling TV lights and the constant click of cameras; during one concert Slava angrily shooed away a distracting videographer with his bow. But the rewards eclipsed the challenges. We were moved by the Russians' refreshing passion for classical music. Rumors spread that students had spent all night hiding in bathrooms at the Moscow Conservatory in hopes of hearing the next morning's rehearsal. Those without tickets scaled walls to peek through the high windows. The exuberant audience response—the glowing faces, the throwing of roses, the rhythmic clapping that would not relent until we gave yet another encore—created powerful memories.

Three years later came another unforgettable milestone: The Coldest Concert Ever. In October 1993, during Slava's final season as Music Director, the NSO became the first orchestra in history to perform in Red Square. On a makeshift platform in front of St. Basil's Cathedral, we played the 1812 Overture in 40-degree weather. Before fingerless gloves were a fashion statement, we created them out of necessity. Woodwind players struggled to keep their instruments in tune, but the tens of thousands of listeners (including one Boris Yeltsin) who packed the massive square applauded fervently. Bells rang out from behind the Kremlin walls. Journalists hailed the event as "a symbol of liberty."

On those earlier Russian tours, Slava was arguably the main attraction. At one concert, the musicians left the stage after several encores, including our signature Paganini *Moto Perpetuo* (performed in unison by both violin sections, standing). As we packed up our instruments, Slava and his baton took repeated solo curtain calls. On our recent visit, despite Slava's having forever "left the stage", the orchestra still experienced a strong connection to the Russian audiences.

The choices of this year's tour repertoire resonated with our history. We opened each concert with Tobias Picker's *Old and Lost Rivers*. Music Director Christoph Eschenbach wanted to present a contemporary work, as Slava—both as cellist and conductor—tirelessly championed living composers. Our two programs included, unsurprisingly, two cello concertos, the Shostakovich First and the Elgar, with soloist Alisa Weilerstein. Shostakovich had written the former in 1959 for Slava, who learned it at his dacha in three days, according to his daughter Olga. Slava premiered the concerto in the same Moscow hall where we performed it. Our second half featured either Schubert's "Great" C Major Symphony or Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony, the piece we took most often on our international tours with Slava.

This year, despite a few logistical blips, we once again ex- >



John Marquis

perienced the Russians' gratifying devotion to music. Load-in to the cramped backstage areas taxed our indefatigable stage crew. Errant lighting in Moscow left conductor, soloist, and the first stand of violins in the dark for part of a concert. But in St. Petersburg, the audience crushed in the moment the doors opened. Patrons stood five deep at the back of the hall for the duration of a 70-minute symphony. Local critics gushed that "[the NSO] performed with a virtuosity that eclipsed even the most respected of Russian orchestras" and lauded our "deep understanding of the music."



Scott Sordino

NSO Musicians Cindy Finks, Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt, the Author, Steve Honigberg, Hyun-Woo Kim, Alice Weinreb, Bob Oppelt, and Desi Alston pay their respects at the gravesite of Rostropovich

Long-time players were particularly pleased to see reviews praise the orchestra's "extreme sound contrasts." Dynamics for Slava were never mere letters on a page; they always carried both emotion and imagery. To Slava, *ff* meant not only fierce and ferocious but also, famously, "like fork in brain." When we see *pp*, we can hear him whispering, "like shadow." These traditions remain alive, spreading to our new members each time we perform Russian music.

Throughout the week the twenty-five or so veterans of the earlier Russian trips encountered nostalgic reminders of the Slava era.

In the imposing hallways of the Moscow Conservatory, the hundreds of photos on display honored the breadth of Slava's career and influence. NSO members spotted their younger selves in numerous shots taken during his 17-year tenure in Washington. An especially "striking" photo showed Slava marching on the picket line, arm in arm with his beloved musicians, in 1978.

The timing of our trip allowed many musicians to visit a downtown plaza that was dedicated to Slava just this year. Beneath the recently unveiled statue of the cellist hard at play, birthday flowers crowded the pedestal, which bore etchings of the opening notes of the Shostakovich cello concerto.

During a morning off in Moscow, several NSO musicians visited the Novodevichy Convent and Cemetery, where we paid our respects at the gravesite of Slava and his wife, Galina. We also visited the modest grave of Dmitri Shostakovich. Carved in relief on his tombstone was a musical staff containing four notes, his musical signature (D-Es-C-H); under Slava many of us recorded and toured with the Tenth Symphony, which celebrates that series of notes.

