

# Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

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## ICSOM Announces Scholarship at Boston University Tanglewood Institute

By ICSOM Governing Board

The lack of racial diversity in the orchestra field has been thoroughly studied and written about for over forty years. Fellowship programs have become the most common approach to increasing onstage diversity. While there have been some success stories—specifically through diversity fellowship programs at various orchestras—we are not yet close to having our orchestras resemble their respective communities. ICSOM supports underrepresented musicians at all stages of their careers, seeks to address potential barriers to access, and works to bolster the pathway of pre-professional orchestral musicians of underrepresented identities.

To that end, ICSOM, in collaboration with the Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI), is proud to announce the creation of the ICSOM BU Tanglewood Institute Scholarship. The ICSOM BU Tanglewood Institute Scholarship is designed to provide support for musicians from historically and currently marginalized backgrounds who have significant financial need and who would benefit from the immersive summer music program at BUTI (a summer program already dedicated to advancing inclusion and belonging for students of all backgrounds).

One full-tuition scholarship per summer will be awarded to a musician attending BUTI's Young Artists Orchestra (YAO) program, and ICSOM has committed to sponsoring this three-month scholarship for five consecutive years. The YAO is a summer orchestral training program for musicians from 14 to 19 years old—an immersive musical experience including orchestral performances, private lessons, chamber music, master classes, and access to every concert at the Tanglewood Music Center. It is ICSOM's hope that this award will help further the advancement of musicians identifying as Black or African American, LatinX or Hispanic, or American Indian or Indigenous (currently underrepresented identities in the orchestral field) who have financial need that would



Joseph Conyers conducts the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Orchestra in 2022

otherwise prohibit them from attending without a scholarship.

The ICSOM BU Tanglewood Institute Scholarship ultimately stems from an evolution in ICSOM's efforts to support young musicians of underrepresented groups. In 1979, the Mendelson Fund was created to assist and encourage the education of young aspiring instrumentalists. The fund was named after founding ICSOM member and former Chairperson Ralph Mendelson, a violist with the NY Philharmonic for 26 years. In 1987, part of that money was directed to a scholarship for students of ethnicities underrepresented in the orchestral field, and in 1993, ICSOM delegates passed a resolution assessing each ICSOM orchestra a \$1 per capita donation to the Mendelson Fund. In 2003, ICSOM began providing scholarship awards of \$500 to each of nine senior semi-finalists in the Sphinx Competition (see [President's](#)

**Tanglewood Scholarship** continues on page 7

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# Chairperson's Report

## Forward Momentum

By Meredith Snow

I generally shy away from using my own orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as an example for our industry. The average yearly income for most ICSOM orchestras is 40% earned and 60% donated. The LAFil is just the opposite, about 60% earned and 40% donated, mostly due to income from the Hollywood Bowl summer season.



Diane Alancraig Photography

But I will say this. Last month our CEO, Chad Smith, came onstage to announce to the orchestra that this winter's ticket sales have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels and that Hollywood Bowl subscription sales have exceeded any previous year's sales.

That, I think, is a good harbinger for us all.

According to a survey done last month by the Advisory Board for the Arts (ABA)—a global strategic planning service for orchestras, opera companies, ballet companies, theater companies, and performing arts centers—more than half of their member arts organizations saw a 60% return of their audiences in 2022. And 72% are expecting to see an increase in ticket sales for 2023. Subscription sales remain lower than previous years, but single ticket sales are up (see <http://www.advisoryboardarts.com> for more information).

A critical factor in selling tickets is that it costs more to sell single tickets than to sell subscriptions. Digital advertising had the largest increase in return on investment for sales in 2022. Social media advertising (up 63%), digital ads (up 54%), and video promotions topped marketing tactics to increase ticket sales. Which might shed some light on why our Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) negotiations have been so sticky this time around.

Familiar and traditional programming—including holiday events—brought in the most audience according to 68% of the ABA survey respondents. Featured solo artists brought in the next highest ticket revenue at 40%.

It looks as if we are returning—faster than I would have anticipated—to our pre-pandemic operations. And I hope I didn't just jinx it by saying so.

