

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

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ICSOM Is Welcomed to Kansas City, Missouri

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

More than 100 people met in Kansas City, Missouri from August 21 to 24 for the 51st ICSOM Conference. Participants included ICSOM delegates and officers, AFM and local union officers, SSD staff, player conference representatives, presenters, and other guests. The location, the Conference hotel (the Westin Kansas City at Crown Center), the weather, and the fabulous hospitality of the conference hosts (Local 34-627 and the musicians of the Kansas City Symphony) all combined to assure the success of the Conference. Special thanks are due to Kansas City Symphony members Brian Rood (ICSOM president) and Steve Multer (conference coordinator) for their advance planning and eager assistance at the Conference.

On the Tuesday before the Conference began, the ICSOM Governing Board worked tirelessly throughout the day, discussing various topics, putting the final touches on the Conference, and meeting with conference presenters. As usual, the negotiating orchestra session was held that night, before the official start of the Conference. Musicians spoke about recent settlements and trends that have occurred during the past season of negotiations. The next morning the Governing Board welcomed new delegates during breakfast, preparing them for what they should expect during the Conference.

After the new delegate breakfast, the Conference was called to order and opened with a roll call of orchestras. The mayor of Kansas City, Missouri, Sylvester “Sly” James, welcomed participants to the city. He shared his vision of how the arts should be a cornerstone of the city and said that, while the new Kaufmann Center for the Performing Arts is an architectural icon, it is the artists and what they do inside the building that makes the city vibrant and the arts flourish. Interspersed with many interesting facts about the city, we even learned that the mayor was in a band that once opened for Jefferson Airplane and that, in his own words, he now serves as the “chief drum major and cheerleader for the city of Kansas City.” After concluding his remarks he read a proclamation declaring August 20, 2014 to be ICSOM Day in Kansas City.

ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge’s opening address lamented that a House committee had proposed to cut funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) by 49 percent. He noted that the NEA has been without its chairperson since January, depriving us of an effective leader who could fight to retain funding during this crucial period. In ICSOM’s first few years, its leaders and members actively worked to see the NEA established. Ridge stated that ICSOM should not be silent now and called on President Obama to appoint a new NEA chairperson immediately. ICSOM delegates adopted a resolution encouraging the same, and, following the Conference, delegates were asked to encourage their colleagues to contact President Obama to urge the immediate appointment of a new NEA chairperson.

Following opening addresses, the ICSOM membership committee recommended and the delegates voted to welcome a new voice to their ranks, as the Grand Rapids Symphony became the 52nd member orchestra of ICSOM. It has been 10 years since the last orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra), joined ICSOM.

This year’s Conference theme, “ICSOM: Music Cannot Be Silenced,” reverberated during our four days of meetings. Chairperson Ridge suggested the theme, which was taken from a quote by Victor Hugo: “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot be silenced.” It was chosen because a number of ICSOM orchestras dealt with significant lockouts this past season. Indianapolis Symphony committee chair Richard Graef, Atlanta Symphony committee member and delegate Michael Moore, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra committee member and delegate Leslie Shank, and Minnesota Orchestra negotiating committee chair Tim Zavadil and Minnesota musicians Kevin Watkins and Marcia Peck all spoke about their orchestra’s

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Photo by Eric Arbiter
Delegates and other attendees of the 2013 ICSOM Conference, wearing “Support Minnesota Orchestra Musicians” T-shirts, stand in unity with their Minnesota Orchestra colleagues.

Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



When Congress began its session on September 9, the members returned to Washington to address many pressing issues for our nation. Of course, whether or not they have any real intention of addressing any of those issues is a matter of debate, and we can leave that shouting match to the circus currently on 24-hour display on the various cable news outlets. But one issue in the budget debate is of crucial importance to musicians and artists, and, indeed, to the next generation of Americans.

One of the proposals to disingenuously address the budget deficit involves drastic cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The cuts, if enacted, would be the largest cut to the NEA's funding in the history of the agency. Our friends at Americans for the Arts described the proposed cuts this way:

With a 49% budget cut, the NEA will be forced to drastically scale back their grant-making. These disproportionate cuts of \$71 million are short-sighted and will ultimately be devastating when combined with the additional loss of \$639 million in potential matching funds for the arts. For every dollar the NEA invests in a nonprofit arts organization, it is matched on average 9-to-1 by additional grants. Communities rely on NEA grants to leverage additional support for the arts, generate local economic activity, and fuel innovation. Through the relatively small investments made by Congress, NEA is making possible extraordinary things all across the country, including seeding new jobs in the creative economy.

One of the mythologies of our political system is that the Federal Government spends a disproportionate amount on arts funding, when the reality is that only approximately 0.066% of the federal budget is invested in the arts. This minimal investment yields a return (on a national average) of seven dollars for every dollar spent. Suggesting that any part of the massive federal deficit could be reduced by cutting arts funding is somewhat akin to suggesting that individuals can lose weight by trimming their toenails.

The NEA was formed in 1965 and is dedicated to "supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education." One of the first projects undertaken by the ICSOM founders was to take an active role in the establishment of the NEA through letter-writing campaigns and testifying before Congress.

Now the NEA is once again under attack, though such attacks are nothing new. When Ronald Reagan was elected United States president in 1980, he intended to abolish the agency entirely. President Reagan's friends in the arts field, influential from his time as the union president of the Screen Actors Guild, convinced him of the importance of the NEA. These friends included Charlton Heston.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

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
Grand Rapids Symphony
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
Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico
Philadelphia Orchestra
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
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Chairperson's Report

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But the attacks on the agency continued, and in the 1990s Newt Gingrich, then Speaker of the House, again sought to abolish the NEA, along with the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 2012, Mitt Romney stated that abolishing the NEA, along with Public Broadcasting and National Public Radio, would be a "focus" of his administration.

