

# Senza Sordino

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## The LA Philharmonic Centennial

*By John Lofton, LA Phil ICSOM Delegate*

In 1919, a copper scion, arts enthusiast, and amateur violinist by the name of William Andrews Clark Jr. founded the first permanent symphony orchestra in the City of Angels and named it the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His statement, "We want to be the best orchestra in America," perhaps reflective of the optimistic 1920s era, was nonetheless a commitment he took on personally by becoming the LA Phil's sole financial resource.

(Rumor has it that he also played in the second violins on occasion). He originally asked Sergei Rachmaninoff to be the Philharmonic's first music director, however Rachmaninoff had only recently moved to New York, and he did not wish to move again. Clark then selected Walter Henry Rothwell, former assistant to Gustav Mahler, as music director, and hired away several principal musicians from orchestras back east, as well as others from the competing and soon-to-be defunct Los Angeles Symphony. The orchestra played its first concert in the Trinity Auditorium in the same year.

At its official opening in 1922, the Hollywood Bowl became the summer venue for the LA Phil. As one the world's largest natural amphitheaters with a nearly 18,000-seat capacity, the Hollywood Bowl became a primary part of the financial success of the orchestra. With its versatility as a venue capable of hosting music of nearly any genre, the Hollywood Bowl became an icon nearly worldwide. From Bugs Bunny to the Beatles, and from Puccini to Penderecki, the Hollywood Bowl provided the means—especially in the lean years of the early 1930s—for the LA Phil to go from surviving to thriving. (In February 2017, the Hollywood Bowl was named Best Major Outdoor Concert Venue for the 13th year in a row at the 28th Annual Pollstar Awards).

Walter Henry Rothwell served as Music Director until 1927 and was succeeded by the following ten Music Directors: Georg Schnévoigt (1927–1929); Artur Rodzinski (1929–1933); Otto Klemperer (1933–1939); Alfred Wallenstein (1943–1956); Eduard van Beinum (1956–1959); Zubin Mehta (1962–1978);

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Courtesy of the Author

## Cleveland Centennials

*By Joela Jones, TCO ICSOM Delegate*

What do the Cleveland Orchestra and former assistant principal oboist Robert Zupnik have in common? At 100, they are both alive and very well, indeed! Cleveland-born Bob Zupnik was already a year old when the Cleveland Orchestra presented its first concert in Gray's Armory on December 11, 1918. Much later as a young college student, Bob played when needed as an extra in the orchestra, and in 1946 after serving in the Second World War, he returned to play as assistant principal oboe until his retirement in 1977.

"My mother was the music in my life," said Bob, as he reminisced from his abode at Montefiore in Beachwood, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. "She had me start the violin at a very early age, and then around 13, I switched to the oboe. For just 50 cents, students could take lessons with Cleveland Orchestra members on Saturdays at John Hay High School right down the street from Severance Hall." (Severance Hall has been home to the Cleveland Orchestra since it was built with John Long Severance's money in 1931.)

One could say that not much has changed since those orchestra members gave lessons in the 1930s. This past year, in celebration of the Cleveland Orchestra's 100th Anniversary, and as part of the Beethoven Prometheus Project, orchestra musicians worked with classes and gave individual lessons to students at the nearby Cleveland School of the Arts.

The orchestra musicians introduced the students to the many facets of Beethoven: Beethoven as the great composer, as a person with struggles and successes similar to those the students face today, as a revolutionary figure for positive change, and as an advocate for freedom, equality, and justice. In classes for music, dance, English, and visual arts, students learned that they can be catalysts for change and can influence and produce positive



Courtesy of Joela Jones

Robert Zupnik

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## Chairperson's Report

*By Meredith Snow*

### Changing Culture

In the past several years, cultural diversity has become a major topic on the national arts agenda. Across the country, foundations, arts councils, advocacy organizations, nonprofit organizations, and universities alike have taken serious steps to explore, understand, and commit to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts.



Against the backdrop of the widely publicized violence against unarmed black citizens, and the anti-immigration rhetoric from the Trump administration, there is an increasing urgency to combat racial bias and commit to equality and inclusion in the arts.

What does this mean for our ICSOM orchestras? Pejoratively referred to as “the last bastion of dead, white, male

Europeans,” are we so mired in our own history as to be incapable of change? Certainly the core of our 19th century repertoire is culturally specific, but that doesn’t mean we need to be.

Looking back to the late 19th century, when many of our American orchestras were founded, “a new class of urban white commercial elites established institutions—such as Metropolitan Museum of Art and Metropolitan Opera, Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—to preserve and present art in the classical European canon.” (Clara Inés Schuhmacher et al., “Making Sense Of Cultural Equity”; Createquity.com) These early philanthropists hoped to promote civic pride and solidify America’s image as a civilized world power. But in so doing, they also solidified their own social standing and class status. The 1960s saw the first serious attempts to fund more culturally diverse arts. But philanthropic funding and government policy had already created a structural disparity between the Western European traditions and diverse arts struggling for funding and a place in our society.

I think it is difficult for us on the inside of our industry to see that our primary definition of “the arts” and its attendant infrastructure is biased towards our own cultural/racial tradition. It will require critical thinking, a willingness to experiment, and a larger vision of how our orchestras might look. Can we make room in our repertoire to diversify what we present? Can we make room on our stages to diversify whom we present? Who is making these decisions? Who will fund our non-profits?

The concept of diversity in our orchestras fundamentally challenges our understanding of what it means for us to play a constructive and responsive role in our communities. How do we respond to past and current inequities in our society and in the arts? We can no longer just ignore them. Our big budget, nonprofit symphonies and museums are too homogenous. While most of us already believe diversity to be morally righteous on its own, there are also solid business reasons for it. When we reflect the communities we serve—when we are diverse—our audiences will also be diverse. If we can successfully engage people in our communities by being inclusive ourselves, our orchestras will be more successful in the long run.