The "Salute to Slava" continued upon our return to Washington. Immediately following our trip, James Conlon led the

NSO in a program of works by Britten, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich, all key figures in Slava's musical life. We dedicated the week's concerts to the victims of the deadly explosion that took place in the St. Petersburg metro the day after our departure from that city.

Just as Shostakovich's works sometimes carried coded messages and multiple layers of meaning, the NSO's visit to Russia this year implicitly offered a harmonious counterpoint to international tensions.

Note: The Author is a violinist in the National Symphony Orchestra

The Street Symphony Approach: Compassion and Collaboration

By Emily Lair

The more you give, the more you get.

That's how Street Symphony musicians feel after dedicating six years to making music for social justice. These professional musicians have brought their art and activism to 250 performances and workshops in Los Angeles' Skid Row neighborhood and county jails, designing programs that help people experiencing incarceration, homelessness, and mental illness to tell their own stories. And the players have found it's not a one-way street. The Street Symphony approach is as restorative for the performers as it is for the communities we serve.

Street Symphony is a network of professional musicians who acknowledge and address the presence of voices that are ignored. In 2011, Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist Vijay Gupta gathered together members of the LA Phil, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Colburn School, and jazz musicians in an effort to bring musical performances of the highest quality to people without access to concert halls. Six years later, the musicians have discovered that the communities we serve often have more to give us than we bring to them.

Through past Street Symphony projects, hundreds of people have found their voice. Many have stood up and shared profound and personal stories of being incarcerated, homeless, or mentally ill, inspiring a new artistic approach for Street Symphony. The stories we hear from them inform and help shape our future programming. For example, the first and second annual Messiah Projects in December 2015 and 2016 were significant community projects designed around what we have learned by listening.

The idea for the Messiah Project came from a member of the Skid Row community. Lifelong vocalist Don Garza is a Desert Storm combat veteran who experienced PTSD and homelessness in Skid Row for many years. Having grown up studying music as a tenor, Don loves Handel's *Messiah*. Singing the *Messiah* carried Don through some of his most difficult times as a veteran, and he had a dream: to perform a *Messiah* in Skid Row.

Inspired by Don Garza's dream, Street Symphony hosted the first Messiah Project in 2015. It took shape as a series of >



Francis Leduc Blander

three vocal workshops culminating in a final performance at The Midnight Mission in the heart of Skid Row. Members of the LA Phil, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Urban Voices Project (a Skid Row choir), and artists from Skid Row came together in a stunning performance of the *Messiah*. Dozens of people from the homeless community, Midnight Mission employees and caseworkers, donors, and musicians packed the Mission to hear the music.

Don Garza performed the tenor solos “Comfort Ye” and “Ev’ry Valley shall be exalted” at the second annual Messiah Project in 2016, after taking lessons and developing friendships with professionals from the Street Symphony Chamber Singers for two years. There was not a dry eye in the house as Don sang “Comfort ye, my people” to 200 of some of Los Angeles’ most vulnerable people.



LA Philharmonic violinist Mitch Newman, Colburn Conservatory student Chandler Yu, Vijay Gupta

In Street Symphony, we take the position that the lives and stories of Skid Row matter. As artists’ activists, we believe that when we make spaces for those voices to be heard, as equal partners and in tandem with our own, it brings new life to the sounds of the music we have known and loved for hundreds of years. The Messiah Project has become an annual tradition of celebrating the bravery and resilience in the Skid Row community. But, as Artistic Director Vijay Gupta said after the 2016 event, “the musicians were walking away with a far greater gift than we can ever hope to give back to the community.”

Note: The Author is Street Symphony Artistic Programs Manager

Secretary’s Report

By Laura Ross

The ICSOM Governing Board has been discussing ways additional services and information can be provided to the members of ICSOM, and we have made some changes to the ICSOM website as a result. Any current member of an ICSOM orchestra who is registered on the website (www.icsom.org), can view and download current and archived ICSOM Settlement Bulletins, much of the materials and presentations from annual conferences, and most sections of the ICSOM Delegate Handbook, which contains a tremendous amount of reference materials.