The NEA has managed to survive these attacks because of its importance and relevancy to the national culture. The NEA has even been able to withstand its own occasional lack of political astuteness, as its funding of certain projects has played into the hands of the agency's political opponents. But the NEA has often lacked an articulate and passionate defender, and many of those controversial projects have been distorted in the media by politicians who would seek to elevate their fame by attacking an easy target that tends not to fight back.

Public arts projects are a soft target for grandstanding politicians. In my home town of Raleigh, a sculpture was commissioned by the Arts Commission in 1995. The sculpture, by internationally respected artist Dale Eldred, was criticized by a mayoral candidate, who lambasted the \$51,000 price tag with a demagoguery that swept him into office. But his tenure was unremarkable, as he had no real ideas for leadership, only a penchant for attacks. Subsequent mayors have led our city to be named consistently among the best places to live in America, always citing Raleigh's many cultural amenities, and the Light + Time Tower still stands on one of the gateway roads into downtown.

But twenty years ago, public art in Raleigh found no truly charismatic defender, and the cause of public art still suffers from a fear of such negative political voices in many communities.

Numerous cities have embraced the cause of public art to great success. Forward thinking communities now see that the beautification of their towns goes hand-in-hand with the revitalization of downtown communities, and enhances the environment for business.

With the renewed attack on the NEA from within Congress, the NEA has lacked a truly charismatic defender at this moment of greatest need. To the dismay of artists everywhere, President Obama has failed to demonstrate a support for the arts, and he has allowed the NEA to go without an appointed chairperson for the better (or worse) part of a year. As if this wasn't bad enough, the National Endowment for the Humanities has also been leaderless since the spring.

This is unacceptable. The NEA needs a public voice that can lobby Congress and speak with passion in the press about the value of the arts in America. After all, the arts in America lead to over 4 million jobs for our citizens. This is a crucial public issue.

But it is more than that. The next generation is at stake. Scientific research is released on a nearly weekly basis that demonstrates

that arts studies for our young people lead to enhanced test scores, lower crime, greater success for individuals, and prolonged mental and physical health.

Our nation cannot afford to neglect this critical issue any longer.

At the 2013 ICSOM Conference in Kansas City, the delegates passed a resolution, sponsored by the Governing Board, calling for President Obama to appoint a new chairperson for the NEA.

In my opening address to the ICSOM Conference, I said: "ICSOM played a role in the creation of the NEA, and we must not stand idly by while it is dismantled.... Today we call upon President Obama to appoint a chairperson for the National Endowment for the Arts, and to appoint a charismatic and effective leader who can help fulfill the vision articulated by President Kennedy fifty years ago 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.'"

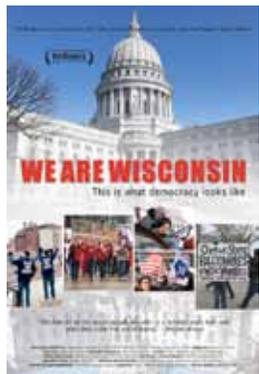
The resolution passed by the delegates will be meaningless unless we raise our collective voices. Today, I ask you all to send respectful messages to President Obama calling on him to appoint a new Chairperson for the NEA and urging his public support for the agency. I ask you to share this message with your friends, colleagues, students, and family members. Let today be the day that the White House hears from the orchestral musicians of America. You can reach President Obama by writing at this link: www.whitehouse.gov/contact/submit-questions-and-comments.

I also urge you to contact your Congressional representatives and send them this strong message. This effort can only be effective if we respond in large numbers; we need every orchestral musician in America to reach out. Possible advocacy points include:

1. The arts in America lead to over \$135 billion in annual economic activity.
2. The arts in America lead to over 4 million jobs.
3. Every dollar the government invests in the arts returns seven dollars to the community.
4. The arts are widely recognized as critical to the education of the next generation of Americans, and conducive to the health of our nation's citizens.
5. America's orchestras are recognized among the finest in the world, and play a crucial role in the cultural, economic, and educational health of our nation's cities.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, President Obama will have appointed a chairperson for the NEA. And, hopefully, it will not be too late to save the agency. But regardless of the actions of this ineffective Congress, our advocacy must continue. Our livelihoods depend on how effective we can be, and the next generation of Americans will benefit from our efforts.

We Are Wisconsin **Film Review, by Bruce Ridge**



Director/Camera: Amie Williams. Producer: Kathryn Takis. Executive Producers: Marge Tabankin, Doug Pray, Bill W. Hirsch, Scott Verges. Additional Camera: Arlene Nelson. Editors: Bill Hauge, Todd Darling. Original Score: Mark Tschanz. Music: Liam Gerber, Tom Morello, Aaron Nevi. Presented by Bal Maiden Films, Public Interest Pictures, and Peer Review Films. 105 minutes. \$19.95 (DVD). Official Website: WeAreWisconsinTheFilm.com.

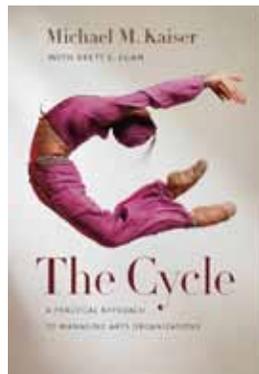
During the outstanding 2013 conference of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA), delegates and attendees were treated to a showing of the documentary *We Are Wisconsin*, which tells the story of the 26-day occupation of the Wisconsin State House as public workers from many different occupations came together to protest Governor Scott Walker's efforts to eliminate collective bargaining rights and stifle the debate.

This film is inspiring and emotionally moving, as it tells the story of American workers from diverse walks of life coming together to find common ground in a universal cause. These are people who may not have otherwise ever met were it not for these difficult circumstances, but they found strength, friendship, and unity through a shared idealism. As one of the participants in the protest says, "You need to pay attention because your rights can be gone in a second with a stroke of a pen."

Teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters, and artists all joined together in the remarkable event, which was followed all over the world (as evinced by the pizza orders from multiple countries to feed the workers). Yet, somehow, in media that is often controlled by ideology, the true story was never shown on cable news, and the protesters were attacked as "thugs" by commentators. These "thugs" teach our nation's children, protect our citizens and their homes, and selflessly tend to the sick. The citizens fighting for their rights were joined by musicians from AFM Local 166 (Madison) and Local 8 (Milwaukee). Throughout, music plays a central role in the protest, and in the human expressions on display.

While the occupation ultimately was not successful in its immediate mission, and the recall of Scott Walker failed, it is difficult not to see these citizens as heroes whose small victories will lead to an awakening of America's workers for many election cycles to come—well, at least that is my hope. I have watched the film twice, and both times I had tears in my eyes, especially as the occupiers join together to sing the National Anthem. Certainly my emotions were born (at least momentarily) of anger and frustration over injustice, but ultimately what I felt was inspiration, admiration, and, most importantly, hope for an America that once again will care for the workers (teachers, artists, police officers, firefighters, nurses) that make our nation great.

***The Cycle* by Michael Kaiser** **Book Review, by Bruce Ridge**



The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations, by Michael M. Kaiser with Brett E. Egan

Hardcover/Ebook

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\$26.95

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Michael Kaiser, president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, has released *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations*. This book forms a trilogy of brilliant analysis of the field of arts management, joining with his previous invaluable contributions, *The Art of the Turnaround* and *Leading Roles*. Both of those books were reviewed in *Senza Sordino* upon their release. Brett Egan, who joins Mr. Kaiser as an author of the current release, is the director of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center.

Mr. Kaiser makes the case that, to be successful, arts organizations must create a family atmosphere that invites staff, board, audience members, artists, and donors to feel ownership of the organization. Should any aspect of this cycle fail, the success of the organization is undermined. Each chapter of the book works effectively to demonstrate that artistic programming, marketing, fundraising, and board development are all interlinked. He describes the "cycle" by saying: "Successful arts organizations make interesting art that they market aggressively to potential customers. But at the same time, they must create allegiance to the organization; this is what motivates subscribers, contributors, board members, and volunteers to participate. When the arts organization attracts supporters, they produce revenue that the arts organization can use for creating better art the next season. This art, supported by aggressive marketing campaigns, attracts new supporters who produce more revenue."

The book is filled with strong statements that are both brilliant and deceptively simple, but too many organizations ignore these concepts. He stresses that "there is one fundamental truth about arts management: the key to a healthy arts organization is strong, exciting, surprising programming."

He also makes the case that across-the-board salary freezes and reductions can be dangerous for an arts organization. "Almost always, the money that is saved is marginal, but the cost can be substantial." He bemoans what he calls a "slot mentality" to programming, where organizations view programs simply as "slots" to be filled as opposed to opportunities to create exciting art that enhances institutional marketing. "Dynamic programming institutes a healthy cycle...."

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ICSOM Conference

(continued from page 1)

experience. President Brad Eggen of Twin Cities Local 30-73 and Minnesota public relations consultant Blois Olson also spoke.

Indianapolis Symphony musicians were locked out for five weeks, settling upon an agreement that includes substantial cuts to wages, season length and orchestra size (for the term of this agreement only), although wages regain ground during the five-year term. Atlanta Symphony musicians were locked out for four weeks, ratifying a two-year agreement that cut \$5.2 million through conversion of nine to ten work and vacation weeks to non-working summer weeks at reduced wages and a reduced number of orchestra members. Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra musicians were negotiating for 17 months, which included a 191-day lockout that ended with a three-year agreement that reduced the size of the orchestra from 34 to 28 through early retirement packages and took away all off-season wages previously paid in lieu of unemployment. October marks the one-year anniversary of the lockout of Minnesota Orchestra musicians. (The lockout was in its tenth month at the time of the Conference.) During the Minnesota presentation, Watkins, who had recently joined the negotiating team, spoke about his work when he had served on the logistics committee. He said that finding ways to assist musicians during the lockout had shown him that “we can do management’s job, but they can’t do ours.” It reinforced for him that we are highly skilled and trained musicians who can do something only a tiny portion of the country can do, similar to highly compensated professional football and baseball players, doctors, attorneys, and others.

That afternoon Randy Whatley, president of Cypress Media Group, spoke about utilizing new and old forms of media to communicate a message to our communities. Whatley assisted the Atlanta Symphony during their lockout last season. His presentation was very well received as was his break-out session Thursday evening.

Wednesday evening began with a wonderful concert in the Kansas City Symphony’s (KCS) new concert hall—Helzberg Hall in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. KCS rented the hall and orchestra members performed Mozart Symphony No. 31. Delegates and guests were also treated to a tour of the hall. Trolleys carried guests from the hotel to the Kauffman Center and back, where people enjoyed a mixer held on the top floor of the hotel. Many KCS musicians joined delegates and guests as a perfect sunset and the lights of the city added to our celebration of the Kansas City Symphony’s recent successes. It was only 15 years ago that KCS musicians were able to negotiate an AFM contract. This summer they announced a new, progressive settlement one year early.

On Thursday we heard a number of reports, including an AFM Convention report from Member at Large Matt Comerford. Mark Lindsay, chairman of the American Symphonic Advocacy Project (ASAP), shared tips to lobby legislators, officials, and other influential community leaders to support orchestras locally and nationally. He also took questions during a private Town Hall meeting with

delegates. That afternoon AFM President Ray Hair addressed the delegates, followed by presentations by representatives of each of the Player Conferences. General session wrapped for the day while delegates joined their assigned Members at Large in smaller groups to talk about their orchestras and compare notes.

