

Senza Sordino

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Symphoria: Four Years Later

by Michael W. Bull and Jon Garland

In the spring of 2011, during its 50th Anniversary season, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra (SSO) Board of Directors voted to cease operations and dissolve the orchestra through bankruptcy.

The closure happened just a few weeks before cellist Yo-Yo Ma was to perform, which was a highlight of the anniversary year. No ticket refunds were forthcoming from the defunct SSO and many patrons who had donated had not been adequately thanked for their efforts to save the symphony, so the musicians decided to produce a concert for all of the patrons who had supported the orchestra. This performance, along with two benefit performances organized with help from Hamilton College, set into motion a series of performances that led to the formation of Symphoria, and ensured that symphonic music continued uninterrupted in Syracuse and central New York.

Initially, the orchestra formed an unincorporated foundation in order to secure insurance, accept tax-deductible donations, and temporarily present performances. Musicians from the orchestra took on roles in personnel management, fundraising, operations, library, marketing, and stage management. Summer concert presenters were contacted and assured that while the SSO was gone, the musicians were here to stay. Because all of the physical assets of the SSO were tied up in the bankruptcy, arrangements were made for chairs, stands, music, etc., for each

(continued on page 11)

In This Issue

| | |
|---|----|
| Symphoria: Four Years Later | 1 |
| A Symphonic Resurrection in Hawaii.. | 1 |
| Chairperson's Report .. | 2 |
| The Defiant Opera House of Donetsk | |
| The New IMA..... | 3 |
| What's in it and how it came about | |
| Controlling the Message | 5 |
| What we can learn from a viral article | |
| Reaching Younger Audiences..... | 5 |
| The Cleveland Orchestra's new strategies | |
| A TEMPO Crescendo .. | 6 |
| The importance of political engagement | |
| Orchestra Newslets | 7 |
| From San Francisco, St. Louis, Atlanta, NYC Ballet, Kennedy Center, Minnesota, Buffalo, Chicago Lyric | |
| Dropping the Mute | 10 |
| Advocacy of advocacy | |

A Symphonic Resurrection in Hawaii

by J. Scott Janusch

It's hard to believe it's been five and a half years since the Honolulu Symphony Society (HSS) canceled concerts and filed for Chapter 11 reorganization in December of 2009, with Chapter 7 liquidation a year later. The death of the 104-year old institution dealt a blow to our community; however, because most of the musicians stayed in Hawaii, and thanks to the efforts of a new group of community leaders, symphonic music eventually returned.

As has been reported, the 2009-2010 Honolulu Symphony Orchestra season began with an early distribution to the HSS by the Honolulu Symphony Foundation (HSF), to eliminate debt and pay orchestra musicians for months of unpaid work completed during the previous season. These funds came at a cost, however: Local 677 had to approve an immediate 15% pay cut, the hiring of a new Executive Director, and a "realistic budget". It soon became clear that the sacrifice was in vain (again) when the orchestra ran out of operating capital. Concert production was suspended in October 2009,

following performances of only two Masterworks concerts and one Pops concert. Though attempts were made to impart revenue enhancement ideas, the Board appeared not to want to hear any of it.

Following the Chapter 11 filing, the bankruptcy judge tasked the HSS with devising a reorganization plan. The vision that the HSS leaders seemed to have was one of a deeply downsized part-time orchestra that wouldn't resemble the ensemble that the community had come to love and support for generations. The Orchestra Committee and the Local nevertheless tried to find community leaders who could lead the organization away from the HSS's vision; Vicky Cayetano, business leader and former Hawaii First Lady, and Mark Polivka, Vice President of an insurance company, formed a nucleus of what would become the driving force behind a new entity. The Local reached out to industry professionals; Steve Monder, recently retired Executive Director of the Cincinnati Symphony, agreed to advise the new group and offered his services at a minimal cost. JoAnn Falletta also agreed to help out in whatever way she could.

Without a recognizable reorganization plan, the HSS Board elected to file for Chapter 7 liquidation in December 2010.

(continued on page 10)



Symphoria performs at Beard Park in Fayetteville, NY, Summer 2014

Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge

The Defiant Opera House of Donetsk

Recent days have seen an intense escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, which began in 2013 and led to a revolt that ousted President Viktor Yanukovich in early 2014. When Russia subsequently annexed Crimea, a war ensued between pro-Russian factions and the government established in Ukraine following Yanukovich's removal from office. The city of Donetsk has taken the brunt of the conflict, with over 5000 deaths on its 236 year-old streets as bombs drop unceasingly and the streets are patrolled by armed men in tanks. Roughly half of the city's citizens have fled.



Michael Zilio

In the face of this terrible violence, one institution remains defiantly open, the Donetsk Opera House. Built in 1936, the Donetsk Opera and Ballet Theater produced its first opera in 1941 and it survived World War II and the Nazi occupation of the city. The theater has 960 seats, and features a large bust of Alexander Pushkin in its lobby.

In the midst of the conflict, operas are being produced on a weekly basis. Recent productions have included *Eugene Onegin*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *La Traviata*. The artists are putting their lives at risk every time they walk to the theater, as are the audience members who stand in line for free tickets. The operas must be scheduled in the daylight, as nighttime in the city is simply too dangerous.

In a recent article in the *Guardian*, the deputy director of the opera was quoted as saying that for the opening production of this season, "Tickets were free and there were hundreds of people queuing...People were upset they couldn't get in. In the end we had people sitting on the steps, standing in the wings, we crammed in as many as we could. Two old ladies were in tears, on their knees and kissing (the director's) hands in gratitude that he had opened the season."

The violence in the streets led to the cancellation of plans for Donetsk to host the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships later this spring, but the Opera remains defiant.

The *Guardian* went on to quote baritone Sergei Dubnitsky: "Maybe it sounds pretentious, but I think we have a certain moral obligation to stay", he said. "We have our performances, our audience, our city to think about. You can treat wounds with medicines, but art is medicine for the soul."

It never leaves my thoughts how the world turns constantly to music. On days of joy, such as weddings, our happiness must be accompanied by music. On days of great personal pain, such as memorial services, we must be comforted by music. On regular days, when we need solace from everyday trials, we turn to music. And in times of great tragedy and devastation, music reminds us of the most noble aspirations of humanity as citizens of the world refuse to allow violence to rob us of any part of our souls.

