

# Senza Sordino

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## The Road to the Picket Line

By Karen Hall

On September 8, 2016, after 15 months of unproductive negotiations, the musicians of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra left the stage of the Bass Performance Hall, walked outside, and replaced bows and bocals with picket signs. The decision to strike was painful, but we had reached our breaking point.



Dorothy Vasek

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra has a relatively short history. Founded in 1925 as a community orchestra, we began our transformation into a professional symphonic orchestra in 1976-77, when Music Director John Giordano hired nine full-time musicians to form the core of the ensemble. Very quickly, more full-time musicians were hired and a chamber orchestra—the Texas Little Symphony (TLS)—began touring, playing education programs, and performing a subscription series. In addition, the TLS acted as the core of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra to perform full orchestra concert series. During the 1990s, the orchestra continued to grow—part-time musicians were converted to full-time, the chamber orchestra was replaced by a full-time symphony orchestra, and each successive contract contained growth in salary and, often, weeks of work. In pushing for more performance opportunities, the musicians inspired a very successful five-week summer series of outdoor concerts, which this year earned record profits for the organization. The FWSO Players Association transitioned from membership in ROPA to ICSOM. In 2008, with a base salary of over \$60,000 and a 52-week season, the Fort Worth Symphony performed at Carnegie Hall. Patrons and donors were happy, the musicians were happy, and the administration proudly broadcast our success to the community.

In 2010 the tide turned, as it did for so many Americans during the recession. The orchestra lost donors, its endowment shrank, and the Texas Ballet Theatre stopped using live music and replaced our orchestra with recorded music. The direct result was a loss of six paid weeks of work. At negotiations that year, we took a 13.5% pay cut to help the administration, and looked forward to working together for growth once the economy stabilized and the ballet returned.

*(continued on page 15)*

### In This Issue

The Road to the Picket Line .....	1
Conference Report .....	1
Chairperson's Report....	2
The Nature of ICSOM	
ICSOM on the Pitch .....	3
Of baseball and orchestras	
Opera Down Under .....	4
A member of the MET Orchestra plays in Sydney	
Protecting Our Greatest Asset .....	6
A closer look at the hearing presentation	
Performance for Peace..	7
Charlotte's response to tragedy	
Newslets .....	8
Detroit, Nashville, Los Angeles, Buffalo	
Adopted Resolutions of the 2016 Conference .....	9

## Conference Report

By ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross

The 54th ICSOM Conference was held August 24-27, 2016 at the Loews Madison Hotel in Washington DC. Our hosts were ICSOM's resident orchestras of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—the National Symphony Orchestra and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra—and their local, the Metropolitan Washington DC Federation of Musicians, Local 161-710.

Last year in Philadelphia, ICSOM held a new volunteer event before the conference. Again this year, a number of delegates and guests, along with Local 161-710 president Ed Malaga, participated by performing and serving dinner at the Central Union Mission near the Capitol building on Tuesday, August 23. That evening another



Bobbi Klein

pre-conference event, the Negotiating Orchestras Workshop, was held. Delegates from orchestras that settled their agreements this past season, as well as those in the midst of negotiations, gave reports to attendees. The workshop was moderated by ICSOM President George Brown and ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case.

*(continued on page 12)*



Bruce Ridge

Jennifer Kim (National), Greg Mulligan (Baltimore), the Author (Nashville), Anne Marie Brink (Dallas), Steve Flanter (Hawaii), John Koen (Philadelphia), Debbie Brooks (Fort Worth), and Ed Malaga (Local 161-710) perform at the Central Union Mission

## Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

### The Nature of ICSOM

After ten years of dedicated service to ICSOM, Bruce Ridge has stepped down from the position of Chair. His visionary leadership has raised the profile of ICSOM and changed the public dialogue around classical music and the health of our orchestras. Bruce has touched the lives of countless musicians through our Call To Action advocacy and the utilization of social media. I am honored to have been elected to take his place. It is with tremendous gratitude to Bruce and our



Dana Alexander, Chairperson

Delegates, and no small amount of trepidation, that I take up where he has left off. In 2001, I was every inch the “What does ICSOM do for me besides the Directory?” orchestral musician. When our then Delegate, Lyndon Taylor, stepped down, I drew the short straw on our Orchestra Committee and by default became the new ICSOM Delegate.

“Damn, well at least it’s in San Diego. I can just drive down there...”

What I found when I arrived changed my mind forever. At the time, the controversy over the negotiation of our national media agreements was just beginning to brew. In an effort to make recording more accessible for all our orchestras, the contracts were being re-negotiated using the infamous “IBB” (interest based bargaining) method and undergoing wholesale revision. The proposed changes would completely transform the pay scale and working conditions of the then-current agreements. Lines that had already been drawn in the sand were just becoming apparent at the conference. This was grassroots democracy in action—people who cared passionately about their orchestras, their colleagues and the future of our business, making a stand for what they believed to be right and fair. The ensuing melee nearly tore ICSOM apart. But over the next few years, dialogue, at times frenzied, ensued and compromise was made. We found common ground. What began as divorce proceedings ultimately became the Integrated Media Agreement.

It is this passion and caring that is the strength of ICSOM and the hope for the future of our orchestras—and by extension, our society. The seeds you water, grow. We, the musicians of ICSOM, have a singularly intimate, hands-on understanding of the power of music to connect, to create commonality, and to build something greater and more beautiful than we could hope to achieve alone. Which is not to say we realize that ideal every day, being as subject to human fallibility as the next. But we unerringly know music to be a mainline to the human soul. We know its power to unite the hearts and minds of all who play and all who listen. It is that to which we have dedicated our lives and our livelihoods. To quote Bruce in his final address to ICSOM, “This we do with our lives for a reason. This is who we are. We are musicians, and we stand for beauty, peace, understanding, and compassion at a time when the world has never needed us more.”

My experience at that first conference in 2001 opened my eyes to the power and vitality of ICSOM, and the possibilities for change that we can facilitate. Our storehouse of knowledge and >



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experience, both historic and present day, provides a unique perspective on the business of orchestras. We have the potential to revolutionize the landscape in which we work. Bruce has laid the groundwork by calling out the purveyors of negative messaging and beginning a dialogue through social media. Next, we should begin to identify areas of mutual agreement with our boards and managers and work together to create stronger institutions. While some conflict is inevitable, it is important to explore avenues to limit collateral damage.

To me, that has always been the nature of ICSOM: to find common ground and help our industry thrive, to understand the needs of our communities, in-house and out, to lend assistance where needed, and—dare I say it?—to help our managers manage better. We hold in our hands the power to cultivate unity and understanding, to nurture compassion and community. We strive to empower our orchestras because they inspire the best of what the human spirit has to offer.

So we stand with our brothers and sisters in Fort Worth because they are fighting for so much more than a paycheck. They are fighting to preserve a cultural institution that elevates the human spirit and finds unity in a world of discord. By joining together through ICSOM, we can ensure the survival of our art, enrich the lives of our audiences, and help inspire the next generation of musicians. 

## ICSOM on the Pitch: Of Baseball and Orchestras

By Heather Kurzbauer

Of the many lessons absorbed during ICSOM's 2016 conference, one of my "eureka" moments took place far from the air-conditioned comfort of Loews Madison. Nats Park on a sticky summer night might not conjure images of a setting ripe for introspective discovery, but then again, learning can take place at any time, any place.

Although I dislike the term ex-patriot (expat) with its implications of patriotism gone astray, as an American-living-overseas in Amsterdam, a place that the *New York Times*' Russell Shorto dubs "the world's most liberal city", I have to admit that an insider-outsider viewpoint takes shape over time. I can twang with the best of the Midwest but find myself mystified by the multiple changes in what I perceive to be my "home" culture. Raised with the unbridled optimism of the Great Society, I often have trouble recognizing America-the-Angry lurching toward one of the strangest



Sean Brockmeyer

elections in history.

So what did an evening in the nosebleed sweatbox up high at Nats Park impart? And, how on earth does this relate to the challenges faced by orchestras on both sides of the pond?