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Across the nation, our ICSOM orchestras are already exploring their place in the diversity discussion and the arts ecology in America. Accessible ticket pricing, education programs, fellowship and mentoring programs, community engagement, hiring practices, board diversification, and programming are all being brought into play. But we will not achieve cultural democracy and equity employing the same structures and strategies that built our current inequitable systems. We must be willing to look critically at our prevailing practices and understand how we can change to accommodate our changing world. As musicians and artists, we have the power to sway hearts and minds, to transform lives. I believe it is our artistic and political responsibility to use that power to change our orchestras from the inside out.



## President's Report

By Paul Austin

### Concrete Action on Diversity

This month, the League of American Orchestras (LAO), the Sphinx Organization, and the New World Symphony are jointly launching an initiative that will provide support to Latino and African-American musicians who are auditioning for orchestral positions. These organizations are making a commitment to address the lack of African-American and Latino musicians in US orchestras.

As reported by Michael Cooper in the *New York Times*, the

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation granted \$1.8 million for an initial four-year period for the initiative, which will be known as the National Alliance for Audition Support. (*Note: see <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/18/arts/music/symphony-orchestra-diversity.html>*)

While the US Census Bureau reported recently that 13.3% of the US population is African-American, the percentage of black musicians in our orchestras falls far below this figure (1.8% according to one study). The

same is true for Latino musicians, who in 2014 made up only 2.5% of the orchestral population. Studies indicate that larger orchestras have lower minority representation than smaller orchestras. Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, while considered minority populations, are far more proportionately represented in our orchestras and therefore are not considered in the new initiative.

The three organizations have been working since 2015 on plans for audition support for these under-represented musicians. ICSOM was introduced to this project in June 2017 at the League of American Orchestras conference in Detroit, when I was included on a sub-committee working on these plans. ICSOM supported this project and insisted upon the inclusion of the AFM and ROPA in the conversation.

In February 2018, ICSOM, ROPA, and the AFM were present at the Sphinx annual conference in Detroit when this initiative was announced to the public. Many aspiring orchestral musi-



Courtesy of Sphinx

cians from minority populations expressed enthusiasm about the National Alliance for Audition Support and urged us to continue conversations about how Latino and African-American musicians can succeed in the orchestral world.

The program begins this month with 18 string players attending a three-day intensive course in auditioning at New World in Miami. Those selected to participate in the National Alliance for Audition Support will receive a combination of training, mentoring, and financial assistance. For more information about the program, including how to apply, visit the Sphinx Organization's site. (<http://www.sphinxmusic.org/national-alliance-for-audition-support/>)

As a result of this project, ICSOM currently is considering how best we can address the lack of diversity in our orchestras, and how our efforts can best complement other worthy initiatives like this one. As reported in ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow's column in the March 2018 issue of *Senza Sordino*, we are seeking to form a minority caucus within our membership, whose lived experience can help us better identify the roadblocks to participation by minority musicians. Several conference calls have occurred with key players who would serve us well in this capacity, and we look forward to reporting more about ICSOM's role in this arena in the future.



## Secretary's Report

By Laura Ross

A while back, one of my colleagues suggested that the ICSOM conference was nothing more than a big social gathering. Unfortunately, I suspect they were not the only person to have that perception. Few people know about the time and effort the Governing Board, along with



Courtesy of Local

the host orchestra and Local, put in to the planning of these four days to ensure that each year's conference has the very best information about negotiations, contract administration, and other important issues of mutual interest. It makes me sad because it suggests that the information delegates learned at the conference may not have made its way

back to their orchestras as intended. Or, it could be that the information was shared with the orchestra committee but did not filter down to the rest of the orchestra. It's also possible my colleague didn't read the conference report in *Senza Sordino* or take advantage of the wealth of information, including conference minutes and documents from the conference, available to ICSOM members on the ICSOM website.

When ICSOM began in 1962, the representatives from ICSOM's first member orchestras were the leaders of their committees and their orchestras. They spoke with authority. Decades have passed since then but ICSOM remains relevant. Our orchestras continue to send their leaders to these conferences to share and receive important information. Over the years the Governing Board has had periodic conversations about the role of delegates within their orchestras and their attendance at the conference each year. With such busy lives =>

and responsibilities it's hard to find time to carve a week out of the summer to attend a conference, but from my own perspective I have found attendance at these meetings to be one of the most rewarding experiences ever. Even when there are subjects I may be well informed about, I can always find some new piece of information, an idea, or a new approach that hadn't occurred to me previously.

This year I will be attending my 30th conference. The first, in 1988, was as a host orchestra for ROPA. I caught the bug and couldn't wait to run for delegate so I could spend the time building relationships with other orchestra delegates. I knew those relationships would be vital when I had questions or needed suggestions about issues that were going on in my orchestra. It's that opportunity to share your experiences with others who have faced the same issues in their orchestras that made conferences so special. Over the years these acquaintances, colleagues, and friends have offered advice about all sorts of matters my orchestra has dealt with, and their recommendations have been incredibly helpful in resolving many issues.

In my orchestra, as in many others, our players' bylaws state that the ICSOM delegate serves as an ex officio member (meaning by virtue of being elected as delegate they serve as a member of the orchestra committee, the negotiating committee, or both) in recognition of all the information shared at these conferences. Let's face it, we're musicians first and foremost. What do we know about labor law and enforcing contracts? ICSOM was formed not only to give musicians a better forum in which to communicate with each other; it was also formed to give orchestra leadership the chance to talk and learn about labor law, to help us enforce our agreements, and talk about trending issues in the orchestral world, such as dealing with amplified concerts, diversity within our organizations, education programs, the pension fund, health care, etc. It also gives us the opportunity to meet first hand with orchestra leaders, with AFM leadership—the AFM International Executive Board and Symphonic Services Division staff attend every conference—and with many of the attorneys currently representing our orchestras at the bargaining table.

The conference this year will be no different. The Cincinnati Symphony will host this year's conference from August 22–25—Wednesday through Saturday. There will be reports of

**The 2018 ICSOM Conference** will take place August 22–25, at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Any member of an ICSOM orchestra is welcome to attend. All attendees **must** register for the conference in advance with ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross.

Online registration is at [www.icsom.org/conferences/register/index.php](http://www.icsom.org/conferences/register/index.php). Please use this link to make hotel reservations at the conference hotel, and refrain from using third-party websites to do so.

