

Senza Sordino

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Second FIM International Orchestra Conference Remarks by Bruce Ridge, ICSOM Chairperson

The 2nd FIM International Orchestra Conference (IOC) was held March 7–9, 2011 in Amsterdam. It was open to musicians and their trade unions from all over the world, as well as to conductors and orchestra managers. Functioning as a space for exchange and dialogue, it was structured in nine panels over two and a half days addressing three main topics: orchestra financing, musicians' health and welfare, and working relationships/working conditions.

There were 200 participants from 40 countries. Representing the American Federation of Musicians, AFM President Ray Hair took along Bruce Ridge (ICSOM), Francine Schutzman (OCSM), Carla Lehmeier-Tatum (ROPA), and Chris Durham (SSD). As panel speakers, Ridge, Schutzman, and Lehmeier-Tatum were joined by Alan Valentine (President and CEO, Nashville Symphony Orchestra) and Paul Stewart (President, Dallas Symphony Orchestra). Simultaneous interpretation was provided in the FIM's four official languages: English, French, German, and Spanish.

Founded in 1948, the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) is an international organization which represents musicians unions, guilds, and professional associations. Its aim is to promote, defend, and foster the interests of performing musicians on a global scale. FIM's membership includes the American Federation of Musicians along with organizations from some 70 countries.

Below are remarks that ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge delivered on the first day of the conference.

It is a great honor to be with you all today in Amsterdam, representing the musicians of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, or ICSOM. ICSOM was founded in 1962, and is comprised of over 4,000 musicians from America's top 51 orchestras, and we are a Players' Conference of the

American Federation of Musicians. The "international" part of our name might seem a bit of a misnomer, but when we were founded we had Canadian members as well until they formed the Organization of Canadian Symphonic Musicians. We remain in close contact with musicians across the world, and are eager to be advocates for the arts everywhere.

I believe that, in a world that occasionally slumps with the weight of its burdens, the musicians that comprise countless orchestras around the world offer a message of hope that citizens of every nation are eager to hear. Supporting the arts is not just a mission that keeps the past alive, but it is in fact a mission that empowers the future. Countless studies have demonstrated the value of the arts in educating the next generation, where students who participate in music and other art disciplines are far more likely to stay in school and actually enjoy learning.

There is nothing about our message that is about the past. Indeed we are here to imagine and plan for a greater future—a future articulated by John F. Kennedy when he said:

I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens.

As the artistic quality of our orchestras continues to rise, the standard of achievement has indeed been elevated, but the recognition of the value of musicians in many places is still sadly lacking.

When we speak of vision, of visionary managers or visionary musicians, we are describing a quality that inspires by seeing opportunities that others might overlook. We must see every crisis as an opportunity. In the worldwide economic downturn, many orchestras in America have faced just such a crisis.

We work in a field that uses a lot of nebulous catch phrases and engages in a seemingly constant and largely ineffective self-study. For the orchestras that comprise the membership of ICSOM, this has resulted in a phrase widely used among managers that calls for "a new model," as if there is a national solution for the local environments that cause an orchestra, or other entity, to succeed

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

Recently, Michael Steele was asked to name his favorite book, and he answered *War and Peace*. He then went on to quote from the book, saying "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Aside from not knowing the difference between Tolstoy and Dickens, I thought his reference was appropriate, as it is the best of times, and it is the worst of times.

The notion that anything about these times might be positive must seem to be a fantastic statement when we look at the state of art and music in America. We are seeing a renewed series of attacks on the arts and attacks on unions. It feels like 1980 all over again. The air traffic controllers union was wiped out by the government, and opponents of public funding for the arts would soon attack the funding of one photographer as indicative of moral decay and federal waste.

Ahh, nostalgia. Leg warmers, anyone?

In 2011, legislators have once again proposed drastic cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts, and a few have suggested eliminating funding completely. This despite the fact that every dollar the government invests in the arts returns seven dollars to the community.

It is patently absurd to suggest that in order to address budget deficits, we must cut the NEA. The deficit is something like \$1.5 trillion, and the budget for the NEA is \$165 million. It is such a small fraction of the budget—a little over one one-hundredth of one percent!—that cutting it in order to achieve fiscal responsibility is a little like gambling away all of your savings, and then deciding to unplug your microwave to save money on electricity. Our country needs to create jobs, and the arts lead to over 5.7 million jobs annually.

And what else is wrong? Well, where do I begin?

As of this writing, The Detroit Symphony remains on strike, with management having "suspended" the rest of the season. The musicians of the Louisville Orchestra had to resist an attempt by their management to put them into bankruptcy; fortunately, a judge refused to uphold this attempt. A renewed attack on unions has led to widespread demonstrations, most notably in Madison, Wisconsin, but also in town squares and government plazas across America.