The Governing Board shared a productive dinner with President Hair, which was followed by evening breakout sessions covering healthcare reform and the Affordable Care Act, musician-board participation, overscale issues, public relations, and a comprehensive pension discussion. Sessions were led by SSD counsel Rochelle Skolnick, SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn, attorney Kevin Case, Randy Whatley, and AFM-EPF trustee Bill Moriarity. Members of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee who were attending the Conference also found time to meet with President Hair, AFM Symphonic Services Director Jay Blumenthal, and AFM Symphonic Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark in anticipation of the upcoming negotiations for a successor agreement to the Integrated Media Agreement.

Friday’s session began with a video trailer of the ICSOM documentary filmed at the 50th anniversary conference in 2012. ICSOM committee reports and a panel discussion with the entire Symphonic Services Division staff followed. After lunch, we took time to thank Member at Large Cathy Payne, who was stepping down from her Governing Board position after six years. ICSOM adopted a resolution of thanks and presented her with a plaque and framed cover page of the 2006 International Musician issue that featured her. Then it was time for ICSOM General Counsel Susan Martin’s follow-up presentation based on her very successful 2011 Delegate Duel. We discovered we still have much to learn! A second town hall meeting was equally productive and offered ICSOM delegates and officers the opportunity to share ideas in a more private setting. That evening was a free night that saw a number of delegates and guests attend a matchup between the Kansas City Royals and the Washington Nationals while others went in search of barbeque.

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Photo by Eric Arbiter

(Left to right): Tim Zavadil, Bruce Ridge, and Kevin Watkins during a presentation on the Minnesota Orchestra lockout.

Orchestra Newslets

Within the past few months, the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** negotiated a new three-year contract, launched its music and wellness website, and completed its fortieth major tour. Pittsburgh delegate Penny Brill reports on the developments.

In June the PSO ratified a new contract that calls for a 4% raise the first year, a freeze the second, and a 3% raise in the third. The increases were possible thanks in large part to a \$1.2 million gift, restricted to musicians wages, made by Michele and Pat Atkins, and by the continuing generosity of the Richard P. Simmons family. A key provision in the contract is that the size of the orchestra remains at 99 players plus 2 librarians.

PSO's music and wellness website, *wellness.pittsburghsymphony.org*, was launched in August. It is a great addition to PSO's Music and Wellness Program and serves as a resource for patients, families, healthcare providers and administrators, as well as for musicians. The website is designed to empower those interested in the creation of music and wellness programs or in the use of music to support health-related goals. Its development and launch were made possible by a Getty Education and Community Investment Grant, the Sigismunda Palumbo Charitable Trust, the Scaife Family Foundation, Michael Baker Corporation, and the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust.

The PSO's August 2013 European tour included well-attended and successful concerts in five countries, including a first-time performance in Bucharest, Romania. In addition to the PSO concert in Bucharest, 19 musicians participated in a side-by-side rehearsal and concert with very talented local professional musicians. The concert was intended to support and make more visible the work of Romanian musicians and was financed by an American donor who had ties to Romania. It was a remarkable, very positive experience. Additional activities included music by our concertmaster and associate principal violist at Sankt Anna-Kinderspital (St. Anna Children's Hospital) in Vienna and a chamber music concert organized by our principal oboist at a private home in Cologne to support music for schoolchildren there. The tour was made possible by funding from BNY Mellon, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the NEA, AW Mellon, and the Hillman Endowment for International Performances. The orchestra was pleased to have musicians from the Minnesota Orchestra playing with us on tour.



While the shocking story of the financial collapse and bankruptcy of the **New York City Opera** is now already well known, orchestra members were completely blindsided by the severity of what they heard early in September. The company said that, unless the it raised \$7 million by the end of the month plus an additional \$13 million by the end of December, both the remainder of the current season and the entire next season would be cancelled.

The journey to bankruptcy began in 2008. At that time, with the agreement of the New York Attorney General's Office, the board

borrowed from its endowment both to pay down the accumulated deficit and to cover operating expenses for the season when the company would "go dark" during the Lincoln Center theater renovation. General Director Designee Gerard Mortier's decision to terminate his association with the company led to calamitous appointment of George Steel as general manager and artistic director in 2009. Steel downsized the company, including firing the music director and slashing orchestra and chorus guarantees, and further alienated the company's loyal donors and ticket buyers by moving out of Lincoln Center in 2011. The inevitable bankruptcy followed.

As reported by the online news publication *Capital* in April 2012, Steel told a group at the New York Public Library the company was "now at last on a stable financial footing, and we're looking forward to a bright future and to grow." Opera chairman Charles Wall repeated at the time that the opera was on "firm footing." The company's 2012 Form 990 shows a different story, listing a deficit of \$44 million. From the landlord at their executive offices to individual orchestra members who recently retired, the list of creditors is long. It will be many months before the bankruptcy case is settled.

Delegate Gail Kruvad ponders what will happen to the orchestra. Local 802 President Tino Gagliardi has been consistent in support of the orchestra as an ensemble that wishes to continue to play together. There have been multiple reports in the media regarding the need for a second major opera company in New York City, and orchestra members are committed to supporting efforts to create a new company.



On September 13, **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** musicians ratified a new three-year agreement with the BSO Association by an overwhelming margin. The new agreement contains wage increases of 1% for the first six months, and another 1% in the second six months of the first year. The second year will see increases of 1.5% for the first half and 3.5% for the second half of the year. In the final year, a 53-week year, the increases will be 1% for 32 weeks and 6.61% for the final 21 weeks of the agreement. Annual wages for a base salary musician will rise from \$67,600 in 2012–2013 to just over \$75,000 in 2015–2016. The pay for the final 21 weeks of the contract will be \$1,500/week.

Changes to the way health care costs are shared and funded will provide added financial benefits to musicians in the form of increased Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) funding by management. Pension contributions to the AFM-EPF will increase from 4.36% to 5% this year, and in the second and third years of the agreement the Association will provide another 1% contribution into 403(b) or similar retirement vehicles. In return, BSO musicians agreed to allow five Sunday matinee concerts at Strathmore Hall, their second main venue (an hour away from Baltimore, in Bethesda, Maryland). The BSO board and management believe that there is

significant demand for Sunday concerts there, and that increases in revenue from these concerts will help fund the compensation increases.