### Song and symbol: togetherness and pride

A rousing rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" in which thousands of people—young, old, black, white and everything in between—stood and sang in throaty unison brought home

the message that love of country, unabashed pride without prejudice, is nothing to be ashamed of. It is the stuff that binds us, that gives us a sense of belonging.

As orchestral musicians, our passion for making music takes hold in our communities, from Albuquerque to Amsterdam: this is what keeps us ablaze. A pundit once wrote that the music profession is not for the meek, but for those of blood and guts who believe passionately in the message of their art. Belting out an anthem reminded me of the importance of sharing our pride in what we do, in what we represent.

### Baseball fans connect with the past: replays and reminiscence

The fans seated right in front of me spent much of the game scribbling notes. When I asked them what they were doing, why they weren't watching the action, they responded in disbelief: "can't you see, we're tracking the game, it's important to record what each batter did and where the pitches went." Following the score, tracing the present and comparing it to the past is familiar to professional orchestra musicians. Keeping tabs on box scores links the past to the present: how did the individual, how did the team stack up and what does this say about the future? In our daily lives as musicians, we strive to meet the highest standards as we reinterpret music to grant it a new lease on life.

For those of us in the midst of thorny bargaining processes, looking back to the past could be quite instructive. Take a moment to reflect on a time when getting to yes was less of a battle than it is today: perhaps this mode might tip the balance in our favor. A fantastic anecdote from the hallowed halls of the New York Philharmonic shows that "let's drink a beer and talk" worked wonders with a bargaining bone of contention even before the first sip.

### No high culture or low culture debate on the pitch

Whether joining in a chorus of "Take me Out to the Ball Game" in the middle of the seventh inning stretch or listening to diehards take apart the umpire's calls, there is something for everyone at the ballpark. No discussions of high or low sport, either. Just like our craft, sport knows no barriers: the experience is what counts. All the palaver on elitist culture needs to be wiped off the slate. Our game is every bit as rousing and visceral as a nine-inning wonder.

### Ballpark etiquette: to Wave or not to Wave, to clap or not to clap?

Feeling free not to agree seems to be the modus at the ballpark. To illustrate the point, a couple of diehards carefully laid out their arguments concerning the Wave. "Us [sic] 'Kill the Wave' supporters know what's good for the game. Baseball is serious business: we are looking in on professionals and their strategies in winning a great game. The Wave kills concentration needed to focus on the real game."

But the majority of the crowd loves the Wave. It's our moment to show the world that we are here right now, at this game, and "we are lovin' it." Doesn't this remind us of concert etiquette discussions? Should we stare down enthusiastic audience members who clap between movements? Is a part of our mission to educate the philistines to sit still and listen? Or, >

should we celebrate the fact that a concertgoer who purchased a ticket to hear our music liked it so much that he/she cheered us on, horror of horrors, between movements. The ballpark just put that discussion into perspective.

### Stand by them: a true fan remains...true to the end

ICSOM 2016 imparted a wealth of information and inspiration thanks to presentations by Bruce Ridge, Kevin Case, Randy Whatley, and many others who challenged us to breathe hope into doomsday scenarios as we work hard to build new futures for our orchestras. While many European orchestral musicians are encouraged to look out for their own orchestras first and foremost, ICSOM 2016 proved that to persevere, we must all stand together. The higher the stakes, the greater the solidarity: when the Fort Worth representative shared her anguish, the whole room stood with her. Their trials are our trials and their triumph will be shared by all of us over and beyond social media.

### It's not over until...

It's time to replace that overused adage of a fat lady singing. Yet before we retire her, remember it really isn't over until....

That hot and sticky night, the Nationals held a comfortable lead up into the penultimate inning. A steady mass swelled towards the exits. Focused on my own exit strategy, I stopped in my tracks. My newfound baseball buddies told me in no uncertain terms that to walk was sacrilege: true fans do not leave until the game is over. Although tempted to unstick myself from my perch, I realized that to leave was tantamount to walking out on Mahler's 3rd Symphony after the upbeat 5th movement. To miss the transcendence of major chords after unspeakable pathos would rob the listener of the totality of the experience.

At Nats Park, the rewards were worth the wait as the Rockies hit a homer; the scoreboard reflected the tension of a close call and an extra rush of adrenaline coursed through the crowd as the home team triumphed.

From our daily messages of hope through music to ICSOM's Calls to Action, our game has only begun. 

*The Author, who presented at the 2016 conference, is on the Faculty of Law at the University of Amsterdam and a violinist in the Netherlands' Sinfonia Rotterdam.*

## Opera Down Under

By Laura Hamilton

The commute couldn't be beat. When sitting in traffic along the way to New York's Lincoln Center from my home in New Jersey, I can't help wistfully recalling a time when I could take a boat to work. The high-speed ferry ride lasted 11 minutes over the most beautiful harbor in the world, docking at Sydney's busy transport hub, the Circular Quay, within steps of my destination: the breathtaking Sydney Opera House. In 2013, I took a job as Concertmaster with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra (AOBO), one of three full-time professional



Richard Brinkoff

orchestras in residence at the Opera House. My eight-month term of employment there was a trial situation, which for family reasons I decided to terminate at the conclusion of the trial. I was on leave from the Met Opera Orchestra, where I am an Associate Concertmaster. It was wonderful for me, after 27 years at the Met, to have the opportunity to work in another major opera house, where I discovered both similarities and differences in the workplace culture.

The AOBO's parent organization is Opera Australia, which, like the Met, is a repertory company. There are typically three or four works in performance during any given week, while the orchestra might be rehearsing upcoming repertoire during the days. Opera Australia is a large company that performs in other parts of the country as well, using local orchestras in the various cities. The AOBO's full work year stretches across 11 full months, including two periods of opera, each lasting about four months, interspersed with two seven-week stints playing for the Australian Ballet. From mid-May to mid-June the theatre is dark and the AOBO musicians scatter all over the world for their Annual Leave. My trial encompassed summer and winter opera seasons and the intervening autumn ballet.

A note of explanation about the Sydney Opera House: the name of this iconic structure is misleading, since opera is only one of the cultural arts on offer there. It is actually a bustling performing arts complex under one roof, housing multiple venues and hundreds of performances of all description each year. The Concert Hall, home of the Sydney Symphony, is the biggest performance space. The opera and ballet companies share the smaller 1,500-seat Joan Sutherland Theatre. The stage and pit are too small to mount large-scale productions, and there have been acoustic problems with the space from the beginning. As a result, the AOBO faces formidable challenges every night, playing in a pit where they can't hear the stage well, can't hear each other well, and can't sit in normal orchestral formation. The brass play behind a plexiglass wall. The percussionists are so far back under the stage that they watch the conductor on monitors. Dynamics are difficult to gauge because everything sounds loud in the pit, yet it is hard to know what is projecting into the auditorium. Despite the problems inherent in the venue, the dedicated and skilled musicians of the AOBO deliver excellent performances, night after night.

Almost since the building opened for business in 1973, there have been numerous proposals put forward for improving the acoustic and/or remodeling the entire theatre. In 2017 the Opera House will be undergoing a A\$200 million refurbishment, necessitating closure of the Joan Sutherland Theatre for seven months. Most of the planned maintenance is mechanical, but there will be some modifications to the pit floor and ceiling to increase volume of air space, and a new sound enhancement system will be implemented. It is doubtful whether these renovations will be sufficient to transform the hall into a world-class opera venue. According to former AOBO committee chair Mark Bruwel, the long-term hope is that "one day we will either completely rebuild the JST within its famous Opera House sail or have a purpose built theatre built just near the Opera House." During the period when they will be displaced, AOBO will still be gainfully employed, playing ballet, musical theatre, and some concerts at an alternate venue in Sydney.

