

Senza Sordino

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Baltimore Musicians #TakingAStand in Negotiations

By ICSOM Member-at-Large Greg Mulligan

In August 2018, the Baltimore Symphony (BSO) embarked on its first overseas tour in thirteen years, to wide acclaim. Over fifty supporters accompanied the BSO on the trip, and we received some very nice reviews as well as terrific response from live audiences. (Note: See “A Whirlwind Tour” in the October 2018 issue)



Brian Prechtel

To give a bit of a background, on July 3, Players Committee Co-Chair Brian Prechtel and I were surprised by a visit from our CEO, Peter Kjome, and board chair, Barbara M. Bozzuto, at the tail end of a rehearsal. They asked us to consider a four-month extension of the contract, with a pay freeze. We listened to their request as they told us that the BSO’s upcoming tour would provide an excellent opportunity to convert the good publicity into increased fundraising. Later in July, members of the Players Committee sat down with our management and made a counteroffer: we would accept a four-month extension, until January 15, 2019, if we got a 2% raise in the final week and if the BSO committed to hiring 83 full time musicians, which our contract already provided as the temporary minimum.

At that point, the orchestra was set to begin the season with only 77 full-time musicians. We suggested various ways that the BSO could get up to speed, including hiring multiple violinists in the November section violin audition (there are currently eight vacancies in a section of 30). Management turned down our offer.

When we returned from the tour, we faced a contract expiration date of September 9. On September 6, BSO management made exactly the same offer. We replied with the same counteroffer, insisting that more full-time musicians should be hired, and in addition, gave them a template for a longer contract, one that included requests for increases in compensation and improvements in various scheduling issues, etc. Our management took umbrage that we would have the nerve to ask for such improvements.

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Lyric Opera Orchestra Strike

By Amy Hess, Lyric Opera ICSOM Delegate

On the morning of October 9, just days after my first opening night as a tenured member of the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra, I found myself outside on the first picket line in my orchestra’s 65-year history.



Amy Hess

More than a year before this, Lyric had held its first-ever scheduled all-company meeting. To their audience of hundreds of employees—orchestra musicians, chorus members, stagehands, costumers, support staff—management spelled out what it called “the facts”. Subscription rates were falling, tickets were harder to sell, and donors were tired of giving to an institution whose financial house was not in order. The clear subtext was that

management planned to seek concessions in all the union contracts, trying to improve its finances on the backs of the artists and craftspeople of the company who create the great opera for which Lyric is world-renowned. When we began bargaining, that is exactly what Lyric demanded: major cuts to the size of the orchestra and the number of guaranteed weeks of the sea-

(continued on page 11)



Lyric Opera Orchestra members and supporters rally in Daley Plaza

Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

Implicit Bias

Imagine for a moment the tens of thousands of sensations that bombard your conscious mind daily: that which you see, both moving and still, its color, detail and depth; what you hear, pitch, volume, perhaps words; touch, smell and taste. Your brain can process and sift all that information with minimal conscious attention, all while you're walking down the street, sipping a coffee and reading texts on your smartphone. How does the brain process so much input all at once?



Diane Amorella Photography

According to Jerry Kang, professor of law at UCLA and author of *Implicit Bias: A Primer for Courts*, it does so by creating schemas, or templates of knowledge, that organize specific examples into broader categories. These 'mental

shortcuts' allow us to recognize an object with a flat seat, a back, and legs as a chair, regardless of its size, color, or the materials from which it is made. Without expending valuable mental resources, we simply sit. We create schemas not only for objects but for processes as well. Once we have learned to walk, drive a car, or pour a glass of water, we are able to do so automatically, without conscious direction. These are implicit cognitions, actions taken without conscious thought. (**implicit**: essentially or very closely connected with; always to be found in. Latin: *implicatus* 'entwined'.)

By the same process that our brain creates implicit cognitions to effortlessly walk or drive, we also create implicit social cognitions that assign people into various categories according to conspicuous, accessible traits, such as age, gender, and race. These social categories guide our thinking and attitudes—for example, you might expect an elderly person to be frail and hence not raise your guard on their approach. Conversely, you might think they need help getting up the stairs. Some of these schemas are created through real-world encounters, but most are relayed to us subliminally through vicarious means: the families, friends and culture we grew up with, stories, media, and books. If we examine these social cognitions more closely, we see they include both stereotypes—traits that we associate with certain categories—and attitudes, which are general, evaluative feelings that could be either positive or negative. The term implicit bias includes both implicit stereotypes and implicit attitudes.

In their book, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, authors Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald turn the conventional way people think about bias on its head. It is not overt prejudice, springing from animosity and hatred, but unintentional and unacknowledged biases that may influence relationships and hiring practices. The two psychologists have revolutionized the study of this unrealized bias with their Implicit Association Test (IAT), which measures the speed of people's hidden associations. The IAT is designed to examine which words and concepts are strongly paired in people's minds. As an example, 'lightning' is more readily paired with 'thunder' than with 'horses'. Connecting concepts that the mind perceives as incompatible takes extra >



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time. That time difference can be quantified and, Banaji and Greenwald argue, is an objective measure of people's implicit attitudes. By asking participants to pair, as quickly as possible, positive and negative words with race and gender as part of the mix, the IAT can highlight these unconscious preferences.

So how might implicit bias effect our orchestral workplace?

Understanding that we all unconsciously carry bias is the first step in dismantling the often uncomfortable and defensive attitudes that accompany this realization. It is not a judgment on our individual character but the underlying thumbprint of the culture in which we were raised. Our workplace is a highly structured social system that seems to come with prepackaged attitudes. From the musicians' perspective, musicians are good, management is bad, and the music director is often problematic. One might have had reliable, real-world experience that engenders a negative bias towards management. Or, it may be that one has unconsciously adopted the implicit bias that "management is devious". In either case, being fully aware that the bias exists—not implicitly, but openly and accurately identified for what it is—goes a long way towards ameliorating conflict when it arises.

