

Senza Sordino

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Baltimore's Brass

Avalanche

By Andrew Balio

Two months after our return from what was heralded as an historic and triumphant tour of Scotland, England, and Ireland, the musicians of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra were told by our management and board that we should now accept a pay cut of at least 20% as part of a reduction of the orchestra's season from 52 to 40 weeks. Welcome home, guys and gals!

Fortunately, the Baltimore Symphony Musicians, as we are known around here, have friends in high places: the musicians of the other major symphony orchestras of our region. And this became abundantly clear to me when I picked up the phone to call on brass players from the National Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, to ask whether any of them would come down to Baltimore to play alongside us in a concert at Baltimore's Basilica to send a message. Their answer was an unhesitating yes, they would most certainly come play.

Shortly thereafter, many more—including conductor James E. Ross, members of the Semper Fi Brass, and the New York Philharmonic's Chris Martin—had all changed their previous plans, and we ended up with a brass avalanche of more than 50. It became for us here in Baltimore the first turning point in the darkest chapter of our 103-year history.

Indeed, it was Baltimore's brass concert of the century, overflowing with at-



Jonathan Jensen

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The Great Mexican Sabbatical Project

By George Brown

By the time you read this, my wife Shirley and I will be just past the half-way point of my one year sabbatical from the Utah Symphony. It has been a fascinating adventure to say the least, and thus far, the time has flown by in a blur. This mile marker also seems like a good

place to pause and assess some of the impressions taken in from our time here, as well as a few lessons learned along the way. But for the sake of providing some context, I need to back up for a few moments.

As a few of you know, part of what I wanted to explore for my sabbatical project was inspired by the ICSOM Governing Board working with the League of American Orchestras in addressing various diversity issues facing US orchestras. This is, of course, a wise long-term decision if

American orchestras are to remain relevant in their individual communities, given our national demographic shifts. Salt Lake City, like many US cities, particularly western ones, has a large Latinx—predominantly Mexican-American—community, and orchestras in these cities face common issues in attempting to reach out to them.

A few of these issues stem from often unquestioned assumptions that many of us hold about México, particularly if we don't know any Mexicans and haven't spent time in the country (other than its beach resorts or border towns). In these cases, what little information we get about the country often comes from cable news, with the result being that México remains a mystery to us for the most part, whether or not we even realize it. Some of these broad-brush assumptions, as they relate just to our industry, might include:

- Mexicans aren't fans of classical music and somehow must be educated about it.
- Mexicans will only be drawn to a symphony concert if the program includes only Mexican (or Spanish) music, or if there are several Latinx musicians playing onstage to whom they can relate, or if the program includes dancing (don't laugh; I've heard this).

Those of us Gringo orchestra musicians who spent signifi-
(continued on page 9)



Brian Root

Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

Advancing Diversity

As it becomes increasingly clear that diversity in our orchestras must be a priority moving into the future, more opportunities to facilitate that goal are being created within our industry each year. The National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) is an unprecedented national initiative created by the Sphinx Organization



Danae Amernic, Chairperson

(which is the program leader and fiscal administrator of NAAS), the New World Symphony, and the League of American Orchestras (LAO). With a four-year grant of \$1.8 million from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as well as contributions from orchestras across the United States, NAAS will provide African-American and Latinx musicians with grant money for auditions, including travel and accommodation, potential lost income, instrument repair, coaching, lessons, and other audition-related expenses. NAAS Audition Intensives, hosted by the New World Symphony, offer mock auditions, lessons, and performance psychology training. To date, 16 of our ICSOM orchestras are partners with the NAAS initiative. A number of our ICSOM musicians are advisors who have helped to create and guide this program, including John Lofton (LA), Alberto Suarez (Kansas City), Beverly Baker (Virginia), and Kenneth Thompkins (Detroit).

“This unprecedented collective action on the part of America’s orchestras addresses some of the main barriers to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in orchestras,” said Jesse Rosen, President and CEO of LAO. “The unique and coordinated network of support is informed by research and extensive discussions with many Black and Latinx musicians as well as many other individuals in orchestras and higher education. We are especially grateful to the American Federation of Musicians, ICSOM, and ROPA for their participation and support.”