I think of Mstislav Rostropovich playing Bach by the Berlin Wall, and Leonard Bernstein joyously celebrating freedom with



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Beethoven's Ninth Symphony just after the *Mauerfall*. I'm listening now to my vinyl recording of the Boston Symphony playing Mozart's *Requiem* just after the death of President Kennedy. I remember orchestras across the world performing immediately following September 11, bringing their communities together around music. I am moved at the thought of 150 musicians playing Barber's *Adagio* in Trafalgar Square following the recent terrorist attacks in Paris.

One of the citizens of Donetsk who attended the opera performances said "When you are surrounded by ugliness, beauty becomes something you cherish even more."

This is why we work so hard to be advocates for our orchestras, and all of our cultural institutions. We know we are not advocating for ourselves, but for the best of society and for all future generations. I'm sure when we were younger we believed that the world could evolve, and such conflicts would not devolve into unspeakable violence. I know I thought that education would improve and enlighten the world. But instead, we face more and more cuts in education funding, and a less educated world will only lead to more conflicts with violent outcomes; it takes thought and insight to find more creative solutions.

A disproportionate number of the cuts in education are found in music and arts programs. This shortsighted thinking will have a profound effect on the world should we not resist. After all, we know from multiple studies that music education leads to improved emotional outlook, enhanced social skills, greater mental health as we age, improved cognitive function, increased graduation rates, and greater skill in personal expression.

Of course there will always be terrible conflicts that appear unresolvable, and no one can eradicate violence from this world. But it seems to me that the best hope for future generations must come from education, and it appears too often that we live in a time when education is somehow viewed as "elitist". Conflicts will persist, but I don't see how it can get better with a less educated future, and music must be recognized as inherently valuable to achieving a more educated and enlightened society.

It is frightening to contemplate what might happen next in Donetsk, perhaps before this issue of *Senza Sordino* is published. Even as I write this afternoon, the media is reporting that a chemical plant in Eastern Ukraine near Donetsk has been bombed and is burning out of control. A new ceasefire accord was reached on February 12, but it is the second such attempt, and we can only hope it succeeds in ending the violence. But music will always represent the best of humanity, and the defiance and resiliency of the human spirit. In a time of war the opera in Donetsk seems to me to be a revolutionary act of defiance, and I want to think of those artists as I perform with my colleagues, and as I travel as an advocate for musicians everywhere. Indeed, each one of us must see ourselves constantly as advocates for all musicians everywhere, and for the best of humanity. The 24-hour news channels might lead us to believe that the best of humanity is in short supply these days, but I don't believe that. I've seen and heard the best of humanity in every musician I've ever met, and I only wish it could be possible that I could be present at one of the operas in Donetsk.

Every note we play must stand as a statement against violence. When next we walk onto our stages, we should remember that across the world an opera company is producing music at the risk of their lives, insistent that the violence in their streets must not be allowed to diminish the value of life, nor the beauty that exists and remains possible to achieve.

As one of the performers in Donetsk expressed her hope: "You leave the house in the morning, and there's ice on the ground, wind in your face, snow falling, and the sound of bombs exploding everywhere. What can be better than to walk along and sing Strauss to yourself?"

(Note: many of the quotes in this report have been harvested from press accounts, most notably an excellent article by Shaun Walker in the Guardian, viewable at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/feb/02/donetsk-opera-ukraine-show-must-go-on>)



The New IMA

by Matthew Comerford, ICSOM Media Committee Chair

After a long and contentious negotiation, the American Federation of Musicians Negotiating Committee reached an accord for a successor Integrated Media Agreement (IMA). Unlike the prior agreement with individual employers, the new agreement is a multi-employer agreement



applicable to all employer members of a newly-formed corporation, named the Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Electronic Media Association (EMA). This negotiation took more than a year to reach its conclusion, from the early fall of 2013 until agreement was reached on December 12, 2014. The tentative agreement must still go through the ratification

process, which is now underway. All ballots and orchestra vote tally sheets must be received by Deborah Newmark at the AFM New York offices prior to 5:00 p.m on April 1, 2015.

A brief summary of the history of the IMA will be helpful in understanding the IMA successor. Many readers will remember that bargaining of Symphony, Opera, and Ballet (SOB) media agreements was not formulaic when the first agreements were created. From the 1980s through about 1998 there was no formal multi-employer bargaining. An agreement was arrived at with a few interested employers and the resulting agreement was available for other employers to sign. From 1999 through 2006 some Symphony, Opera, and Ballet employers joined informal multi-employer groups, but these groups did not commit themselves to be bound to the new agreement prior to knowing the outcome of negotiations.

In recent history, for the 2004 Live Recording Agreement (LRA), the post-2006 Audio/Visual Agreement, and the 2008-2009 IMA negotiations, the Symphony, Opera, and Ballet employers formed a multi-employer group, which included a self-destruct option: employers, as part of the group, committed to the outcome of the negotiations, but the group's authorization expired if no agreement was reached by a previously established authorization expiration date. The authorization expiration date was a unilateral decision made by the employers

group, not by any accord with the AFM negotiating committee. This was a gamble the employers took that succeeded in regard to the LRA, but failed in the IMA negotiations.

In the course of the SOBAV-turned-IMA negotiations of 2008-2009, the two sides reached the 11th hour and came to agreement on 95% of the issues, but at that point the employers let their "authorizations" expire and walked away from the table. Subsequently the Cleveland Musical Arts Association led a campaign to force media negotiations with their AFM Local and not the AFM. This gambit failed at all levels of National Labor Relations Board and judicial proceedings and the AFM achieved conclusive rulings that it had jurisdiction over SOB media agreements. Following those rulings, a very successful campaign to sign individual employers to the AFM-drafted IMA was waged. Over 70 managers and their organizations became signatory to the IMA.

This brings us to the current IMA negotiations. In March of 2013, for the first time, the employers formed their own corporation, the EMA, in contrast to the informal multi-employer groups they had created earlier. The EMA is made up of 72 organizations, roughly evenly divided between former IMA signatories and non-signatories. They were all bound to sign a successor IMA. At our initial negotiation sessions, held in Chicago in December of 2013, the EMA tried to completely throw out the IMA and begin again on writing a new agreement from their set of positions and proposals. The AFM negotiating committee (which includes the ICSOM Media Committee and representatives of the ROPA Media Committee) was shocked and outraged at this attack. The EMA characterized its proposals as earth-shatteringly progressive, but in reality they were merely resurrecting a wish list of positions and proposals the employers have been bringing to media negotiations for over 15 years. The employers brought on board two manager media consultants to try to drive home these proposals. These same two consultants had been trying since 2009 to dissuade any employers from signing the IMA. The AFM negotiating team remained steadfast in the face of this attempt to destroy the very bargaining history and record of SOB media agreements.