Obviously, our audition and tenure processes are another potential area for implicit bias. As we have experienced, the introduction of screens to the audition process greatly increased gender diversity. (It is worth noting that female principal players are still very much in the minority. Monetary compensation is another discussion....) But the use of screens has hardly moved the needle on racial diversity. Why is that? The oft-quoted answer is that candidates of color do not advance past the résumé screening or the initial rounds of screened live auditions—they are not there to be hired. That may or may not be true, but we have NO data to prove or disprove that assumption.

Shea Scruggs, former oboist with the Baltimore Symphony and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, is now a consultant working with companies to build mission- and data-driven projects that increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). In his view, "lack of data is one of the first challenges to tackle. A data-driven understanding of an organization's current position lays the groundwork for progress, not just for one organization, but for the entire field." Tracking data about hiring and retention is the first step towards assessing and improving our current practices. We should be keeping track of who applies, who is invited, who auditions, and who gets tenure.

Scruggs, along with Weston Sprott, trombonist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, has been working for a number of years to promote DEI in the orchestral field. Sprott said, "It is impossible to separate what you hear from what you see." For proof positive, check out the McGurk Effect, a video integration of speech and sight (*Note: See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-IN8vWm3m0>*). That which your eye sees simply overrides what your ear hears. I challenge you to "hear" it otherwise!

The MET Orchestra has the longest standing practice of fully screened auditions from amongst our ICSOM orchestras. They allow any applicant to play—regardless of name, position, or past experience. Résumés are not distributed during the audition process and there is no discussion of candidates during any round of the audition, voting only. Their audition panels comprise members of the relevant and neighboring sections.

The Music Director only gets one vote, and his/her vote is weighed no differently than that of anyone else. "I believe the presence of the screen from start to finish in our process has impacted diversity and inclusion in our orchestra," said Sprott. "In recent history, the MET Orchestra hired three African-Americans over a two-year period and had a majority (five out of nine) female French horn section. These hires were all the result of a completely screened audition process."

No discussion of audition policies can be comprehensive without open acknowledgment of the elephant in the room. The Music Director has an outsize influence on both hiring and tenure review in most of our orchestras. In some, they are entirely in control, with musicians in a purely advisory role. As our audition processes evolve with more invited candidates to the final rounds and trial weeks beyond the "cattle call", there needs to be accountability on the part of a Music Director in whom they chose to invite and how tenure decisions are made. Music Directors must be included in any discussion of a more inclusive audition process and be an active part in changing our culture.

Whatever decisions we may make as individual orchestras, the first step to a more inclusive culture is understanding who we are right now and overcoming the "status quo bias". Conducting our business "the way it's always been done" is passively endorsing the inequity and lack of diversity that is now prevalent. If we are serious about making changes in regard to DEI, and I strongly believe we must, we need to commit time, thought, and resources towards understanding who we are and what we hope to represent. Our demographic composition sends a powerful message to our audiences, donors and everyone who works, or might hope to work someday, with our orchestras.

We, the musicians of ICSOM, have powerful tools at hand to create change. With our union-negotiated collective bargaining agreements, we can determine, in conjunction with management, how our audition and tenure process is run. Cultivating honest and tolerant relationships in-house will go a long way towards creating a culture that is not only diverse and inclusive of our society but of each other—Music Directors included. ➡

Note: See additional references:

Jerry Kang, *Implicit Bias: A Primer for Courts* (Prepared for the National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts, 2009), <http://jerrykang.net/research/2009-implicit-bias-primer-for-courts/>.

Shankar Vedantam, "See No Bias," *Washington Post*, January 23, 2005, W12, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A27067-2005Jan21.html>.

Shea Scruggs and Weston Sprott, "Finding a New Path Forward: Five useful concepts for a more diverse and inclusive orchestra," *Allegro*, January 2018, <https://www.local802afm.org/allegro/articles/finding-a-new-path-forward/>.

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President's Report

By Paul Austin

October Travels

In October, I had the opportunity to meet musicians of two ICSOM orchestras, under very different circumstances.

On Friday, October 12, I traveled to Chicago to support the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra musicians during their strike. For eight hours I joined them on the picket line, marched from the Civic Opera House to Daley Plaza for their rally, and delivered a speech there. Before the rally began, the brass section of the Lyric Opera Orchestra performed beautifully (despite the cold and rainy weather) for those who attended. The musicians delivered what they can do best, and their music set the proper tone for the event. When talking with the musicians throughout the day, their love for opera and our profession truly was apparent. Soon after my visit, the strike was settled and the Lyric Opera Orchestra musicians returned to work. (Note: See "Lyric Opera Orchestra Strike" on page 1.) I look forward to attending a Lyric Opera production soon, so that I can observe these fine musicians in action—indoors.

From October 21st to 24th, I visited Salt Lake City for a site



Justin Johnson



Chris Williams

Paul Austin, Bill Denton (Lyric Opera Orchestra), Hannah Barnes (DePaul University student), Kyle Gilbertson (local music teacher), and Declan Ryan (DePaul student)

visit, in preparation for ICSOM's 2019 annual conference. Having never been to Utah before, I really was impressed by its stunning natural beauty. Within hours of arriving, I attended an afternoon performance of Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* given by the Utah Opera in the historic Capital Theatre, followed by dinner with the orchestra committee.

Two days later, ICSOM Chair Meredith Snow and I traveled to nearby Ogden to hear the Utah Symphony perform a run-out concert at a beautifully renovated high school (a stunning building that featured art-deco architectural design). Recalling that a merger between the Utah Symphony and Utah Opera had occurred soon after the millennium, resulting in a 52-week season for the musicians, it was good to observe both an opera and an orchestral event during my time there. While in Salt Lake City,

Meredith and I toured five hotels under consideration for our conference, with Utah Symphony musician leadership Julie Edwards and Keith Carrick, who served as excellent hosts and ambassadors of their city.