As you can see from our cover article, ICSOM is extremely proud and excited to announce our new partnership with Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI) to underwrite a single, full scholarship to the BUTI Young Artists Orchestra summer program at Tanglewood. We have committed to a five-year program that will provide one full-tuition scholarship each year to BUTI for a pre-professional musician from an underrepresented group who demonstrates financial need that would otherwise prohibit them from attending.



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### Governing Board

**Meredith Snow, Chairperson**  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
13610 Emelita Street  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
818-786-3776  
meredsnow@gmail.com

**Paul Austin, President**  
Grand Rapids Symphony  
561 Madison Avenue SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-304-0869  
austinpaul@gmail.com

**Laura Ross, Secretary**  
Nashville Symphony  
1609 Tammany Drive  
Nashville, TN 37206  
615-227-2379  
lar2vln@comcast.net

**Mike Muszynski, Senza Sordino Editor**  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
450 E Ohio Street, Apt.114  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
224-558-0342  
mmuszynski@gmail.com

**Peter de Boor, Treasurer**  
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra  
431 North Kenmore Street  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-465-9157 • Fax 866-832-7838  
pdeboor@gmail.com

**Keith Carrick, Member at Large**  
Utah Symphony  
1529 E Parkway Avenue  
Salt Lake City, UT 84106  
301-639-6614  
keith.carrick@gmail.com

**Alberto Suarez, Member at Large**  
Kansas City Symphony  
3001 NW 59th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64151  
305-338-5411  
albertsuarez@gmail.com

**Daniel Sweeley, Member at Large**  
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra  
30 Lakeside Court  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
716-553-9200  
sweeleydan@gmail.com

**Kenneth Thompkins, Member at Large**  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
4107 Shadrock Dr  
Troy, MI 48085  
248-828-3463  
thompkinsken@gmail.com

**Kevin Case, ICSOM General Counsel**  
Case Arts Law LLC  
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1241  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-234-9926 • Fax 312-962-4908  
kcase@caseartslaw.com

**Subscriptions:** \$10 per year, payable to ICSOM Inc.,  
c/o Peter de Boor, Treasurer, 431 North Kenmore Street, Arlington, VA 22201.  
Report delivery-related problems to Mike Muszynski, Editor, 450 E Ohio  
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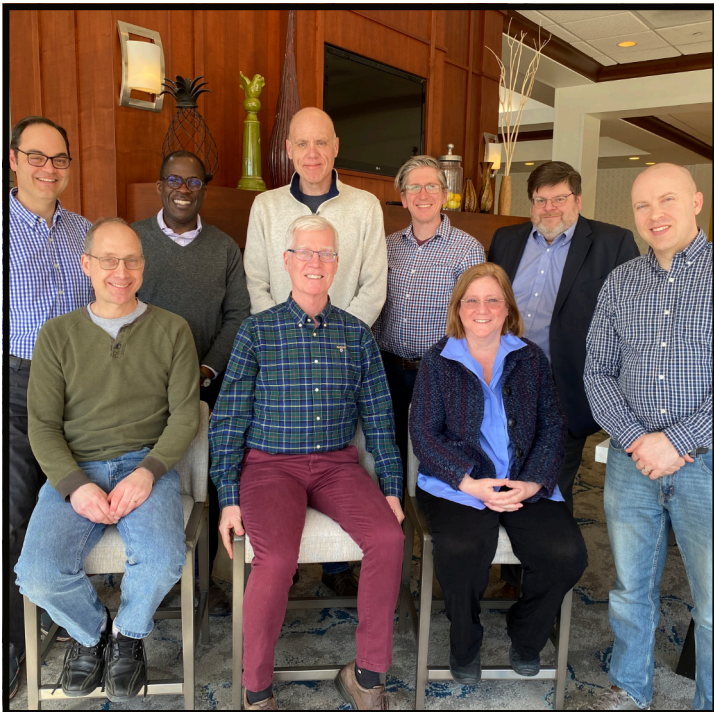
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After a year’s delay, the 102nd American Federation of Musicians (AFM) Triennial Convention will be held in Las Vegas this June 26–29. The ICSOM Governing Board has submitted our proposed Strike Fund bylaw resolution, amending the bylaws to allow the trustees of the fund additional leeway in considering awarding strike fund benefits in the case of force majeure or implementation of the doctrine of impossibility. As it stands now, the only possible scenarios for awarding benefits are a strike or lockout.