Australian laws are very stringent about health and safety >

in the workplace. Because of the sound problems in the Opera House pit, orchestra management takes decibel level readings for each section of the orchestra several times during the run of every production. The findings are tabulated and distributed to the orchestra, and projections are made about noise level exposure over the course of each workweek. Some brass and wind players, whose noise readings exceed a threshold, are required to play fewer services without reduced pay. The AOBO's hearing conservation policy includes management of portable sound screens, mandatory annual hearing tests and availability of earplugs. Opera Australia also offers a variety of optional health-related programs and courses which any employee can take advantage of. For example, I worked with a psychologist who taught mindfulness techniques to address performance anxiety.

Opera Australia employs a series of guest conductors and there currently is no Chief Conductor or Music Director for



Laura Hamilton

the AOBO. For that reason, the concertmaster is expected to represent the artistic concerns of the orchestra within the company. As a starting point, the concertmaster must fulfill the musical requirements as leader of the first violins, leader of the strings, solo violinist, and conduit to the conductor. Beyond that, I was consulted in all matters involving orchestra personnel and other artistic concerns, from routine rostering to more sensitive situations; clearly extra-musical leadership was part of the job description. I was treated very respectfully and with a degree of deference that I hadn't been accustomed to in America. This was brought home to me early on, during curtain calls after one of my first performances in Sydney. I was chatting with my stand partner during the ovation and was a little late to notice when the conductor gestured for the orchestra to stand. Absolutely none of my colleagues budged out of their seats until I did—nor would they sit down ahead of me. I learned to be very attentive to protocol for bows! (I am wryly aware that during bows at the Met, when acknowledged by the conductor, the orchestra tends to rise in disorderly fashion with hardly a glance at the concertmaster. We Americans are so individualistic!)

At Opera Australia, concertmaster of the AOBO was a senior management position within the company. I met regularly with the General Manager for the orchestra, as well as the Artistic Director and other executives within the company. There were numerous other meetings that required my attendance, having to do with a wide range of issues. In fact, all the musicians are expected to attend many more meetings than I was used to from the American orchestras I have worked for. The AOBO's contract specifies larger call counts than the number of services they actually play. The large number of calls on paper reflected the various mandatory committee and general meetings, in addition to played services (rehearsals and performances).

The AOBO is represented in negotiations by its union, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), a large umbrella organization supporting all entertainment professionals in Australia, including journalists, professional athletes, actors and freelance musicians. The symphonic branch is called

SOMA (Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association). There is a Musicians Union of Australia, but in the 1990s, the AOBO and seven other Australian orchestras left it in favor of SOMA. Membership in SOMA is optional for AOBO members, although most choose to join, as I did. Annual dues come to less than 1% of annual base salary; there are no additional work dues. AOBO contracts typically have terms of one to three years, and have not been contentious in recent years. There was a strike in 1993 involving both the Sydney Symphony and the AOBO that was settled in arbitration. According to Pete Jenkin, who was committee chairman at the time, "The dispute rose from the removal of free parking for musicians on the Opera House site. Our managements had made no attempt to address this matter. The resulting decision

by the Australian Arbitration commission resulted in a 'special disability allowance' of A\$18.00 a fortnight being granted to full-time musicians of both orchestras. The SSO went on to negotiate free parking as part of their package and the Opera now have a system where they pay half of the cost of parking. It was a landmark decision actually because it centered around the argument that the musicians had been disabled by the removal of parking."

Even though I was in a trial period myself, I served on several audition panels during my time with the AOBO. The early rounds were held behind a screen, but the screen was removed for the final round. During auditions at the Met, we are contractually forbidden to discuss our impressions with fellow jurors before casting votes. By contrast, in Sydney we held extensive discussions after each round, each panelist being encouraged to express our preferences. We were invited to comment in rank order—for example, in a violin audition, concertmaster spoke first, then associate concertmaster, then principal second, associate principal, and so forth. I remain convinced that there is no "perfect" or foolproof audition system. It is true that open discussions can allow some very vocal or opinionated panel->

ists to exert influence that might sway less decisive colleagues before the vote. Still, in the case of a French horn audition, I appreciated hearing reactions from the members of the section, since I am not a brass player.

Based on my years of experience at the Met, I considered myself well qualified for this position. I was extremely comfortable with the opera repertoire, although the ballet component was new to me. My opening night in Sydney was to be *La Bohème*, which I have played hundreds of times over the course of my career. When I got into rehearsal with the AOBO, I found that their parts were marked with some bowings that were opposite to those I was used to. Southern Hemisphere bowings? Not better, not worse, just different. I quickly abandoned the notion that I was “right” just because I was used to some different conventions. When we played *Carmen*, another work that I thought I knew backwards and forwards, I encountered a “new” solo in an orchestral interlude—new to me, that is. Proof that there is always more to learn!

At the Sydney Opera House, there is a shared employee lounge for all the venues, a large open space joining the two large wings of the building. This Green Room boasts a prime view of the famed Harbour Bridge, plus a cafe and vending machines, tables, chairs and sofas, and a fully-stocked wet bar. Often after an opening night, drink chits would be distributed to the orchestra and many of us would stay to unwind together, rehashing the high (or low) points of the performance. The AOBO are an amiable bunch and I dearly miss my friends there. Despite our different backgrounds, ultimately the music brought us together. We were hard-working musicians from all over the globe, playing magnificent music together in a building considered to be one of the new Wonders of the World. I feel very privileged to have had the chance to work with my talented colleagues in the AOBO. 

*The Author is Principal Associate Concertmaster with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. She was previously a member of the Chicago Symphony and the New Jersey Symphony.*

## Protecting Our Greatest Asset

By Andy Bruck, Jacksonville Symphony ICSOM Delegate

At the ICSOM conference in Washington DC, Dr. Heather Malyuk, a full-time music audiologist, offered vital information about hearing damage and loss and the best ways to proactively avoid and/or treat them. She urged us to take care of our hearing with the same devotion that athletes keep themselves in shape, and to think of ourselves as “small muscle athletes”.



Photo: Douglas Hill

Trained as a violinist, she recalled how teachers offered her a vast array of ways to improve—an example was how to fully engage spinal muscles—but that none of them ever delved into how to conserve or protect one’s hearing. Fortunately, now musicians have a web-accessible resource available to help them do just that: “NASM/PAMA Advisories on Hearing Health.” (<https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/publications/brochures-advisories/nasm-pama-hearing-health/>)

Created by the National Association of Schools of Music and the

Performing Arts Medicine Association, it is “a comprehensive overview of hearing health issues for postsecondary schools and departments of music.”

Heather defined hearing loss as “a temporary or permanent blockage or permanent injury in the structures of the ear,” elaborating that most of the permanent injury occurs in the hair cells of the cochlea, each of which is tuned to a particular pitch like the keys of a piano. She alerted us that “sudden hearing loss” is caused by a viral infection, and must be treated with steroids within 48 hours in order to forestall the damage from becoming permanent. She also noted that smoking raises hearing loss risk by 15%.



Dan Swaenley

Dr. Heather Malyuk presenting at the conference

Heather shared the powerful words of bassist Tal Wilkenfeld: “Sometimes I am shocked at how careless some musicians tend to be when it comes to protecting their ears, yet they’re so protective of their hands. Doesn’t make any sense to me. Music is all about listening.” (*Note: quoted in <https://reverber.com/news/hearing-protection-myths-and-recommendations-the-lowdown-from-two-rock-star-audiologists>.*) She emphasized that musicians should get annual hearing checkups with an audiologist who is properly trained to assess musical hearing. Her organization, Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation, trains and provides a list of audiologists specially trained to assess musical hearing, with its much wider range and overtone spectrum ([www.sensaphonics.com](http://www.sensaphonics.com)).

There are two national standards for evaluating safe exposure times for different sound levels: regulations issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); and the “Safe Exposure Guidelines” from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is a research arm of the CDC. They are not identical, but they agree that sounds above the 85 dB threshold pose a potential threat to our hearing if exceeding the maximum recommended exposure times. Importantly, however, these standards refer to sustained sound at certain decibel levels—not the intermittent spikes of sound that we frequently encounter in the orchestral workplace.

