

President's Address
ICSOM Conference
August 25, 2014

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this year's conference. Your governing board was last in Los Angeles in 2011 for our mid-winter meeting, and we enjoyed every minute. A few of us arrived early enough that Sunday afternoon to attend an LA Phil concert in Disney Hall. Several of us stayed through Tuesday in order to meet with musicians, hear a rehearsal, have lunch with Debra Borda, and stop in at Local 47 to visit with our friends there. On behalf of the governing board we are happy to be in LA again. We could not be in better hands than with Nancy, Meredith, John, Tom, Local 47 and everyone else who has worked so hard to make this conference happen.

I made a quick day trip to LA last October to look at hotels. Meredith picked me up and we put two hotels through their paces. When we were done we knew we had the right one. The Bonaventure is LA's largest hotel with 1354 rooms and suites. It is one of LA's most recognizable sights and is among the ten most photographed buildings in the world. Hollywood has used the hotel for many films including *Rain Man*, *Forget Paris*, *Blue Thunder*, *Nick of Time* and, of course, *In the Line of Fire*. Who can forget Clint Eastwood chasing John Malkovich through the lobby and up the glass elevator?

On a somber note, Bruce just mentioned the passing of Robin Williams, someone whom many of us grew up with and admired.

He could and often did entertain millions at a moment's notice with seemingly no opportunity to prepare. Among the world of comedians no one could improvise better. Watching Robin perform was like watching a musician at the top of his or her game. That creative genius and incredible spontaneity will be missed.

Robin also entertained us with over 100 acting credits to his name. His characters came up with memorable quotes, and I would like to share three with you now. Each one has touched me uniquely in the days following Robin's passing.

1. "You'll have bad times, but it'll always wake you up to the good stuff you weren't paying attention to." ~ Sean Maguire in *Good Will Hunting*
2. "You know what music is? God's little reminder that there's something else besides us in this universe; harmonic connection between all living beings, everywhere, even the stars." ~ Maxwell "Wizard" Wallace in *August Rush*
3. "Please, don't worry so much. Because in the end, none of us has very long on this Earth. Life is fleeting." ~ Jack Powell in *Jack*

On a personal note each of us likely knows someone afflicted by depression. This terrible disease affects almost 7% of the US population over the age of 18. Too many wait too long to seek treatment and the results are often devastating. We can and must do better as a country to care for our depressed family members, friends and others that suffer whatever their circumstances may be.

Let's change gears. We are pleased to have our great friend and the chair of ASAP Mark Lindsay with us here this week. Mark will speak tomorrow afternoon and has made himself available to talk with you. Many of you have met Mark previously and know that he is an incredibly dynamic and charismatic person. He continues to be a great friend to ICSOM and is committed to helping orchestral musicians and their institutions.

Mark will talk about current ASAP activities and future projects in the works. I won't go over those now except to ask that we all consider this-there will come a time over the next few months when ASAP will need more volunteers. We know that we have not called on you yet. But, as ASAP gains further traction, there will be opportunities for boots on the ground-possibly talking to and working with legislative offices in our communities, schmoozing with potential donors, and serving on ASAP committees. There is much to discuss and we will talk about this further during our town hall session Wednesday.

We are also pleased to have Holly Slocum, Paul's wife, with us. Holly and Mark have worked together for years and it was a natural fit to have Holly assist ASAP by serving as our secretary. She continues to put an incredible amount of time and energy into ASAP and we are very grateful to her.

Just as we will need new people to become involved with ASAP we will be looking to you now and in the near future to take on leadership roles within ICSOM. We have been incredibly fortunate to have consistent leadership and service on the governing board. But, new ideas and new blood, sweat, and tears are not only important but also crucial for any healthy organization. Please think about running for MAL, Editor and other positions as they open up.

I have this one opportunity each year to tell you how grateful I am to serve with these terrific people who make up your governing board and counsel. To a person they are some of the finest individuals I have had the pleasure to work with. We have been together for a long time and have worked through many difficult issues. We are a family and a close one at that.

As you know Richard and Gail are stepping down this week. We worked with Gail for only one year. Yet, she brought fresh perspectives to our discussions and showed us by personal example that we are stronger together than by ourselves-both in ICSOM and the AFM.

Richard, one of our longest serving Editors, will be missed. But Richard has been much more than an editor. No one thinks through and contemplates every point possible more than Richard. He is the only person I have ever seen argue against his own motion on the conference floor. But, this is just an example of the incredible knowledge, experience and wisdom Richard has through his decades of service to ICSOM and his orchestra. We will forever be in his debt and I am hopeful that we will see more of Richard in the future. After all, Paul and I could not produce the Directory without him.

It has been three years since I mentioned Chairman Emeritus Fred Zenone during these opening remarks. His advice to us is as important now in 2014 as it was thirty years ago. I would like to close with some of his article that may be found online in the delegate manual titled "how delegates make ICSOM work."

"Too often" Fred writes, "delegates return to their orchestras with the message, I have been to the annual ICSOM conference and I am convinced. This is not a position that will enlighten or persuade an orchestra. Few people at the conference or at home will act as a result of such a statement. Because we are a rank-and-file organization, and because we do not make agreement a condition of membership, our single most effective tool is persuasion. We must have the power to persuade and the willingness to be persuaded.

We have been designated by our orchestras as leaders and activists. ICSOM asks us to affirm and reaffirm that position throughout the year. We are the voice in our orchestras of American orchestra musicians united on a national level. We are the persons who must constantly examine the effect our orchestra's action will have on other orchestras. Each of us must be a leader, an organizer, a conduit of information, the conscience of a movement of caring and

involved and active musicians who insist on improving the institutions through which we produce our art.”

Enjoy your stay in Los Angeles, and let’s have a great conference!

Thank you.