More information on NAAS is available at <http://www.sphinxmusic.org>.

Another initiative launched this year, created by LAO with support from the Mellon Foundation, is the Catalyst Fund. This three-year pilot program will award annual grants to orchestras to advance their internal capacity for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and foster effective EDI practices within their organization. With a grant from the Catalyst Fund, orchestras can engage a consultant to audit and help in developing a strategic program of coaching, mentoring, and training staff, board members, and/or musicians in best EDI practices for their organization (<https://americanorchestras.org>).

An increasing number of our orchestras have created fellowship programs available to musicians from underrepresented populations. These initiatives are designed to enhance career development through mentorship and performance, with the long-term goal of increasing the diversity of professional orchestras.

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Fellowship, launched in 2012 in partnership with the Sphinx Organization, offers a single residency that includes performances with the BSO, mentoring >



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Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
The Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony
Grant Park Orchestra
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony
Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Louisville Orchestra
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony
National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
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and working in education and outreach initiatives, including OrchKids and the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestra.

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra has partnered with UC College-Conservatory of Music (CSO/CCM) to offer a two-year program for up to five string players, which includes full tuition for a Master of Music or Artist Diploma, five weeks per season of performances with the CSO, plus a variety of additional work focused on community engagement and educational activities. Each Fellow also has access to audition and professional development travel stipends.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra has had the longest running program of our ICSOM orchestras. Since 1980, the DSO has been a leader in fostering opportunity for African-American composers and musicians. Their current program, created in 1990 and sponsored by the Mellon Foundation, has just been increased to two positions. There are currently more than 15 alumni of the DSO Fellowship Program working professionally in the music industry.

The Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus, in partnership with the Chicago Sinfonietta, has a unique training program, Project Inclusion, that sponsors both string players and singers. In addition to playing the summer festival, fellows perform in community concerts throughout Chicago.

The LA Phil just launched its Resident Fellows program this season. Up to five musicians, string players or percussionists, have the opportunity to participate in a three-year program that includes salary, housing allowance, a minimum of 22 weeks of employment—including orchestral, chamber, new music, and education concerts—plus assistance with audition preparation and travel expenses.

The Minnesota Orchestra's Rosemary and David Good Fellowship is a two-year initiative that grew from the orchestra's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, comprising board, staff, and musicians. This season, two musicians were hired, both brass players.

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's EQT Orchestra Training Program for African American Musicians (OTPAAM) is open to all instruments with the exception of keyboard. One Fellow will spend two seasons playing with the orchestra, studying, and preparing for auditions.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's IN UNISON initiative, created in 1992, began as an outreach program through African-American churches in the community. In 1994, the IN UNISON Chorus, comprising 120 voices, began performing as part of the SLSO season. In addition to three combined performances a year, SLSO still presents free performances in the 30 partnering churches. Since 2005, the SLSO's Music Without Boundaries program has provided free admission and transportation for immigrant and refugee populations to SLSO performances in hopes of fostering greater understanding of and appreciation for the diverse populations of St. Louis.

Of course, all our ICSOM orchestras have community engagement and education programs. They are an integral part of our work schedule and provide an invaluable link to our communities and audiences. Just a few of the programs targeted specifically towards increasing diversity and fostering talent in underserved communities include:

- the Atlanta Symphony's Talent Development Program, now in its 25th year;

- the Nashville Symphony's Accelerando initiative (*Note: see the March 2016 issue*);
- the Philadelphia Orchestra's HEAR: Health, Education, Access and Research program;
- One Nation, now in its 18th year, a musical and cultural partnership between the Phoenix Symphony and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community;
- the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Youth Orchestra LA, celebrating its 10th year;
- the Music Advancement for Newark-area Youth (MANY), a partnership between the New Jersey Symphony and NJ Performing Arts Center that prepares music students for performance-based educational programs within the Newark area.