It is the age of wisdom, and it is the age of foolishness.

It might appear that there is not much good happening right now—but I don't see it that way.

I look out and sense that we are entering a renewed era of activism. Those who would seek to undermine the arts in America may well overplay their hand. Even politicians such as Mike Huckabee are
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A Player Conference of the
American Federation of Musicians of the
United States and Canada, AFL-CIO

www.icsom.org

Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Louisville Orchestra
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony Orchestra
National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
New York City Opera Orchestra
New York Philharmonic
North Carolina Symphony
Oregon Symphony Orchestra
Philadelphia Orchestra
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
San Antonio Symphony
San Diego Symphony Orchestra
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
San Francisco Opera Orchestra
San Francisco Symphony
Syracuse Symphony Orchestra
Utah Symphony Orchestra
Virginia Symphony

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Secretary's Report

by Laura Ross



Whatever happened to treating people with at least a modicum of respect or civility and to elevated discussion and behavior? I wonder, too, what has happened to bargaining in good faith or negotiating at all?

I have become more and more disturbed by the behavior of orchestra boards and managers in the past few years as they use threats and strong-arm techniques to coerce musicians to accept their “proposals” (AKA ultimatums) to cut weeks, salaries, and orchestra size—or, in more than one case, to “fix” the problems they, not the musicians, have caused. Far too many boards are holding musicians accountable for the mistakes made by the managers boards have hired.

In the last year more than one orchestra manager has cancelled the musicians’ health insurance due to an impending work stoppage. In one situation, the health insurance policy was cancelled retroactively without notifying the musicians, additionally prohibiting these same musicians from being able to take advantage of the only option normally open to the unemployed, COBRA. Another refused to allow their musicians to pay for their own insurance during a labor action.

Meanwhile, these same managers continue to receive their sizeable salaries during strikes, lockouts, and bankruptcies; yet they are doing next to nothing, since there is no orchestra or concerts to oversee. So why, I have to ask, do boards continue to pay inflated six-figure salaries when their managers are doing nothing? In Honolulu, the executive director, whose hiring was forced upon the musicians and who was engaged for three years instead of the one year promised by the board, has bled away what little money remained while doing nothing because she shut the orchestra down during the first week of their newly negotiated concessionary contract.

In Detroit, the governor and ranking senator called upon both sides to end a strike that had lasted more than four months. The musicians, admitting it might erode what they had been trying to protect for the institution, still agreed they would be willing to make the effort to meet and try to achieve a settlement. And what did management say? No, we just can’t raise any more money than we’ve been saying we could raise over the past few months.

When the Detroit management finally did agree to mediation, little had changed from their initial proposal. For instance, they claimed to have segregated monies designated for community engagement services, yet clearly defined vision of these services has been a moving target. Meanwhile they have glossed over their intractability about proposals to remove tenure provisions. (Removing peer review would essentially equate to that, whether they are willing to admit it or not.) Sadly, far too many board members involved in this dismaying situation have bought this bill of goods.

I’ve also watched the situation in Louisville with great interest and concern. As someone who lived through an eight-month shutdown and bankruptcy (in Nashville, the bankruptcy filing actually came

nearly four months after they laid off the entire orchestra and staff), I was delighted to see a bankruptcy judge finally see through the actions of the Louisville Orchestra’s board and management. The judge refused to set aside the collective bargaining agreement because musicians offered proof of available assets. He also reportedly disagreed with the board’s slash and burn methods as the only alternative to address the orchestra’s financial problems.

Time and again an orchestra enters negotiations in good faith but the management and board dig in and never move from their initial offer. The board decided early on that they are only willing to raise a certain amount of money and no more. In Detroit, this take-it-or-leave-it mentality meant there was no option but to strike because management and the board went that extra step and implemented the regressive contract. The musicians had only two options: strike or accept the unacceptable contract terms.

What has been most disheartening is something I have long been concerned about, a lack of education and understanding about our institutions, how they work, and how they are funded. I have just finished reading Michael Kaiser’s *Leading Roles: 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask*, and I have learned a lot. It explains a great deal and just reinforces, in my opinion, the very desperate need to educate our boards about how our organizations work and their role as caretakers of our orchestras.