Anyone interested in attending the conference and wishing to receive a conference packet should contact the ICSOM Secretary.

activities over the past season, interactive presentations about issues of concern to our orchestras, and breakout sessions for smaller groups of musicians to speak about issues together. There will be the traditional mixer on Wednesday evening when all conference guests—Delegates, Governing Board, AFM and Local officers and staff, attorneys, other Player Conference representatives, and orchestra musicians—will have the opportunity to tour Cincinnati's upgraded concert hall, taste Cinci's famous chili (or infamous, depending on your regional preferences), and get to know others attending the conference.

We would like to extend an invitation to orchestra leaders and their membership, especially those of you who may live within a few hours of Cincinnati, to consider attending the ICSOM conference this summer, even if only for a day or two. The conference packets will be mailed to delegates at the end of May; conference registration and hotel reservations at the historic Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza will be available at <http://www.icsom.org/conferences/register/index.php> through July 30, 2018. Please contact your delegate or email me at lar2vln@comcast.net if you are interested in attending the conference this summer. I hope to see you there.



## The Win/Win/Win/Win Alzheimer's Project

*By Magdalena Martinic*

The Phoenix Symphony has a very extensive community outreach program, reaching not only thousands of children in the education programs, but also sending musicians out to homeless shelters, rehab centers, hospitals, and most recently, the Hospice of the Valley. The most recent addition to these amazing and powerful programs is a clinical study about the effects of live music on dementia and Alzheimer's patients. It began as a study, but it became an invaluable life-changing experience.

To begin the study, a group of musicians from the symphony met with music therapists and experts from different health organizations, in collaboration with the Arizona State University (ASU) College of Nursing. In our first meeting we were asked, "Have any of you been directly affected by this disease?" Absolutely everyone raised their hands.

This is the profound truth about this devastating disease, and we were soon to learn the powerful and positive effects music could have as we embarked on this journey.

We have now completed two studies in collaboration with ASU, at two very different facilities for dementia and Alzheimer's patients. The first one was for six weeks at a smaller, quite beautiful, care facility. There were only 48 patients housed in four "cottages" or houses, according to their level of function. The grounds were beautiful, with areas for the patients to walk and sit. The second one was at a large institution, where most of the patients are wheelchair bound, and many are rarely visited by family or friends. As different as these places were, the results were identical. The patients at both were profoundly



## Phoenix Symphony Undertakes Research Initiative

By Jeff Hunsinger

The B-Sharp Music Wellness: a W.O.N.D.E.R. Project Alzheimer's Research Initiative (ARI) evaluates the impact of live music on Alzheimer's patients through a six-week program of musical interventions. Our team comprises a groundbreaking coalition of experts representing Banner Alzheimer's Institute, Arizona State University's (ASU) College of Nursing and Health Innovation, University of California, Irvine's Institute for Interdisciplinary Salivary Bioscience Research, ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Dignity Health, and leading care centers. The coalition collaborates with the goal of improving quality of life, by reducing stress levels and suffering of patients, families, and caregivers in our community.

The ARI launched in spring of 2015. Nineteen Phoenix Symphony musicians worked together with ASU Music Therapy experts, participating in ensembles at Huger Mercy Living Center, delivering six weeks of live musical interventions. In the second program phase, conducted in fall 2016, we replicated our protocols at Maravilla Care Center, a more conventional environment where enrichment programs seldom receive the same level of institutional support as they do at a care facility such as Huger.

In both program phases, the symphony captured research data demonstrating significant reductions in the stress levels of patients, caregivers, and the musicians participating in the program. In both the pilot launch and the recent program phase, we experienced similar positive results regarding the impact of live musical interventions among patients, musicians, and caregivers. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed. Two biomarker measurement methods were used to gauge stress levels: salivary cortisol is an indicator of the level of activity in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system, which is one of the principal arms of the stress response; and salivary alpha-amylase is an index of the sympathetic

affected by the musical encounters.

We went once a week for these sessions, in small groups, performing and interacting with the patients, and we were soon astonished by the results—seeing an unresponsive woman open her eyes for the first time in weeks, a Polish man asking for polkas, another unresponsive woman suddenly starting to sing “Amazing Grace” as we played. By the end of our time with these special people, it was very hard to say goodbye because we had grown to know them after so many weeks of personal interactions. These are memories for a lifetime.

The Phoenix Symphony began a new program this year with dementia and Alzheimer's patients at the Hospice of the Valley, and although this program did not have the consistency of seeing the same patients, and developing relationships over a prolonged period of time, the single interventions with the hospice patients had the very same powerful results.

During the clinical studies we all had to take a saliva test before and after each session to measure the level of stress

nervous system activation. The analysis of these measurements in the program showed a consistently positive effect on participating patients. An interesting deviation in the data between the levels of functional impairment between the Huger and Maravilla patient populations has led to an additional research question for a third research phase.

As a result of the Huger study, we added an environmental rating to the research agenda at Maravilla. This environmental analysis indicates there may be two critical reductions to cost for the participating institutions. The first of these potential savings is among staff, due to less turnover, increased time on task, less abusive behavior towards staff, and reduced staff stress and more time for focused care. The second cost reduction would be among clients, as residents at care facilities would eat better, sleep better, and experience less agitation and fewer critical events (falls, acute illnesses, and deaths). This suggests the protocols used in the ARI are not only effective in reducing stress, but may significantly reduce the cost of residential treatment for Alzheimer's patients.

Hospice of the Valley has invited the symphony to provide live music programming for their Alzheimer's unit, which has an exceptionally high ratio of caregivers to clients. The expertise that our musicians have developed in working with patients and caregivers is recognized as unique and effective in the reduction of stress. The symphony has been invited to develop interactive musical programming for this new space, drawing upon our experience with Alzheimer's patients.

Continued expansion and funding will strengthen our ability to create a sustainable, growing program and the symphony continuously researches funders whose priorities align with our efforts. The Alzheimer's Initiative has received additional funding from the Getty Foundation, Twiford Foundation, BHHS Legacy, Thunderbird Charities, MUFG, and the Walton Family Foundation. Additionally, our key researcher, Dr. David Coon at ASU, will be seeking funding from the National Institutes of Health for this project to allow for further expansion.