As you well know, during the pandemic several ICSOM employers furloughed their musicians or declared force majeure. Those musicians were deprived of all wages guaranteed in their collective bargaining agreements—and in one orchestra, health benefits as well.

This amendment would broaden the scope of reasons that the Strike Fund trustees would be able to consider in awarding benefits. Twenty-two Locals have co-signed and submitted our resolution in support of the proposed bylaw amendment. It will go through committee at the convention and be voted up or down by all the Locals in the Federation. Expect to read more on this in the next issue of *Senza Sordino*.

The ICSOM Governing Board recently met in Chicago this month to begin planning our own conference, which is scheduled for August 23–26 at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee, hosted by Local 8 and the musicians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. I’m looking forward to seeing their newly renovated hall, Warner Grand Theater at the Bradley Symphony Center, and to seeing all of our ICSOM delegates. It will be a busy four days!



*The ICSOM Governing Board (missing Meredith Snow, who attended remotely) with attorney Kevin Case at the Midwinter meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn O’Hare Airport in Chicago on March 20, 2023*

## President’s Report

### In with the New

By Paul Austin

Now that 2023 has arrived, ICSOM has some notable updates to several of our online offerings. All of them include a passing of the torch from the person who made each of these programs successful.



Paul Austin

### Website Transformation

If you have not visited [icsom.org](http://icsom.org) since last year, its recent transformation will probably surprise you. Our website began in 1995 and was completely redesigned by former ICSOM webmaster Martha Warrington (violinist, Oregon Symphony, retired, pictured at left) in 2012. For over ten years, Martha’s generosity in building and maintaining our website—at no cost—benefited ICSOM greatly, but she recently informed us that it needed to be upgraded by someone else soon since she was retiring. Thanks to LinkedIn, I discovered that Bert Witzel (bassist, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, pictured below) is an accomplished web designer, so I approached him in the summer of



Martha Warrington

2021 about renovating ICSOM’s site. Bert did much research regarding suitable platforms to make the website more compatible for mobile and tablet devices, which became necessary because the original website had been envisioned primarily for desktop and laptop use. Martha and Bert worked together to discuss the important features of ICSOM’s website, and the transfer occurred in January 2023 ([as reported by Bert in the December 2022 issue of Senza Sordino](#)).



O’Neil Arnold

### Conductor Evaluation Program

The founder of our online Conductor Evaluation Program (CEP) will also step down from the Administrator position shortly. Barb Corbató (violinist and ICSOM Delegate/Grand Rapids Symphony, pictured left) became our first Administrator of ICSOM’s online CEP in fall 2017. As reported in the December 2017 issue of *Senza Sordino*, Barb and I worked together to establish the CEP, which went live in early 2018 ([see Senza Sordino, December 2017](#)).



Grand Rapid Symphony Orchestra

**In with the New continues on page 7**

# Bouncing Back in Hawai‘i

By Rebecca Matayoshi

*Editor’s Note: This article uses the traditional spelling of Hawai‘i, including the okina character, which Senza Sordino normally omits*

**O**n January 17, 2023, the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra officially announced that Chinese-Australian conductor Dane Lam would be appointed as Music Director Designate. While the appointment of a new Music Director is exciting for any orchestra to share, it is especially exciting and meaningful to the Musicians of the HSO, given our orchestra’s recent history. It is no secret that the HSO has had ups and downs in the last fifteen years—the most notable being Chapter 7 bankruptcy in 2009.

Formerly known as the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, the organization re-opened in 2012 as the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, the new name chosen to be more inclusive of the other islands that make up the beautiful state of Hawai‘i. With a brand new board, then-Executive Director Jonathan Parrish and the musicians who chose to stay looked ahead toward an uncertain future, with gratitude that there would indeed be a forward path and the hope that the orchestra would grow into that future.

Slowly but surely, the orchestra took steps forward, first by bringing on JoAnn Falletta as Artistic Advisor. She would steer the ship over the next ten years as the orchestra began to rebuild. The group would find its footing by establishing a tradition of concerts throughout the season, such as Beethoven’s beloved Symphony No. 9 during the holidays. Next came a series of auditions to fill openings in the orchestra, as well as one-year appointments to cover any gaps that could not be auditioned right away.