Those of us lucky enough to have heard Mr. Kaiser in person, or who already have read his previous book, *Art of the Turnaround*, know that our orchestras cannot “save their way to health.” Cutting programming and marketing, and later orchestra size and wages, inevitably will fail and in many cases will destroy both the soul and the reputation of the organization. This is especially true for those orchestras that make their financial crises public because no donor wishes to waste money or time on a failing institution—especially if those responsible for caretaking the organization are the same ones proclaiming its failure! Kaiser recommends that an organization in crisis come up with a single plan and prove to the public how it will resolve the financial situation, incrementally, while continuing to provide and build quality programming. A positive attitude is also crucial during this period and these incremental improvements give constituents hope and morale improves.

One of the saddest observations is in regard to the mission statement of an organization. Many board members, because they come from the for-profit world, do not understand or agree with the non-profit business model and have difficulty believing (or supporting) the idea that producing quality performances is more important than making money or breaking even. Some even believe the earned income/contributions relationship is nothing more than bad business practice and a “new model” can somehow “fix” the problem to increase profits. Further, board members are often unaware of all the skills necessary to be an executive director, and, rather than hiring someone who can create revenue, they hire someone who only understands discipline and financial control, so they measure

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AFM-EPF Website Improvements

by Laura Ross, AFM-EPF Trustee

At the 2007 ICSOM Conference in Minneapolis, delegates passed a resolution asking the American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) to develop and provide a transactional website. Since that time the AFM-EPF has offered additional services beyond simply providing copies of forms and documents for download.

By 2008, the Fund began providing a password protected area that allowed participants the ability to change their address and to view their most recent contribution statement, which is generally mailed in September of each year. As scanning and archiving has occurred, additional statements were made available (at this point they stretch back to 2000.)

Registration has also been streamlined. Previously, the sign up process included mailing a temporary password. Now, you can sign up in just a few minutes but you will need your Pension ID Number (you can find it on your annual statement.) Once registered, you can use your email address as your user ID.

In 2010, the Fund began to make available quarterly records for the current contribution year. At this point, if you have registered on the website, you should be able to view all contributions made on your behalf for the first three quarters of 2010, through September 30, 2010. Since some employers do not always pay their contributions in a timely manner, nothing is official until you receive your annual statement for 2010 (which could arrive as early as August as it did last year.)

This February, the Fund announced they have developed a calculator, called the Pension Estimator, which allows you, in just a few minutes to estimate your monthly pension benefit between the ages of 55 and 65. You can choose either the single or joint & annuitant (you and your spouse or designated beneficiary) benefit and you can even add contributions to estimate anticipated future contributions. Of course this will only provide an estimate of your anticipated monthly benefit but I am sure our members will find this is a helpful tool.

I encourage you to register at www.afm-epf.org and take a look at the information and tools the Fund now provides.

Senza Sordino is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers, or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

FIM Conference

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or fail. We find that, oddly enough, there is a tendency to study our industry's failures in order to create a so-imagined new model, while orchestras that have thrived and been innovative throughout the recession often go undocumented. What other industry studies its failures while overlooking its successes in order to create a new business model?

Our belief is that the symphonic field too often promotes a negative message from within. And simply put, people will donate to and invest in organizations that inspire them, and they will not invest in organizations that question their own sustainability.

Every arts organization depends on a great deal of good will to accomplish its mission. Everyone in this field would agree that we should aspire to create positive relationships among all facets of our organizations. However, few truly perceive the building of positive relationships as a prerequisite for achieving an orchestra's mission.

Currently in the United States, several of our member orchestras face great difficulties. The Honolulu Symphony, which was founded by the people of Hawaii over 110 years ago, currently resides in bankruptcy. The Louisville Orchestra, famed across the world for its recordings of music by American composers, has fought off a bankruptcy claim from its management, and the musicians have emerged as positive advocates for their city and community and as effective fund raisers for their own orchestra.

And of course, as is well known to us all, the great Detroit Symphony remains silent as it seeks to negotiate an agreement with its management after a strike of over 20 weeks. It is there that that the rhetoric of a new model emerges as a focus and concern for many American musicians.

But elsewhere, visionary orchestras have been led to a period of new heights. The Metropolitan Opera appears in 1,500 theaters in 46 countries as part of its international broadcasts. The Los Angeles Philharmonic has just appeared in theaters across North America. The New York Philharmonic has announced it has nearly doubled its fund raising goal. And of course, the Nashville Symphony, led by our friend and panel member Alan Valentine, has emerged from a crisis that flooded its renowned new concert hall to achieve an even higher level of acclaim among the citizens of its city, and with three new GRAMMY awards as well.

Visionary leadership of our orchestras will serve to inspire us all, and can guide our profession and art form into a future that can be greater than our past.