The two sides met often for bargaining sessions in either New York or Chicago over the course of 2014. In the Chicago sessions of June 29–July 1, our committee reached the end of how far we believed we could move towards their positions and gave the EMA our final offer. No immediate response was made by the EMA and no more sessions were held for many months. In the fall of 2014 the EMA sent the AFM their last best final offer, which, after lengthy discussion and careful consideration, was turned down by the AFM. That is where the negotiation remained until December 2014, when both sides agreed to make an attempt at a final resolution. Both sides agreed to send smaller committees in an attempt to jump-start the discussion and find a way to reach agreement. After two and a half days of intense bargaining we did reach an agreement. It then took weeks of thrashing out the final language of what would be included in the new agreement.

The details of the agreement were sent out to all eligible AFM orchestra members as part of the ratification packets. The ratification process began in mid-February; so all eligible musicians have seen the details of the successor agreement.

The majority of the elements of the IMA remain intact, but

here are some, though not all, of the additions or changes the successor IMA contains:

- The agreement will have a term from the date of ratification to June 30, 2017.
- The main agreement and the provisions and rates for radio broadcasts remain intact.
- In Live Audio recording, the percentages used in calculating up-front payments remain the same or increase when the employer elects not to pay tier payments. The number of minutes of music covered by the up-front payment shall be increased from 78 to 80 (in the case of symphonic recordings) and from 126 to 130 (in the case of opera recordings).
- In Non-Television Audio/Visual Products, rates are established for projects of thirty minutes or less and for 60 minutes or less. Payment for product of more than 60 minutes remains the same.
- News & Promotion provisions were expanded to help employers meet their needs in attempts to attract concertgoers, supporters and donors.
- There is a new section in News & Promotion detailing guidelines for Volunteer Promotional Recordings.
- An additional new section in News & Promotion details guidelines for gifts to Donors, Corporate Sponsors and Subscribers.
- There is a new side letter Regarding Audio and Audio-Visual Recording with Non-Classical Featured Artists.
- Pension contributions to the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund are increased to 12%.

Other employers that did not join the EMA, whether or not they are currently signatories to the former IMA, will be able to sign the agreement as individual organizations directly with the AFM after it is ratified.

The new changes were arrived at after painstaking consideration. The AFM Media Negotiating Sub-Committee heard the concerns of employers and made careful choices in coming to agreement on all of those concerns. The ICSOM Media Committee, along with the ROPA Media Committee representatives, fully supports this agreement and endorses ratification.

I would like to thank the ICSOM Media Committee members for their hard work and absolute dedication to this negotiation: Dan Bauch, Boston Symphony; Paul Frankenfeld, Cincinnati Symphony; Steve Lester, Chicago Symphony; Cathy Payne, San Francisco Symphony; Bruce Ridge, North Carolina Symphony and ICSOM Chair; Peter Rofe, Los Angeles Philharmonic; Brian Rood, Kansas City Symphony and ICSOM President; Laura Ross, Nashville Symphony and ICSOM Secretary; and Fiona Simon, New York Philharmonic. Many thanks to the ROPA Media Committee members: John Michael Smith, Minnesota Opera and ROPA Media Committee Chair; Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, New Mexico Philharmonic and ROPA President; and Nancy Nelson, Houston Grand Opera and ROPA Vice President.

I extend deep thanks and appreciation to AFM President Raymond Hair, Jr., Legal Counsel Patricia Polach, SSD Director Jay Blumenthal, SSD Director of Symphonic Electronic Media Deborah Newmark, those Local Presidents who attended many sessions, and all the staff at the AFM that afforded the musicians committee the ability to assist the AFM at the highest level throughout the course of this negotiation.



Controlling the Message

by Randy Whatley

Several weeks ago, I worked with ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra Principal Bassoonist William Short on the publication of an article on the MET Orchestra Musicians' Web site. The article, entitled "2014: A Great Year for Orchestras (or haven't you heard?)" can be found online at <http://www.metorchestramusicians.org/blog/2014/12/26/2014-a-great-year-for-orchestras-or-havent-you-heard>.



Within hours of publication, viewership and readership of this article exploded from the promotion by the classical music community worldwide on social media. To date, over 60,000 people have seen this article. Over time, because it is online, thousands more will read it for years to come. If we had paid for advertising to disseminate this message, the cost to ICSOM would have approached \$10,000.

Until now, battles for public opinion have been overwhelmingly one-sided because musicians simply don't have the deep pockets or media contacts of those who have sought to decimate our profession. Suddenly, with the advent of social media, we have been presented with the single greatest equalizing tool in the history of our industry—a tool with which, through the sheer force of conviction and truth, we can reach tens of thousands of interested parties without spending a dime.

Once we observed the exposure of these messages and reflected on what three people working together could produce, I proposed the following idea to Bruce Ridge and Billy Short: What if we mobilize 30—then 300—classical musicians to produce this kind of content regularly? Then it will not matter what the mainstream media reports or does NOT report about the industry. We would own and control the message, which would keep the naysayers on the defensive against our messaging and incapable of advancing their own.

We envision a team of volunteers that would regularly develop and publish content to spread the messages to educate people about issues that affect classical musicians and orchestras. By working cooperatively, we could disseminate these messages on all of our social media channels, on blogs, and to the mainstream media. Participants could produce copy, video, and audio to deliver our messages. All the work would be done on a volunteer basis by ICSOM orchestra musicians and their supporters. Our ICSOM content provider team could produce content for orchestra musicians' social media channels. We could also create guest posts on blogs. In addition, the team could produce background information and white papers to educate mainstream media journalists on a myriad of issues that affect all orchestra musicians.

ICSOM orchestras are composed of a collection of uniquely talented and skilled people, and musicians have proven time and time again to be the best advocates of their profession. The positive message that ICSOM has been articulating is being heard, and now we have an opportunity to share our viewpoint of the future of our orchestras with the public, and the press. We need more voices articulating the value of music

to our society. We all seek ways that we can make a difference, and here is an opportunity for every member of ICSOM to join together in a unified chorus to proclaim, and realize, what is possible for our orchestras to achieve.