Emeritus members have access, as registered members, to

the ICSOM introduction and history, the current ICSOM governing board and delegate roster, Emeritus program information and registration, and a pension primer (the last two are found in the reference section of the Delegate Handbook). Emeritus members also have access to the ICSOM Settlement Bulletins, which include current and archived bulletins.



New ICSOM Website Offerings

Thanks to our wonderful website designer and webmaster Martha Warrington, we have some new additions to our website to serve our members. Under the Links section we have added two new pages. The first is for our ICSOM members who provide various services or who have written books addressing various playing issues or presenting personal orchestral history perspectives. It is not intended as a place to sell services or materials, but rather to provide a direct link so people can find them. Members and Emeritus members wishing to post here are asked to provide a link and description of the link or a pdf about the material. These may be sent to me or Chairperson Meredith Snow, and we will assure that the material is in compliance with these guidelines. Once approved, the link will be uploaded for one year, at which time it will be removed if it is not updated or renewed by the musician. A second page in the Links section will provide notices from conference presenters, or offers and discounts to ICSOM members from presenters. These links can also be found in the conference year they presented, and they will be periodically checked to ensure they are active.

ICSOM Directory Online Search

Another new, and much requested, link will allow ICSOM members and Emeritus members to search the ICSOM Directory for contact information of friends and colleagues. A prerequisite to use this search engine is that the member must have an email listed in the ICSOM Directory database. This email must be entered to begin a search and will authenticate the user as an ICSOM member. (Members who wish to add an email address to their Directory database entry should contact their delegate.) Search results will also be emailed to that address. Searches will be limited to five per day, and members will have the ability to request their entire orchestra’s roster as well. Former *Senza Sordino* Editor Richard Levine, a cellist from the San Diego Symphony, and his wife, Jean Lim, designed the database that is updated by delegates each year for publication. Richard worked with Peter de Boor and Paul Gunther to make this new search feature available.

AFM-EPF Website Redesign with New Information

Another website that has undergone a major redesign recently is the website for the American Federation of Musicians and Employers’ Pension Fund (AFM-EPF). There are now new or enhanced portals for Participants, Employers and Locals. The Participant Portal provides a great deal of information about the Fund, and numerous areas allow you to double-check and update information and even estimate >>

Newsletters of Note

Several ICSOM orchestras publish newsletters, including the musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. This article from their most recent issue, by PSO bass clarinetist Jack Howell, reprinted by permission, exemplifies the fine writing one can find there. To subscribe, write to newsletter@psomusicians.org.

PSO Musicians Care Fund: Building the Next Generation

By Jack Howell

He's not one to make a big deal of it, or even be particularly pleased with the publicity, but when former Concertmaster Noah Bendix-Bagley performed the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the PSO for the "welcome back" concert on December 2, he donated a portion (all he's willing to say) of his solo fee to the PSO Musicians Care fund, which provides assistance to underfunded school music programs. Funded primarily by benefit concerts and administered by the Pittsburgh Foundation, the Musicians Care Fund has purchased new instruments, paid for the repair of donated instruments, and paid for transportation of students to PSO School Time concerts, all for school music programs that otherwise couldn't afford these things. It is no secret that art and music are often the first to suffer when school districts run short of money, with consequences that cascade through society. Given the link between participation in school music programs like band and orchestra and lifelong enjoyment and support of the arts, it makes sense: if you want a tree to grow, you nourish the roots.

In Oakmont, Riverview High School band director Ian Hughes already sees a difference in his band's prospects resulting from a PSO Musicians Care Fund grant that bought instruments for the Verner Elementary Band in neighboring Verona, which has an elementary school but no high school, sending its students to Riverview. While the Riverview and Verona school districts are separated geographically by a line

on the map, they are much further apart in property tax rates and school funding, and in 2013 Hughes counted five students in the Verner Elementary Band, and three Verner students who moved on to the Riverview Band. Three.

"It's hard to recruit students for band when the school doesn't even own instruments to show the kids," said Hughes. "Learning to play an instrument is difficult enough when you have everything you need. We have to get students in the door, get them started. Music can make a tremendous difference in a student's life, in every way. It teaches the relationship between effort and achievement, teaches patience and problem-solving, and builds confidence. Most importantly, it allows kids to join a community of other musicians, and find a 'home' in the band room. But first we have to get them in the door."