As I now reflect upon my October travels, the common thread is apparent. ICSOM is there for its membership, in good and troubled times. So many of the Lyric Opera Orchestra musicians stated their appreciation for ICSOM's presence, both in person and on social media. Likewise, Utah Symphony musicians are pleased to be highlighted by ICSOM with our August 2019 conference. While it will be the 12th time that ICSOM has held its annual event in Utah, the last time was in 2003.

Seeking to promote unity, ICSOM continues to be an important presence for its membership. Feel free to contact me at any time with your thoughts on this at AustinLPaul@gmail.com. 

Orchestra Surveys: Asking the Right Questions

By Kevin Case, ICSOM Counsel

Last August at the ICSOM conference in Cincinnati, I gave a presentation regarding preparing for bargaining ("Bookends of Bargaining, Part 1"). Of the topics I covered, orchestra surveys sparked the most feedback. Many delegates have asked if they could share that part of the



Maya Klammen

presentation with their colleagues, so I would like to expand upon that here as orchestras start preparing for next year's negotiations.

Orchestra surveys are critical in preparing for bargaining. At a basic level, they help answer the question every bargaining committee considers: "What do my colleagues want?" In certain ways the answer is obvious—more salary, better healthcare, better working conditions. But knowing that your colleagues want improvements isn't of tremendous value to the committee in the bargaining process. As everyone knows, you don't get everything you want. The committee is forced to make choices—often, very hard choices—and to prioritize. A good survey will go beyond the obvious, and give the committee the knowledge it needs to make those choices when the time comes.

The first task in drafting a survey is coming up with topics, i.e., the issues you expect will be on the table in bargaining. Start by identifying broad categories, like health care, orchestra complement, retirement benefits, or work relief. Then get more specific with respect to issues that have come up in your orchestra. The source of those issues can be varied: disputes that have come up with management; issues raised in orchestra meetings or smaller group meetings with the committee; or issues emerging in the orchestra world (your ICSOM delegate is a good source for those). Often, the committee will solicit suggestions for items to be put on the survey. That can be helpful, but use discretion; not everyone's pet issue should make it onto the survey.

In terms of what to ask and how to ask it, there are a number of guidelines I typically advise, and covering them all would >

make for far too long an article. But here are what I see as the three most important:

Don't ask questions to which you already know the answer. This may seem obvious, but I often come across survey questions like, "Do you want better health care?" or "Should nine-service weeks be eliminated?" When those questions are asked in isolation, you know the answer will always be "yes." Don't bother asking.

Other guidelines flow from this. For instance, don't ask questions about improvements that would benefit only a small number of musicians, or an individual (e.g., assistant principal pay). You know that those who benefit will want it, and those that won't benefit probably won't care (unless it is a point of principle that has universal appeal). Note that does not mean the committee shouldn't seek those kinds of improvements in bargaining; rather, the committee will use its own independent judgment as to whether to seek such improvements and how hard to push. But there is no need for a survey question.

The same applies to pretty much any type of salary question. It does no good to ask your colleagues how much of a raise they want, or will accept. The answer is obvious: as much as possible. In bargaining, the committee will try to obtain the largest increase management will agree to, period. Then the committee and, at ratification, the bargaining unit will need to determine whether the salary component of the deal is acceptable in the context of the entire agreement and the circumstances of the situation. So whether your colleagues want a certain percentage raise, in the abstract, is simply irrelevant.

Ask your colleagues to make choices. This may be the most important survey guideline of all, and the hardest one to get right. As noted, the bargaining committee invariably must make difficult choices, and the most difficult are when the committee must decide whether to drop a particular proposal the committee knows is of great importance to the musicians, in favor of pursuing something else the committee determines is more important. When making such choices, it won't be enough for the committee to know that the musicians really want those improvements, or even how badly they want them; rather, the committee needs to know which improvements the musicians want more than others.

Consider, for example, questions about typical subjects like health insurance, orchestra complement, and work relief. Commonly, surveys will ask "how important" each is, and provide answer choices such as "very important / somewhat important / not important" or offer a numeric scale of importance. That is only somewhat helpful, as it doesn't answer the question, "as compared to what?" Such questions give only an idea of how strongly someone feels about an issue, but not that person's priorities. It remains unclear whether that person would be willing to forego work relief in exchange for adding a musician to the complement—or whether that person would accept any less of a salary increase, or any concession on health care, as the price of obtaining that additional musician. That is the kind of information the committee needs.

The easiest way to fix this is with a ranking question—list a few items and ask the respondent to rank them in order of importance. That will indeed identify priorities. But ranking questions suffer from some common mistakes. For example, I often see nine or ten items on the ranking list, ranging from

salary to doubling to getting more Mondays off. That's not at all helpful, for several reasons.

First, there are simply too many items. It is difficult for anyone to keep track of more than three or four items simultaneously, and that's what you want—comparisons that are as direct as possible. Second, it does no good to combine dissimilar items, like economic vs. non-economic or "big economic" issues vs. minor ones that affect only a few people. It is both too difficult and too easy to prioritize between wholly different items, or between items of entirely disparate magnitude. Plus, you probably already know the answer: the orchestra as a whole will almost certainly rank salary as more important than Mondays off, or retirement benefits as more important than raising the doubling rate. So, instead, group like issues together—or, to look at it another way, those that you think could actually be a toss-up. It's fine to have multiple ranking questions, each with three or four items.

Note that I also often see ranking questions where the order of the items implicitly shows the bias of the drafters—for example, putting salary at the top and Mondays at the bottom. That also pretty much tells people how to answer. Instead, mix it up. SurveyMonkey is great for that, as it has a feature that randomizes the order for each respondent.

Another way to force the identification of priorities is to flat-out ask which of two issues is more important—or, even more uncomfortably, ask whether the respondent would be willing to forego one improvement if that was the only way to obtain the other. For example: "Would you be willing to accept less of an increase in salary if that were the only way to obtain an increase in complement?"