Would you or several of your colleagues like to be a part of an ICSOM content production group? Can you write and/or edit copy? Can you produce audio and video? Do you have a blog that could publish this content? Do you have an interest in starting a blog that could publish this content? If you can't do any of these things, do you have friends or colleagues that you can recruit to do this?

Please contact Bruce Ridge at bruceridge@earthlink.net to volunteer to be a part of this effort. Our initial goal is to find 30 active participants. Our ultimate goal is to have 300 participants, which would represent roughly 7.5% of the membership of ICSOM orchestras. Please join us in this pioneering public relations effort by adding your name to the volunteer list today.

Reaching Younger Audiences

By Lyle Steelman, TCO ICSOM Delegate

In 2010, The Cleveland Orchestra created the Center for Future Audiences. As its name suggests, the Center was created to fund programs that will generate interest in the orchestra's activities among the youth of Northeast Ohio. The Center received a lead endowment gift of \$20 million from the Milton and Tamar Maltz Family Foundation. Milton Maltz has said, "Let's face it, if we don't get young people involved in classical music, in theater, in the arts, the opera, ballet: There won't be the arts of tomorrow." The Center is charged with the task of making sure there will be a future for classical music in Cleveland.

There are several programs that comprise the Center for Future Audiences. The 2011 Blossom Festival saw the beginning of *Under 18s Free*, the flagship program for audience development. The goal of this program was to create an inexpensive way for families to attend Blossom Festival concerts. The program offers two free lawn passes for children under the age of 18 with the purchase of each regularly priced adult lawn ticket. There were an average of 700 *Under 18s Free* passes handed out for each Blossom Festival concert of The Cleveland Orchestra during the program's initial season. The program was so successful that it was extended to include select Severance Hall concerts throughout the winter season. For concerts at Severance Hall, the program offers one free ticket for children ages 7–17 with the purchase of one regularly priced adult ticket. The average number of *Under 18s Free* tickets that are issued each year to attend concerts by The Cleveland Orchestra has risen to 22,000.

The Center for Future Audiences has also taken control of an already existing program aimed to offer students a sizable discount for attending concerts. The Student Advantage Program is designed to allow admittance to high school, college, graduate, and post-graduate students for \$10. While enrollment is required, membership is free and it offers the discounted student rate for most concerts during the Severance Hall winter season. Students that take advantage of this program are invited to attend open rehearsals of The Cleveland Orchestra and also attend masterclasses given by guest soloists and members of the orchestra. Social media has also been brought into the mix with postings on the Student Advantage Facebook page

announcing upcoming concerts that are available for students to attend at the \$10 rate. Thanks in part to this program, college student attendance rose 50% in 2014. Between the *Under 18s Free* and the Student Advantage Program, this season saw the 100,000th student/youth concert attendee since the program's inception.

In the fall of 2012, the Center launched another offering for members of the Student Advantage Program. The Student Frequent FanCard was created to assist students that would like to attend more than the occasional performance. A FanCard for one season costs \$50 and it allows the student a single ticket to any weekly subscription concert. There is no restriction on the number of concerts the FanCard can be used for.

The Center also created a Student Ambassadors program. Each season the orchestra recruits up to 20 college and graduate level students to promote awareness of the Student Advantage Program on college campuses in Northeast Ohio. Student Ambassadors promote orchestra activities to faculty and students of local colleges and universities. Participants in this program receive a free Student Frequent FanCard and work with the marketing department of The Cleveland Orchestra.

It is clear that The Cleveland Orchestra is an institution in transition. The organization is changing its business model



Blossom Festival concert

and is striving to become an ever greater asset to the communities it serves. The organization is targeting a more diversified audience base. Getting younger audience members to attend performances on a regular basis is an ambitious goal, but it is a goal that The Cleveland Orchestra is dedicating itself to achieving. It appears to be working. When the Center was created in 2010, student attendance was 8%. As of this season, student attendance is over 20%. Focusing energy on younger audiences is a key to ensure that every orchestra will have an audience in the future.



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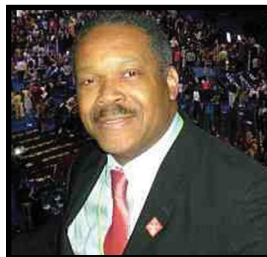
at the Philadelphia Sonesta Hotel

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

A TEMPO Crescendo

by Alfonso Pollard, AFM Legislative-Political Director

Over the years, AFM Symphonic Player Conferences, such as ICSOM, have recognized the value of access to and direct engagement with national, state, and municipal policy makers. Legislators, in their turn, support positive government policies that shape our industry. When I returned as Legislative-Political Director of the AFM in 2013, the question I wanted to address is how do we, as a national arts labor organization, project even greater political presence? First and foremost, by being there.



Alfonso Pollard

So we were there. 2013 and 2014 saw the highest level of legislative and political activity in Washington, DC in the history of the AFM. Four issues dominated AFM government affairs activities: addressing new and adverse restrictions for traveling musicians who own instruments containing African elephant ivory; promulgation of rules for musical instruments as carry-on, cabin, and checked baggage; funding for the National Endowment for the Arts; and lobbying against tax incentives that encourage offshoring of film scores.

The AFM's active engagement in federal policy actions last year on the aforementioned issues generated quite a lot of interest on Capitol Hill. Many members of Congress weighed in positively on those issues using their staff and constituent resources to develop amendments and send congressional letters to federal government department heads. One of the reasons that we were able to garner such support was that we were able to double the amount of contributions to these politicians from the levels of recent years past. This is exclusively because of increased contributions to TEMPO with the new TEMPO Signature Plan. Jennifer Mondie (ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large and National Symphony Orchestra Alternate Delegate) summed it up: "It has been very satisfying to see the progress that can be made when we, world-class orchestral artists, make our presence seen and heard on Capitol Hill. I am very excited to envision and help plan for an even further expansion of our presence through a more robustly-funded TEMPO fund."

Created through President Hair's office and the AFM International Executive Board, the TEMPO Signature Plan is planned giving of \$1.00 per week for a year, realized as a one-time payment of \$52.00. While no donation is ever too small, the average donation amount before the Plan had been \$3. This is simply not the level of value I would like my fellow AFM members to associate with our legislative efforts. As Doug Rosenthal (ICSOM Delegate for the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra/Washington National Opera Orchestra) explains it, "Money talks. It's not a reality I enjoy acknowledging, but it is a fact of life in 2015. After living in our nation's capital for thirty months, I have personally observed that it takes more than a powerful message to move mountains. We all work so hard to advance the quality of our art form, and our contributions to TEMPO ensure that we can engage the lawmakers who will advance the respect and security of our art form."