In 2014, the Fund provided \$2500 for the purchase of new instruments, and also provided a small number of high-quality, refurbished used instruments. Enrollment in the Verner band jumped to 25 students. This fall, as a new class of fourth graders gets their hands on the Fund-donated instruments, participation is at an all-time high of 34. Which is a big improvement over five.

Each instrument provided by the Fund has a gold and maroon metallic decal. "Students know that these are special instruments," said Hughes. "Whenever we listen to PSO recordings, or watch videos of the PSO, I explain to the kids that these musicians are the professional athletes of the music world. I think they take it personally that these amazing musicians care about them and want them to play music."

The Fund has also provided instruments for programs in McKees Rocks, Finleyville, and Uniontown, and most recently to the Urban Pathways Charter School and the Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 school. "We look for programs where we can make a difference," said PSO Principal Piccolo and Fund Committee Member Rhian Kenny. "We can't buy instruments for every kid who needs one, but there are school music programs that really have nothing, and if we can get a few kids started with good instruments in those districts, one thing may lead to another. These kids are our future."

your pension benefit. You can change your address, sign up for paperless delivery of notices and statements, and check who is listed as your beneficiary. Participants can also view all of their Annual Covered Earnings Statements from 2000 to the present. Quarterly statements are also posted so participants can track contributions made on their behalf. This is especially important because the Fund established a policy years ago that adjustments for missing benefits need to be corrected within a three-year period after the annual notice is distributed. A recent addition is the ability to request statements from 1999 and earlier, as the Fund has spent some of its resources scanning and digitizing all participant records. There are eight icons on the Participant Portal: **FAQs, Pension Estimator, Document Delivery, 5500 and Other Documents, Covered Earnings, Beneficiary Information, Profile and Settings, and Change Password.**

In December, 2016, all participants in the AFM-EPF were sent a letter discussing the funding status of the Plan. To address the numerous questions and concerns they have received in the past few months from participants about the Fund's

status, the Fund staff, working with Trustees and advisors, have put together answers to many of these questions; these frequently asked questions and responses are periodically updated and can be found by clicking on **FAQs** once you have signed into the Participants page.

In **5500s and Other Documents** you will find the December 2016 funding status letter, the most recent annual 5500 report filed with the Department of Labor, and links to request copies of Fund documents. You can also find a copy of the slideshow presentation, with additional notations included, that were presented to select locals and conferences by a group of Fund Trustees, attorneys, staff and advisors in March and April. We will hear an updated presentation about the Fund's status this summer at the ICSOM Conference in Buffalo, NY.

There are a great many questions about the Fund these days; the best place to look for informed answers is on the AFM-EPF website at www.afm-epf.org. You will need your six-digit pension ID number to register; that number can be found on your Annual Covered Earnings Statement, or you can contact the Fund for it.



Newslets

Executive Changes

In March, the New York Philharmonic announced that Deborah Borda, longtime President of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, would be replacing Matthew VanBesien as President and CEO, in September. The move represents a return for Borda, who previously served as the Executive Director of the New York orchestra from 1991 to 1999. In Los Angeles she oversaw the construction of the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the engagement of current music director Gustavo Dudamel.

The National Symphony Orchestra has engaged Gary Ginstling to be its new Executive Director, replacing Rita Shapiro (who resigned in January). He is currently the CEO of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, which has recently seen dramatic increases in ticket sales and fundraising, as well as a progressive contract with the musicians reached more than a year before the expiration of the old agreement. (*Note: See "Newslets" in the December 2016 issue.*)

Amy Adkins, President of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, announced in May that she would be leaving in July to take a position leading the All Saints Health Foundation. Her six-year tenure leading the orchestra was marked by the recent contract negotiations that led to a 13-week strike by the orchestra last fall. (*Note: See the October 2016 and December 2016 issues.*)

Also leaving in July is Michael Mael, the Executive Director of the Washington National Opera—a position he took up in 2011, as the WNO became an affiliate of the Kennedy Center. The highlight of his tenure was the successful production of the company's first Ring Cycle, in 2016.