Many see the landscape before us as treacherous for the arts. But artists with vision, and in that group I include both managers and musicians, can see things that others might not. We must set visionary goals as we aspire to new heights for our civilization and our children. Together, we can imagine and create a future where our orchestras are even more relevant to a world that endlessly seeks inspiration.

Symphonic Connections in the Bluegrass State

by Trevor Johnson, Louisville Orchestra Delegate

We might not have been able to call ourselves by name because of our management's attorney's allegation that use of the name "Louisville Orchestra Musicians' Association" is a violation of our contract. Instead, we answered to code names such as "Major orchestra across the Ohio River from Jeffersonville, Indiana" and "Musicians from our Nation's Capital Orchestra." But something amazing happened when two ICSOM orchestras combined at the Louisville Marriott on February 19, 2011.



Photo by Laura Ross
Violinists and long-time orchestra leaders Clara Markham (left, Louisville Orchestra) and Bill Foster (National Symphony).

The National Symphony was in Kentucky for a week's residency when its musicians graciously volunteered to help musicians of the Louisville Orchestra (LO) in their fight to maintain a full-size orchestra. After the LO management filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in December, the LO musicians formed a nonprofit organization called KEEP LOUISVILLE SYMPHONIC to raise awareness and funds to combat management's goal of "right-sizing" the orchestra to 50–55 musicians. (It was modeled after the KEEP LOUISVILLE WEIRD campaign supporting local, independent businesses. Please visit www.keeplouisvillesymphonic.org to



Photo by Laura Ross
Duelling contras Roger Soren (left, Louisville Orchestra) and Lew Lipnick (National Symphony).

learn more about our mission and ways you can support us!) A Christmas pops concert and a Classics concert with Maestro Uriel Segal and Mark Kaplan had been very successful under KEEP LOUISVILLE SYMPHONIC.

So the offer of help from NSO musicians was too good to refuse. A program of American music was planned, and after securing an ASCAP license and rental parts, we set out to fashion the largest orchestra possible. LO bassist Bert Witzel deserves a medal for his leadership in organizing the many facets of this concert. The long list of people to thank includes NSO violist Jennifer Mondie for acting as liaison between Louisville and Washington, the musicians of the NSO for the generosity of their time and money, our attorney Liza Hirsch Medina for recommending such a collaborative effort, Jason Seber for conducting and loaning percussion equipment, local composers Paul Brink and Ray Horton (also an LO trombonist) for their pieces, violin soloist and benefactor J. Patrick Rafferty, Indianapolis Symphony violinist Louise Alexander for providing the very first on-line donation to KEEP LOUISVILLE SYMPHONIC, and ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross, who drove up from Nashville to support her colleagues, see friends, and take the excellent pictures accompanying this article.



Photo by Laura Ross
A large brass section is on hand for a performance of *Stars and Stripes* at the concert on February 19.

In mounting these self-produced concerts, we're learning that the jobs of management are definitely not easy. Ask me about seating musicians from two orchestras or Bert about transporting percussion instruments and stands on a U-Haul at "Oh-dark-hundred" in the morning, and you may have to resuscitate us! But the musicians of KEEP LOUISVILLE SYMPHONIC and the National Symphony proved that we *can* produce these concerts, that there is enthusiastic and generous support for full-size symphonic music in Louisville, and that audience members aren't the only ones changed by the experience. We musicians are forever changed by the support of our colleagues from Washington and by music's healing influence, and we are re-dedicated to our mission to *keep Louisville symphonic*.

Orchestra Newslets

The **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** is in the midst of its 75th season. In celebration of this milestone, Buffalo Heritage Unlimited, in cooperation with the BPO, has published *The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra: The BPO Celebrates the First 75 Years*. This highly informative volume outlines the history of the orchestra from its inception to the present with a wealth of photographs and text. In addition, the Buffalo Philharmonic has produced a five-CD set of recordings that includes Beethoven Symphony No. 6 (William Steinberg, 1949); Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5 (Josef Krips and Glenn Gould, 1960); Foss *Baroque Variations* (Lukas Foss, 1967); Foss *Renaissance* Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (Lukas Foss and Carol Wincenc, 1986); Mozart Symphony No. 36 (Maximiano Valdes, 1987); Ruggles *Men and Mountains* (Michael Tilson Thomas); several Gershwin selections (Michael Tilson Thomas and Sarah Vaughn, 1975); Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 (Julius Rudel and Emanuel Ax, 1980); Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 (Semyon Bychkov, 1988); Schreker *Prelude to a Drama* and *Das Spielwerke* (JoAnn Falletta, 2008); and Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade* (JoAnn Falletta and Michael Ludwig, 2007). All of these recordings took place at Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, New York. Additional information is available at www.bpo.org or www.music.buffalo.edu/bpo/record.htm.