*Note: the Author is the General Manager of the Phoenix Symphony.*

hormones. This was done by all four groups: the patients, the caregivers, the family members, and the musicians.

The results showed that everyone had lower stress levels after the sessions, and for the patients it would last—we were told that on the days of our interventions the patients were calmer all day, especially when they had to take showers or go through other stressful experiences.

With the goodwill created in the community, you can add the Phoenix Symphony to that list of groups made better off by this program, and it is a win/win situation all around.

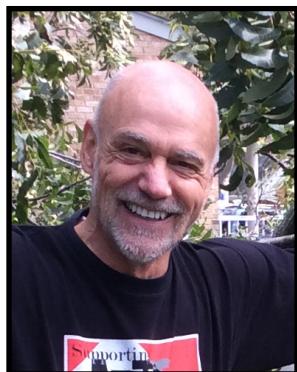
The most important and meaningful result of these opportunities for us as musicians was the deeply beautiful human interaction. As difficult and emotional as some of the encounters were, it was an invaluable experience to be able to use our music to bring some peace and comfort to these special people. Powerful and positive.

*Note: the Author is the Associate Concertmaster of the Phoenix Symphony.*

## The End of an Era

*By Tom Reel, Virginia Symphony ICSOM Alternate Delegate*

**J**oAnn Falletta has announced her intention to end her tenure as the Music Director of the Virginia Symphony after two more seasons. In the 2020–2021 season, the Virginia Symphony will celebrate its centennial, and JoAnn explained to the musicians that she preferred to have that milestone be entirely forward looking (with a new Music Director either in place or arriving soon with great fanfare) rather than looking back at her time here. Such a selfless decision is entirely in keeping with her devotion to the orchestra.



A season brochure for 1990–91 pictured six guest conductors who were finalists for the Music Director position. On the cover, one of those finalists' names was misspelled. The misspelling of Falletta (one L) may have been a mistake, but hiring her most certainly was not.

Her VSO legacy will include many recordings and tours to Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. Rather than recite the artist management boilerplate rhetoric of orchestras conducted, critics quoted, and awards won (that makes all Music Directors sound pretty much the same), perhaps it's best to summarize JoAnn as a champion of new compositions and a genuinely compassionate person. She has conducted many ICSOM orchestras and continues her roles as Music Director in Buffalo and Artistic Advisor in Hawaii. She has been willing to conduct orchestras in trouble as a benefit.

Off the podium too, she has earned a reputation for her respect and love for musicians. When the late percussionist John Grimes arrived in Norfolk (for the 2009 ICSOM Conference), he had come directly from Venezuela working in “El Sistema” and was looking for a place to wash some clothes. Unable to locate a laundromat driving around downtown Norfolk, he asked a pedestrian where he might find one, explaining his predicament. Well, John certainly asked the right stranger. “Nonsense,” JoAnn replied. “I’ll do it.” The next day John had



clean and folded clothes waiting for him at the Marriott.

Last summer at the ICSOM Conference in Buffalo, JoAnn participated in a panel discussion called “Back from the Brink” about orchestras that had experienced grave troubles only to return to viability and improved health. The statement she made that stuck with me was that turning an orchestra’s fortunes around always requires a board dedicated to success. Certainly we all know the truth in her observation, regardless of what our own Board cultures may be.

But orchestras and boards don’t succeed without artistic leadership. Just over seven years ago, JoAnn’s work in Virginia caught the attention of an important arts lover. First Lady Michelle Obama wrote in part, “Throughout our Nation’s history, the power of the arts to move people has built bridges and enriched lives, and helped to bring individuals and Communities together. With vision and dedication, music directors like JoAnn carry this proud tradition forward. As a passionate advocate for the arts, her efforts have helped strengthen and grow the artistic community in Virginia, and her work continues to inspire those around her.”

That letter from the White House was sent on the occasion of JoAnn’s twentieth season as Music Director of the Virginia Symphony. We’ve since celebrated a twenty-fifth season, but we won’t celebrate a thirtieth.

Instead we will begin our second century under new leadership with a Music Director who will owe JoAnn Falletta a great deal—for her arrival here over a quarter century ago, for her work to improve the Virginia Symphony since then, and for her exit at the perfect time to benefit the organization and whomever her successor turns out to be. As JoAnn noted recently, “One of my proudest moments was when the VSO was invited to be a member of ICSOM.” Of course, that would not have happened when it did without her.



## Newslets

### Violins of Hope and Schindler’s List Too

The Violins of Hope project, which brought approximately 25 violins, a viola, and a cello to Nashville from mid-March to June 2, was nearly 27 months in the making. The instruments, collected and restored by father and son Amnon and Avshi Weinstein and played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust, survived concentration camps, pogroms, and long journeys to tell their stories. The Nashville Symphony and the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee partnered with more than 25 arts organizations and sponsors to bring these instruments to Nashville and to facilitate a citywide dialogue about music, art, social justice, and free expression.

Even though customs delayed the instruments’ arrival until just before the first rehearsal of the Nashville Symphony’s classical series week, it didn’t dampen the musicians’ eagerness to choose an instrument for the week. While the Violins of Hope have been featured with other ICSOM orchestras—including Jacksonville (*Note: See “Newslets” in the March 2017 issue*), Charlotte, Alabama, and Cleveland—their residency in Nashville was the first in which the violins were to »

be featured in a recording project: Jonathan Leshnoff's Symphony #4, "Heichelos", for Naxos. In his opening remarks at the first performance, Mark Freedman, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation thanked Amnon and Avshi Weinstein for creating Violins of Hope and "serving as ambassadors of peace and understanding...and as trustees of a sacred heritage whose life's work serves to turn the darkness and evil of the Holocaust toward a more promising and hopeful future filled with redemption and light...The sounds of the violins you will hear tonight are the transmission of musical blessings that



Musicians of the Nashville Symphony with Avshi and Amnon Weinstein, the Rosner bass, and the Violins of Hope

could not be bestowed upon the vast generation that was lost to the Jewish people." Referring to a poem he once wrote, Freedman said, "there are six million songs lost in the hills of Jerusalem. Tonight, in loving partnership with the Nashville Symphony, those six million songs have found a home among us to echo across this and future generations."