It's at this point that I typically hear objections. "Everything is important—we should ask for it all!" "Management will see this—they'll think we're willing to give stuff up!" "This looks like we're already bargaining against ourselves!" I get it. But there is an easy cure: explain the methodology, usually in a preamble to the survey. Explain that the survey should not be read as an indication of what the committee may or may not propose at the bargaining table; that questions asking for a choice between two items does not mean the committee does not intend to seek improvements for both, but instead is merely a tool to identify priorities; and that there will be an opportunity for further comment in the survey. As for management seeing the survey questions, you have to assume that is a possibility. But asking a question about an issue does not necessarily signal a willingness to make a concession—and if management takes it that way, you can always say in bargaining that you surveyed it, and your colleagues said, "hell no!"

Ask your colleagues what they want and how they feel, not what the committee should do. I sometimes see questions that ask, "should the committee try to [obtain X]?" That's the wrong way to ask the question. Deciding what to ask for in bargaining isn't a decision the orchestra makes as a whole—they elected a committee to do that. The orchestra workplace is a representative democracy, not a direct one; the committee doesn't make decisions by referendum. That's actually to the musicians' benefit, because then management is forced to deal with the folks at the table (as opposed to trying to negotiate with the group as a whole). Not all musicians understand that distinction, which requires some education. >

Avoiding survey questions that ask what the committee should do can be part of that education.

Similarly, don't put specific proposals on the survey. For example: "Should nine-service weeks be eliminated?" Apart from asking this in isolation (see above), another problem is that it is presented in the form of a solution rather than the problem that needs to be solved. A better way would be to ask questions about whether the musicians feel overworked, and what the source of that feeling is. I've had several situations where the bargaining committee was initially certain that nine-service weeks were the problem, but it later came out that the real issue was the increasing number of programs per week. The committee needs to know what the problems are and how people feel about those problems; but it is up to the committee to come up with possible solutions.

Finally, I'm often asked whether survey results should be shared with the orchestra. The answer always is "no." For one thing, management will find out. It's not the end of the world for them to see the questions, but obviously the answers are another story—you don't want management to know the musicians' priorities and bargain accordingly! Even if you take steps to try to keep the results within the bargaining unit—for example, stating the results only orally in an orchestra meeting—rumors may get around in inaccurate or exaggerated ways. Also consider that if the musicians see what has been identified as top priorities, they may expect to see those improvements when the committee brings back a tentative agreement for ratification. If the agreement doesn't line up with those expectations, there may be a problem—even if it's an acceptable agreement overall.

Happy surveying.



Colorado Community Outreach

By Jason Lichtenwalter

Haitian music students, Denver-area dialysis patients, and local dog lovers: all benefited from the talents and generosity of more than two dozen Colorado Symphony (CS) musicians in 2018. In June, two CS musicians made their third trip to Haiti to mentor young musicians. Regionally, DaVita Dialysis Centers became miniature concert halls in September for "A Day of Music." On October 7, the Concert for Canines fundraiser in Englewood brought dog lovers together to fight canine cancer.



Bradley Walker Photography

Haiti Youth Orchestra

In late June, when CS Violist Helen McDermott and Assistant Principal Clarinet Abby Raymond left Denver to work with the Haiti Youth Orchestra (HYO), they were prepared. It was their third annual visit to the HYO in Mirebalais, an hour northeast of Port-au-Prince. They distributed donated instruments, coached sectionals, and performed chamber music with the eager students.

"We were all very happy to see how the students were

progressing," Raymond said.

Two other musical ambassadors joined the pair, McDermott's daughter Anna, a violinist, and bassist Zach Harris. Harris's parents, Rich and Lisa Harris, founded The Road to Hope,



Abby Raymond

Anna and Helen McDermott and HYO members in Haiti

a Denver non-profit supporting US-Haiti relations. The organization covered some of the trip expenses.

"Seeing many of the same students over these past years in their journey of developing as musicians—often with amazing speed—was rewarding to see," McDermott said. "Their dedication and enthusiasm are exciting, and on a level I seldom see here in the United States."

In addition, meeting two advanced string students was a welcome surprise to McDermott. "My daughter and I performed quartets with them. It was thrilling and gave me confidence that the program could one day be staffed entirely by Haitians."

An unwelcome surprise came when fuel-price protests, a part of life for their students, kept McDermott and Raymond in Haiti three extra days. But the inconvenience only strengthened their commitment to their friends and the music that is helping to transform their lives.

DaVita Day Of Music

The "DaVita Day of Music" serenaded staff and patients at 25 DaVita Kidney Care centers across the Front Range on September 5. Nineteen CS musicians from eight sections, including all five horn players, performed mini-concerts as part of a new alliance with the Denver Young Artists Orchestra.



Courtesy of DaVita

Kolio Plachkov, Michael Thornton, Carolyn Kunicki (standing); Patrick Hodge, and Matt Eckenhoff (kneeling)

CS Assistant Principal Oboe Nick Tisherman traveled to DaVita locations in Loveland and Greeley, an hour north of Denver. He performed solo works ranging from Telemann to Barret.

"From a performer's perspective, the day was a lot of fun. The nurses, care- ➤

givers, and patients all seemed really glad that I had come to play for them,” Tisherman said. “In a couple of years, it would be great for the partnership to grow, and musicians could regularly perform at the centers.”

DaVita has been a financial supporter of the Colorado Symphony for several years.

Concert for Canines

Cancer sadly affects dogs more often than many people realize. In just one month of 2017, four CS musicians lost three dogs to hemangiosarcoma, an aggressive canine cancer of the blood vessels that frequently spreads undetected.

On October 7, thirteen CS musicians performed chamber music in Englewood at the Concert for Canines. The event raised more than \$4,200 for Morris Animal Foundation, a Denver non-profit that funds over 200 animal studies globally.