Here are the recommended maximum exposure times for various decibel levels of sustained sound:

### Safe Exposure Time (in hours)

Level, in dBA	85	88	90	91	94	95	97	100	105	110	115
NIOSH	8	4		2	1		0.5	0.25			
OSHA	16		8			4	3	2	1	0.5	0.25

Those thresholds can often be exceeded by orchestral instruments, as shown by the following: ➤

## Common Levels of Orchestral Instruments at Forte

Instrument	Peak sound level (in dB)
Piano	92-95
Violin	84-102
Cello	82-92
Oboe	90-94
Flute	85-111
Piccolo	95-112
Clarinet	92-103
French Horn	90-106
Trombone	85-114
Timpani and bass drum rolls	106
Orchestral peaks	120-137

In the midst of such high levels of sound in our workplace, an obvious first step to prevent hearing damage is the use of earplugs. Heather recommended that musicians find and purchase earplugs with the flattest frequency response. In this regard, she believes that filtered earplugs are much better than foam ones, as the former allow all frequencies through more or less equally and they are available in different filtering levels. High-quality electronic earplugs are also available that will amplify low-level sounds in addition to attenuating loud sounds.

In private correspondence with me while fact-checking this article, Heather also stressed the importance of verifying actual sound levels where one plays, and not simply relying on the general guidelines outlined above: “Checking decibel levels using a dosimeter is essential to know [the] risk of hearing injury. Sensaphonics created a device called dBCheck that can actually measure sound levels in the room or off of [In Ear Monitors (IEMs)] that will tell the musician how loud the room is/how loud he or she [is] listening through their IEMs. It will also show the musician in the two scales (OSHA and NIOSH) how many minutes of safety time he or she has before risking hearing injury. This piece of the puzzle is invaluable for any musician wanting to protect their hearing.”

In the case of hearing loss, she discussed two options: hearing aids (which she describes as “mini-PA systems”) and IEMs. Not having had experience with hearing aids, I was surprised to learn that they work primarily as a boost for hearing conversation, not music. The largest difference between music and speech is the much greater range of dynamics and pitch frequencies. Audiologists without special training to work with musicians do not test the full gamut of hearing. She stressed that hearing aids are programmable, and that musicians usually prefer “a more linear setting”, which results in a less compressed sound.

Heather cautioned about less than mindful use of IEMs. While such devices reduce background noise along with amplifying volume, they are not all of equal quality. Also, she believes it is a mistake to use them in a single ear only, as the utilizing ear compensates for the missing one by seeking a louder volume. She also described a new type of IEM, developed and patented

by Sensaphonics, that she said can also be used by orchestral musicians as active earplugs to achieve much more flexibility and superior sound quality to standard filtered earplugs. For individuals with hearing loss, the system allows individual EQ levels to be adjusted to aesthetic taste, using a choice of devices such as a mixing board or smart phone. In 2014, musician and sound engineer Larry Revit published an article (“A Solution to Challenges Faced by Hearing-impaired Musicians Performing on Loud Amplified Stages”) in *The Hearing Review* describing his experience utilizing one of these devices to compensate for both-ear hearing loss.

The most important takeaway for me was that certain types of ear damage are undetectable except via testing; early detection and treatment can help the damage from worsening. The shocking revelation that most audiologists are not trained to work with musicians’ hearing wellness means that we must take extra care in protecting our most important musical asset. Based on this new awareness, I am now arranging to get my own hearing tested for the first time.



## Performance For Peace

By Rich Harris, Charlotte Symphony ICSOM Delegate

On Wednesday, September 21, all of the employees of Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Duke Energy in Charlotte, NC, were told to go home in anticipation of planned protests over the police shooting of Keith Scott. Downtown was basically being evacuated. In the nine years I’ve lived in Charlotte I never have witnessed anything like the frenetic exit that all were attempting to make. That night the peaceful protest turned violent, with looting, fights, and a murder that was within steps of our stage door.

The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra was scheduled to give a concert on Thursday night—our first of this season. Because



Courtesy of the Charlotte Symphony

The concert opening outside the hall

of the uncertainty, safety concerns, and the state of emergency, our management decided to cancel our Thursday night concert. In coordination with our orchestra committee, our Music Director and management were able to quickly change our previously scheduled Friday morning photography service into a “concert for peace”. Additionally, our local classical station WDAV agreed to broadcast our concert. The costs of the concert were covered in large part by Wells Fargo and an anonymous donor. We did not have time to rehearse the concert, but our orchestra was committed to use music in our community as a clarion call for peace and unity. We all rose to the occasion to use our skill to bring our city together. The concert began with Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*, which was performed in front of the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center. After this, the orchestra assembled onstage and we began our broadcast, which included: >>

Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* (with Reverend Dr. Clifford Jones, narrator) and *Simple Gifts*; "Lift Every Voice" by Johnson; the Largo from Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 in E Minor "From the New World"; and "Nimrod" from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*.

The concert also featured remarks from Mary Deissler, our new President and Executive Director, Music Director Christopher Warren-Green, and board member Hugh McColl, a Charlotte philanthropist and the former CEO of Bank of America.

One could not have anticipated what Charlotte has experienced during this time: loss, fear, despair, endangerment, and pain, but also hope, community, love, and understanding. These wounds will take time to heal, but I'm proud of our organization for its ongoing role in mending them. 

## Newslets

### Detroit Honors Exceptional Giving

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) recently celebrated the extraordinary generosity of Peter Cummings and his wife Julie, whose accumulated giving to the DSO has exceeded \$10 million. The Music Box, a multi-purpose entertaining space,



Courtesy of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
was renamed the Peter D. & Julie F. Cummings Cube. The Cube is located within the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, and serves as a supplemental performance space to Orchestra Hall.

The Cube features the popular "Mix @ the Max" series, which showcases diverse musical experiences ranging from chamber music and jazz to yoga classes accompanied by live music. Featuring local artists as well as national talent, the events at The Cube attract audiences beyond the traditional classical and pops series.

This past June, the Detroit Symphony family was saddened to hear of the passing of Marjorie S. Fisher. Over the years, the DSO has been the recipient of over \$25 million from the Fisher family and its Foundation, a fact that was celebrated just last year when Marjorie's name was added along side her husband's to the front of the building. In July, the musicians of the DSO were astonished to learn that Mrs. Fisher had bequeathed \$5000 to each full-time musician. This gift totaled \$390,000. The news was delivered to the musicians by Mrs. Fisher's son, and DSO Board Chairman Emeritus, Phillip Fisher.

The musicians' Orchestra Committee issued the following statement of appreciation:

"The Musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are overwhelmed with gratitude and emotion by the unprecedented generosity of Marjorie Fisher. Her gift is incredibly meaningful to each of us, as it embodies the personal bond we share as musicians with the Fisher family and our entire community. We are most appreciative of the entire Fisher family and their

impact on our community. We will always cherish the special bond we had with Marjorie and all members of the Fisher family. She will be truly missed."

### Nashville's New Records

The Nashville Symphony ended its 2015/16 season with much to celebrate. The Symphony won its eighth Grammy Award, settled a scheduled reopener three months ahead of schedule, and broke records for ticket sales and fund raising.

The current CBA, which expires in 2018, included a financial reopener at the end of the second year. The union and musicians were able to settle in record time, with raises totaling 10 percent over the next two years. This restores wages to 2012/13 levels after a 15 percent pay cut in August 2013.

For the third consecutive year, ticket sales for the 2015/16 season broke all previous records, with \$11.1 million in sales—a 23% increase over the previous season. Attendance grew 14% from the 2014/15 season, to 191,000, and the organization boasted 132 concert in the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, which celebrates its 10-year anniversary this year.

The 2015/16 season also saw record-breaking increases in fundraising. The Association raised more than \$7.3 million in donations, up from \$6.6 million the previous year. This includes a 10% increase to the Nashville Symphony Annual Fund. Individual donors rose by 700 contributors with average donations of \$900. There was also a 35% increase in the number of foundations supporting the Symphony and a 27% increase in the number of companies donating at the \$5,000 level.