The MET Serves Vets

The MET Orchestra Musicians continued to expand their public outreach, performing on April 23rd at the Veterans Affairs NY Harbor Healthcare System Facility in Manhattan, and on May 1st at the system's Brooklyn facility. Joined by soprano Susanna Phillips and conducted by Marco Armiliato, 42 members of the MET Orchestra performed overtures, arias, and patriotic music for an audience of veterans and their caregivers.

The concerts were part of the MET Orchestra Musicians' new public performance initiative, which seeks to bring their music



Sarah Melissa Rofler

out of the opera house and into the community. The initiative has already seen five free public performances since March, including performances in New York City public schools.

Baltimore Ratifies Early

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra announced on June 2 that the musicians had ratified a one-year renewal contract, three months prior to the expiration of the existing agreement, which was also a one-year agreement ratified three months early. The new agreement, like its predecessor, contains salary increases, this time of 3.7% year-on-year. The successive short-term agreements come at a time of transition in leadership for the orchestra, with former President and CEO Paul Meecham replaced by Peter Kjome in February. Quoted in the *Baltimore Sun*, Kjome said, "My sense is that next year we would work toward a multi-year agreement." Orchestra Committee Chair and ICSOM Delegate Greg Mulligan said, "We are pleased to have another season agreed to, with both a salary increase and plans for several auditions in the works, in order to keep the Baltimore Symphony moving in the right direction, while everyone in the organization takes the time we need, under Peter's direction, to develop some strategic goals for the institution."


Utah Plans Great American Road Trip

The Utah Symphony announced a series of concerts in state or national parks and monuments across the state, including



Courtesy of Utah Symphony Utah Opera

The Utah Symphony performing on the portable stage at Red Cliffs Lodge during the orchestra's Mighty 5 Tour in 2014 (Watch the stage being set up at www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMv48A19FIE)

Zion National Park and Natural Bridges and Dinosaur National Monuments. Titled the Great American Road Trip, and echoing the orchestra's Mighty 5 Tour in 2014 (which visited each of the five national parks located in Utah), the orchestra will be creating performance spaces, transporting a portable stage to each location. In a press release, Utah Symphony Utah Opera President and CEO Paul Meecham stated that the tour's objectives were to celebrate Utah's natural and cultural history, as well as provide live classical music to rural parts of the state that may not have easy access to it. "What better way to connect great live music with the unparalleled natural beauty and heritage of our state than for the Utah Symphony to perform outdoors in the heart of our dramatic landscape!" he said. 

President's Report *(continued)*

few of these aforementioned works into our season would wisely be balanced by also seeking out opportunities to perform in more diverse neighborhoods. An unwillingness to do so might even be perceived as condescending towards the very people our Orchestras would be attempting to engage.

- Orchestra offices that hire interns should seriously recruit young Latino or African Americans in the future to give them a “from the ground up” experience of orchestra management. Those that go on to a career in the field can be enormously helpful in adding their perspectives which can serve to broaden the attitude and vision of the management team. Likewise, as the League continues to revamp its training and education programs for people aspiring to a career in management, a strong focus on recruiting Latino and African Americans for these programs would be beneficial.
- I wish the League success in its endeavors to support increased diversity within our Orchestra Boards, which in some cities can be rather averse to looking beyond their traditional networks for nominating new members. I applaud their endeavors to take on the subject, as tackling it effectively will require having some of those challenging discussions with their member orchestras that Rosen referenced.

In sum, it's a much broader subject than just the aggregate ethnic diversity of our Musicians. The more one delves into the issue, the bigger and more complicated it seems to become. But as JFK once observed, great challenges often come with great opportunities. The musicians of ICSOM have gladly collaborated with their administrations when orchestras have spearheaded programs to instruct and mentor minority students; and as we look ahead, ICSOM musicians welcome the opportunity to join the conversations dealing with this complex issue.

As some of you may already know, after much thought and consideration, I have decided not to seek a second term as ICSOM President. The privilege of being able to serve you in this role for the past two years has truly been an honor just as serving with the members of your Governing Board has been an amazing education! I consider my eleven total years with ICSOM as Delegate, Alternate, and finally President to have been the pinnacle of my professional career, and the people of ICSOM with whom I have worked made it so for me. I will miss them all (but my wife and I will certainly enjoy seeing more of one another). I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve.