Clarinetist Abby Raymond and Piper prepare for the Concert for Canines

Several of the performing musicians had each lost a beloved dog to some form of canine cancer.

For Principal Flute Brook Ferguson, an onstage photo of her cherished Boston terrier, Nugget, inspired her performance of Bach's Partita in A Minor, BWV 1013.

CS Principal Harp Courtney Hershey Bress said it was uplifting to participate in the project. “Being involved with Concert for Canines filled me with hope. Losing my dog, Zen, over a year ago was very difficult and still is hard for me,” Bress said. “It was an honor to be a part of a concert that raised money exclusively for the research of cancer in canines.”

Production costs were generously underwritten by Artists for Animals, co-founded by Dallas Symphony Principal Oboe Erin Hannigan, and Englewood Arts, led by former CS cellist Eric Bertoluzzi.

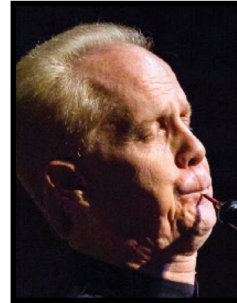
The projects, some of many undertaken by CS musicians, fit into a larger trend among orchestras: extending the scope and reach of classical music outside the concert hall. People who might never hear a live classical performance now have that experience, courtesy of outreach. In Denver, CS musicians have been engaging with the community regularly since 2011. Given the positive responses to these 2018 projects, the impact of their time and talents will be remembered for years to come. 

Note: The Author plays oboe and English horn in the Colorado Symphony.

True HI Wood

By J. Scott Janusch

The Hawaiian Oboe Legacy Project began as an idea to create something unique to benefit and inspire future audiences and students in a place where I'd spent the majority of my professional life. I had always had the



idea in the back of my head to have an oboe manufactured out of an indigenous Hawaiian wood—an oboe that would be of this place and be inextricably linked to it. Once we managed to obtain a supply of an extremely rare and culturally significant wood, kauila, this project got its wings.

Kauila was highly respected in the pre-contact Hawaiian culture for its hardness, durability, beauty, and versatility. Everything from spears and clubs to small medicinal items and ceremonial staffs (*kahili*) were made from this resource. Honoring the wood's place in Hawai'i's history is a key aspect of the project. We also wanted to bridge the past to the present day with a contemporary use of this 300-year old reclaimed resource, as well as create awareness of the importance of preserving and protecting our natural resources for future generations.

The kauila wood that was used is from the island of Kauai, and was harvested more than 25 years ago by a local Hawaiian *Kumu* (cultural practitioner), Ed Kaiwi, in a rural area near the Waimea Canyon. His longtime friend, noted luthier Michael Sussman, was given a big chunk of this kauila and asked to make a ukulele out of it, as well as an ark for the torah at a synagogue in Lihue, Kauai. He made these special objects many years ago, but the rest of the kauila wood remained under Michael's house.

Once Michael learned of the Hawaiian Oboe Legacy Project, he agreed to gift the remaining wood to the project and milled two billets from this tree trunk, one measuring 4" x 4" x 12", the other 4" x 4" x 24". Because of the density of the wood, the milling took Michael around 11 hours. These billets were taken to the Worthing factory of Howarth's of London, where they completed the instrument in just shy of two years. The wood, according to the craftsmen at the shop, behaved remarkably well during the manufacturing, most likely due to the wood's age and long period of seasoning.



We displayed the instrument at the International Double Reed Society conference last August, and drew a lot of attention. No one there (with the exception of myself and a former teacher, Elaine Douvas) was allowed to play it; a long 'break-in' period is warranted because an oboe has never before been made from this type of wood. It sounds lovely, but differs somewhat from the sound >>

of the typical grenadilla wood usually used for oboes. One could characterize the sound as slightly mellower, which is quite interesting considering the density of the material.

Another component of the project is the creation of a piece of music to feature this one-of-a-kind oboe. We commissioned a nationally known and respected composer, Dr. Jon Magnusen, to write the work, which will be in seven or eight short movements, each highlighting, in musical form, the role and uses of the wood. He will compose two versions of the piece: a chamber version for string quartet, piano, percussion, Hawaiian instruments, and solo oboe will debut in the spring of 2019 at several venues, including Chamber Music Hawaii's concert series in May 2019; and a full symphonic concerto version of the same work will be premiered the following fall on the Hawai'i Symphony's Master Works series. Both versions, as well as the instrument, will be donated to the community at the end of the initial project year, entrusted to the care of a local non-profit, Live Music Awareness*, and be made available to local artists and presenters for future concerts and projects.



William Rhee

It is my hope, as its director, that the growing interest generated so far in this project will propel it well into the future, so that generations to come can learn from and be inspired by this unique effort. The public has already stepped forward in support of the project with several thousand dollars in private contributions. The City and County of Honolulu also awarded the project a grant of \$10,000, which will go, in part, to fund performances of the chamber version of the new commission in Honolulu and in rural areas of Oahu and Kauai. We will capture a recording of the Honolulu premiere and also create a documentary that will chronicle the inception of the project through the final symphonic premiere in the fall of 2019.

Anyone wishing to learn more about this project, or wanting to help support it, may visit the Live Music Awareness website: livemusicawareness.com.

Note: The Author is the principal oboist in the Hawai'i Symphony and the director of the Hawaiian Oboe Legacy Project. Live Music Awareness is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by officers of the Musicians' Association of Hawai'i, Local 677 AFM, and is managed by former Senza Sordino editor Marsha Schweitzer.

ICSOM bylaws provide that dues are late after December 31. If your orchestra has not yet sent in your dues payment, please do so as soon as possible. Thanks for your support!