Members of the Nashville Symphony used the instruments once more during the ten-week residency, for performances of Verdi's Requiem. This work had been performed by the inmates at Theresienstadt concentration camp for the Red Cross to convince outsiders that Theresienstadt was a model resettlement village for European Jews. Rafael Schachter, who conducted the inmates' performance, said the text gave the singers a chance to "sing to the Nazis what they could not say to them."

That final weekend, the Jewish Federation presented violin #17 from the Weinstens' Violins of Hope collection to the NSO to commemorate their partnership.

The Nashville Ballet, Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities, numerous churches, temples, and community centers, along with the Nashville Public Library, held more than 56 performances, lectures/discussions, and events during the collection's stay. Some performances included the use of a quartet of instruments from the Violins of Hope collection; the rest of the violins, along with remnants of damaged and weather-worn instruments, were displayed at the downtown Nashville Public Library free to the public—a first for the collection, according to presenters.

An additional element of the public dialogue were five other exhibits in Nashville—one each at Lane Motor Museum and Nashville State College, and three at the Frist Art Museum, including "Slavery, the Prison Industrial Complex: Photographs by Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick"—that explored issues of identity and social justice.

When word spread that the Violins of Hope were coming to Nashville, local musician Patrick Crossley was keenly interested, as he owns the bass that used to belong to Leo Rosner, one of the people saved as a result of having been on Schindler's List. Rosner played the bass (thought to be a mid-19th century Tyrolean instrument) in the Krakow ghetto and was forced to play for Nazi officers and guests at the Płaszow labor camp. Schindler visited the family after the war, served as best man at the wedding of Rosner's brother William (another name on the List), and facilitated the return of several instruments to the family after the war, including (likely) the bass.

Crossley, who moved to the Nashville area in the 1990s, heard about the Violins of Hope project and graciously lent the instrument to the bass section of the Nashville Symphony for the duration of the collection's presence in Nashville. Members of the section were delighted to have this instrument on loan and especially honored to have the opportunity to play it. They offer their thanks to Patrick Crossley for his generous contribution to this important project.

## An Update from Haiti

During the last week of March, a relief week, a group of Utah Symphony musicians visited Cap Haitien for the second annual Haitian National Orchestral Institute. This weeklong session of lessons, sectionals, rehearsals and concerts is the brainchild of two Utah Symphony musicians: violinist Yuki MacQueen and cellist John Eckstein (*Note: See "A Week of Relief" in the December 2016 issue*). Founded in 2017, the mission of the Institute is to foster the growth of orchestral music in Haiti while establishing bonds between the musicians of the Utah Symphony and the musicians of Haiti. The Institute is attended by musicians from all across Haiti who are selected by an audition process headed by Janet Anthony, recently retired Professor of Cello at Lawrence Conservatory of Appleton, Wisconsin and President of the BLUME-Haiti Foundation, a non-profit devoted to furthering the study of classical music in Haiti.



The horn section of the 2018 Haitian National Orchestral Institute

The students faced a grueling schedule: three hours of lessons and coaching in the mornings and three hours of orchestra rehearsals in the afternoon. The faculty gave a recital on the penultimate evening. The institute concluded with the big concert featuring the orchestra, led by Thierry Fischer, Music Director of the Utah Symphony, followed by a reception for the students and faculty.

Partnering with the Musicians of the Utah Symphony were Utah Symphony/Utah Opera and the BLUME-Haiti Foundation. This year they were joined by Utah Symphony/Utah Opera CEO Paul Meecham, as well as bassist Thomas Sperl »

of the Cleveland Orchestra and his wife, oboist Cynthia Sperl. The participants wish to extend thanks to Thierry Fischer for being with them from the beginning, and special thanks to the musicians of the Cleveland Orchestra, who made an extremely generous donation to the cause. Also, thanks to all of those that contributed their time, money, instruments, music, and accessories. They are looking forward to the third annual Haitian National Orchestral Institute, to be held in Jacmel, Haiti, during the first week of April, 2019.

## New Ticket Paradigms

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra ended last year with record attendance—thanks partly to children and college kids who got in for free.

About 116,000 people attended at least one concert during the fiscal year that wrapped up June 30, 2017, a five percent increase over the year before. That number was boosted by the organization's New Generation Initiative, launched last year, which offers school and college students free tickets.

Compared to the year before, young attendance quadrupled.

The orchestra announced its New Generation Initiative in August, 2016, a program designed to attract people under 40 to its productions. Children ages 6–17 and students of any age—from high schoolers to doctoral candidates with valid IDs—can order free tickets. SPCO subscribers also receive two free guest passes to give to anyone under 40.

Five individuals from the Twin Cities area, including members of the SPCO's board of directors, donated about \$200,000 to support the initiative.

The SPCO relies more on donations than ticket sales. In fiscal year 2017, 62.5% of the SPCO's income came from contributions and other support. About 20.5% was "earned". The endowment made up the rest.

The earned income category includes revenue from another SPCO initiative, the Concert Membership program. Started in 2012, this program allows attendance at an unlimited number of regular concerts for a monthly subscription cost, currently \$7. Subscribers may obtain free seats in the second and third price tiers, subject to availability.

The annual report, presented in December, shows that the SPCO balanced its \$10.3 million budget in fiscal year 2017, with a surplus of more than \$340,000.

## Minnesota's New CEO

In April 2018, the Minnesota Orchestra announced the selection of its next President and CEO, Michelle Miller Burns, currently Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Chief Operating Officer of the Dallas Symphony. The search process began nearly a year prior, with the formation of a committee comprising board members, musicians, and staff. The committee consisted of 15 voting members, with the Music Director and current President/CEO serving as advisors throughout the process. It was designed to be broadly inclusive of these three main constituent groups, with five committee members being musicians.