There are still big issues to address and exciting opportuni-

ties to create. TEMPO was integral to the successes of the past year. With the launch of the TEMPO Signature Plan, there is even more that can be accomplished. Issues that I would like to expand include a resolution to the African ivory issue, the perennial fight to better fund the NEA, and increasing our involvement with the work of the House Congressional Arts Caucus led by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY 25) and Leonard Lance (R-NJ 7), a body comprising 157 members of congress (123 Democrats and 34 Republicans). Its mission is to support federal initiatives in the arts and to learn more about the impact of the arts on our economy, educational system, industry strength, healthcare costs, and service members returning from active duty overseas. It stands to reason that we as a community of artists are the direct beneficiaries of the daily work of this Caucus and that it is in our collective interests to see to it that those members of Congress who devote their time to advancing the arts in America are returned to Congress so they can continue to help. Finally, a new initiative for this year is establishing an annual "AFM on the Hill" day, similar to full-day events put on by other arts organizations such as Americans for the Arts, GRAMMYS on the Hill, and the Rock caucus sponsored by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

All of these areas for change and work would benefit from increasing the support I can find from my fellow AFM members, most importantly by greater participation in the TEMPO Signature Plan, but also any direct involvement that you can manage as well. Together we can spread the word about how our music is vital to the fabric of our society and everyday lives. I look forward to hearing from and working with as many ICSOM members as possible and seeing your names on the TEMPO Signature Plan enrollment list.



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As explained, TEMPO is open only to AFM members and their families.

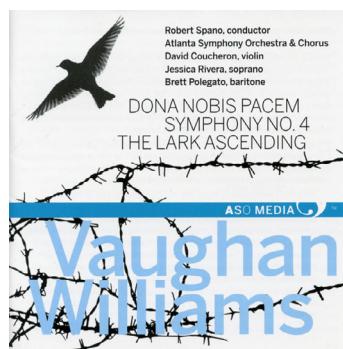
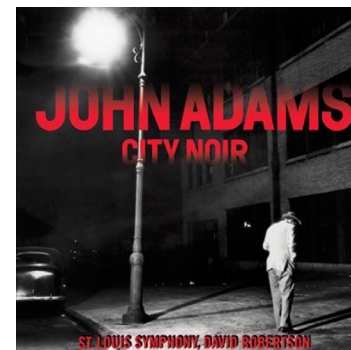
If you are an AFM member and would like additional information about TEMPO or the TEMPO Signature Plan, please contact Sande Grier at (202) 274-4756 (sgrier@afm.org) or log into the AFM website (www.afm.org) and click on the TEMPO link.

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.

Orchestra Newslets

ICSOM at the Grammys

On February 8, the St. Louis Symphony's recording of John Adams' *City Noir* won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance. The recording, with David Robertson conducting, is on the Nonesuch label, and includes two recent Adams compositions: *City Noir*, and the *Saxophone Concerto*, featuring soloist Timothy McAllister. Both were recorded live at Powell Symphony Hall in 2013. It is the orchestra's first Grammy win since 1991, bringing the orchestra's total to seven.



The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra was associated with Grammy Award number 28, this time the award for Best Engineered Album, Classical, bestowed on Michael Bishop (engineer/mastering engineer) for *Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem; Symphony No. 4; The Lark Ascending*. The featured performers on the recording are Robert Spano, Norman Mackenzie, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.

San Francisco Reaches Agreement

On January 31, 2015 the musicians of the San Francisco Symphony ratified a new agreement lasting almost four seasons and expiring in November, 2018. The agreement provides for yearly increases in salary (approximately 14% over four years) and to the defined-benefit pension plan.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the new agreement is the way it addresses health insurance. The San Francisco Symphony will likely move to self-insurance by the end of the year. The musicians and administration jointly engaged an actuarial consultant who explored the feasibility of self-insurance as a way to moderate the increasing cost of high-quality health care. The parties agreed that his analysis indicated that self-insurance has the potential to provide significant savings in health care costs. With self-insurance, all of the current plan designs (there are four), benefit levels, and musician contributions would remain unchanged for the length of the contract.

The agreement was ratified on the very day the old agreement expired. This was in stark contrast to the last ratification, which came only after a three-week strike and a protracted, rancorous negotiation. After that experience, the musicians and administration worked hard to build a better relationship and achieve a fair agreement on time.

New Music Director at NYCB

Andrew Litton has been appointed the sixth music director of the New York City Ballet Orchestra. The announcement was made on December 16, 2014 by Peter Martins, Ballet Master in Chief. Litton's tenure will begin in September of this year. While ballet orchestra news, including music director appointments, is generally not a hot topic in the classical music world, this appointment is noteworthy because Litton is such an internationally famous conductor, and it is rare, or perhaps unprecedented, for a conductor of his stature to direct a ballet orchestra.

About the appointment, Litton was quoted in the New York Times: "I think the City Ballet Orchestra are unsung heroes, because they go through more repertoire in a year than most symphony orchestras that I've ever encountered. And the number of new pieces that are premiered or done by this orchestra—it's extraordinary."

Litton is a native New Yorker and is music director of the Colorado Philharmonic and the Bergen Philharmonic (Norway). In 2013 he was a guest conductor at the City Ballet, leading several performances of *Coppelia*, with music by Delibes. Based on that brief collaboration, and on his international reputation, the musicians of the New York City Ballet Orchestra are excited about his appointment as their new music director.

Alabama Hires New Music Director

After a search that lasted more than three years, Carlos Izcaray has been appointed Music Director of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, commencing September 2015. A committee made up of four musicians elected from the orchestra, six board members and two (non-voting) ex-officio executive members of the administrative staff selected Maestro Izcaray from among twenty-eight distinguished candidates who conducted the orchestra during the search process.

The Venezuelan-born Izcaray first trained as a cellist, and served as the Principal Cellist of the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra. Since his appointment was announced, he has already hit the ground running, conducting a Master Series week of concerts and meeting with orchestra musicians and members of the community.