Gareth Ormita

Fast-forward to March 2020 as CEO Dave Moss began his tenure. Beginning a new post in the fine arts at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown presented a big challenge, but Moss was able to provide HSO and its musicians stability against all odds. The HSO was one of the first American orchestras to successfully be granted a federal PPP loan, which secured pay for the musicians.

Throughout the pandemic, Moss also built relationships with several additional corporate partners who added new sponsored series to our existing season. Some of those include the Halekulani Masterworks Series (sponsored by the Halekulani Hotel), the Sheraton Starlight series (HSO’s summer season, supported by the Sheraton Waikiki), and the Hapa Symphony Series, which features local Hawaiian artists and music.

The effects of COVID-19 were challenging for the music industry worldwide. But the Musicians of the HSO are no strangers to challenges, having experienced the bankruptcy of our institution. The government enacted extremely cautious state-wide mandates that changed often as the pandemic progressed, making it nearly impossible for the orchestra to be together in a predictable, conventional way. To overcome not being able to make music together in-person, HSO musicians rallied to establish an online presence by creating virtual recordings and sharing photos from their pandemic lives as a way of staying connected to the community. The added bonus of going virtual allowed for the inclusion of commuter musicians, which currently make up approximately 10% of the orchestra.

The Orchestra Committee worked tirelessly with management to continue discussions of the future after it was safe to re-open. It was never a question of “if,” but rather “when.” Most recently, the Orchestra Committee successfully negotiated and ratified a new agreement which guarantees increased pay and added weeks (increasing from eighteen to twenty-one) over the next four years. That, plus the addition of HSO’s first official Music Director in its eleven-year history, is one giant step toward solidifying legitimacy.



Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra



*Incoming Music Director Dane Lam, conducting the HSO in October 2022*

Brad Goda

Originally from Brisbane, Australia, Dane Lam completed his formal school training at the University of Queensland with Gwyn Roberts and at the Juilliard School under James DePriest. He held an assistantship with Gianluigi Gelmetti; a fellowship at the Royal Northern College of Music with Sir Mark Leder, Clark Rundell, and Mark Heron; and an assistant conductor position at the Orchestre National de France. All of these eventually led him to his current post as the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra. Lam made his American orchestra debut with HSO in May 2021, conducting two programs of varying repertoire: a Hapa Symphony series program called “Hawai‘i Calls”—a nod to the former radio show which broadcast traditional Hawaiian music directly from Waikiki Beach until 1975—and a Masterworks program called “Hungarian Rhapsodies” that featured a variety of different rhapsodic selections as well as Brahms’ Second Symphony.

Lam was subsequently invited back in October 2022 to conduct Dvořák Symphony 9, and the premiere of the First Symphony of Dai-Kyong Lee, a composer native to Hawai‘i. Lam’s chemistry with both the orchestra and audience was undeniable, ultimately leading to his appointment. Maestro

Lam’s initial contract is set to run until 2027 and he will conduct his first official week in July 2023, during the Sheraton Starlight pops season.

It has been a long road of rebuilding to get to this point, and any orchestra that has endured similar strife can certainly vouch for the financial—but also emotional—duress a rebuild creates, with the uncertainty and the lack of stability being the most obvious of concerns. One unique trait that gives the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra so much strength is the ohana culture of the islands.

In Hawai‘i, “ohana” means “family” and stems from the idea of community and inclusion for all, not just blood relations. It is this special quality that has provided HSO’s musical ohana with the grit to push through struggles, and the desire to celebrate together in the joys of the orchestra’s success. Reporting from Hawai‘i: we are happy to say we are currently riding a wave of success, and looking forward to many years of music-making to come. [➤](#)

*Many thanks to Music Librarian Kim Kiyabu and the musicians of the Music Director Search Committee for verifying the facts included in this article.*

## Defying the Silence: A New Book from Julie Ayer

By Paul Gunther

“To my colleagues I give the last word. It is my hope that their legacy of commitment will inspire us all. I hope, also, that these reflections will remind us of the continuing pertinence of their story and the necessity for ongoing vigilance.”