The **Columbus Symphony** got a contract settlement in less than a week—six months before the expiration of the current agreement—through transparent collective bargaining between two highly motivated parties. This follows a long history of problems.

Beginning in 2003 the orchestra began to run large deficits, and its 52-week contract was lost in 2005, with musicians accepting a 10% cut. In 2008 the musicians were locked out mid-term after several months of public battles, and the orchestra ceased operations for six months. When the dust cleared, the musicians faced an additional cut of 21%. It was also extremely difficult for the orchestra to resume operations, having lost both contributed support and subscribers. Despite the severe cuts accepted by the musicians since 2005, the orchestra was barely alive in 2009. A new board and management leadership had taken charge, but so much damage had been caused by the nine-month public fight that, a year ago, the orchestra faced another imminent shut down. Because of confidence in the new orchestra leadership, the musicians agreed to another 20% cut to give time to repair the orchestra. A new business relationship was established with the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA), essentially handing control of the orchestra's management over to them. As the first anniversary approaches it appears that this relationship has been successful and is working well.

At 25 weeks, total compensation for musicians this season is 40% less than it was in 2008. Making matters even worse, the group health insurance premiums were about to increase 42% on March 1. Musicians must pay 20% of the premiums each month, and those premiums already represented about 8% of gross wages on average.

Earlier this season the orchestra leadership informed musicians of its plans to build a large cash reserve and to begin planning for an endowment drive, tied to an early settlement and a multi-year agreement. The local and the orchestra committee said that if there could be financial relief this season and help with the huge health insurance increases, it might be possible to reach an early settlement. Over a tense period of four long days, a deal was put together. A change in insurance companies and policies contained the premium increase to 24%. The musicians will receive \$1,000 this April to provide some financial relief this season. Over the four-year term beginning this September, the minimum annual salary will increase 14%, recovering to \$40,000 in the last year for a 26-week season. With strong new leadership on all fronts, including an excellent new music director, some relief and hope has finally come to Columbus.

Congratulations to ICSOM orchestras whose recording won awards in the 53rd Annual GRAMMY Awards. The **Chicago Symphony** won the Best Classical Album for its recording of the Verdi Requiem with Riccard Muti and the Chicago Symphony Chorus on CSO Resound, also taking the Best Choral Performance award. The **Nashville Symphony Orchestra** scored big with its recording of Michael Daugherty's *Metropolis* Symphony coupled with his *Deus Ex Machina* (with pianist Terrence Wilson). With Giancarlo Guerrero conducting, the Naxos recording won Best Orchestral Performance, Best Classical Contemporary Composition (*Deus Ex Machina*), as well as the Best Engineered Album, Classical award (tied with *Quincy Porter: Complete Viola Works*, featuring Eliesha Nelson on the Dorian Sono Luminus label). The Best Surround Sound Album was *Britten's Orchestra*, on Reference Recordings, featuring Michael Stern and the **Kansas City Symphony**. Mitsuko Uchida won the Best Instrumental Soloist(s) Performance (with Orchestra) award for her performance of Mozart Piano Concertos Nos. 23 and 24 with **The Cleveland Orchestra** on Decca.

As reported in the *Wall Street Journal* recently, the **New York Philharmonic** has not only met its five-year fund raising campaign goal of \$50 million, but expects to nearly double that figure. By the time the campaign concludes in June, the Philharmonic expects to have raised more than \$90 million, with \$52 million going towards the endowment. The bulk of those funds came in before the market meltdown in 2009, but the Philharmonic board has still been able to raise more than \$12 million during the past two years, with another \$18 million to come in future years. One area that has made fundraising more successful is the increase in endowed chairs.

There are currently 41 endowed chairs, up from 21 at the beginning of the campaign. Many of these positions are "term endowments" that expire at some point in the future (usually after 10 years), at which point the chairs can be re-endowed. The endowment of chairs seems to have set up a system in which there is a more personal connection between large donors and orchestra members.

All is not completely rosy. The Philharmonic has still been running deficits and has needed to draw \$25 million from the endowment to cover them along with the usual endowment draw, and to make contributions to its under-funded pension plan. The \$190 million endowment is still \$23 million lower than it was in 2000.

The **Phoenix Symphony** was looking at some dire numbers for the 2010–2011 season. As of December 31, 2010, contributed revenue was down 58%, total revenue was down 39%, and there was a projected deficit of \$1.7 million on a budget of \$9.2 million. Jim Ward, the new CEO, asked the musicians to reconsider their salary for 2011–2012, which was negotiated two years ago when the musicians took their last cut. It was to have been a restoration year with a 12% raise.