Michael Moore, ICSOM Treasurer

Newslets

Si Otsedoha: We're Still Here

The North Carolina Symphony (NCS) gave powerful, emotional performances of the new work *Si Otsedoha (We're Still Here)* across the state of North Carolina during one week in October. Cherokee Central Schools students from the Cherokee Chamber Singers performed in traditional Cherokee garments. Audiences in Raleigh, Wilmington, Boone, and Cherokee gave the work standing ovations.

The piece had both spoken words and sung lyrics, in both the Cherokee language and English. Written by the students, the words related thousands of years of Cherokee history from their modern perspective, highlighting decades of repression but also the students' hope for the future.

William Brittle scored the five-movement work for orchestra, choir, synthesizer, and soprano soloist (Eliza Bagg). The movements are entitled "Si Otsedoha (Overture)", "When Money Becomes Religion", "Phoenix Rising", "Walls of Glass", and "Si Otsedoha". NCS Music Director Grant Llewellyn conducted with the able assistance of Cherokee Central Schools choir director Michael Yannette.

Si Otsedoha was commissioned by the North Carolina Sym-



Michael Zittel

phony as part of a multi-year collaboration with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, with the support of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Through that partnership, the NCS education programs have engaged every student in Cherokee Central Schools. On the same October tour, three NCS Education Concerts featured selections from *Si Otsedoha*, with the choir traveling across the state with the orchestra for those programs as well.

Columbus Cares

The Columbus Symphony (CSO) announced a new initiative in late September, Columbus Symphony Cares, in which the orchestra will partner with local service organizations and schools. Intended to support the missions of these organizations, the program will "bring the transformative power of music to their clients, constituencies, students, and staffs," >

Pittsburgh Symphony Responds

By Stephen Kostyniak

Note: The following is the text of a speech delivered at a Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra concert on October 28, the day after the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Kostyniak, I am a member of the French horn section of the Pittsburgh Symphony, and this year I am chair of the Orchestra Committee of the PSO Musicians.

Speaking in the aftermath of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Leonard Bernstein shared this sentiment:

We musicians, like everyone else, are numb with sorrow at this murder, and with rage at the senselessness of the crime. But this sorrow and rage will not inflame us to seek retribution; rather they will inflame our art. Our music will never again be quite the same. This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.

Yesterday, as news spread of the sickening assault that struck our city, words of sympathy, support, and encouragement poured in from friends and colleagues around the country. More than a few who knew I would address you today begged me not to read that standard, well-worn Bernstein

quote. And I thought, “How much ugliness is in this world, how desperate must the world be, when even Bernstein’s eloquent and moving response to violence has become overused.”

So as you think of Bernstein’s words, focus not on “what” we musicians will do, but “why”. My predecessor as Chair, Susanne Park, argues passionately that access to great Art is not a luxury of wealth, but a basic human right. This week, many of our basic human rights have been threatened—to worship, to love, to live. Art exists in society to express the inexpressible and to give an outlet and voice to every emotion, from anguish to ecstasy. Through each note we play we preach a testament of harmony and unity. A world in pain needs that message now more than ever. As the violinist and educator Shinichi Suzuki said, “All people who love Art burn with the obligation to save the world.”

Our Music Director, Maestro Manfred Honeck, asked to share how heartbroken he was at this horrific tragedy, and that he holds the entire Pittsburgh community in his thoughts and prayers. He says “Please know that while I am sadly not with you today in person, I am there with you in spirit.”

On behalf of the entire Pittsburgh Symphony family, we express our deepest sorrow and sympathy, and dedicate this weekend’s performances to all those who have been impacted.

May our offering today renew our commitment to community and join all of us in a spirit of peace and beauty, strength, hope and love.

according to a press release.

Supported in part by a grant from the American Electric Power Foundation, the initiative will bring programming that is tailored to each organization, and will include ensemble performances as well as tickets for CSO Masterworks concerts. The initiative will also support student participation in the CSO’s Young People’s Concerts, including study guides and transportation.

In the inaugural season, the CSO has partnered with eleven organizations, including the Columbus City Schools, KIPP Columbus, and Catholic Social Services.

CSO Executive Director Denise Rehg said, “Columbus Symphony Cares is intended to strengthen the CSO’s connections to our entire community and ensure that our programming is serving and benefitting all, including the most vulnerable among us.”

“In Columbus, we are finding that since 2008, corporate donors have been much more interested in social causes than in funding the arts in isolation,” said Orchestra Committee Chair Betsy Sturdevant. “This initiative is the Columbus Symphony’s solution to that shift in donor focus. It’s just getting off the ground, and we’re expecting very positive results. At the very least, it will re-define the symphony’s relevance in the community.”

Leadership Changes

A number of orchestras reported new leadership recently. The Grand Rapids Symphony (GRS) and the San Antonio Symphony (SAS) both announced new chief executives, while the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) publicized the

appointment of a new music director, and the North Carolina Symphony’s (NCS) long-time music director disclosed a timeline for his departure.

A longtime business executive in West Michigan—currently the chief compliance officer and senior vice president with Meijer, Inc.—Mary Tuuk has been serving on the board of directors of the GRS since 2012. She co-chaired the search committee that chose the current music director, Marcelo Lehninger. For months she had also been chairing the search committee for a new president and CEO, until the rest of the committee decided that she was the best person for the job.

Tuuk has more than 20 years experience in executive and legal leadership roles at Meijer and Fifth Third Bancorp. She studied business and music at Calvin College, and received her JD and MBA from Indiana University, where she also studied organ and voice. She plays the organ, piano, and violin, and is a soprano in the GRS Chorus. She will step down from her roles with the GRS board and Meijer as part of the transition to assuming her new role in early 2019.

“Mary Tuuk is well-known and highly respected by the musicians of the Grand Rapids Symphony,” said ICSOM President Paul Austin, Grand Rapids Symphony horn player and one of the three musician representatives on the search committee. “Her business and financial background combined with her musical training uniquely qualify her to lead the organization. The musicians couldn’t be happier with this decision.”