Despite his international conducting career, with his current residence in Berlin and engagements in Thailand, Switzerland, Brazil, Sweden and Colombia, Izcaray is familiar with American culture having reportedly spent his high school years in Wisconsin. The Alabama Symphony Orchestra looks forward to this exciting new chapter, and welcomes Maestro Izcaray.

Lyric's Tragic Loss

Kenneth G. Pigott, President and CEO of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, passed away suddenly on February 13, 2015. This news came as a shock and profound loss to the entire Lyric Opera. When Pigott became President of the Board in 2011, one of his first actions was a generous one: to meet personally with the orchestra committee, a gesture that exemplified the kind of person he was. There is no doubt he did this with the other unions and departments that make up the Lyric family.

Pigott was instrumental in bringing Renee Fleming to Lyric Opera in the position of Artistic Consultant. He was a board member of OPERA America, the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Chicago Children's Hospital and the Merit School of Music. His generosity with people and support of Lyric and the opera world in general was unsurpassed. He will be greatly missed.

Music Director Musical Non-Chairs

February 2015 was a big month for Music Director announcements. February 6, 12, and 18 saw announcements from the New York Philharmonic, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra, respectively, that each of their current Music Directors, Alan Gilbert, Edo de Waart, and Christoph Eschenbach, would be stepping down from those positions after the end of those orchestras' 2016-2017 seasons. When they depart, both Gilbert and de Waart will have been Music Director of their orchestras for 8 years, while Eschenbach will have held his post (along with the post of Music Director of the Kennedy Center) for 7 years. Eschenbach and de Waart will both continue their affiliation with their former ensembles as conductors laureate. The next question is whether these three orchestras will announce new Music Director appointments in an equally coordinated time frame.

Festival Shifts to the Kennedy Center

Carnegie Hall's innovative but short-lived Spring for Music, which featured performances by 23 orchestras over four years, including 16 ICSOM orchestras, has found a revival in Washington, DC. The Kennedy Center, in partnership with Washington Performing Arts (an active and vital organization in Washington's cultural community), has announced a new initiative, *Shift: A Festival of American Orchestras*. "The title of the festival, *Shift*, recognizes the dynamic, evolving work and role of orchestras in the 21st century and underscores our mission to play a role in shifting pre-conceived notions about orchestras," says Jennie Bilfield, CEO and President of Washington Performing Arts. Beginning in the spring of 2017, four or five orchestras will be selected to perform annually at the Kennedy Center and explore different ways to teach and connect with audiences around the DC metropolitan area. "Just because you put together the most compelling concert program does not guarantee participation if you do not come with other activities," says Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter. *Shift's* first three years have been secured through a \$900,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with \$700,000 earmarked to match new contributions. "I believe there is a lack of awareness of the scope of programming that takes place by orchestras," says Rutter. "In the nation's capital, where we have opinion leaders of all sorts, we can be a platform showcasing this to the rest of the country."

Kennedy Center Expansion

On December 4th, Vice President Joe Biden led the groundbreaking of the Kennedy Center's Expansion Project, marking the first modification to the Center's appearance since it opened 53 years ago. The \$100 million project will create more space

for arts education, rehearsal rooms, and new places for audiences to experience performances, including a floating pavilion on the Potomac River. There will also be aspects that further memorialize President John F. Kennedy. Other speakers at the ceremony included Rose Kennedy Schlossberg (granddaughter of President Kennedy and new Board of Trustees member), architect Steven Holl, Deborah Rutter, and David Rubenstein (Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kennedy Center). Rubenstein, who has pledged \$50 million for the Expansion



Deborah Rutter, Vice President Biden, David Rubenstein, Rose Kennedy Schlossberg and Steven Holl

Project so far, dug into soil with the same golden shovel used to break ground for the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials as well as the Kennedy Center's original construction. The Expansion Project is slated for completion on May 29, 2017, marking the 100th birthday of President Kennedy.

Minnesota to Visit Cuba

Music Director Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra have been invited by the Cuban Ministry of Culture to perform two concerts in Havana this May as part of the International Cubadisco Festival. This means that Minnesota will become the first U.S. orchestra to perform in Cuba since the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra visited in 1999, and only the second since the Cuban Revolution brought about a break in relations between the two countries. (The Florida Orchestra has had a cultural exchange with Cuba since 2011 that has involved small groups of musicians traveling to Cuba.)

The orchestra is scheduled to depart on May 13 and return to the U.S. on May 17. In addition to offering two performances in Havana, the orchestra will also be looking at opportunities for community engagement activities while in Cuba. Kevin Smith, Minnesota Orchestra CEO, said "This is an extraordinary privilege and opportunity for our Orchestra, and we are enormously grateful to special donors whose generosity is making the tour possible...We offer thanks to Osmo and the musicians, whose willingness to postpone a planned vacation week has made the trip possible in May; to board members who encouraged the concept in its early stages; and to the staff members who have worked so hard to pull this together in a short period of time."

Buffalo Continues Strong Performance

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra recently announced a balanced budget for the 2013-14 season. Ticket sales have been climbing steadily for a period of time, showing revenue of

\$3.3 million during the 2013-14 season. This is a 6.2% increase from the previous season, and represents an increase of over \$500,000 (18.4%) from the 2010-11 season. This marked the ninth season out of the last ten that the BPO has been able to balance the budget.

Other recent highlights include the release of four recordings during the 2013-14 season. The BPO also successfully performed six concerts on a five-city tour of Florida in February 2014, as well as a performance at Princeton University in July 2014. Over 200,000 people attended performances of the BPO during the 2013-14 season. The season also saw the endowment grow to over \$32 million. The goal of a \$50 million endowment is in sight, as an additional \$10 million is pledged for future years.

The BPO even found a new way to give back to the community, as \$15,000 was donated to the campaign for the new Oishei Children's Hospital, scheduled to open in late 2017 in Buffalo. This money was raised through a "Doctors of the World" concert that was hosted by the BPO in July 2014.

As the BPO looks towards the 2015-16 season, it will mark the 75th anniversary of Kleinhans Music Hall. In the latest phase of renovations to the hall, it was recently announced that new seating would be installed over the summer of 2015. Seating capacity will actually drop from 2,800 seats to 2,400, due to slightly larger seats and more legroom between rows.