The committee began its search by identifying the main qualities desired in the next CEO, by looking at aspects of the

organization in need of growth, and by engaging the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to lead the search. The team from Isaacson then spent time in meetings with the committee, as well as members of the key constituent groups, to gain a deeper understanding of the institutional needs and to create a position profile. The confidential search process involved robust discussion, résumé and reference reviews, and several rounds of in-person interviews. Finalist candidates ultimately met separately with each search committee sub-group (musician, board, staff) for further in-depth interviews and then a full-committee social event.

Throughout the process, the musicians were heartened by the similarity of values and qualities that all members of the committee were seeking in the candidate selection. It was agreed early on by the group that they would continue to search for a new CEO until the decision was unanimous (which can be revealed now that the search is over and confidentiality restrictions are eased to a certain extent). This turned out to be the case with Michelle Miller Burns.

Her artistic values and depth of experience in the industry, combined with her collaborative leadership style, singled her out as the best candidate to lead the Minnesota Orchestra going forward. Ms. Miller Burns will accompany the orchestra on its August tour to London and South Africa, prior to her official start as CEO on September 1, 2018. The collaborative "Minnesota Model" served well in this important search, and the musicians are thrilled to have identified and engaged Ms. Miller Burns as the next CEO.

## Texas Move 'Em

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra announced in May that its Music Director, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, will step down from the post in 2020. "I believe that after a tenure of twenty seasons, it will be the right time for the orchestra to close a chapter and to begin a new one, exploring new challenges, points of view, opportunities and ideas," Harth-Bedoya said.

Harth-Bedoya, the eighth Music Director in the orchestra's 106-year history, has presided over tremendous change. Nearly two fifths of the current complement has joined since his first season, and the number of full-time positions has increased by 25%.

In neighboring Dallas, where DSO Music Director Jaap van Zweden just stepped down in May (*Note: See "Newslets" in the March 2016 issue*), the orchestra announced on June 4 that his successor will be Fabio Luisi, perhaps best known in this country as the former Principal Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera. Luisi currently holds three major conducting posts in Europe, including Principal Conductor of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. He will become Music Director Designate for the 2019–2020 season, and assume the Music Director title the following season.

"I am delighted and proud to be appointed Music Director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra," said Luisi. "From the moment I met the orchestra again this spring, I felt a strong connection artistically and personally. These are supremely talented musicians, who welcomed me so warmly. Our performances were filled with great joy, and I look forward to working with them to share our mutual passion for this great music with audiences." »

## Florida Sets a Path to Growth

On May 21, the musicians of the Florida Orchestra reached agreement with their management on a new collective bargaining agreement, months ahead of the expiration of the existing agreement. The terms of the three-year deal include a cumulative increase in the annual salary of 13.5%, achieved through a combination of weekly scale increases and the addition of two paid vacation weeks. Orchestra members have not had paid vacation since 2009. The complement will also grow to 68 musicians by the end of the agreement, an increase of two.

"This new agreement puts us on a path towards becoming a truly world class organization," said Andrew Karr, the chair of the Orchestra Committee. "The musicians look forward to continuing to enrich the cultural life of the Tampa Bay region and representing it further afield."

## A Salute to Bill Foster

By Brian Rood

When I joined the ICSOM Governing Board in 2002, a top priority was to bring our orchestras together to discuss electronic media. We recognized that the ICSOM Media Committee had to be expanded and become more diverse, while also being inclusive of the many viewpoints within ICSOM. We also knew that we needed a chair who was an expert and was well respected within ICSOM and the AFM. Our unanimous choice was Bill Foster. Luckily for us he accepted and then led ICSOM and the Media Committee through several difficult yet important years, culminating in the Integrated Media Agreement (IMA).

Whether it was as the ICSOM media committee chair, chair of his negotiating committee within the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), or as AFM-EPF trustee, Bill always represented his colleagues with the utmost integrity, professionalism, patience, and good humor. During bargaining sessions, Bill had facts and figures "at the ready" and used his articulate persuasiveness to change even the most intransigent positions from the other side. Yet, I know of no other person that remains to this day as well respected and admired by everyone, regardless of their position.

Several years ago I met with former ICSOM Counsel Lenny Leibowitz in his office at Local 802. His walls were covered with framed photographs of orchestras signed by the musicians he had represented. In the center of one wall was a photograph of the NSO picket line from 1978—with Maestro Rostropovich marching in solidarity, arm-in-arm with Fred Zenone and Bill, as the police prepared to arrest NSO musicians. While proud of all orchestras, Lenny turned and with a smile made special mention of those negotiations and the tremendous leadership role that Bill played.

As Bill celebrates his fiftieth and final year with the NSO, I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done for musicians across the country. Never has such a mild-mannered and soft-spoken individual made such an emphatic difference in the lives of so many musicians!

Bill, congratulations on your retirement, and thank you for being here for all of us.

Note: The Author is ICSOM President Emeritus.

## Dropping the Mute

By Peter de Boor, Editor

### The Pension Fix is In?

I have been interested in financial issues all of my adult life, and in the state of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF, or the Fund) ever since I became a participant. I have been concerned about the latter ever since it entered critical status in the aftermath of the Great Recession. My second column as editor (back in December 2014) was about the state of the Fund, and what I saw as every participant's responsibility to be planning for their own future in light of its problems.

Of course, I have not been alone. There has been a great deal of discussion of the issue—around the proverbial water cooler, on Orchestra-L, and in main and breakout sessions at several ICSOM conferences. And some Fund participants have organized themselves into groups to raise awareness and push for change, such as the Musicians for Pension Security (MPS).

MPS recently announced to great fanfare that they and the independent experts they have hired—funded by generous contributions from their members—have crafted a recovery plan to rescue the AFM-EPF, one that would not involve cuts to benefits under the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA) (Note: See "MPRA Demystified" in the October 2017 issue). They revealed this plan at their national meeting, held on April 4 in New York and live-streamed on Facebook.

I observed with great interest the Facebook live-streaming, and have carefully re-listened to the presentation, and read the accompanying slides, as well as the summary contained in an open letter to AFM President Ray Hair (in his capacity as co-chair of the Fund's Board of Trustees).