### A Philharmonic Farewell

After an astonishing 67 years as "the voice of the Los Angeles Dodgers", Vin Scully is hanging up his microphone at the end of the season. Members of the brass and percussion section of the Los Angeles Philharmonic were invited to play the national anthem, arranged and conducted by John Williams, at the pregame ceremony honoring Scully. Broadcast live on KTLA TV and MLB.com, the performance was paid under the Basic Cable and Television Agreement. "It was an honor to have been asked to participate in this historic event," said ICSOM Delegate John Lofton. "This became a reality because of lots of behind-the-scenes effort by Local 47 President John Acosta, the AFM, and the LA Philharmonic Association. Kudos to my Philharmonic colleagues for making this a great experience." >



Alexander Shiban

## Historic Contract in Buffalo

The musicians of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra ratified a new six-year contract on September 15 that continues an unprecedented period of labor stability and financial growth.

A five-year contract was fulfilled and expired at the end of the 2015-16 season as the new contract was being negotiated. After many months of active negotiations, the new deal was tentatively reached in early August 2016. Both contracts were successfully negotiated by retiring SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn.

The new contract continues the trend of slow and steady growth established during the previous agreement. Although the first year contains a pay freeze from the 2015-16 season to allow the BPO society to recover from a rather flat season of ticket sales, the remaining years of the agreement show slow and steady growth, with annual raises ranging from 2% to 2.85%. The third year will see base scale above \$50,000 for the first time, a goal set forth in these negotiations. The final season, 2021-22, arrives at a salary of \$54,177, up from \$48,120 in year one. Additionally, EMG payments remain at \$3000.

The new contract maintains current health plans, with any future increases in premium costs tied to existing contractual formulas. The contract carries over necessary changes made last season due to the Affordable Care Act. The AFM-EPF pension contribution remains at 8%, while the number of vacation weeks remains at two weeks. Significant changes were made in the new contract regarding non-renewal and reseating, especially in the area of peer review.

Language was added to the contract creating a tour committee. Touring is becoming a common occurrence in the BPO and seems likely to be a part of the BPO's future, so the negotiating committee felt it necessary to have more input into tour planning and execution. During this last contract the orchestra toured twice to Florida, as well as to Princeton, NJ, and Saratoga Springs.

The agreement also converts an open Violin 1 section position into a new title position—an additional Assistant Concertmaster. There is no change to the overall complement of 73 full time musicians.

The musicians of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra are excited about the continued growth not only of the orchestra but also of the region as a whole. The forward vision of the musicians, the management and the board of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is a testament to all those involved in a common goal: a stable future for symphonic music in Western New York.



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## Adopted Resolutions of the 2016 Conference

**Lew Mancini**

**Whereas**, Lew Mancini had a long and active career with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), beginning with his membership in Local 248 Patterson, New Jersey, and continuing through his work for seven different AFM presidents; and

**Whereas**, The AFM was a family business for Lew as the son-in-law of Bob Crothers, the former executive assistant to AFM President Hal Davis, and with his wife Laura, as his assistant during the last few years of his tenure with the Federation; and

**Whereas**, Lew joined the AFM staff in the Booking Agent Department in 1971 and, during a 44-year career, advanced to be appointed in 2010 to the newly designated position of Chief Operating Officer of the AFM; and

**Whereas**, Lew oversaw the day-to-day office administration at the Federation, coordinating with field staff, local officers and the AFM International President and AFM International Secretary-Treasurer, as well as dealing with national and international bylaw and policy interpretation, local compliance matters, local mergers and a whole host of meetings preparation and correspondence; and

**Whereas**, Lew was the man with the answer on any issue for the AFM, and oversaw biennial and triennial AFM conventions for years; and

**Whereas**, Lew Mancini retired at the end of the 2015 calendar year; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference offer their sincerest gratitude and thanks to Lew Mancini for a job exceedingly well done, and extends its best wishes to Lew for a long and satisfying retirement.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Antoinette Follett**

**Whereas**, Antoinette Follett served as president of Bentley-Hall, Inc., the marketing company that publishes the American Federation of Musicians' newsletter the International Musician; and

**Whereas**, For 16 years, Antoinette served as managing editor of the International Musician, and worked with AFM locals and ICSOM delegates and members to publish news about the activities of our orchestras; and

**Whereas**, ICSOM was pleased that Antoinette chose to attend the 2015 ICSOM conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

**Whereas**, Antoinette recently joined Liberty Resources as Director of Marketing and Communication; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference wish Antoinette Follett every success in her new position with Liberty Resources, and thank her for her hard work and dedication to serve AFM members through the publication of its principal communication outlet, the International Musician.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Susan Martin**

**Whereas**, Susan Martin, a principal in the firm of Martin & Bonnett in Phoenix, Arizona, has a distinguished list of accomplishments as counsel for thousands of union-side employees in a wide variety of employment, labor, pension and employee benefit cases; and

**Whereas**, Susan has been at the forefront of advocating for and representing private and public sector professional and blue collar employees in the areas of employment, pension and health care, and labor law; and

**Whereas**, Susan has advised, represented and served as attorney during negotiations for a number of ICSOM orchestras that include the Atlanta Symphony, Balti- ➤



Cheri MacChie



Cheri MacChie

more Symphony, Boston Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, New York City Opera Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, and San Francisco Symphony; and

**Whereas**, In 2011 Susan agreed to serve as General Counsel of ICSOM, where she could share her knowledge with all ICSOM's member orchestras; and

**Whereas**, Susan stepped down as ICSOM Counsel in October, 2015; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference express their admiration and immense gratitude to Susan Martin and her firm Martin & Bonnett P.L.L.C., for their work on behalf of orchestra musicians across the United States; and be it further

**Resolved**, That ICSOM extends Susan Martin its best wishes for further successes in the future, both in her work for ICSOM's member orchestras and in her work on behalf of workers and union employees across the country.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



Michael Luna



**Nathan Kahn**

**Whereas**, Nathan Kahn prepared for his life's mission as an educator and negotiator for the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) of the American Federation of Musicians as a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with a degree in music education; and

**Whereas**, Nathan began his professional career as principal bassist of the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra, and later as principal bassist with the Nashville Symphony and, since 1991, as a member of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic (formerly the Colorado Springs Symphony); and

**Whereas**, During this same period Nathan also served on the faculties of the University of Arkansas, the University of Tulsa, Oral Roberts University, Tennessee Technological University, and for 15 years at the Sewanee Summer Music Center; and

**Whereas**, Prior to joining SSD staff in 1988, Nathan Kahn was a founder and first president of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA) from 1984-1988; and

**Whereas**, For 28 years, Nathan has served as a SSD negotiator and advisor, assisting more than 250 different bargaining units and negotiating hundreds of symphony orchestra contracts, lecturing at US colleges and conservatories on the subjects of symphony

orchestra career preparation and the role of the AFM in these future careers, and administering the AFM Symphony Audition Complaint Hotline to assist musicians with difficulties they encounter during orchestra auditions; and

**Whereas**, Nathan has announced his intent to retire from the AFM within the next few months; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference offer their appreciation and thanks to Nathan Kahn for his tireless work on behalf of symphonic musicians across the US, and offer best wishes and success for whatever path Nathan Kahn chooses to follow in the future.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Carla Lehmeier-Tatum**

**Whereas**, Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, a cellist with the New Mexico Philharmonic (and prior to that, the New Mexico Symphony) for well over a quarter century, was elected President of the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) in 2008 and has since become the longest serving president in the history of that organization; and

**Whereas**, In her role as ROPA President she has overseen an impressive expansion of the organization, with the addition of 19 new member orchestras joining during her tenure; and

**Whereas**, As ROPA President, Carla has been an outstanding speaker in her yearly addresses to the ICSOM conference, at numerous American Federation of