Honoring the Rank and File in St. Louis

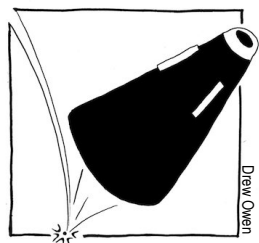
This has been a most interesting year in St. Louis. The theme of the 2014-2015 season has been Soloists from the Orchestra, with some 50 different orchestra members getting up in front of their colleagues and showing their stuff. The level of playing has been astounding and a source of great pride for all. A cool wrinkle to this is that Music Director David Robertson commissioned an orchestra member to write one of the pieces played. On November 21 a concert on a new series called Music You Know featured a piece no one could possibly know: *Beinn na Caillich, or Hill of the Old Woman, Fantasy for Fiddler and Orchestra*. The soloist was Becky Boyer, and the composer was St. Louis ICSOM delegate Chris Woehr. It was possibly the first time in the 135 year history of the orchestra that such a commission has occurred. It gets another performance April 12, with an additional 2 or 3 minutes of music at the request of Robertson.

On February 11, after a full year search, a new President and CEO was announced. On July 1, 2015, Marie-Hélène Barnard, Executive Director and CEO of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, replaces Fred Bronstein as the head of the St. Louis Symphony. Barnard is a viola da gamba player with extensive legal and executive experience, including the orchestras of Canton, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. Two members of the search committee and co-chairs of the Musicians Council, Katy Mattis and Michael Walk, stated: "We were most impressed with Marie-Hélène's collaborative nature and global perspective. She has shown herself able to see many sides of an issue, and to think creatively in addressing problems. We believe she will help the St. Louis Symphony to explore new growth opportunities, and will foster the orchestra's continuing prominence in the artistic world."

Dropping the Mute

by Peter de Boor, Editor

For the last several years, the Governing Board has been putting an emphasis on advocacy. Articles have appeared in this publication, presentations at the annual conference have been solicited; even the conference's overarching theme last August was "The Art of Advocacy".



Although I have only been on the board for a short while, I am pretty sure that the main impulse behind this advocacy of advocacy is the perception that our culture is replete with voices of negativity about the present and future of our art form, and the realization that this negativity must be countered. But I think there is an equally important rationale for advocacy—it

makes our art better and more effective.

I grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, and from early in my horn-playing career revered the Chicago Symphony and its brass section. The recordings I bought in high school and repeatedly listened to were theirs. When later we moved to Chicago for graduate school, and lived off stipends, we budgeted money for subscription tickets. I had taken lessons with three of the members of the horn section, and I felt a connection to the orchestra. I was a fan.


Of course, fans are commonplace in the world of professional sports. The fan base is actively cultivated, with players having twitter accounts and teams selling player jerseys. An entire section of the newspaper contains not just stories about the actual game, but human-interest stories about, and interviews with, individual athletes. While I am not equating the experiences of attending concerts and baseball games, I do think that our audiences—and prospective audiences—are making economic choices in how to allocate limited discretionary dollars among an ever-increasing array of entertainment opportunities. What will tip the balance towards buying symphony tickets instead of that premium cable subscription? A personal connection with members of the orchestra.

This is not my own great revelation—orchestras have been doing exactly this type of relationship-building for years. But with the advent of social media, we have the ability to take some ownership of this important function. A number of orchestras have made superb use of social media in the face of contentious negotiations (or lack thereof) with their managements, Atlanta and the MET Orchestra being the two most recent examples. Elsewhere in this issue, Randy Whatley describes how social media can be as effective as paid public relations in spreading a particular message.

But Facebook and Twitter should not be viewed merely as tools to be used during threatened or actual lockouts. They should be commonplace tools wielded by orchestras as often as their members use metronomes.

A brief survey of ICSOM orchestras last night revealed 35 (or two thirds) with their own "musicians of" Facebook pages, although a handful of these have had few recent postings. The other third of orchestras leave to their managements the opportunity for interaction with the audience.

Full disclosure: my own orchestra's Facebook page is in its

infancy, having debuted in January. But its birth was much easier than I anticipated, with some of the newer members of the orchestra willing and able to do the necessary work. Every ICSOM orchestra has the necessary expertise available in its membership to engage its audience through social media. I urge all of our members to use these tools to build relationships with their audiences. It won't make you play better, but it will make the audience enjoy the performance more. 

A Symphonic Resurrection (continued)

By this point, a few more community leaders had joined the initial group, which would form what was called a "Symphony Exploratory Committee". This group, including business leader (and current HSO Board Chair) Paul Kosasa, played a key role in the liquidation of HSS assets when the group submitted the winning auction bid to purchase the music library—containing many rare and unique items—and several instruments.

By early 2011, the exploratory committee, now formally the new Hawaii Symphony Board, entered into collective bargaining, as it was felt that waiting any longer to plan a season could result in even more musicians leaving town. An agreement was ratified in April 2011, with a duration of three years starting with the 2011-2012 season, and a \$1,000 base weekly salary for 30 weeks, rising slightly in the third year. In the summer and fall of 2011 the Board attempted to locate funding, find office space, and discuss the hiring of key staff personnel. The Board now included nine members, only one of whom remained from the previous HSS Board.

By February of 2012 it became apparent that even arriving at an accurate budget from which to plan a season was a challenge. With the only paid staff being Executive Director Monder, an operations manager, a receptionist, and the music librarian, key positions—in development, marketing, and, most critically, finance—either remained open or were filled by community volunteers. Because budget numbers were fluid, the Board operated in a vacuum while trying to plan for the future, making it reluctant to schedule concerts. However, key individuals indicated they would leave unless a season was scheduled that year.

Ultimately, a short season of 16 weeks was planned and scheduled for mid-March to early July of 2012. This was made possible in part by the decision of the HSF to again advance its annual distribution (typically around \$400,000 in earnings/appreciation each year), which would otherwise have come at the end of the calendar year.

During the two-and-a-half year gap between the end of the Honolulu Symphony and this beginning of the new Hawaii Symphony, the HSO musicians did have one source of financial relief: the Hawaii Opera Theater Company, which previous to 2009 had always subcontracted their services, produced Grand Operas in each of the seasons following the symphony shut-down, thus allowing many, if not all, of them some employment.

The first concert of the short season, Sunday, March 4, 2012, was held in the Blaisdell Concert Hall to a nearly packed house. The audience gave three standing ovations: the first when the musicians walked out on stage; the second when Monder appeared after intermission; and the third (and longest) after the last piece on the program, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Maestro Naoto Otomo shook the hands of every musician on stage, while young musicians from the Youth Symphony distributed leis.