Our orchestras, by their very nature, are slow to change. Steeped in tradition, with highly dedicated professionals who are intent on their individual performance, we are not always cognizant of the changing world around us. We are lagging behind in the push towards diversity and relevance to our communities. Collectively, we have begun to strive for progress. But it is clear that we must give these efforts time to bear fruit. We are in a marathon, not a sprint, and we must continue to support and maintain these programs, as well as create many more.



President's Report

By Paul Austin

Improvements at ICSOM.org

As readers of my previous reports will have noted, I believe that ICSOM has an important role to play in communication: between orchestras, within the larger Federation, and with the wider world. That's why I and the Governing Board have put a lot of our effort into improving ICSOM's social media presence (*Note: see the October 2017 issue*), relaunching the conductor evaluation program (*Note: see the December 2017 issue, as well as Barb Corbató's report in this issue*), and making sure that our listservs, Orchestra-I and Delegate-I, have a successful transition to a new platform (*Note: see the October 2018 issue*).



Another important communication tool is our own website, www.icsom.org. Originally created in 1996, our website enjoyed a substantial overhaul in 2012, thanks to ICSOM webmaster Martha Warrington. I had the pleasure of meeting Martha last summer when I attended the ROPA conference in Portland (she is a violist with the Oregon Symphony). We spoke for several hours about our vision for ICSOM's website, and the ways we could improve its usefulness to ICSOM members. I am pleased to announce that we have recently completed many improvements to ICSOM's website, thanks to suggestions from Governing Board members and work by Martha.

For starters, the home page (<https://www.icsom.org>) now has >>

a “Current News” column, which I update at the beginning of every week (since November 2018). There you will find the leading stories about ICSOM orchestras that had appeared recently at our Twitter account @ICSOM.

Next, the menu’s “News” option includes a “News Archive” (<https://icsom.org/news/>), which houses all of our news stories. Notice that it has been categorized by year, as well as by orchestra.

Another new feature is that the “Orchestras” option on the menu (<https://icsom.org/orchestras/index.php>) contains more detailed information. For each orchestra, links to the websites of the players’ associations are given, as well as links to their Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. The news items from the home page for that orchestra are provided here as well.

A photo of each ICSOM orchestra now appears at our website. Governing Board members Dan Sweeley and Laura Ross are to be thanked for handling this project.

We continue to update the “Member Services links” from the “Links” option on the main menu (<https://icsom.org/links/member-links.php>). As a convenience, links to items offered by ICSOM members are provided on that page (such as information about ordering Bruce Ridge’s recent book *Last Year’s Words, and Next Year’s Voices*, highly recommended reading for everyone, by the way). As stated there, the Member Service links are not an endorsement by ICSOM. Contact me should you have an item that you wish to have included in the Member Services links.

We created room on the home page for the “Current News” column by moving the information about ICSOM that had previously appeared there to a special page for that purpose. We added an “About” option on the menu (<https://icsom.org/about/>) to access the new page.

Why is it important for our members to visit the website? To stay informed about the news regarding ICSOM’s orchestras. All are encouraged to view our improved website to see these updates, as well as check in weekly to keep up with the current news stories.

Finally, I must give a sincere thank-you to Martha Warington for all of her dedicated work. I am pleased that those ideas we discussed in Portland have been realized, and so quickly. Thanks for all you do, Martha!

Ideas of having ICSOM’s website as an improved resource for our membership evolved into action, and I am pleased to have assisted in this project. Contact me any time at AustinLPaul@gmail.com with suggestions for even more improvements. 

Where Words Fail

By Jack Howell

A name was spoken, and a young child dressed in white walked onstage, carrying a candle. This happened eleven times. In the silence as the children walked, the occasional faint sob pierced the hall, all the more piercing for being forcefully restrained.



Brian Lapoint

Joyce Fienberg
Richard Gottfried
Rose Mallinger
Jerry Rabinowitz
Cecil Rosenthal
David Rosenthal
Bernice Simon
Sylvan Simon
Daniel Stein
Melvin Wax
Irving Younger

“May their memory be a blessing.”