The negotiations were conducted in July and early September and were characterized by the musicians' attorney, Bruce Simon, as "very professional." BSO musicians had heard for the last year or so that their board and management had started to think that the deep concessions musicians had reluctantly accepted this past decade had indeed had a negative impact on the organization, and the musicians were happy to have had this belief confirmed at the bargaining table. BSO Players Committee chair and ICSOM delegate Greg Mulligan says that the musicians hope that this "win-win" agreement portends a better relationship with their board and management than has been experienced over the past several years. At the same time, they recognize that their increasing internal unity contributed heavily to the success of this negotiation and that, in order to preserve and further the artistic success of the BSO and the livelihoods of its musicians, they must remain vigilant, committed, and united.

Greg and the rest of the committee, Leonid Berkovich, Bob Barney, Marcia Kämper, and Andrew Wasyluszko wish to thank principal librarian and Local 40-543's Secretary-Treasurer Mary Plaine for all her expertise and assistance along the way, and Bruce Simon for his wisdom and guidance. They all worked diligently together to achieve this agreement.



According to Allyson Dawkins, principal violist of the **San Antonio Symphony Orchestra** and board member of the American Viola Society (AVS), AVS recently held its first Orchestral Excerpts Competition for violists aged 18–28. The Joseph de Pasquale Grand Prize winner, Blake Turner, will play for a week in the viola section of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of its music director, Sebastian Lang Lessing. Turner will be paid as a regular extra musician and will receive an additional cash award. The second and third prize winners, Batmyagmar Erdenebat and Emily Basner, respectively, will receive cash prizes and private lessons on orchestra excerpts from principal violists of **The Philadelphia Orchestra** C. J. Chang (current principal violist) and Roberto Díaz (former principal violist). Both Chang and Díaz were students of the renowned Joseph de Pasquale, principal violist of The Philadelphia Orchestra from 1964 until his retirement in 1996. Judges for the finals of the competition included Cathy Basrak, (**Boston Symphony Orchestra**), Choong-Jin Chang (The Philadelphia Orchestra), Christian Colberg (**Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra**), and Ellen Rose (**Dallas Symphony Orchestra**).



In August **Nashville Symphony** musicians ratified a one-year agreement that includes a 15% cut in wages. This agreement followed a season-long attempt by the Nashville Symphony Association

to get its "financial house in order" regarding the municipal bonds used to fund the Schermerhorn Symphony Center (SSC).

The previous agreement was negotiated the year after SSC opened. The Association had successfully raised \$123 million in their "A Time for Greatness" campaign; It was financing \$102 million in municipal bonds that were guaranteed by a group of five banks; and the orchestra had just won its first three Grammy awards. One year later, the endowment lost 25% of its value, which resulted in rewritten bond covenants and investment in swap transactions. A second endowment campaign, "Sustaining Greatness," was launched but later put on hiatus. The 2009–2010 agreement was renegotiated twice, first freezing the orchestra's salary for the season and then pushing all terms back one additional year.

Two months later, in May 2010, the SSC basement flooded. It took eight months and \$42 million to repair and upgrade the building. There was flood insurance coupled with FEMA's agreement to cover 90% of the rest of the damage, but the Association was unable to obtain a short-term loan and had to withdraw more than \$30 million from the endowment just as stock markets were recovering.

Consultants were brought in to attempt to turn things around. Employer contributions to staff 403(b) accounts were terminated in March, and pay cuts followed a few months later. Staff salaries of \$60,000 or more were cut by 11%, and the music director and president & CEO took salary cuts of 15%. Approximately 30 staff members were let go, including the entire catering staff and one of the orchestra personnel managers.

In March of this year, the NSA board announced they would not renew their letter of credit from the banks that guaranteed the bonds. In May the Symphony defaulted on the loan, leading to negotiations
(continued on page 10—see *ORCHESTRA NEWSLETS*)



Photo by Lynn Larsen
On a trip to the Tanglewood Music Center to address students, ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge (*center*) visits with Boston Symphony Orchestra bassists Larry Wolfe (*left*) and Ed Barker (*right*).

Adopted Resolutions of the 2013 ICSOM Conference

Honoring Cathy Payne

Whereas, Cathy Payne has been a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the San Francisco Symphony since 1996; and

Whereas, She first represented her orchestra as ICSOM Delegate in 1998; and **Whereas**, Cathy proved to be an active and passionate representative for all ICSOM orchestras when she was elected as Member-at-Large in 2007; and

Whereas, As one of this country's prominent musicians, Cathy has been an influential voice within ICSOM and has been a vocal advocate on behalf of orchestras, and especially orchestras under fire; and

Whereas, After six years on the Governing Board, Cathy has chosen to step down; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2013 ICSOM Conference offer profound gratitude for her passion and advocacy and extend their best wishes in all her future endeavors.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Ongoing Support for Minnesota Orchestra Musicians

Whereas, Orchestras have been under attack and those attacks escalated during the 2012-2013 season in such a manner as to cause avoidable labor disputes including multi-week lock-outs in Atlanta and Indianapolis that resulted in massive cutbacks, a 191-day lockout of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and a continuing lockout, now in its eleventh month, of the Minnesota Orchestra; and

Whereas, The incomprehensible behavior by boards and managers of these prominent orchestras has demonstrated how badly they have betrayed their communities as trustees of their great public institutions; and

Whereas, These boards have abandoned their charge to support the highest forms of symphonic music for a "business model" designed to destroy their orchestras and the good works they do in their communities by reducing costs without regard to consequences; and