The 2017 ICSOM Conference will be held in Buffalo, NY, August 23-26, 2017 at the Adams Mark Hotel. All attendees must register for the conference in advance with ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross. Online registration is available at <http://icsom.org/conferences/register/>. Anyone interested in attending the conference and wishing to receive a conference packet should contact the ICSOM Secretary.

A Broader Perspective on Orchestra Diversity *(continued)*

think the solution is complicated at all.



I'd answer your question with another: “What does your organization look like now?” So much focus is put on diversifying the stage and the audience that we rarely look at our institutions internally, where there could be opportunities for diversification. This includes our staffs and particularly our boards—the place where most institutional decisions are made. The board and the staff play such a large role in directly connecting with the

community that if there are diversity gaps there, then you will have diversity gaps in all “outreach” efforts.

When serving under-resourced communities, many of which in urban areas have high numbers of people of color, a real environment of community support must exist to allow for those in programs such as Grand Rapids Symphony's Mosaic Program or Atlanta Symphony's Talent Development Program, and most recently the PMAY Artists Program in Philadelphia, to find success. Becoming a classical musician is hard enough for someone who does have all of the “right” ingredients (starting at an early age with a supportive environment). Once started, one must make sure these students have proper guidance and support. A huge undertaking? You bet. But this is a true and authentic investment in the orchestra's community—not a temporary program. Otherwise, without giving the students the support they need, we're setting false expectations for these young people—and ultimately setting them up for failure.

Finally, I'm a staunch believer in casting the net. You can't just pick four kids, give them the right ingredients, and expect for those exact four to end up on the stages of American orchestras. Those students will have to develop and find their own intrinsic motivation, the grit, and the determination that all those on stages across America know it takes to end up there. Some students have those innate necessary qualities, while others do not. Therefore, the support of music education on the grandest scale possible is paramount. It's why I'm a staunch advocate for music education. I didn't find music—music found me! And against many odds, those students whom music discovers will begin to find a path to success—particularly if they are in an environment where the world is on their side. What a great testament to orchestras if every orchestral community could play such a role in that narrative of success for those students!

Alberto Suarez, Kansas City Symphony (Horn) and ICSOM Delegate

Thank you so much for contacting me about this topic. It is a great subject, and I like the question that you pose. A question I think we should be asking is: “What can musicians do today to improve diversity tomorrow?”

I feel that most musicians are caught up in their individual journeys and sometimes forget that as part of the community >

Developing Diversity

Note: To give an idea of how ICSOM orchestras are already addressing diversity on stage, here are descriptions of two programs, one well-established and one nascent.

By Valerie Little, Minnesota Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

Starting in September 2017, the Minnesota Orchestra will offer a two-year program designed to enhance the orchestral careers of African American, Latino American, and Native American musicians, and to encourage greater racial and cultural diversity in the orchestral field. Auditions will be open to musicians playing violin, cello, flute, trombone, bass trombone, and tuba. The fellowship musicians will attend orchestra rehearsals (both on stage and in the house), perform with the orchestra as determined by the section principal, have regular lessons with Minnesota Orchestra musicians, have an official musician mentor from another section in the orchestra, participate in formal and informal mock auditions, and receive a stipend to take outside auditions. They will also participate in education and outreach work, including presentations, school visits, work with community partners, and Young People's concerts. They will serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, work with community partners, join Development meetings with funders as appropriate, and receive formal reviews with feedback from the audition committee and the section three times per year. Initially a single musician will be selected. A second fellowship musician will be chosen beginning with the 2018-19 season, with the intention of continuing with two overlapping fellowship positions.

we serve, we need to make the change happen and not wait for our orchestra management to create the program for us. The path is complex and full of many different social and economic barriers. The more we as musicians look beyond these barriers the more we can help our community. The answer is mentoring.

I feel there are two types of mentors: musical mentors and life mentors. We may not be qualified to be life mentors, but surely as musicians in professional orchestras we can be musical mentors. We need to expand our reach and help all youth but especially the ones who are under served. We can do this by volunteering with other non-profit organizations, speaking to groups about our careers, performing in community ensembles, or starting chamber ensembles geared towards demonstrating what can be achieved through the arts.