Following the orchestra's welcome return, the Board decided it needed more time to produce the 2012-2013 season, so plans to start in the fall were put on hold. After another year without any concerts (though with health coverage continuing this time), the Board decided the symphony could only move forward under one of several scenarios for the fall of 2013, all of them contingent upon the HSO receiving Grant-in-Aid monies from the state. In the end, the HSO received half of the maximum possible \$900,000, so HSO management, the Board, and the Local agreed on a 12-week season, reduced from 16 weeks in 2011-2012. This modified agreement, with a budget for 2013-2014 of around \$3 million (roughly half of previous Honolulu Symphony budgets), also called for 14 weeks in the current (2014-2015) season, and 16 weeks in the 2015-2016 season.

With the modified CBA in place, the Board authorized Monder to hire full time marketing and development staff. Monder later agreed to remain as Senior Advisor to the HSO Board and management when his successor, HSO hornist Jonathan Parrish, took over as Executive Director. Parrish in turn hired a full time Financial Officer in December 2013. At last the organization had professional financial, marketing, and development data with which to guide its course. The 2013-2014 season ended with a balanced budget, thanks to relatively healthy ticket sales and the implementation of new marketing strategies and a new ticketing system.

One of the most welcomed aspects of a resumed symphony season was the return of "Beethoven 9" concerts in December that had been an annual tradition prior to bankruptcy. The performance on December 23, 2013 was sold out, and the tradition continued in December 2014 with two well-attended performances.

In the current season, year two of the amended CBA, the successful fall season started off in September with a concert honoring the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Blaisdell Concert Hall. This gala event featured music performed 50 years earlier: the "Nocturne" and "Wedding March" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture*. Memorabilia from the mid-'60s was displayed




Parrish, Kosasa, and Honolulu City Managing Director Ember Shinn, reading a Mayoral Proclamation in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Neal Blaisdell Concert Hall

in the lobby, including bound programs, photos, a copy of a musician's contract for the week (\$7 per rehearsal, \$14.50 per

concert!), plus a schedule of the week's festivities in September 1964. Of the season's 14 weeks, 12 contain Masterworks concerts; although subscription levels so far are not quite as high as in 2013-2014, average concert revenue is up by 5%.

Symphony Pops also returned with a first concert "Hooray for Hollywood!" in November, followed by a sold out concert on January 23 that featured Disney film music. Two more Pops concerts are scheduled for March and May 2015. Education/Outreach has also resumed with symphony ensembles visiting Oahu schools in February.

We remain cautiously optimistic about the future of the symphony. Of critical importance for the organization going forward is to nurture and grow the depth of the HSO Board of Directors. And, while many good things are happening, we don't yet have anything close to the level of employment we once had, nor the number of performances that the community had enjoyed for so many years. We all want that level of service to return as quickly as possible. 

Symphoria: Four Years Later *(continued)*

performance. With the help of some very generous people and institutions, too numerous to mention here, eight full orchestra concerts and several ensemble performances were produced that summer.

Once the summer performances had been completed, a decision was made to continue to present a series of performances in order to ensure visibility within the community. During the 2011-12 concert season, the orchestra performed four Masterworks and two Pops concerts. Our Masterworks featured violinist Elmar Oliveira and cellist Julie Albers, and conductors Stuart Robertson and Fabio Mechetti, to name just a few. We will always be thankful for their tremendous gift to the orchestra to help make that first year a great success. In total, the orchestra produced over 40 performances, including several Chamber concerts, opera, the *Nutcracker* and numerous run-out concerts to our supporters across New York from Inlet to Jamestown and many communities in between.

While the orchestra continued to perform, dozens of meetings were taking place behind the scenes to form a permanent organization. A business plan was drafted, revised, and revised again in order to secure support from major funders. In the fall of 2012, a smooth transition took place between the musicians' foundation, and a new organization that had secured support from major funders in the region. The name of the new orchestra was announced at a sold-out holiday performance in December 2012 and an abbreviated subscription series was announced for the remainder of the 2012-13 concert season.

Since operations as Symphoria began, all of the former SSO musicians who remained in the area have been offered employment as core members of the orchestra. The orchestra is organized as a musician cooperative, with a board of directors made up of a number of community members as well as a smaller number of musicians. Members of the orchestra have the final authority over who may serve on the board.

The bank that held a lien on the assets of the former SSO donated them to Syracuse University and the local arts council (CNY Arts), and they have since been secured with a long-term

loan. Shortly after beginning operations as Symphoria, the orchestra hired Sean O'Loughlin as principal pops conductor, and more recently Lawrence Loh was hired as music director. Symphoria has also engaged additional professional staff, including Catherine Underhill as Managing Director. Audience and orchestra support has been overwhelming, and attendance is projected to grow 16% during the 2014-15 season. Orchestra wages are still very modest, but Symphoria does offer fully paid health insurance to orchestra members.

With the very public demise of the SSO, many people ask what is different about Symphoria. It has diversified its concert offerings, including an innovative Spark series that focuses on venue collaborations. The pairings offer a more intimate opportunity to hear symphonic music with thematic programs that complement the venue, along with refreshments. Performances such as "Music of Machines" at the Museum of Science and Technology and pairings with contemporary art at the local art museum have been extremely successful in raising the visibility of the orchestra. Symphoria has also started offering a Sunday afternoon Casual Concert series that includes a reception for all audience members to meet the orchestra musicians, and a Kids Concert series that—with the help of a corporate benefactor—incorporates state-of-the-art multi-media. In addition, Symphoria began a Healing

Harmonies program, which partners with local healthcare institutions and provides small-ensemble and solo musicians to perform live music with therapeutic benefits to patients.

Symphonic music is very different in Syracuse today, and though the orchestra has experienced some major turnover with many former colleagues finding jobs in orchestras all over the country, a strong core of musicians remains from the former SSO, along with a number of newly hired members. All

of us have worked very hard to ensure that professional symphonic music continues in central New York. We are also very thankful for all of our colleagues in ICSOM and orchestras across the country that sent money to help our cause with well-wishes and moral support. All of us truly appreciate each of you and your kindness.

We will soon announce Symphoria's third season,

and though we still have a long distance to travel before achieving our goals, we look forward to performing great symphonic music and being at the forefront of the central New York landscape. If you have not done so, please have a look at our website, ExperienceSymphoria.org and see what we have planned for the future.



Symphoria in the John H. Mulroy Civic Center in Syracuse, October 2014



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

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