Whereas, ICSOM orchestras, along with ROPA, OCSM and RMA members have demonstrated resolute support for all orchestras in jeopardy, and especially for the musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra during its ongoing lockout, as demonstrated by more than \$300,000 in contributions stemming from ICSOM's Call to Action and donations of salaries and concert proceeds from benefit concerts and from a performance for the recent League of American Orchestras by some of ICSOM's prominent orchestras; and

Whereas, At the recent 99th Convention of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, Local AFM officers, Player Conference and Local Conference representatives, AFM officers and staff, and AFM Convention attendees displayed their own form of united support for the Twin Cities Musicians Union, Local 30-73 AFM, which supports and represents musicians from both the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra, when in two hours their contributions to Local 30-73 exceeded \$70,000; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2013 ICSOM Conference condemn the conduct of those boards and managers who seek to dismantle and destroy our orchestras, and especially the Minnesota Orchestra; and, be it further

Resolved, That these same Delegates and Officers stand united and offer their ongoing and unwavering support for the Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra as they continue their fight to retain the highest level of performance and artistry.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board, Norbert Nielubowski (Minnesota) and Leslie Shank (Saint Paul)



Gratitude for Support of Orchestra Musicians in Labor Disputes

Whereas, When an orchestra finds itself locked out or on strike, the musicians continue to perform to keep the music alive; and

Whereas, At times we find it necessary to call upon our friends within the musical community to assist us in that mission; and

Whereas, Many of our greatest artists and conductors deserve our thanks for supporting the Atlanta Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra during their lockouts this past season, in

particular conductors Michael Palmer (Atlanta), Raymond Leppard (Indianapolis), Hugh Wolff (Saint Paul), Sir Neville Marriner (Minnesota), Stanislaw Skrowaczewski (Minnesota), Edo de Waart (Minnesota) and Osmo Vänskä (Minnesota); conductor and violinist Pinchas Zuckerman (Saint Paul); and pianist Andre Watts (Indianapolis); and

Whereas, We are also indebted to Bernadette Peters and Bobby McFerrin for their support of the San Francisco Symphony strike when they agreed to postpone their performances rather than cross the musicians' picket line; and

Whereas, It is important to acknowledge the generosity and support of these individuals nationally as well as locally; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2013 ICSOM Conference offer their heartfelt thanks and gratitude to these wonderfully gifted conductors and musicians who offered their support in a time of need, and who, along with ICSOM's orchestras, bring the world's greatest repertoire to life within our communities.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Support of AFM Convention Substitute Resolution Related to AFM-EPF

Whereas, The American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) is the sole or primary pension fund for the majority of ICSOM orchestras, as well as ROPA orchestras, Broadway and recording musicians and freelancers; and

Whereas, Since the steps taken by the AFM-EPF to address the effects of the 2008 economic crash there is concern that symphonic employers may consider withdrawal from the Fund; and

Whereas, Some employers attempt to convince musicians to agree to withdraw from the Fund without all the pertinent facts; and

Whereas, The AFM, in partnership with the AFM-EPF, is dedicated to educating and assisting negotiating orchestras and their Locals; and

Whereas, At the recent 99th AFM Convention a substitute recommendation supported by both the AFM International Executive Board and the leadership of ICSOM was adopted by the Convention; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2013 ICSOM Conference support the substitute Recommendation below and agree to work with their Locals to assure all negotiation committees are informed of this process.

In the event that an employer requests a withdrawal liability estimate or engages in discussion of bankruptcy and/or withdrawal from the AFM EPF or MPF-Canada, or a proposal is made that would result in a reduction of the effective percentage contribution rate, the Local Union and negotiating committee shall promptly notify the President's Office. The Local Union and negotiating committee will engage in educational session(s) with the International President's Office, or Vice President from Canada's Office, as appropriate, in order to supply the Local Union and negotiating committee with pertinent information regarding the AFM-EPF or MPF Canada.

Thereafter, the parties shall agree to appropriate steps which may include, but are not be limited to,

- Federation and Pension Fund representatives meeting with the negotiating Committee;
- Federation and Pension Fund representatives meeting with the orchestra,
- Federation and Pension Fund representatives attending bargaining sessions designated for discussion of pension withdrawal, bankruptcy proceedings, or reduction of the effective percentage contribution rate.

This Section 37(b) shall not be applied to deprive, or otherwise interfere with, Locals' rights and responsibilities with respect to the negotiation and ratification of any CBA.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Honoring Shirley Helzberg

Whereas, Mrs. Barnett C. (Shirley) Helzberg recently stepped down as Chairperson of the Kansas City Symphony (KCS) Board of Trustees after 18 years (1995-2013) of exemplary service; and

Whereas, Shirley has consistently demonstrated a passionate and unwavering commitment to the KCS and to the cultural life of Kansas City; and

Whereas, Under Shirley's leadership the KCS ushered in an era of tremendous artistic and fiscal growth as well as cooperative governance and musician empowerment; and

Whereas, The KCS has experienced wide critical and public acclaim for the artistic growth of the KCS through live performances and on recordings including a PBS nationally broadcast documentary and two Grammy award nominations including one award; and

Whereas, Shirley was instrumental in fostering a culture of mutual concern and respect by and between the Musicians, the Board and the Staff and approached all issues in a spirit of openness, cooperation and fairness; and

Whereas, Since 1900 only four other individuals are believed to have led the board of an American orchestra longer than Shirley; and

Whereas, Shirley and her husband Barnett exhibited extraordinary generosity and kindness, not only in her work and contributions on behalf of the KCS but in her concern for the welfare of the Musicians and their families as in, for example, the facts that they established Section 529 accounts for the dependents of KCS Musicians and made generous annual contributions to these accounts; and

Whereas, Shirley continues to serve on multiple boards of not-for-profit organizations across Kansas City and the country; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates of the 2013 ICSOM Conference express their utmost appreciation and admiration to Mrs. Barnett C. (Shirley) Helzberg for her exemplary leadership of a symphony orchestra and for her extraordinary tenure as Chairperson of the Kansas City Symphony Board of Trustees.