Orchestra committee chairman Chuck Berginc says that with the new CEO and a new general manager, these were by far the easiest, and most non-adversarial negotiations the musicians have ever experienced. They are very encouraged by the way they were treated and by the degree to which their views were heard and considered.

The changes to their contract include a cut from 40 to 38 weeks and a base salary of \$35,200, including \$5 per week EMG (\$190), representing a wage freeze to the base salary on an annual basis for 2011–2012. This will continue to Oct 31, 2012. In addition, there are a few minor alterations to work rules that limit services on runout weeks, and minor restrictions on personal leave during classics weeks.

The musicians report that, having peacefully reached an agreement that they can live with in the short term, they are hopeful that it will give their new management a foundation that will lead to much success in the future.

Recently, musicians from the **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra** created and organized a “flash mob” in an effort to transport classical music out of the concert hall and into their community. This grass roots project has proved to be very successful both in enriching the lives of citizens and in increasing awareness of the ISO. Brian Smith, section bass, led the first effort, which occurred on a Saturday afternoon in one of the biggest malls in town. A string orchestra performed the last movements of Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings* and Vivaldi’s *Summer* from the *Four Seasons*, featuring Concertmaster Zach DePue. One of the biggest hurdles was memorizing the music and arranging everyone so that the beginning of the performance looked unplanned.

There was ISO literature available for the “audience,” and ISO’s director of communications, Jessica Di Santo, made a video of the event that can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrc2uXT9suc. The video is approaching 10,000 views, and there is great excitement about using flash mobs to bring classical music to more locations around the city.

Secretary’s Report

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the financial problem instead of solving it. Add then the perception by some board members that the staff must be incompetent because otherwise they would have much better paying jobs in the for-profit/corporate world; so why would the board listen to the advice of these unsuccessful, second-class people? Of course, what these same board members don’t understand is that many staff members work for our orchestras because they love what they do, just as we musicians do.

Leading Roles is filled with incredible advice for boards, but it is equally as interesting from the artist’s perspective because it explains things like running endowment and building capital campaigns and the preparation needed to be successful. I believe that musicians and board members should read this book.

In Louisville, the board refused to meet with Mr. Kaiser and decided instead to file for bankruptcy. Once again the board has taken up the call to reduce the size of the orchestra, not realizing they are actually destroying the orchestra because they will have a much harder time hiring subs and extras with a reduced core. Yet, the orchestra is about to celebrate its 75th anniversary, and a recent movie focuses on the incredible recording work this orchestra accomplished as it championed new American compositions. Why the board is not taking advantage of these gifts is unknown.

The very sad fact is that there are very few really great executive directors out there. Even rarer still are the boards that truly work as a community to support their orchestras. I’ve spoken with a number of conductors and managers in our industry who could point to those orchestras who have failed for the simple reason that their boards have decided they absolutely know what’s best for their orchestra and are unwilling to listen to any advice, even from proven industry leaders. We need to encourage directors who truly want to support their orchestra and are willing to work toward that support.

Some board members are neither subscribers nor donors, and they’re certainly not making an effort to get their friends involved. And a few boards may even have a majority of directors who do not genuinely love their orchestra or care to support it. These boards have set the bar so low that they have diminish the amount of effort it requires to sustain their great orchestras, which leads to a destroyed morale and a product that, over time, suffers greatly making it less attractive to supporters. This has to stop.

I call on the League of American Orchestras to develop an orientation program in consultation with ICSOM, ROPA, and the AFM, for all incoming board members of our institutions. Further, I call on the League and all our boards and managers to stop this aggressive, negative rhetoric that further threatens the tenuous relationship between management/board and musicians. We must work together to end this destructive, negative behavior and help our leaders lead.

Correction: The editor apologizes that his poor typing caused Mike Greenfield’s wife’s first name, Rochelle, to be reported as Rachel in our December 2010 issue.

2010–2011 Virginia Symphony Negotiations

by Amanda Armstrong on Behalf of the VSO Negotiating Committee

The economy was in the tank, and we were at a very, very low point in terms of financial stability due to our previous administration. Six positions remained unfilled by mutual agreement to avoid financial catastrophe. It was not a pretty picture.

As in every negotiation, our negotiating committee began by taking a survey. The results of that survey were disheartening to several of us, but we had to look at them objectively and take the message seriously. Our initial proposal called for a two-year agreement, restoring the 11% due to us in year four of the previous agreement, which had been reopened, as well as restoration of all positions. The counter offer we received six weeks later was brutal. Management “offered”: a five-year agreement cutting two weeks from the season, elimination of all paid leave, elimination of instrument insurance, elimination of all six positions, a 40% cut in guarantee for Oboe III, and integrating our Community Engagement services into the regular service count.