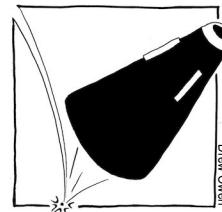
While there are certainly aspects of the recovery plan I can fully support, what I thought of as the central plank of the plan left me bemused.

MPS has shared the entire presentation on its website, and you should by all means read through it yourself. But they seem to be pinning the recovery of the Fund on the idea of increased contributions.

First some background: the AFM-EPF currently receives approximately \$60 million per year in employer contributions, and these contributions, in aggregate, have been growing at approximately 2.5% per year (which is also the rate at which the Fund's actuaries project that contributions will keep growing). According to Tom Lowman (the actuary hired by MPS), only 15% of those contributions go to new benefits, while 85% go to whittling down the \$1.1 billion deficit between the present value of accrued benefits and the market value of the Fund's assets.

If nothing happens to contribution rates, and everyone working for signatory employers gets a 2.5% raise (and does the same amount of work), then the total contributions will increase by 2.5%.

Of course, life is not that simple. Many employers might not agree to 2.5% wage increases (even if, as Lowman pointed out, the overall level of wage inflation in the economy is currently >



2.9%), or the amount of covered employment might shrink (if recording projects are moved overseas, for example). It's also possible that the projection might be off in the other direction—if the AFM negotiates even more unallocated contributions, say, or if more employment is covered.

The MPS recovery plan calls for 6% increases in these aggregate contributions per year for five years. Sounds great, right? But look closer, and there are a number of problems with this proposal. First, the Fund trustees have no role in contract negotiations, except perhaps as individuals representing managements or Locals at the table. Increasing contributions is certainly not something that the trustees can control.

Second, President Hair has indeed called for increased Fund contributions in our CBAs, most notably at the 2017 ICSOM conference in Buffalo. But our contracts are negotiated locally, by our orchestra committees working together with our Locals. Achieving that was the single most important reason that ICSOM was created 56 years ago. I don't think anyone at ICSOM is going to advocate a return to more Federation control over local negotiations.

Third, the Fund does not enjoy a reputation as a wise place to put one's money, in part as the result of the efforts of groups such as MPS. There have been only a few instances of ICSOM orchestras raising their AFM-EPF contribution level since the multiplier was lowered to \$1, and most of those were to restore the contribution rate to its previous level. And that exhortation last August by President Hair to increase contributions? My recollection is that it got a frosty reception by delegates.

Fourth, our employers also know about the condition of the Fund, and I would bet that they would resist an increase in the contribution rate much harder than they resist increasing wages. In bargaining, we might have to "pay" for such contribution increases with much greater reductions on the wage side of the ledger.

Let's look more closely at what it would take to achieve 6% increases in contributions for one orchestra. I'm going to use my orchestra's finances to illustrate. We have an average AFM-EPF contribution rate of 13% (between our two CBAs). But this year we didn't even come close to a salary increase of the prevailing wage inflation of 2.9% that MPS emphasizes. No, we got an increase of 1.4% (and speaking as the chair of our orchestra committee, that was hard won). How could we have achieved 6% growth in our orchestra's total Fund contributions? We would have needed to increase the contribution rate to about 13.6%, a bump of 0.6%, to go along with that modest wage increase.

I hear you say, "That's not such a big a deal." But now MPS would have us do this again for each of the next four years. Assuming that we can only get that same 1.4% salary increase, we'd have to get our AFM-EPF contribution rate up to 16.2% by the fifth year. What if our managements told us we would have to pay for those increases by reducing our wage increase, or even by cutting our wages? Then the pension rate increases would have to be even greater. If we had to take wage freezes, the contribution rate would have to go up to 17.2%.

Even if by some miracle I were able to persuade my colleagues in the bargaining unit of the importance of these contribution increases, and to actually negotiate them with our managements, for the aggregate contributions to rise by 6% a

year for five years, this would have to happen in **all** the bargaining units—including all 37 ICSOM orchestras that contribute to the Fund. Failure to achieve this in any one unit would mean reaching an even higher contribution rate in the others.

And here's the kicker. Even if we achieve these enormous contribution increases, and cut the administrative expenses by 10%, according to Lowman's projection we would only push back the insolvency of the Fund by six years. Benefit cuts would still be necessary.

Mr. Lowman did briefly outline a scenario in which benefit cuts might not be needed, but it involved 5% per year increases in aggregate contributions **forever**. In light of what I've already described, I consider that idea as realistic as persuading Warren Buffett to give us \$1.1 billion to plug the funding gap.

As for the other elements of the MPS recovery plan, I certainly endorse lobbying to obtain legislative relief for multi-employer pension plans. Indeed, the Fund trustees appear to be actively involved in these efforts, urging a letter-writing campaign by Fund participants to demonstrate popular support for such legislation. I think having all AFM-EPF trustees be financially literate is eminently sensible, but what evidence is there that the current trustees are not? (Trustees undergo extensive training and education, several times each year.)

The principle of solidarity is paramount for a labor union. Sometimes, a few make sacrifices for the good of the whole. But our younger colleagues are already making large sacrifices for the good of the Fund—they are enduring the \$1 multiplier, and probably will endure it for their entire careers. Asking them now to give up wage increases (or decent health care) for such a paltry improvement in the condition of the Fund is stretching solidarity to the breaking point.

The situation of the Fund is very bad, and it will require sacrifice. But that sacrifice should be borne equitably. Achieving the most equitable sharing of that sacrifice is not aided by marketing fantasies as solutions.



### Cleveland Centennials (*continued*)

messages. Triumphantly, after many lessons and much hard work, a dozen young string players from the Cleveland School of the Arts played the *Prometheus* Overture in a side-by-side concert with Cleveland Orchestra members in Severance Hall.

It was the idea of current Music Director Franz Welser-Möst to use the image of Prometheus giving the gift of fire (the symbol of power and learning) as a metaphor for Beethoven's works. Great expectations and excitement were in the air when, in May, the Cleveland Orchestra played his nine symphonies, four of his overtures and the Grosse Fuge in Cleveland and then on tour in Vienna and Tokyo in celebration of the orchestra's 100 years of performances.