Submitted by Marvin Gruenbaum and Brian Rood (Kansas City) and the ICSOM Governing Board



Young Musicians of Minnesota

Whereas, Members of ICSOM Orchestras inspire many thousands of music students throughout the U.S.A.; and

Whereas, Many of these music students become dedicated and serious young musicians; and

Whereas, Music students and young musicians represent the future of our profession, both as performers and supporters; and

Whereas, The well-being of an orchestra directly affects the ability of its musicians to inspire students; and

Whereas, Extended lockouts have caused the loss of members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestras from the Twin Cities, because the musicians have been forced to go far afield in search of work, and even to relocate permanently; and

Whereas, These losses increasingly disrupt or destroy connections between professional musicians and their students; and

Whereas, In order to stem the losses of their teachers and role models, and to encourage the resolution of these labor disputes in the Twin Cities, a group of concerned music students and young musicians has come together and established a new organization called the Young Musicians of Minnesota (<http://www.youngmusiciansofmn.org>); and

Whereas, Through the use of public concerts and social media, the Young Musicians of Minnesota have worked tirelessly to keep the ongoing Minnesota Orchestra lockout in the public eye; therefore, be it

Resolved, That, in order to encourage the Young Musicians of Minnesota in their ongoing efforts to support their professional mentors and to bring about a healthy future for the ICSOM orchestra musicians who inspire them, the Delegates and Officers to the 2013 ICSOM Conference recognize the contribution of the Young Musicians of Minnesota, and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

Submitted by Norbert Nielubowski and Paul Gunther (Minnesota), Leslie Shank (Saint Paul) and the ICSOM Governing Board



Urging Appointment of Chairperson of and Funding for the NEA

Whereas, The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was established by an act of Congress in 1965; and

Whereas, One of the first projects undertaken by the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) was to take an active role in the

establishment of the NEA through letter-writing campaigns and testifying before Congress; and

Whereas, The NEA is dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established by bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education; and

Whereas, The NEA has withstood numerous attempts to abolish and defund the institution over many years, and is once again under attack by some members of Congress who fail to see the value of the Arts to our nation and the next generation of Americans; and

Whereas, When Congress returns to Washington this fall, a proposal from the House Appropriations Committee to enact the largest cut in the NEA's history awaits; and

Whereas, The non-profit arts and culture industry results in over \$135 billion in economic activity annually, while leading to jobs for over four million Americans; and

Whereas, The valuable role of the arts in education is undisputed; and

Whereas, The NEA has been without a Chairperson for over eight months; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2013 ICSOM Conference call upon President Obama to immediately appoint a charismatic and effective new Chairperson for the NEA; and, be it further

Resolved, That the members of ICSOM call upon President Obama, and all of our nation's leaders, to increase advocacy for increased funding for the NEA and to make public statements in support of the role of the arts in our society.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

ICSOM: The First Fifty Years

A Documentary Filmed Predominantly at
Last Year's 50th-Anniversary ICSOM Conference

Find it in the video archive at
www.icsom.org

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AFM Convention Report

by **Matthew Comerford, Member at Large**

The 99th AFM Convention, held July 22–25 at the Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, has to be noted for the unprecedented spirit and unity exhibited throughout the entire four days of meetings. ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge, ICSOM President Brian Rood, and I attended as the ICSOM's elected delegates to the AFM Convention. ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross and ICSOM Treasurer Michael Moore were also there as delegates of their respective locals, and we were also joined by ICSOM legal counsel Susan Martin. I want to thank all the delegates who responded with comments in reply to our emails leading up to the convention. The input we received was informative and helped us prepare for a few of the recommendations and resolutions.

Congratulations are due to the entire International Executive Board (IEB). All the members of the IEB were reelected, and that has not happened in recent history. Their hard work during the past three years to put the AFM back on a secure fiscal path was a very large reason this convention had such a spirit of unity.

After much work and testimony before the Law & Finance committee, Recommendation #1, the financial package, was adopted overwhelmingly. It may well be a hard sell for some of the small locals, but the IEB made an excellent case for its passage, citing the work they have done to shore up the Federation's finances and giving a plan for how the new revenue will be utilized to strengthen seven main areas of the AFM's operations. The ICSOM team supported this substitute financial recommendation.

One other recommendation of concern for the ICSOM team was Recommendation #3, dealing with the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF). After much work and discussion with the IEB members, we were able to offer suggestions to the recommendation that I believe will work well for our ICSOM musicians. The AFM and the AFM-EPF representatives will be able to assist locals, orchestra committees, and orchestra members with education about our defined benefit pension plan designed to counter demands during orchestra negotiations to alter or change pension commitments. ICSOM extends grateful thanks to the IEB and Law committee for their help and understanding in working out this amended recommendation.

Wednesday, July 24, was a day that epitomized the spirit of unionism. There was a remarkable, spontaneous outpouring of support for the Twin Cities Musicians Union, Local 30-73, which has been at the forefront in the struggles faced by musicians of both the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra during the past year. Over \$70,000 was raised as, one by one, local presidents, AFM Convention delegates, ICSOM, and the other player conferences donated money to help out the cash-strapped local. It was a very emotional display of unity and unionism that I, for one, will never forget.

Orchestra Newslets

(continued from page 7)

between the Association and banks for a settlement. In early June the banks announced they would put the SSC up for auction at the end of the month. Days before the threatened auction, the banks and the Association reached an agreement that nearly depleted the endowment. Musicians' negotiations began just as that deal was finalized.

While musicians offered to freeze wages, management's initial proposal was to cut the musicians budget of \$6 million by \$2.1 million, cut 8 weeks from the season, reduce the weekly salary to reflect a cut from 8 to 7 services, cut full-time salaries from \$60,000 to \$42,953, convert 16 positions from full time to part time at a salary of \$25,000, and to freeze salaries for 4 years.

