

**The following resolutions were adopted by unanimous consent at the 2026 ICSOM Conference in
Honolulu, Hawaii on August 22, 2026**



Support for Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Librarians

Whereas, Orchestra Librarians are highly skilled professional musicians whose specialized musical knowledge and labor are integral to the artistic work and daily operation of a symphony orchestra; and

Whereas, ICSOM has long recognized that Orchestra Librarians belong alongside their performing colleagues in orchestral bargaining units, first adopting a resolution in 1997 encouraging member orchestras to seek the inclusion of all Orchestra Librarians in their collective bargaining units; and

Whereas, In 2018, ICSOM reaffirmed that position, recognizing its “long and consistent history of recognizing and supporting Orchestral Librarians as colleagues to be included in their orchestral bargaining units” and encouraging every ICSOM orchestra whose librarians remained outside the bargaining unit to seek their inclusion “at the earliest opportunity”; and

Whereas, Inclusion in the bargaining unit provides Orchestra Librarians the collective voice, due process, contractual protections, compensation standards, and workplace rights appropriate to the musical labor they perform, while strengthening the bargaining unit by preventing employers from isolating groups of workers and treating them as separate or expendable; and

Whereas, In September 2025, the Milwaukee Musicians Association, Local 8, AFM, petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for an Armour-Globe self-determination election to permit the two librarians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra to choose whether to join the existing musicians' bargaining unit; and

Whereas, Despite opposition from Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management, the National Labor Relations Board directed that election, and the eligible librarians ultimately voted unanimously, 2–0, to be represented by Local 8; and

Whereas, The National Labor Relations Board certified the results on March 24, 2026, after which Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management continued its legal challenge, filing a request for review that the National Labor Relations Board denied on July 24, 2026; and

Whereas, The librarians have therefore exercised, clearly and unambiguously, their federally protected right to collective representation, and management has exhausted its challenge to their right to do so before the National Labor Relations Board; and

Whereas, Federal labor law protects employees' rights to organize and bargain collectively, prohibits employers from threatening, restraining, coercing, or retaliating against employees for exercising those rights, and requires employers to bargain in good faith with their employees' chosen representative; and

Whereas, In bargaining for a first contract covering its librarians, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management has rejected established industry standards for the employment of Orchestra Librarians and instead seeks to subject the librarians to the terms of the Orchestra's staff handbook, enshrining their status as at-will employees and denying them fundamental collective-bargaining protections and standards enjoyed by their musician colleagues including with respect to compensation, benefits, and job security; and

Whereas, In the midst of bargaining, ostensibly as a cost-cutting measure, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management declared that it will now be seeking to eliminate one of the Orchestra's two librarian positions; and

Whereas, The timing of management's efforts to terminate the employment of one of its librarians – immediately after the librarians successfully exercised their right to union representation, which management opposed every step of the way – is highly suspicious and raises the inference of retaliation for protected union activity; and

Whereas, Any retaliation directed at employees because they exercised their protected rights is not only hostile to the principles of collective bargaining and union democracy, but is unlawful and morally indefensible; and

Whereas, The actions of Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management do not threaten the librarians alone: an employer that is permitted to isolate one group of our colleagues, disregard their democratic choice, or threaten their livelihoods because they seek union protection creates a precedent that threatens the bargaining-unit rights of every orchestral musician; and

Whereas, Solidarity requires that we vigorously defend the rights of our colleagues when an employer attempts to separate them from the rest of us; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2026 ICSOM Conference unequivocally condemn the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management's treatment of its librarians and its continuing efforts to resist their lawful and democratically expressed choice to join their colleagues in collective representation; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls upon Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra management to immediately reverse course, respect the results of the librarians' unanimous vote and the decisions of the National Labor Relations Board, bargain in good faith toward a fair contract in line with well-established industry standards, and abandon its retaliatory effort to terminate the employment of one of the librarians; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM declares its full solidarity with the librarians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the musicians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and Milwaukee Musicians Association, Local 8, in their defense of the librarians' rights and their bargaining unit; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls upon all of its members to recognize attacks on the representational rights of Orchestra Librarians as attacks on the collective rights of orchestral musicians generally, and to resist employer efforts to divide bargaining units, exclude classifications of musical workers from collective protection, or use threats to discourage workers from exercising their rights; and, be it finally

Resolved, That an injury to the rights of one group of orchestral musicians is an injury to us all, and ICSOM will not stand silent when any employer attempts to weaken those rights by dividing our colleagues from one another.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Welcoming the Freelance Musicians Association to the AFM Player Conferences