For the Cleveland Orchestra's annual spring opera presentation, Franz chose *Tristan and Isolde*. He felt that Beethoven broke the mold and introduced the Romantic Era in music, while Wagner's opera reached the apex of that same Romanticism and announced the start of our modern world. Franz believes that both the Beethoven series and the Wagner opera are perfect for TCO's Centennial season, as "music makes history and at the same time leaves the past behind, taking us >

into the future."

The orchestra's greatest strength continues to be the citizens of the Cleveland area. Individuals and corporations finance the orchestra's growth, while insisting on programs for educating and inspiring young students. Today, 20% of audience members are aged 25 or younger, and the orchestra is the beneficiary of the greatest generosity of any major American orchestra, measured by per capita donations.



Robert Mastropietro/Courtesy of the Cleveland Orchestra

TCO's performance of *Tristan and Isolde*, with Gerhard Siegel, Nina Stemme, and Okka von der Damerau

So, the orchestra is definitely still going strong at 100, and so is Bob Zupnik. Although Bob no longer plays the oboe, he says he has become a singer. He demonstrated for me with perfect intonation and flawless rhythm, singing several well-known oboe passages, including *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, which he had played for George Szell at his audition in 1946.

Some of Bob's reminiscences about George Szell and the orchestra are included in the recently published book *George Szell's Reign* by Marcia Kraus, wife of Felix Kraus, the orchestra's former second oboist and English horn player. When we discussed the book and his years in the orchestra, I asked Bob what he thought made the Cleveland Orchestra so great. His answer was quick and direct. "Putting the music first—total dedication. And listening to your colleagues!"

Bob is remembered in Cleveland Orchestra lore for being the perfect gentleman, always dressing sharply and acting

professionally. At 100 he has a keen wit, a warm manner and a philosophical attitude toward life. Laughingly, Bob remembered when 51 years ago Orchestra members were taken on a bus out to view the 500 acres where Blossom Music Center, the summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra, was to be built. "It had been raining for several days, so it was just a BIG mud pit! They served us a bottle of beer. I guess they thought that would make up for the bad weather," he said with a twinkle in his eye.

It will be fifty years ago this summer that Blossom Music Center was opened. Welser-Möst and the orchestra will celebrate that anniversary with the opening program on July 7, including another Beethoven work: the Triple Concerto, with this author as the pianist.

Celebrations for anniversaries are in abundance in Cleveland this year!



## The LA Philharmonic Centennial (continued)

Carlo Maria Giulini (1978–1984); André Previn (1985–1989); Esa-Pekka Salonen (1992–2009); and Gustavo Dudamel (2009–present). Sir Georg Solti served as a guest conductor on several occasions and might have been on this list, as he was named Music Director in 1961, but alas, he never served in that capacity. Ms. Dorothy Chandler, the Board chair, hired a young upcoming conductor as assistant (Zubin Mehta) without previously consulting Maestro Solti. That slight was enough to send him to regions elsewhere without ever having conducted a note as Music Director in Los Angeles. In addition to these names the LA Phil has had a list of distinguished Principal Guest Conductors as well: Michael Tilson Thomas (1981–1985); Simon Rattle (1981–1994); Leonard Slatkin (Hollywood Bowl, 2005–2007); Bramwell Tovey (Hollywood Bowl, 2008–2010); and Susanna Mälkki (2017–present).

Ms. Chandler began raising money for a permanent home for the LA Philharmonic in 1955. Having raised \$20 million in cash, the rest was financed by a \$14 million bond-revenue-financed mortgage. The result was the construction of the »



LA Phil founder William Andrews Clark Jr. with the orchestra on its first tour, in 1921, after the completion of its second season. The tour comprised 33 concerts in cities from Bakersfield, California, to Butte, Montana.

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, a part of the Music Center in downtown LA. It opened in December of 1964 with a program featuring Jascha Heifitz conducted by Zubin Mehta. The Chandler Pavilion served as the home of the LA Phil until October 2003, when the LA Phil moved into its present home, the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

A major part of the success of the LA Phil came from individuals within our LA Phil family. Amongst these people were leaders on the podium, world-class musicians in the orchestra, and visionary representatives on the staff. Retired members Ron Leonard (Principal Cello), Tom Stevens (Principal Trumpet), and Ralph Sauer (Principal Trombone) deserve special mention, with apologies to those I've omitted. Among our former Executive Directors, perhaps no better example of visionary leadership was Ernest Fleischmann. His commitment to new music was legendary and became a signature feature of each LA Phil season. His courageous resolve to go in directions where others feared to go was renowned throughout our profession. The ability of recently-departed President Deborah Borda to solve the most difficult challenges was masterful as well. We owe all of those aforementioned people a great deal of gratitude.

Since the arrival of Gustavo Dudamel, the orchestra has created Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), which is patterned after El Sistema in Venezuela. The LA Phil and its community partners provide free instruments, intensive music training, and leadership training to nearly 1,000 students from underserved neighborhoods. On November 9, 2017, the LA Phil

announced the purchase of a building in Inglewood dedicated to the YOLA program. (The renovation will be a Frank Gehry design.) In addition to this, the Centennial will also be the first season for the LA Phil Resident Fellows Program (*Note: See "Newslets" in the December 2017 issue*). This is more than a community outreach program. It gives talented young musicians an opportunity to experience life as an everyday musician in the LA Phil and hone their skills—so they can successfully compete for positions in our orchestras and help those orchestras to better serve their communities.

Next season, as part of our Centennial celebration, the LA Phil will commission 55 new works, go on two tours, perform a concert featuring our present and former Music Directors, and put on a movable concert, which will begin at Walt Disney Concert Hall and end at the Hollywood Bowl, with a few stops in between. (This season we did something similar with War of the Worlds. [*Note: See "War of the Worlds" in the December 2017 issue.*]) I don't know if I can imagine how Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Zubin Mehta might make music magic sharing one stage together, but it'll be an interesting ride nonetheless. The Centennial became too much to put into one season, so the celebration will continue into the 2019-20 season as well.

We hope to continue to meet the challenges of our community and our industry. We also hope that our efforts today are a worthy homage to those who've come before us, and, finally, that these endeavors leave us in good shape for the next 100 years.



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