Judy Dines, Houston Symphony (Flute) and former ICSOM Delegate

I think an interesting question to ask is: "How do we spark in young people a lifelong interest in playing classical music?" There are a lot of kids (at least here in Texas!) doing music in



Courtesy of the Kansas City Symphony

By Monica Fosnaugh, Detroit Symphony Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra Fellowship Program was established in 1990 and was designed to enhance the careers of African-American orchestral musicians. An individual can participate in the program for up to two years. The DSO Fellows have the opportunity to perform with the Detroit Symphony for 18 weeks of the season, for which they are paid the DSO weekly rate, and participate in 18 individual lessons, for which they receive a stipend. During non-playing weeks, the Fellow is expected to observe DSO rehearsals and performances. The Fellows also provide outreach services, such as Training Ensemble sectionals or school presentations.

The program was designed to include a strong emphasis on audition preparation. The Fellows are required to hold a minimum of three mock auditions and observe any DSO auditions that occur within the Fellows' instrument group. They must take at least one non-DSO audition, for which they receive travel assistance, and take any DSO audition that occurs within the Fellows' section during their residency.

Since its inception, 16 musicians have participated in the program, and many have gone on to hold positions with orchestras and educational institutions worldwide. These organizations include the Detroit Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, New Mexico Philharmonic, Knoxville Symphony, Michigan Opera Theater, and Mahidol University in Thailand. Currently, the DSO has one Fellowship musician in the bassoon section, and will be auditioning for an additional position in the string section this fall.

schools, but not continuing on when going to college. It takes a leap to go from something that's fun to do, to something that you can't do without. I had a recent experience of talking to a group of about 20 high school flutists, who were mostly Hispanic. I asked if anyone was going on to college as flute majors, and nobody raised their hands. It seemed to me that most hadn't even considered it, or that the thought didn't even occur to do so. I had a few say that they might continue to play or they might minor in flute, and major in business, computers, etc. Most said that they wouldn't continue with flute after high school. There were some very talented flutists there—I'm hoping I was able to plant a seed!

John Lofton, Los Angeles Philharmonic (Bass Trombone) and ICSOM Delegate

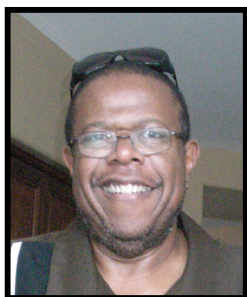
Your question is an evocative one that brings up issues with strong sentiments. With respect to achieving a more diverse representation in the orchestra world, a few concerns have to be allayed, primarily whether or not your orchestra/community sees that as a value.

Some regard a push for diversity as social engineering or >>



Eric Ardier

a lowering of the standards. With respect to the former, the viewpoint that we live in a zero-sum reality presumes a more deserving candidate gets passed over. The fact is that every job is a zero-sum reality and when orchestras hire subs and extras—because of their talent and professionalism—the standard of winning an audition is modified to accommodate a need.



Each orchestra has to decide how to prioritize the pursuit of a diverse representation and whether or not that adds value artistically and/or fiscally. There are short- and long-term benefits that may be realized. For example, there are grants specifically targeted for African-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American, and Pacific Islanders that orchestras could avail themselves of. In a longer time

frame, we are experiencing changing demographics in our communities. In 2011, for the first time in the USA, minority births outpaced the births of the majority population. Considering that most of our orchestras represent urban centers, the potential exists to put our arts genre on the radar of a population of subscribers, donors, talented arts managers, and board members previously not considered.

One of the issues hindering greater minority representation on stage is that there are very few jobs available for anyone, and winning a job is an exercise of improbabilities. The improbable becomes the impossible when there are so few minority auditionees in queue. It seems that some sort of mentoring is

a key element to augment those numbers. It can take many forms—from performances in traditionally underserved parts of our communities to teaching—all with an eye toward creating a larger pool of auditionees.

Again, this first and foremost has to be a value for it to be a success.

After receiving these responses to my question, my view on diversity in our orchestras widened. Now my thoughts extend beyond the concert stage: not only to colleagues with whom I share that stage, and the featured soloists and composers on our concerts, but also to those who serve on the orchestra's board of directors, the audience for our various programs, and young musicians in our communities, whose exposure to and participation in music could create an improved quality of life. I would urge us all to take a moment to reflect upon what is going well and, more importantly, what can be improved. Who knows? Maybe several comments in this article will spark a creative idea that could bring forth positive movement. <

The online version of *Senza Sordino* is available at www.icsom.org/senzasordino/
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