These words, penned by author and professional violinist Julie Ayer, appeared in her 2005 book, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History*. In it, Julie, then a longtime member of the Minnesota Orchestra (formerly the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, as so many of us would still prefer it to be named), recounts the step-by-step history of ICSOM from its historical beginnings in Chicago, through the early years of the 21st century. I'm glad to report that Julie has another book out for anyone interested in the inner workings—and external impacts—of symphony orchestras, especially those in the US and Canada.

Orchestras, in how they are managed and how they operate, have changed in ways both subtle and gross over the centuries, and most especially in the past thirty years. Symphony musicians have a particularly fraught history of being forced by circumstances, whether social or political, to look out for themselves and remain watchful in order to protect and to influence their professional work situations. Because the status quo can shift in unpredictable ways—and without much warning—maintaining such vigilance within any beloved institution, be it an orchestra or a nation, can be daunting.

Julie's new book covers this precarious situation. Now retired from the Minnesota Orchestra, she tells a story of betrayal and recovery, of shock and tenacity. It is indeed a warning, one that tells the reader how the tides can turn against a beloved institution; and then can be turned back again through sheer grit and the firm belief that there are things worth fighting for that can make not just lives, but entire communities better for the struggle.

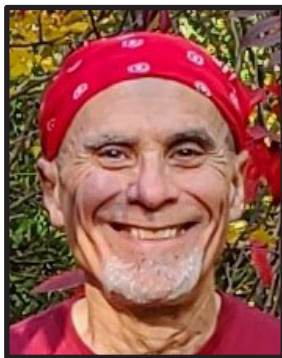
The book is titled *Defying the Silence: A Chronicle of Resilience That Saved the World-Renowned Minnesota Orchestra*. The unprecedented—and thoroughly unnecessary—Minnesota Orchestra lockout of 2012–2014 lasted sixteen months and merits such a tale. It is simultaneously a historical chronicle detailing a journey from suffering to success, a plea for awareness, and, yes, a warning. It encompasses an exposé of sordid backroom dealings of an orchestra board, of remarkable unity amongst the musicians of the orchestra, of overcoming challenges and enlisting aid from friends and from strangers who became friends, and of how an entire

community eventually rose up to defend and restore their beloved institution.

In addition to recounting the historical record of events over the period of the sixteen-month Minnesota Orchestra lockout and what led up to it, Julie has filled her book with memories and quotes, stories and photos. I read the book to ascertain the depth of her reportage; and then I read it again because it resonated so greatly, bringing me back to the time of the lockout and what we endured, what we gained, and how we all grew.

Spoilers: the Minnesota Orchestra is thriving once again. But it took some doing and significant engagement from a lot of people. This book explains how it happened, suggests why the situation occurred in the first place, and examines what might be done to prevent it from happening again. Maintaining vigilance is the easy answer and, simultaneously, the challenge. Engaging with our community is paramount, because who

we are and what we all do is always, always part of something bigger. Brava Julie!




Paul Gunther



Carl Nashan

# DEFYING THE SILENCE

A Chronicle of Resilience That Saved the World-Renowned Minnesota Orchestra




## JULIE AYER

*Defying the Silence* is available starting May 23 at Amazon or [julieayer.com](http://julieayer.com)

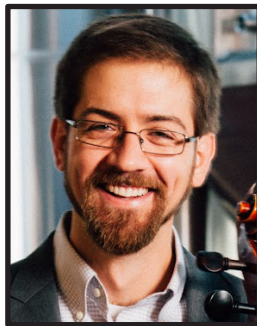
**Tanglewood Scholarship** *continued from page 1*

[Report Senza Sordino June 2021](#)). Currently, the Mendelson Fund supports the National Alliance for Audition Support and Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions, both programs run by The Sphinx Organization. The audition Intensives are typically three-day events held at the New World Symphony Center in Miami Beach, where pre-professional musicians seeking an orchestral career receive coaching from professional musicians, perform mock auditions, and receive audition preparation mental training.