Musicians (AFM) conventions, and has been an effective representative of ROPA and the AFM during her addresses at the 2nd International Orchestra Conference in Amsterdam and the 3rd International Orchestra Conference in Oslo; and

**Whereas**, She also serves as President of AFM Local 618 in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and

**Whereas**, Carla's visits with countless regional orchestra musicians across the United States have displayed visionary leadership that elevate the stature of all orchestral musicians across the world; and

**Whereas**, She has not only been a strong supporter of ICSOM, but she has also been a true friend and advisor to ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge; and

**Whereas**, Carla recently stepped down from her position as ROPA President at the 2016 ROPA Conference in Madison, Wisconsin; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference express their great admiration to Carla Lehmeier-Tatum for her many accomplishments, and extend sincere congratulations upon the completion of her tenure; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the musicians and leadership of ICSOM wish Carla Lehmeier-Tatum the greatest success and happiness in all future endeavors.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Tom Mendel**

**Whereas**, Tom Mendel has been a very successful and highly sought-after bassist and pit musician since 1978; and

**Whereas**, He has served for six terms as the Chicago-Area Chapter President of the Theater Musicians' Association (TMA) and for two terms as TMA Vice-President, and has just completed five terms as President of the TMA, having been elected in 2011; and

**Whereas**, Tom's visionary leadership helped guide the TMA's membership expansion to represent musicians from more than thirty cities with membership in one of TMA's ten chapters; and

**Whereas**, He and the TMA forged a partnership with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) that has elevated and greatly improved the information and services provided to TMA musicians and AFM locals; and

**Whereas**, Tom and the TMA have been strong advocates on behalf of theater musicians for continued investment in live music for all musical theater productions; and

**Whereas**, He has been a true and supportive friend to ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge as ICSOM and TMA have strengthened their close and supportive relationship; and

**Whereas**, Tom has just stepped down as TMA President; therefore, be it  
**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference extend their deep admiration and sincere congratulations to Tom Mendel for his successful leadership of the Theater Musicians' Association, and wish him continued success and happiness in his musical career and in all of his future endeavors.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**John Beder, participants in 2015 Performance Anxiety Survey and interviews for *Composed***

**Whereas**, Filmmaker John Beder reached out to the ICSOM Governing Board in early 2015 to seek information and assistance about ICSOM's 1987 performance anxiety study; and

**Whereas**, At the 2015 ICSOM Conference John Beder addressed delegates to request their participation, along with their orchestra colleagues, in a second survey of ICSOM membership to update the 1987 ICSOM study; and

**Whereas**, During the same 2015 Conference he exhibited a short clip of interview material that would later be used in his documentary *Composed*; and

**Whereas**, At this 2016 Conference, John Beder shared many of the findings from >>



Dan Sweehey



Danae Tule



Eric Adler

the updated survey with delegates and guests, and also exhibited a sizeable portion of finished footage from his soon to be completed documentary; and

**Whereas**, Earlier this season, the ICSOM Governing Board authorized a \$1,000 sponsorship from ICSOM to assist with the cost of completing the documentary, because completion and dissemination of the information and interviews featured in *Composed* was deemed to be of great importance to current and future musicians who deal with performance anxiety; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference offer their gratitude to John Beder in recognition of his excellent work bringing performance anxiety and the associated mental and physical effects to the attention of music students and the general public through his documentary *Composed*; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the members of ICSOM participating in the 2015 performance anxiety survey and interviews for John Beder's documentary be thanked for their candid responses to help others understand and find solutions to deal with this issue; and be it further

**Resolved**, That ICSOM offers its continued support to John Beder as he strives to spread this important information about performance anxiety to current as well as next generations of performers.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Hearing Issues**

**Whereas**, Most orchestra halls are designed for unamplified performances and have built-in resonance that is unsuited for amplified sound; and

**Whereas**, Many orchestra managements appear to allow artists' sound engineers seemingly free rein and impose little meaningful restriction on decibel levels; and

**Whereas**, Orchestra musicians are suffering physical injuries and, in many cases, permanent hearing damage from extreme levels of amplification; and

**Whereas**, Orchestra musicians and audience members alike suffer from these high levels of amplification; and

**Whereas**, Ear plugs are not a viable solution to extreme amplification, because the nature of some instruments precludes the use of ear plugs, and because widespread use of ear plugs causes ensemble, intonation and performance problems; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference call on orchestra managements to recognize that extreme amplification, particularly in rock-band pops shows, can do significant physical harm to musicians and audience members; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference demand that orchestra managements, as employers and caretakers of their musicians, take a strong stand to protect their own musicians from the dangers of extreme amplification, rather than simply catering to the desires of guest artists; and be it further

**Resolved**, That orchestra managements should engage only those sound engineers who understand and are sympathetic to the needs of onstage orchestra musicians; and be it further

**Resolved**, That orchestra managements should not engage (or re-engage) artists whose acts are unsuited to halls that cannot handle extreme levels of amplification, especially while performing with an orchestra on stage; and be it further

**Resolved**, That orchestra managements should make it a priority to discuss the above issues with each other, including at conferences and annual meetings, as well as with the elected representatives of their musicians, and to communicate with each other regarding the use of amplification by specific artists.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**In Support of Substitute and Extra Musicians**

**Whereas**, The Delegates to the 100th AFM Convention in June 2016 adopted Resolution #20, which seeks to achieve equal pay for substitute and extra musicians in salaried orchestra bargaining units, as well as their participation in the bargaining process; and

**Whereas**, Such conditions of unequal pay that currently exist are most often the result of demands by employers against the wishes of the bargaining unit; and

**Whereas**, Substitute and extra musicians are essential to the ongoing operation of any symphony, opera or ballet orchestra; and

**Whereas**, There exists no good reason for providing those musicians with any different wage than at least the scale wage on a pro rata basis; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference express their unqualified support for all musicians who try to make their living by performing the invaluable task of filling temporary vacancies and/or adding their talent to certain performances that require a larger ensemble; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference call on all orchestral employers to end the exploitation of our short-term brother and sister colleagues by this practice of unequal pay for equal work.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**In support of continued advocacy for the arts**

**Whereas**, The mission of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) includes enriching the cultural life of our society; and

**Whereas**, ICSOM's mission also includes preparing for an even greater future through advocacy for a thriving future for the arts in America; and

**Whereas**, In the past two months alone, reports from across the country have included positive stories such as increased funding for arts education, grant awards to provide music for health initiatives, and donations for the purpose of providing tickets to audience members who might otherwise be unable to afford to attend orchestral concerts; and

**Whereas**, ICSOM provides media releases about these stories on its social media sites, including Twitter and Facebook, for the education of and distribution by its membership; and

**Whereas**, All efforts to improve the arts at this time help to preserve our art form for future generations; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference promote good news stories throughout their membership; and be it further

**Resolved**, That ICSOM will encourage its communities to continue to fund arts programs so that the mission of ICSOM is carried forth; and be it further

**Resolved**, That future media releases about our industry continue to be distributed so that this good work is recognized by all.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*



**Jennifer Mondie**

**Whereas**, Jennifer Mondie has been a member of the viola section of the National Symphony Orchestra (the "NSO") since 1995, and previously a member of the Colorado Symphony from 1993-95; and

**Whereas**, Jennifer was raised in a musical household where she was able to learn from her father, a double bassist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, about the issues and concerns of orchestral musicians along with the importance of service; and

**Whereas**, Over the years, she took what she had learned and applied her knowledge while serving numerous times on the National Symphony Orchestra Committee, and, on numerous occasions, as Chair of the Orchestra Committee; and

**Whereas**, In 2003-04 Jennifer served as ICSOM Delegate, and from 2013 through 2016 as Alternate Delegate for the NSO; and

**Whereas**, In 2014 she was elected to the position of Member-at-Large and brought her energy and inquisitive mind to bear as a member of the ICSOM Governing Board for the past two years; and