Consulting with our lawyer, Jon Axelrod, as well as several colleagues from around the country, we set out to pick the offer apart piecemeal. We researched instrument insurance options and found the VSO a rate that would save them thousands of dollars. We obtained records on paid leave, analyzed the data, and discovered that the true cost to the VSO was less than half what was presented by management. Additionally, we were absolutely unwilling to fold our Community services into our salary.

Our counter offer edged closer to their position in terms of weeks. We held firm on the positions and on our paid leave. We proposed total elimination of the Community Engagement program if, as they said, it was too costly. This tactic was successful in keeping those services outside our salary and optional.

Going into September, it became clear that we would need mediation. Federal Mediator Rich Giacchalone was indispensable. The first thing he did was get both sides to agree to drop the old format of offers and counter-offers.

Our first session in mediation was spent brainstorming ways to increase revenues for the orchestra. During those four hours our team suggested hundreds of ideas to raise revenue. Our executive director, being new to the job, learned a lot during that session about our specific circumstances and regional niceties. The next session was spent talking about ways to reduce spending.

An agreement was finally reached when management increased their offer using some of our revenue ideas. The two-week cut remains, but we will receive a 15% raise in our weekly rate over the term of the agreement. This, however, was at the expense of converting the six unfilled positions into per-service positions. The issue of paid leave was unexpectedly complex. Management proposed to eliminate the distinctions between sick and personal leave. For various reasons, we decided to take that offer.

What I Know For Sure:

- Know your orchestra to a member. Know what they will and won't accept.
- Know your community in the same way. What works in Texas won't work in New England and vice-versa.
- Cultivate a relationship with your board members. I truly think this is what saved us as an orchestra.
- Reach out to as many sources as possible, but trust your instincts as to what will work.
- Get a great committee together! On the off season, work on wooing potential committee members.
- Never stop loving your colleagues. Take the time to do so and you will be a better leader.

Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 2)

fighting back against the negativity of denying our children access to the arts. The demonstrations in Madison have been uniformly civil and positive. In our field, while some managements seek to study their own demise and create “a new model” that would only hasten the erosion of our greatest cultural institutions, there are also other voices speaking out, and other successes being achieved despite what some see as a concerted attempt from the field to thwart the positive efforts. Michael Kaiser is traveling across the world with his positive message, and musicians are unifying in even greater ways. The musicians of Cincinnati Symphony and the National Symphony have reached out to assist the Louisville Orchestra musicians (if I may call them that) in a tremendous show of friendship and support.

(I muse on whether I can mention the musicians of the Louisville Orchestra, as their management has absurdly prohibited them from using that name. To quote from the musicians' press release: “Major Orchestra Across Ohio River from Jeffersonville, Ind., Prohibits Instrumentalists from Naming Organization in Which They Play.”)

All arts organizations depend on a great deal of good will in order to be successful. Right now, managements in several places are becoming masters at creating bad will in their communities.

Despite this, other orchestras have recently settled contracts peacefully. The New York Philharmonic has announced it has raised more than \$90 million, even though their goal was only \$50 million. The Atlanta Symphony has received a major bequest. In Honolulu, a

group of citizens has emerged to attempt to bring their orchestra back to the stage, possibly with the assistance of ICSOM's great friend JoAnn Falletta.

But in Detroit, management continues to talk about the new model. In this regard our field is unique. What other business emulates its failures to create a new business model? With other well-managed orchestras succeeding, why are we not studying those to raise the bar instead of studying our industry's managerial pot holes to lower the aspirations of entire communities?

It is the epoch of belief, it is the epoch of incredulity.

A friend of mine at one of our local universities wrote to me recently, reflecting on a lecture she had just heard and putting it in context of the news reports she has been following from Detroit. She wrote:

This week in graduate seminar a professor from UNC came over to tell us how he is co-opting Moore's law to design vaccines through imprint lithography. I had to look up Moore's law on Wikipedia. Here is the condensed version: In 1965, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore observed that "the number of components in integrated circuits had doubled every year from the invention of the integrated circuit in 1958 until 1965 and predicted that the trend would continue "for at least ten years."