After the eleventh name and child, eleven musicians stood and played Boris Pigovat’s string arrangement of David Zehavi’s “Eli, Eli” (“My God, My God”).

Many readers will have seen the hour-long PBS program of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s *A Concert for Peace and Unity*, which aired nationally on December 11 and remains archived for viewing at pbs.org. It is difficult to write about this concert, but our fellow ICSOM musicians should know how it came to be, and pray that their communities never need a similar observance. Every community that is visited by the specter of hate and violence must find a way to shape itself around the ugly fact. That a symphony orchestra would have a part to play in that shaping is an important statement for our art. As the quotation from Hans Christian Andersen, which served as the concert subtitle, so eloquently put it, “Where words fail, music speaks.”

The morning of Saturday, October 27, Mary Persin, PSO Vice President of Artistic Planning, was at Heinz Hall as PSO musicians rehearsed with cellist Maxmilian Hornung for that evening’s PSO360 chamber concert. She glanced at her phone as it lit up with a text from the Israel Philharmonic’s music director, Lahav Shani: “Is everyone in Pittsburgh ok?”

She had no idea what he was talking about.

By the end of rehearsal, everyone knew. As the horrible details emerged of the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill, so did the idea for the concert. It was the desire of the entire institution to do everything possible, along with the rest of Pittsburgh, to foster unity and solidarity with the Jewish community. Sunday’s concert the next day began with an address by PSO Orchestra Committee chair Stephen Kostyniak (text included in the December 2018 issue of *Senza Sordino*) and a string quartet performance of “Eli, Eli”. The PSO website offered a free download of the orchestra’s recording of Barber’s *Adagio for Strings*, while a management team worked to find a date and assemble the elements of what became, a month later, the Concert for Peace and Unity. Executive Director Melia Tourangeau marshaled resources and handled community relations, Vice President of Orchestra Operations Tabitha Mae Pflieger organized the innumerable details of production and >

The 2019 ICSOM Conference will take place August 21–24, at the Park City Marriott in Park City, Utah.

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

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

video recording, and Persin created the artistic design.

It is a measure of the power of the idea that everyone said yes, without hesitation or reservation. PSO Music Director Manfred Honeck and Itzhak Perlman rearranged their schedules. The



Ed DeAmmit/Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Mendelssohn Choir was in from the start. The director of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School pledged the students who held the candles. Speakers Rabbi Jeffrey Meyers, Rabbi of the Tree of Life, Wasi Mohamed, Executive Director of the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, Chief of Allegheny General Hospital, and Liron Blumenthal, a senior musical theatre major at Point Park University and Squirrel Hill native, all agreed with spirit. A particularly powerful speaker was Ari Mahler, the trauma nurse who first treated the shooter. Through his deeds and words following the shooting, Ari, the son of a rabbi, became Pittsburgh's living symbol of loving response to hate. Does it need to be said that everyone, from Mr. Perlman and Maestro Honeck to PSO musicians to the stagehands from IATSE Local #3, donated their services? Perhaps it does. The concert was presented as a gift to the community, benefitting the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Fund for Victims of Terror and the First Responders Fund for the six officers wounded in the attack. The free tickets, distributed via website, "sold out" in two hours.

The swift arrangement for recording for broadcast was thanks to responsive work by Debbie Newmark of the AFM and Deb Acklin at WQED. Condensation of the concert into a one-hour broadcast necessitated some cuts. The concert in reality began with Avro Pärt's *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten*, but Ravel's "Kaddish" from *Deux Melodiques Hebraïques* for clarinet and string orchestra, performed by PSO Principal Clarinetist Michael Rusinek, began the broadcast. "It was important to set the tone early in the concert," said Persin. The Kaddish, the Hebrew prayer for the dead, was followed in its musical setting by a reading of the text by Rabbi Meyers.