**Whereas**, Jennifer has continued to serve as an experienced spokesperson and advocate for issues such as air travel with instruments, the use of endangered materials in the creation of antique musical instruments, and the importance of securing funding for the National Endowment

for the Arts on Capitol Hill; and

**Whereas**, Jennifer has announced that she will step down from her position as Member-at-Large after the 2016 ICSOM Conference; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference offer their thanks and gratitude to Jennifer Mondie for her service to ICSOM as Member-at-Large, and for her leadership and dedication to improve the livelihoods of all orchestral musicians.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*

*Adopted by unanimous consent*



Scott Sudman

**Bruce Ridge**

**Whereas**, Double bassist Bruce Ridge began his professional career at the age of 15 when he joined the Virginia Symphony; and

**Whereas**, Bruce joined the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra in 1987, serving as his orchestra's ICSOM delegate from 1993-2002 and 2004-05, during which he was a strong advocate for orchestra-hosted conferences; and

**Whereas**, In 2004, Bruce was appointed and then elected to a Member-at-Large position, followed one year later by his election as ICSOM President, and then, in 2006, as ICSOM Chairperson; and

**Whereas**, During his tenure as ICSOM's longest serving chairperson, Bruce has raised ICSOM's profile through the use of social media on Facebook and Twitter, overseeing the expansion of ICSOM's website and creating an online version of Senza Sordino that allows individual articles to be shared in other forums; and



Eric Adler

**Whereas**, Bruce has worked tirelessly to change the message about orchestras, especially in the press, to elevate what is positive about orchestras, in contrast to the prevailing pessimism; and

**Whereas**, His prolific writing in every issue of the past 10 years of Senza Sordino, in multiple issues of the International Musician and Local 802's publication Allegro have been a clarion call of optimism; and

**Whereas**, His addresses at ICSOM, the other Player Conferences meetings, AFM Conventions, and the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) conferences; his meetings during site

visits with individual orchestras, their locals and managers; and his interviews for local television, radio and newspapers, have allowed him to make great inroads promoting his message of hope; and

**Whereas**, Bruce's dedication to helping others is demonstrated by his activities as a member of the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, as a participant in numerous League of American Orchestras' music director search seminars and "Orchestra Leadership Academy" workshops, as a keynote speaker and panelist at the University of Michigan's second Orchestra Summit, as a guest speaker on the history of symphony orchestras in America at The Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles and Roosevelt University in Chicago, and as a witness during a hearing on the Economic and Employment Impact of the Arts and Music Industry before Congress in March 2009; and

**Whereas**, One of his greatest achievements thus far has been his leadership in the establishment of ICSOM Calls to Action that mobilized ICSOM's membership to take collective action, and, beginning in 2007-08, to assist struggling orchestras, which has raised more than \$1.5 million for 10 ICSOM, OCSM and ROPA orchestras; and

**Whereas**, Bruce Ridge will step down at the end of the 2016 ICSOM Conference after an unprecedented 10-year term; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the officers and delegates to the 2016 ICSOM Conference offer their immense gratitude and congratulations to Bruce Ridge for his friendship, dedication and service to ICSOM; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the entire membership of ICSOM, along with orchestras around the world, offer their undying appreciation, friendship and admiration to Bruce Ridge for his tireless work on behalf of orchestras everywhere; and be it further

**Resolved**, That ICSOM extends to Bruce Ridge its profound thanks, appreciation and hearty wishes for every possible success in any and all of his future endeavors, and with confidence that he will remain a staunch advocate for the success and support of orchestras throughout the world.

*Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board*

*Adopted by unanimous consent*



Senza Sordino is also published online at [www.icsom.org/senzasordino/](http://www.icsom.org/senzasordino/)  
Members who would like to opt out of a paper copy and receive an electronic copy instead may do so by emailing the editor at [pdeboor@gmail.com](mailto:pdeboor@gmail.com). Address changes of both kinds should also be sent to the editor.

**Conference Report (continued)**

One additional event is held prior to the official beginning of the conference—the new delegate breakfast. An ICSOM conference can be overwhelming to first-time delegates because so much information is included during the four days of meetings



Dan Sweeney

Delegates Ken Mirkin (New York Philharmonic), Albert Suarez (Kansas City), and John Hagstrom (Chicago Symphony) presenting during the Negotiating Orchestras Workshop

that there isn't a lot of time to stop and explain things to newer members. This breakfast allows the governing board to meet face-to-face with the new delegates and give them information about their duties and to share essential information in a smaller setting.

Wednesday morning, ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge welcomed delegates, alternate delegates, orchestra members, Local and AFM officers and staff, and guests to Washington DC. He introduced the ICSOM Governing Board and ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross read the roll call of orchestras (it is read every morning of the conference) at which time delegates introduced themselves and other orchestra members and Local officers joining them at the conference. After a number of local



Dan Sweeney

AFM President Ray Hair



Dan Sweeney

AFM Legislative-Political Director Alfonso Pollard

speakers offered their greetings, the Chairman and President each addressed the conference.

This was Bruce Ridge's final address following a decade of service as chairman. During his tenure, Ridge has battled negative publicity and doom and gloom scenarios aimed at our orchestras. He has traveled the country visiting orchestras and sharing the good news about orchestras: many orchestras have seen impressive increases in contributions, large donations, ticket sales, and audience attendance, and many have also achieved improvements and salary increases in their negotiation settlements. Ridge also met with Local officers, attended rehearsals and/or concerts, and >>

when possible, also met with many staff executives and board leaders. He made a point of sharing the same good news about orchestras with these leaders and reminded them of all the good works orchestras do within their communities. Ridge was also a proponent of “breaking the fourth wall” in which musicians were encouraged to engage face-to-face with donors and audience members, so they could know musicians as more than just the performers on stage.

Reports by the Grand Rapids Symphony and the San Antonio Symphony covered their recent difficult negotiations.



SSD Negotiator Chris Durham and SSD Counsel Rochelle Skolnick



Mark Bruwel, President of Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association (Australia)

The Fort Worth Symphony’s report covered the musicians’ activities and expectation of a strike that would follow the past 15 months of fruitless negotiations.

The Conference was truly international this year with reports from musicians from orchestras in Australia, the Netherlands, and England, who shared how their orchestras are run and financed. Additionally, General

Secretary of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) Benoît Machuel spoke about the upcoming FIM Orchestra Conference that will be held in Montreal, Quebec, in May 2017.

The AFM was well represented at the conference: Legislative-Political Director Alfonso Pollard, who is based in Washington DC, spoke about his lobbying efforts on behalf of musicians; International President Ray Hair reminisced about his history with the Fort Worth Local and Fort Worth Symphony; and Symphonic Services Division (SSD) staff and



Delegates Barb Corbato (Grand Rapids), Debbie Brooks (Fort Worth), and Marisa Bushman (San Antonio) reporting on recently concluded and ongoing negotiations

counsel participated in a moderated panel discussion. SSD negotiator and Audition Hotline administrator Nathan Kahn, who retires from the AFM in the next few weeks after more than 28 years of service, addressed the conference and received a standing ovation for his service.

There were additional reports covering ICSOM business, and there were addresses from executive officers of the National Symphony Orchestra, the Washington National Opera, and



Mac Whitley, DC Valentine, and Wendy Cheng

the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Randy Whatley, who has attended the past three conferences, shared information in a presentation and breakout session to help musicians engage with donors. In his first conference as ICSOM Counsel, Kevin Case gave an informative presentation on bul-



ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case and FMCS Mediator Javier Ramirez

lying in the workplace, and also held a breakout session with Federal Mediator Javier Ramirez. A third breakout Q&A session with AFM-SSD electronic media director Debbie Newmark covered information about the Integrated Media Agreement.

A highlight on the first day of the conference was a concert by musicians of the National Symphony and Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center. A reception at the hall followed the concert. Earlier that day, John Beder had shared results of a survey on performance anxiety that hundreds of ICSOM members completed last fall as follow up to a 1978 ICSOM survey on the same topic. On the final day of the conference, the first 20 minutes of Beder’s docu- ➤



Bust of President Kennedy at the Kennedy Center

mentary *Composed* was exhibited; the completed film will be available for exhibition on college campuses beginning in October following its debut at Boston University. This film addresses an important topic for any musician that is either preparing to or is actively working in our field. I encourage ICSOM members and their students to see *Composed* if it comes to your area.