On November 13, the SAS unveiled a new permanent executive director, Corey Cowart, who will begin his tenure on January 1, 2019. Cowart follows two interim directors, Karina Bharne and Michael Kaiser.

Cowart currently serves as the executive director of the >

Amarillo Symphony, a position he has held since 2015. In his tenure there, he oversaw a new strategic plan that raised annual contributed income by 60%, earned revenue by 40%, and annual paid attendance by 35%. “Mr. Cowart’s excellent skill set includes highly effective fundraising and marketing, sound fiscal management, and strong administrative leadership,” said SAS Board Chair Kathleen Weir Vale.

Cowart studied as a trombonist, earning bachelor of music and master of music degrees from the University of Houston and Yale University, respectively. His prior management experience includes positions with the Atlanta Symphony and the Minnesota Opera. “The musicians of the San Antonio Symphony are thrilled to have an experienced, permanent executive director joining our team. As a musician himself, Corey understands our craft and we look forward to working with him in the spring, when we will also be returning to the bargaining table,” said Orchestra Committee Chair David Reinecke.

The MSO has been engaged in a three-year long search to find a replacement for Music Director Laureate Edo de Waart, who stepped down in 2017. (*Note: see “Newslets” in the March 2015 issue.*) In November, they announced their decision to hire Ken-David Masur, currently the associate conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the principal guest conductor of the Munich Philharmonic. He will become Music Director Designate immediately and will begin the 2019–20 season as Music Director.

Masur graduated in 2002 from Columbia University, where he studied East Asian languages and French and German literature. Although he did not initially set out to follow in the footsteps of his father, renowned conductor Kurt Masur, while at Columbia he became the founding music director of the Bach Society Chorus and Orchestra there. After graduation, vocal studies with Thomas Quasthoff led him to choral conducting; he obtained his first full-time conducting position with the San Antonio Symphony in 2007.

Masur made his debut with the MSO in May of this year, and was invited back to open the 2018–19 season. “His energy, passion and collaborative nature are the very right fit for the MSO, and also for Milwaukee as its reputation as a culturally vibrant destination continues to grow,” said MSO President and Executive Director Mark Niehaus.

On November 29, the NCS announced that Music Director Grant Llewellyn would step down from his position after the 2019–20 season, which will be his sixteenth in that role. He will become music director laureate for four seasons beginning in 2020–21.

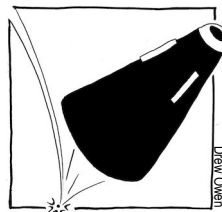
His tenure has been notable for his commitment to new music, in particular that of female composers—two thirds of the living composers whose works were programmed in the 2017–18 season were women. He also will have appointed nearly half of the orchestra’s current complement by the time he steps down.

“In his fifteen years as music director, Grant Llewellyn has overseen the greatest period of artistic growth in the organization’s history, transforming the sound of the orchestra,” said NCS Assistant Concertmaster Karen Strittmatter Galvin, chair of the Orchestra Committee. “In that time he has also hired some of the best players in the country. We know his legacy will continue far into the future.”

Dropping the Mute

By Peter de Boor, Editor

My mind has been dwelling inordinately of late on loss; my father-in-law passed away on October 28.



Of course, loss is inevitable, for none of us is immortal. But his death was not the result of the inevitable toll of time and aging. Rather, it occurred in tragic circumstances. The news reports of the incident did not give his name or condition, but merely reported that an 80-year old man had perished.

As I read those reports in my initial shock and grief, I felt indignant at the implications of that accurate but inadequate characterization of him. Yes, he was 80, but he was not infirm, nor senile, nor incapable of taking care of himself. He was fit and spry, of sound mind, leading geological field trips in the Sierra Nevada.

Someone catching this story on the local news might well have thought that his age had doomed him: “He was probably too old to get out.” “He must have been in a wheelchair and couldn’t save himself.” “It’s too bad, but I guess it was inevitable.”

A loss such as this, once it has occurred, must be accepted. But it should not be considered inevitable. If we had had some foreknowledge of the event, what would we **not** have done to avoid it?

And yet, after other tragedies, there are those who would throw up their hands and say that nothing can be done, that no steps can be taken to avoid future tragedies of the same sort. The shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh is only the latest in a long line of incidents that seems to evoke this resigned response: not “What can be done?”, but “Nothing can be done.”

I am speaking not only of death, but of loss more generally. The musicians of the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra, viewing their management’s bargaining proposals, had a dark vision of what those proposals would likely entail: a fundamental loss of quality of the orchestra and the opera company, resulting in a great artistic loss for their city (*Note: See page 1*).

Their management seemed to be playing the role of those local-news watchers—“it’s too bad, but it’s inevitable.” But the musicians were not willing to give up. They stood firm, knowing that this loss was not inevitable, and the principle was worth fighting for.

Now the musicians of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra are facing similarly harsh proposals, from a management that seems equally resigned, claiming that the financial realities of their position are fraught and unchangeable—“it’s too bad, but it’s inevitable.” (*Note: See page 1.*) These musicians also deem that acquiescence to the proposals will lead to decline and loss.

We must not be resigned to loss. We must not be apathetic, we must not let the unrelenting divisiveness of the news cycle cow us into acceptance that nothing can be done. The musicians of Lyric and Baltimore have shown us, are showing us, that we can act and have an impact. We can stave off loss. We can refuse to go gently into that good night.

Lyric Opera Orchestra Strike (continued)

son (and thus a reduction in our annual salary of up to 43%).

We see different facts.

Our nightly audience is averaging 84% of our house's unusually large capacity of over 3,500, and ticket revenue has increased since 2012. Both of these have occurred despite increasing obstacles to patrons. Management itself has admitted it was slow to adapt to new technology. (You couldn't even buy a ticket on your phone until recently!) Countless audience members have complained of dysfunction in the online ticketing systems—despite Lyric having spent more than \$1 million to develop its buggy website—and of difficulty in getting help over the phone. Others have expressed their frustration with Lyric's recalcitrance when trying to exchange tickets or choose different subscription nights.