ICSOM's efforts to increase racial diversity in the orchestral field started with the very founding of ICSOM itself in 1962. Press releases in 1962 and 1963 stated ICSOM's support for equal opportunity for Black musicians in symphony orchestras and called for an end to racially segregated audiences. These are all significant indications of our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are proud to be able to offer this ICSOM BU Tanglewood Institute Scholarship in the hope that it will further our work toward diversification of our orchestras and help a young musician from an underrepresented group move into a professional career as an orchestral performer. 

**In with the New** *continued from page 3*

Five years later, the CEP remains a vital resource for ICSOM, with nearly one hundred online evaluations of sixty-eight conductors completed by eight ICSOM orchestras. Several ICSOM orchestras have used the CEP for their music director search process instead of their own in-house evaluation, and orchestra managers have requested files from our CEP to gather musicians' confidential input to help decide whether to rehire guest conductors or renew their current conductors. It saddens me to see Barb step down from this role but I am pleased to announce that Brian Magnus (cellist and ICSOM Delegate/Jacksonville Symphony, pictured at right) will take over the reins from Barb beginning in September 2023. Brian has used the CEP frequently and is familiar with our system. Currently Barb and I are working with Brian for a smooth transition in these duties so that there will be no interruption in service for ICSOM's online CEP.




Tiffany Manning

ICSOM is indebted to Martha Warrington and Barb Corbató for their dedication to these two important activities. Thanks to their work, our website has been recognized by the Library of Congress as a leading resource for research and our CEP provides a confidential and secure method for ICSOM musicians to evaluate conductors. ICSOM knows that we are in good hands with Bert Witzel and Brian Magnus, and we wish them well in the continuation of the high quality of our website and CEP.

## DEI Video Series

In spring 2022, I floated to ICSOM's DEI Committee and Governing Board the idea of a diversity video series that

would feature our membership, and I was pleased to receive their enthusiastic support. Off the bat we aimed high by scoring an engaging interview with Joseph Conyers (bassist, Philadelphia Orchestra), and I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know many of ICSOM's Musicians of Color through this venture. However, to keep our DEI video series fresh, I always envisioned an annual change in host. It has been wonderful to launch the "ICSOM Musician Profiles: Celebrating Racial Diversity" series with tremendous guests but, as in all startups, its success will only be ensured if it can survive beyond the vision of its founder. I am convinced that this series will do so, and we will be revealing a new host on our June 1 video. Make sure to tune in at our website: <https://www.icsom.org/media/profiles.php>!

Keeping it new and exciting—that's how ICSOM will continue to be relevant and vital into the future. But for this to happen we would appreciate your support today by visiting our website, participating in our CEP, and watching the videos on our "Musician Profiles" series. 

## Senza Sordino in Color


By Mike Muszyński, ICSOM Editor

**Y**ou could very easily imagine my surprise at the colorful images that appeared in the December 2022 issue of *Senza Sordino*. My initial thought was that I had mistakenly asked our printer, Colonial Quality Printing, for something that was going to cost a lot more money.

However, upon reaching out to John McAdams, he responded that CQP would be switching to color printing in general, and that he couldn't help but to print our issue in color immediately—without any additional cost. Whew.

ICSOM's relationship with CQP predates my time as editor, and my predecessors have reported how much they have appreciated working with the company. I am happy to confirm that John and CQP have been just as helpful as reported. In fact—partially because I've been curious to see how the whole process works—we've been talking about taking an excursion to CQP during the conference this summer, as they are based in Milwaukee. Expect a meta-story about how *Senza* gets published in a future issue of *Senza*.

Astute readers might also notice that the publication dates on *Senza Sordino* don't really match when they are delivered—December 2022 was a particularly egregious example of late delivery, as I sent the issue to CQP in early February. I intend to deliver issues in a more timely manner, but these often get delayed for various reasons—partially because it takes longer than I expect to edit each issue, but also because I need more articles in the pipeline.

The hardest part of editing *Senza Sordino* is coming up with content. I would like to make that easier by being more predictable about when these issues are published. Currently, we are working on an issue for the AFM Convention in June and an issue for our own conference in August. Please reach out if you want your orchestra to be featured in any way! 



Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Genza Sordino*  
Mike Muszynski, Editor  
450 E Ohio Street, Apt 114  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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