What is interesting to me about this is the following:

"Although Moore's law was initially made in the form of an observation and forecast, the more widely it became accepted, the more it served as a goal for an entire industry. This drove both marketing and engineering departments of semiconductor manufacturers to focus enormous energy aiming for the specified increase in processing power that it was presumed one or



Following this year's midwinter meeting of the ICSOM Governing Board in Los Angeles, some ICSOM officers met with musicians and management of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Pictured (*from the left*) are guitarist Angel Romero, Laura Ross, Music Director Gustavo Dudamel, Meredith Snow, Brian Rood, Bruce Ridge, Executive Director Deborah Borda, and Peter Rofé.

more of their competitors would soon actually attain. In this regard, it can be viewed as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Maybe you could come up with a kind of Moore's law for your industry based on observations of what is working and has improved over the last twenty years. Give people something to work for instead of something to work against.

All of this struck me as especially relevant. Indeed the managements who seek to create the new model by proclaiming a new apocalypticism are creating negative self-fulfilling prophecies. We must articulate positively how the field can change in order to achieve growth, to serve in even better ways, to increase relevance.

In a world that occasionally slumps with its burdens, our music is needed more than ever. We have never been more relevant.

It is the season of Darkness, it is the season of Light.

We must not become despondent over the assault of nonsense. We must be inspired to change. Instead of "Moore's Law" we should create "ICSOM's Law," where success is expected and failure is not rewarded. Success breeds success, and failure breeds failure. Americans want to hear a positive message of advocacy, and they want to hear a message of hope. Conveniently, we have one.

Musicians everywhere must be proud and even amazed that the response to ICSOM's *Call to Action* to assist the musicians of the Detroit Symphony has reached \$300,000, meaning that since 2007 ICSOM has raised well over \$600,000 to assist our members in need. But we must do more.

In today's modern culture, the truth belongs to the people who say it most effectively. And sadly, to articulate the truth effectively you must have the funds to pursue a strategic public relations campaign. Recently a group of 400 Rabbis bought a full page ad in the *New York Times* expressing some concerns. They didn't just buy an ad—they bought news coverage and attention for their cause. But the ad itself cost \$150,000.

Throughout this piece, I have enjoyed paraphrasing from Michael Steele's other favorite book, *A Tale of Two Cities*. I think how we move forward is up to us, as no one else is going to do this for us. When things are hardest is when we must be at our best. When we are surrounded by doubt we must surround ourselves with friendships and hope. The more difficult things become, the harder we must work.

Across the world, people are rising up. The musicians of ICSOM must join that movement and positively articulate our message in a way that it can be heard.

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times. It is the winter of despair, it is the spring of hope.

Hope in Honolulu

by Steve Flanter, Honolulu Symphony Orchestra Delegate

On February 22, 2011, Governor Neil Abercrombie publicly announced that a new group of prominent community leaders had formed the "Symphony Exploratory Committee" (SEC) to examine the possibility of having a new professional orchestra in Hawaii. The SEC has begun to assemble an impressive team. Steven Monder, former long-time executive director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra has been enlisted as an advisor and is helping to draw up a successful business plan. JoAnn Falletta, music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Virginia Symphony, has been key in dealing with artistic matters.

On March 17, the assets of the Honolulu Symphony Society, which include the music library, pianos, percussion instruments,



Photo by Laura Ross

2010 AFM Convention attendees from ICSOM, AFM locals, and SSD pose in front of one of the Riviera's two ABC Stores to encourage the president of ABC Stores, Paul Kosasa, to help bring back the Honolulu Symphony. Kosasa has joined the new Symphony Exploratory Committee.

historical documents and memorabilia, were sold at auction as part of the Chapter 7 liquidation. The SEC entered a winning bid of \$210,000, securing the entire package for a new organization. This means that the music library, which includes orchestral arrangements and accompaniments for virtually every significant Hawaiian musician in the last century will stay in Hawaii. It also means that the new organization will be able to preserve some of the history of the old orchestra. Among the treasures bought in the auction is a 1967 photo of Igor Stravinsky when he conducted the Honolulu Symphony in a program of his music. The concert included a very young Itzhak Perlman playing the Stravinsky Violin Concerto. No less touching are some of the many letters throughout the years from schoolchildren who wrote from all over Hawaii to thank the musicians and comment on their experience hearing the orchestra.

The buying of these assets is an important step toward the creation of a new orchestra in Hawaii. We would like to thank Bruce Ridge and the ICSOM Governing Board for helping to make this day a reality. Their constant vigilance has helped to ensure that the assets of the old organization stay in Hawaii. We Honolulu Symphony musicians are glad to be one step closer to the rebirth of an orchestra in the islands.

As this issue goes to print, Detroit Symphony musicians remain on strike. Donations, along with letters of support, should be sent to the DSO Members Fund; c/o Susan Barna Ayoub, Secretary-Treasurer; Detroit Federation of Musicians; 20833 Southfield Rd.; Detroit, MI 48075.