Alexander Belavsky, Mark Brandfonbrener, and Paul Dwyer walking the picket line with colleagues

Over the past decade, management has reduced the number of performances drastically, depriving patrons of the flexibility to find time in their schedules to see opera. We have heard from countless subscribers who simply stopped coming to the opera because Lyric took away their longstanding subscription nights. Not long ago, our season had over 90 performances; this season, management scheduled 56 performances—and only four performances of Wagner's *Siegfried!* Worse, Lyric management informed us last spring that it would immediately be canceling our opening-night radio broadcasts and spring re-broadcasts, further limiting our reach to opera lovers across the country and the world and delivering a huge blow to our audience development.

To the extent Lyric faces financial challenges, we see a different reason for that than the costs of the orchestra. Lyric increased its budget by \$24 million—from \$60 million to \$84 million—since General Director Anthony Freud arrived in 2012. Over that time, the percentage of that budget going to total orchestra costs decreased from 14.6% to 11.9%. It is clear to us that targeting the orchestra is not the solution to management's budgetary concerns.

It was obvious to me and the rest of the orchestra that this strike was not just about the orchestra musicians' terms and conditions of employment. This strike was about a principle. For the past 65 years, Chicago's citizens, civic leaders, and

philanthropists have built a world-class opera company for a world-class city. Our orchestra has been a key part of that, renowned for our artistry and sound and performing for every production our company has presented. The cuts that Lyric management demanded would decimate the orchestra and forever diminish the Lyric Opera of Chicago as a crown jewel in the cultural life of Chicago and the opera world as a whole.

From the minute we went on strike on a Tuesday morning, we were hit by a wave of public support that we could never have expected. Patrons and donors came up to us on the picket line to express their support for our cause. They raved about our beautiful sound, production after production, and decried the cuts management was making to the number of performances and to the radio broadcasts. Messages came in through social media from all corners of the globe, demanding that management take back their cuts to our weeks of work and number of musicians. We were joined on the picket line by friends, family, retirees, students, music lovers, union brothers and sisters, and even neighbors who work in the office portion of the opera building. Brass ensembles serenaded commuters on the street corner beside the ever-plentiful pile of water, sandwich trays, and baked goods that were donated to the cause. Our assigned police officer told us his mother had been a music teacher and enjoyed the beautiful music.

Negotiations continued during the strike, and on Sunday, five days after the strike began, the orchestra ratified an agreement. During an orchestra meeting that took most of the afternoon, we learned that management was so set in its myopic, defeatist view that it was willing to immediately cancel productions, the whole season, and the Ring Cycle scheduled for 2019–2020. Management seemed entirely willing even to go into bankruptcy. The terms of the agreement were better than what had been offered before the strike—and were certainly far better than the initial draconian cuts Lyric was demanding—but were still highly concessionary. After lengthy discussion, where all members who wished to speak shared their thoughts, the orchestra voted to ratify.

We will never know what would have been the alternative to that decision. If we had remained on strike, would we have been able to sustain our claim that we were fighting to preserve grand opera if it collapsed around us? Would we have been able to resist the pressure we were increasingly getting from Lyric's other unions, who had settled their contracts before we struck? Would public pressure in our favor have become so great that management would have been forced to rethink their terrible plan of shrinking rather than growing?

What we do know is that the orchestra has not given up. We will keep working and finding ways to counter the destructive plan of our short-sighted management. Throughout this whole process, I have seen the orchestra's passion and dedication crystallize into a clear mission to preserve and protect the Lyric Opera of Chicago. We are eager to find positive ways forward to ensure that we provide Chicago and the world with the highest quality grand opera. We are confident that patrons, donors, and the people of Chicago are ready to stand with us as we continue to work to convince management that our company deserves growth, not withdrawal. We vow to fight for Lyric's stated vision: "To be the great North American opera company for the twenty-first century."



Baltimore Musicians #TakingAStand in Negotiations *(continued)*

The contract expired on September 9, and we entered a play-and-talk period. BSO musicians leafleted the first week-end of subscription concerts, September 21–23, at Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore and at Strathmore Hall, our major second venue in North Bethesda, Maryland. The flyer invited patrons to follow us on our social media platforms, and mentioned that we were playing under an expired contract. Patrons were distressed to learn that we were playing without a contract.

In early October, Brian and I had lunch, at our request, with Kjome and Bozzuto. We agreed that there should be another formal negotiation session. Shortly after that, we received a request to meet on October 30, and we agreed to do so.

Even knowing that BSO leaders had warned of a “cash flow crisis”—as they had now for years—we were still quite surprised to receive the offer made by the BSO on October 30. The proposal would cut our season from 52 to 40

weeks, along with a reduction in salary of over 16%. It also would increase the costs of health care, eliminate the employer contribution to our 401(a) retirement plan, cut guaranteed relief time, increase the number of nine-service weeks, and adversely modify dozens of other terms and conditions that

have been fought for and achieved over the last 50 years. The total cost to musicians of all of these changes would in effect be a 26% reduction in musicians’ compensation.

As of this writing, BSO musicians have accepted the original offer of a pay freeze through January 15, 2019, while we work toward a long-term contract. We have experienced an unbelievable outpouring of support from the community of BSO audience members and donors, and remain hopeful that we can bring public opinion into the conversation, as we work with the management to achieve an acceptable resolution to this troubling situation.

Please follow us on social media, on Facebook @BaltimoreSymphonyMusicians, on Twitter @bso_musicians, and on Instagram @baltimoresymphonymusicians. More information is available on our website: www.bsomusicians.org/public_html/.

Note: The Author is also Co-Chair of the BSO Players Committee.



Marcia Kämper, Michael Lisicky, Schuyler Jackson, Phil Munds, and Lin Ma perform a pop-up concert. Management removed the music stands they had been using.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS



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