Another topic of interest during the conference was covered in two sessions the second day of the conference. Orchestras are performing many more pops programs these days with artists who are amplified at levels that can damage hearing and adversely affect people physically. Two sound engineers—Mac Whitley, chief sound engineer at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville, TN, and DC Valentine, a Washington-based sound engineer at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—were invited to answer questions and discuss what control, if any, orchestra musicians could have over onstage levels. A second presentation was by Dr. Heather Malyuk, whose employer, Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation, focuses on



John Beder introduces a preview of his film

musicians' hearing issues (see page 6). She related interesting information about average decibel levels of symphony instruments, types of hearing loss, questions to ask during a yearly hearing exam, and the use of earplugs and in-ear monitors. She also discussed problems and options for musicians choosing hearing aids, since most are designed to hear speech rather



Acknowledged extroverts Greg Mulligan (Baltimore), Brian Gordon (Phoenix), Doug Rosenthal (Kennedy Center) and Danielle Kuhlmann (San Diego) demonstrate Randy Whatley's techniques for interacting with donors



Millennium Stage Concert

than extreme highs and lows in music. The second presenter, Wendy Cheng, founder of the Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss (AAMHL), spoke about cochlear implants and the use of assistive listening devices. Much useful information was shared during these presentations.

Orchestra delegates spent time together in four smaller groups with their assigned Members-at-Large, and the Town Hall Meeting allowed delegates to raise issues of concern to their orchestras.

Meredith Snow, a violist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, was elected ICSOM Chair by acclamation. While thanking delegates for their support, Snow

shared her vision of a more inclusive paradigm that promotes dialog and encourages creative solutions where there is division. Treasurer Michael Moore, *Senza Sordino* Editor Peter de Boor, and Member-at-Large Paul Gunther were all re-elected. There were two more Member-at-Large positions available due to Snow's election and Jennifer Mondie's decision to step down at the end of the conference. Several rounds of balloting ultimately resulted in the election of Dan Sweeley from the Buffalo Philharmonic, and Kimberly Tichenor from the Louisville Orchestra as the two new Members-at-Large. The President, Secretary, and fourth Member-at-Large positions held by George Brown, Laura Ross, and Paul Austin (respectively) were not up for election this year.

Adopted resolutions on the final day can be found on pages 9-11. The resolutions honored Lew Mancini, Antoinette Follett, Susan Martin, Nathan Kahn, Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, Tom Mendel, and Jennifer Mondie. Another resolution honored Bruce Ridge for his service as Member-at-Large and President, »



Local 125 (Norfolk, VA) President John Lindberg unveils a plaque honoring outgoing ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge



Outgoing and incoming ICSOM Chairs

and his decade as ICSOM's Chairman. Additional resolutions thanked film maker John Beder for his work on the documentary *Composed*, encouraged musicians to continue spreading the good news about orchestras through social media, and called on orchestra managers to identify ways to better protect their musicians performing onstage during amplified concerts. In addition, following adoption of Resolution 20 at the AFM Convention this past June, the conference adopted a resolution

calling on orchestra managers to end the practice of unequal pay for subs and extras.



Hosts and Chairs: Conference Coordinator Danielle Wilt (National) with Ed Malaga, Jennifer Mondie, Bruce Ridge, Meredith Snow, Doug Rosenthal, and Peter de Boor (not pictured: Steve Wilson (National))

The 2017 Conference is scheduled from August 23-26, 2017 and will be hosted by the Buffalo Philharmonic and Local 92 in Buffalo, New York.

(Video and text of the ICSOM Chairperson's and President's addresses, additional conference addresses, various Power-Point and pdf presentations, and handouts, and conference photo galleries can be found on the ICSOM website, [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org). Current ICSOM members must be registered on the ICSOM website to view most of the conference documents.)



Mary Plaine (Baltimore emeritus) comments from a microphone at the back of the main session room

## The Road to the Picket Line *(continued)*

The motto of our negotiations—and this strike—is “Growth Not Cuts”. Growth never materialized after 2010, and our musicians can no longer subsidize a failing administration with cuts to our salary, our benefits, and our season. The management's final proposal would put our salaries more than \$20,000 less than the national average, and about \$40,000 less than our neighbors in the Dallas Symphony. It would reduce our salary back to what we made in 2003, and by 2020, our salary would still be 5% below what it was in 2010.

Health insurance is a major concern, as it is extremely expensive for our musicians to insure their families on our health plan. Family coverage costs \$1746 a month, and a musician pays the entire cost of the premium. With management's proposed cuts, this would represent nearly 42% of a musician's gross annual salary.

The FWSO is also the only major orchestra in the United States that offers no disability insurance. Since 2010, musicians have been retiring at twice the rate of the previous decade. One of the major reasons given was that they were experiencing injuries from overwork. By proposing that musicians perform over 200 concerts in 43 paid weeks instead of 46—for comparison the Dallas Symphony played 156 concerts in 52 paid weeks in 2015—the FWSO Management is effectively endangering the long-term health of each of its musicians, while leaving the musicians without an option for addressing inevitable health issues related to performing.

The combination of steep healthcare costs and a lack of disability coverage puts the FWSO at the bottom of the country's top 50 orchestras in terms of benefits offered. The bottom line is that the best musicians will no longer move to Fort Worth.

Repeated salary cuts will also cause severe non-financial damage to our orchestra. We are already seeing the effects. Since the 13.5% pay cuts in 2010, as noted, musicians have been leaving the FWSO at twice the rate of the previous decade. Further salary cuts will result in more musicians leaving and this increase in turnover can't help but lead to instability and inconsistency in performances.

We have not been sitting idly by waiting for our management to find avenues for growth. Countless hours have been spent in committees with our management and board discussing the strategic plan (there is none past 2017), health insurance (we are told they are unable to switch to a different plan), artistic >

*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.

issues, and outreach and programming ideas. For years, the musicians have been in the lobby of Bass Hall before every subscription concert meeting patrons. After pressure from the orchestra, Michael Kaiser and the DeVos Institute were hired to do a comprehensive analysis of the FWSO. This was completed in May of 2012, and the strategic plan can be found on the FWSO website ([http://www.fwsymphony.org/hld/dev/financials/strategic\\_plan\\_2013.pdf](http://www.fwsymphony.org/hld/dev/financials/strategic_plan_2013.pdf)). Few of their recommendations were followed, particularly those about staffing and supporting our Development department.

The proposed cuts of weeks from our season are particularly unreasonable. As has been discussed, the contractual loss of six paid weeks of work in 2010 was a direct result of losing six weeks of work from our partnership with Texas Ballet Theater. Three weeks with the ballet have since been regained, yet our management is demanding that we play the additional work while cutting three more weeks of the season. Management intends to reduce our season to 43 weeks while still producing the same number of concerts. Although they claim they are only

cutting three weeks of “vacation days”, we feel that these are in actuality scheduled non-work days that are essential for our physical recovery. As a strategy to save money, the musicians find it foolhardy to cut the number of physical recovery (“vacation”) days, as it will cause more injuries, thus costing the orchestra even more money. It will drive even more of us to leave the FWSO out of fear of career-ending injuries.

There hasn't been an endowment campaign since 2000 and no public fund drive has been launched to remedy a \$500,000 deficit. With our healthy economic environment in North Texas, increases in ticket sales, and continuing excellent reviews, the musicians simply cannot accept another regressive contract. To do so would be to agree that there is no hope for growth. We remain

steadfast in our confidence Fort Worth can support a first-class Orchestra.

*The Author is a member of the FWSO Newsletter Committee, and would like to thank the FWSO Media Committee and Randy Whatley for assistance in preparing this report.*



Jennifer Corning Lucio, Principal Oboe, with musicians and supporters of the FWSO

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