For years musicians had a good relationship with the board and administration because they supported artistic quality and understood that paying a livable wage would attract talented musicians who would want to stay in Nashville. While other orchestras were facing boards willing to lock their musicians out to obtain catastrophic concessions, we had been assured this would not happen in Nashville. Imagine the betrayal felt by musicians when presented with proposals that would reduce the orchestra to mere numbers and efficiency after the established policy had made the Nashville Symphony the impressive, Grammy-winning orchestra it had become. For two weeks negotiators tried to convince management that cutting concerts was short sighted. For example, free park concerts are valuable because they heighten the orchestra's visibility and provide service to the community, even if they do not generate direct income. The committee also argued that education programming had been derailed and that the orchestra needed to be used more effectively. The committee even walked out of negotiations after being told our counter-proposal was not a good faith offer.

In the end, musicians were presented with a contract that cut wages by 15% and added education and community engagement services. It took 18 years to return to a 43-week season after our shutdown 25 years ago; the negotiating committee believed if weeks were cut from the season this time, they would never be restored. The committee also agreed that education services and putting orchestra musicians in the community was vitally important to sustain the orchestra long-term.

Musicians believe this must be a short-term solution; the board and management have a lot of work to do to raise additional funds after ignoring annual campaign fundraising in lieu of capital campaigns for a decade. The endowment fund was drained to buy the building, so it must be restored soon as well.



On September 18, 2013, the **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** ratified a two-year contract. Delegate Ann Marie Hudson reports that the agreement is retroactive to September 1, 2013, and runs through August 31, 2015. DSO musicians will receive a base salary increase

of 1% in 2013 and a 2% increase in 2014. In addition, if other goals regarding donor pledges for major lead gifts are realized, musicians would receive an additional 2% increase in 2015, retroactive to the beginning of the 2014–2015 season. Each musician will also receive a one-time bonus of \$750 in 2013.

Contract changes include a suspension of opt-off privileges for Bravo Vail Valley Music Festival residencies, the reinstatement of New Year's Day as a paid holiday, slight increases in healthcare spending for the next two years (including a \$200 contribution to the flexible spending accounts of musicians who participate in wellness screening), significant changes to the use of divided orchestra services, and the addition of audition committee reimbursement.

Negotiation committee members were Christopher Adkins, chair, Darren McHenry, Tom Demer, David Sywak, and Ann Marie Hudson. The negotiation committee would like to thank President Ken Krause and Secretary-Treasurer Stewart Williams of Local 72-147, as well as their legal counsel, Yona Rozen and Bill Baab.

The Cycle

(continued from page 4)

Prominent among the reasons he cites for why an arts organization gets “sick” is “neglect of family” and “mission drift.” I think we all can think of orchestral organizations that are struggling due in part to those two concepts.

Once again, Mr. Kaiser has made a tremendous contribution to the field, and this book should be required reading for every musician, as well as every manager and board member. And once again, we will all encourage our boards and managers to read his work, but we can expect resistance. I'll never understand why so many managers and boards are hesitant to embrace this strong message, given all the success that Mr. Kaiser has built through these principles. Still, I encourage all of our players' associations to buy a copy for both their CEO and their board chair, and maybe have your entire orchestra sign the inside cover page as a gift.

[Editor's Note: The DeVos Institute of Arts Management at Kennedy Center hosts a number of interesting arts management resources on two of its websites (devosinstitute.org and artsmanager.org), including videos, papers, and Michael Kaiser's blog. A 20-page PDF paper of what appears to be a summary of the book being reviewed is currently available at am.artsmanager.org/kcdocument/ArtsManagerDocuments/The%20Cycle%20Final.pdf (or just browse the artsmanager.org site, go to the Resource Center tab, then look under Documents).]

2014 ICSOM Conference

Los Angeles, California

August 25–28, 2014

***Note that the 2014 Conference dates
have moved to Monday–Thursday***

Please mark your calendar

***All attendees must register in advance for
the Conference with Secretary Laura Ross***

***Further details will be
announced as they become available***

Support Minnesota Orchestra Musicians through ICSOM's Call to Action

***Checks made out to
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**Minnesota Orchestra Members
c/o Jason Arkis
3916 Joppa Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416**

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.

ICSOM Conference*(continued from page 5)*

Saturday morning began with speeches from candidates for the two open Member at Large positions on the Governing Board. Incumbent Matt Comerford was reelected on the first ballot, and Gail Kruvand from the New York City Opera Orchestra was elected on the fourth ballot. President Brian Rood and Secretary Laura Ross ran unopposed and were reelected by acclamation. Following brief addresses by ICSOM Chairman Emeritus Jan Gippo and former *Senza Sordino* editor Tom Hall, delegates discussed motions on a wide variety of topics. The adopted resolutions can be found starting on page 8. Discussion then moved on to site selection for future Conferences.

Ten years ago, as a delegate, Bruce Ridge challenged ICSOM to hold Conferences in different host cities. Since that time we have traveled to Salt Lake City, San Diego, Nashville, Minneapolis, Norfolk, San Francisco, Houston, Detroit, Chicago, and Kansas City. In 2014, the ICSOM Conference will be held August 25–28 in Los Angeles and will be hosted by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Local 47. Delegates accepted the invitation from the Philadelphia Orchestra and Local 66 to host the 2015 Conference. Washington, D.C., Buffalo, and Puerto Rico have been offered as future Conference sites. Neither ICSOM nor our music will be silenced, and we will continue to spread that message across the country.

Opening addresses by Chairperson Ridge and President Rood, along with various Conference presentations and materials, have been placed in the 2013 Conference area of the ICSOM website (www.icsom.org). While some of these materials are available to the general public, others are restricted to delegates or to registered members of ICSOM orchestras.



Photo by Eric Arbiter

After six years on the ICSOM Governing Board, Cathy Payne, piccolo and flute player with the San Francisco Symphony, steps away from her Member at Large position.