Whereas, The American Federation of Musicians represents musicians working across an extraordinary range of musical fields, employment structures, and communities throughout the United States and Canada; and

Whereas, Freelance musicians constitute a vital part of the AFM and of the professional music industry, performing in orchestras, theaters, recording sessions, touring productions, chamber ensembles, commercial engagements, and countless other forms of musical work; and

Whereas, Freelance musicians are also essential to the success of ICSOM orchestras, serving as substitute and extra musicians, augmenting orchestras for large repertoire, filling temporary vacancies, and helping our institutions meet their artistic and operational needs; and

Whereas, ICSOM recognizes that these musicians are our colleagues and fellow union members, and that their wages, working conditions, job security, benefits, and dignity are matters of concern to all of us; and

Whereas, The AFM Player Conferences have a long and important tradition of bringing together musicians who share particular areas of employment and professional experience, providing them with a collective voice, specialized expertise, and a means of advocating for their needs within our union; and

Whereas, The formation of the Freelance Musicians Association and its recognition as an AFM Player Conference represents an important step toward strengthening the voice of freelance musicians and ensuring that their experiences and concerns are fully represented within the Federation; and

Whereas, The strength of our union depends upon solidarity across employers, Locals, industries, and employment classifications, and upon recognizing that improvements in the lives and working conditions of one group of musicians strengthen the profession for us all; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2026 ICSOM conference congratulate the Freelance Musicians Association on achieving status as an AFM Player Conference and warmly welcome the FMA into the family of AFM Players' Conferences; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM expresses its solidarity with freelance musicians throughout the Federation and affirms that freelance musicians are an indispensable part of our union, our orchestras, and our profession; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM pledges to work closely with the FMA, our fellow Player Conferences, AFM Locals, and the Federation to improve wages, working conditions, protections, opportunities, and union standards for freelance musicians; and be it finally

Resolved, That ICSOM looks forward to a strong and lasting partnership with the FMA as we work together toward a more equitable, secure, and sustainable future for freelance musicians and for all members of the AFM.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Resolution in Support of the Musicians of the San Francisco Opera

Whereas, The musicians of the San Francisco Opera have spent years working collaboratively with management to confront the challenges facing the organization, including accepting extraordinary concessions during the COVID-19 pandemic and enduring repeated short-term agreements; and

Whereas, The musicians have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to the long-term health and success of the San Francisco Opera, including helping identify transformational savings in healthcare costs without reducing benefits or increasing costs to participants; and

Whereas, While the musicians have consistently worked with management to help sustain the San Francisco Opera, management has too often failed to demonstrate the same commitment to sustaining the musicians, their wages, their working conditions, and the permanent orchestra upon which the artistic success of the company depends; and

Whereas, The musicians have already endured years of uncertainty, short-term agreements, reductions in the size and scope of the season, prolonged vacancies, and repeated demands that they shoulder the consequences of the Opera's challenges; and

Whereas, Upon reaching their most recent agreement in 2025, San Francisco Opera management and the musicians publicly committed themselves to negotiating a multi-year agreement in the following round of bargaining, creating a reasonable expectation that the parties would finally move beyond years of temporary solutions and toward greater stability; and

Whereas, Management's current bargaining posture appears inconsistent with that commitment and instead threatens further substantial reductions to musicians' compensation and working conditions; and

Whereas, The San Francisco Opera has recently reported signs of progress, including strong audience attendance, growth in subscriptions, significant new philanthropy, increased major-donor support, and ambitious artistic plans for the coming seasons; and

Whereas, These successes should provide an opportunity to stabilize and rebuild the organization rather than impose another round of damaging concessions on the musicians who have already sacrificed repeatedly to sustain it; and

Whereas, Continued instability, significant reductions in compensation, or further erosion of the permanent orchestra risks damaging recruitment and retention, undermining morale, diminishing artistic excellence, and weakening the very institution management has a responsibility to protect; and

Whereas, After years in which the musicians have repeatedly worked with management to protect the San Francisco Opera, it is long past time for management to demonstrate that it is equally willing to work for the musicians and for the preservation of a world-class permanent orchestra; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2026 ICSOM conference stand in full solidarity with the musicians of the San Francisco Opera in their current negotiations; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls upon the musicians of the San Francisco Opera to stand firm in their efforts to preserve their wages, working conditions, complement, and the professional standards necessary to maintain one of the world's great opera orchestras; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM rejects the idea that musicians who have repeatedly sacrificed, collaborated, and helped find solutions should once again be asked to bear a disproportionate share of the organization's challenges; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls upon San Francisco Opera management to honor the commitments it has made, stop relying on delay, instability, and repeated demands for concessions as substitutes for a long-term plan, and begin treating its musicians as the essential partners in the institution that they have proven themselves to be; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM calls upon San Francisco Opera management to stop playing games with the livelihoods of its musicians, take their concerns and proposals seriously, and engage in serious, constructive, good-faith bargaining toward a fair and sustainable multi-year agreement; and be it finally

Resolved, That ICSOM urges San Francisco Opera management and its Board of Directors to reach such an agreement before prolonged conflict causes lasting damage to the musicians, the orchestra, the reputation of the San Francisco Opera, and the artistic institution that generations of musicians, audiences, donors, and community members have worked to build.

Submitted by Ben Brogadir (San Francisco Opera Orchestra) and Craig Reiss (San Francisco Ballet Orchestra)



Honoring the Service of Laura Ross

Whereas, Laura Ross has devoted more than four decades of her professional life to the Nashville Symphony, joining its violin section in 1984 and contributing her artistry, leadership, and service to generations of her colleagues; and

Whereas, Laura served as Union Steward for the musicians of the Nashville Symphony from 1995 through 2019, spending twenty-four years protecting the rights of her colleagues, enforcing their collective bargaining agreement, advocating for fair working conditions, and strengthening the union within her orchestra; and

Whereas, Laura's service to orchestral musicians extends far beyond Nashville, beginning with her work as Chair of the ROPA Electronic Media Committee from 1989 through 2000, continuing through her service as a ROPA Member-at-Large from 1991 through 1994 and as ROPA Secretary from 1994 through 2000; and

Whereas, In 2002, Laura was elected ICSOM Secretary, becoming the first officer in the history of the AFM Players' Conferences to hold the same office in two different Players' Conferences; and

Whereas, For twenty-four years as ICSOM Secretary, Laura has provided extraordinary continuity, institutional knowledge, diligence, judgment, and care to the work of ICSOM and its Governing Board, preserving the history of our organization while helping guide it through decades of change; and

Whereas, Laura has served on the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee since 2000, building upon her earlier work with ROPA and contributing to nearly four decades of Players' Conference involvement in national electronic-media bargaining; and

Whereas, Laura's commitment to the labor movement has included service since 2000 on the Executive Board of the Nashville Musicians Association, AFM Local 257, service as an AFM Convention delegate, participation on AFM Convention committees and national task forces, and countless other contributions to the work of her Local and the American Federation of Musicians; and

Whereas, Since her appointment in August 2010 as a rank-and-file Union Trustee of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund, Laura has undertaken the enormous responsibility of helping safeguard the retirement security of musicians throughout the Federation; and

Whereas, Laura continues to serve the broader labor movement through the AFM Southern Conference of Locals, to whose Executive Board she was elected in 2024; and

Whereas, Across all of these roles, Laura has demonstrated an exceptional and sustained commitment to collective action and to the principle that musicians are strongest when we care for one another, share responsibility for our union, and leave our profession stronger for those who follow us; and

Whereas, The musicians of ICSOM have benefited immeasurably not only from Laura's labor and leadership, but from her wisdom, generosity, friendship, persistence, and unwavering dedication to the musicians she has represented and served; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2026 ICSOM Conference express their profound gratitude to Laura Ross for her extraordinary service to ICSOM, ROPA, the Nashville Symphony, the Nashville Musicians Association, the American Federation of Musicians, the AFM-EPF, and union musicians throughout the United States and Canada; and be it further

Resolved, That in recognition of her twenty-four years of distinguished service as ICSOM Secretary, and of her singular contribution to the history and work of this organization, ICSOM hereby bestows upon Laura Ross the title of ICSOM Secretary Emeritus; and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM recognizes Laura's decades of service as an example of the very best traditions of the labor movement: the often unseen and unheralded work of showing up, keeping our institutions strong, preserving what those before us built, and making them better for those who come next; and be it further

Resolved, That the members, delegates, officers, and Governing Board of ICSOM offer Laura our deepest thanks, our affection and admiration, and our very best wishes as she concludes this chapter of her service to ICSOM, knowing that the organization she has helped shape for nearly a quarter-century will carry her influence long into the future.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