It would be a poor use of space to relate the entire program in detail. Suffice it to say that it described an arc from mourning to pain that reached both its climax and release in the Largo of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. The achingly symbolic reading of the names and playing of "Eli, Eli" gave way to the hope of "Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains" from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the soothing "Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen" (How lovely are thy dwellings) from Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Itzhak Perlman's evocative and inimitable performance of

John Williams's *Three Pieces from Schindler's List*, and, following Ari Mahler's remarks, the cascading, crashing waves of "Nimrod" from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. Eleven times, the tower chime rang.

Grief and remembrance, hope and resolve.

We of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra wish for you that you never have need to perform for such an occasion. But if you do, you could do far worse than to have a community like Pittsburgh, a soloist like Itzhak Perlman, and a maestro like Manfred Honeck in front of you, and dedicated staff members designing an unforgettable program and making the multitude of parts work together.

"*Zichronam livracha*. May their memory be a blessing." 

Note: The author is the bass clarinetist in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Conductor Evaluation Program Update

By Barb Corbató

In December 2017, ICSOM announced the creation of its pilot online Conductor Evaluation Program. The program has been up and running for just over a year, and has begun to grow. Currently, the bank of evaluations includes 20 conductors evaluated by five orchestras. As more orchestras participate, the numbers in the bank will grow, making this an even more valuable tool.



Martin Honeck

Orchestras complete evaluations by the following process: ICSOM delegates request an evaluation of a particular conductor by logging in to the ICSOM website (www.icsom.org), going to the conductor evaluation page, and filling in the form. Note that navigating to the conductor evaluation page without first logging in brings up the form for requesting evaluation results, so it is imperative for the delegate to log in. I then contact the delegate to confirm email addresses—if any updates are needed, the delegate will need to complete those through the ICSOM directory database. Requests for evaluations should be made prior to the concert cycle so that the evaluation can be sent out immediately after the concerts conclude. A unique, one-time-use SurveyMonkey link, will be sent to each musician in that orchestra, and all responses are recorded anonymously.

One or two additional customized questions may be added, and the results from those custom questions would only be sent to the management of that specific orchestra if requested by that management.

Orchestra managements may request results by going to the conductor evaluation page on the ICSOM site, and filling out the form, which includes an indemnification clause ensuring confidentiality. I will then contact the manager to let them know if there are any results for that conductor, and if so provide them in a password-protected PDF file. If the manager requests it, I can contact the Organization of Canadian Symphonic Musicians (OCSM) and the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) to check on results in their data banks. 

At this point things have been going smoothly, and I look forward to receiving more requests from ICSOM delegates for many more conductors and growing the bank of results for a thriving Conductor Evaluation Program.

For more information on the creation and implementation of the ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Program, please refer to ICSOM President Paul Austin's excellent article in the December 2017 issue of *Senza Sordino*. 

Note: the author is the Administrator of the Conductor Evaluation Program and the Assistant Principal Viola and ICSOM Delegate for the Grand Rapids Symphony.

American Opera Initiative

By Douglas Rosenthal

In January, the Washington National Opera (WNO) held its eighth annual festival of contemporary opera, the American Opera Initiative (AOI). Conceived by WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and former WNO Director of Artistic Operations Christina Schepelmann as a way to nurture and grow the production of new opera, the program itself has grown, with some of the created works continuing as full-scale opera productions.



Ashlea Boorer

In 2011, the company had already established a program to nurture the careers of young singers, the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Zambello and Schepelmann felt there was a need to do something similar for the people on the creative side. "Composers and librettists are a small group," said Zambello. "But we felt that by giving opportunities to potentially talented young ones we would be building a whole generation of creators working in the field we so passionately love."

Each year, AOI productions involve three short operas and one longer opera, each based on a theme or a story that is American in some way. They are scored for a small chamber orchestra (usually 13 players), in part because they play in one of the Kennedy Center's smallest venues, the Terrace Theater. The short form was chosen to give participants the chance to create a story, characters, and drama without the pressure of a whole evening. Composers and librettists chosen for the longer works are more established in the field. An important feature of the program is mentoring by well-established conductors (such as John DeMain), librettists (including Gene Scheer), and composers (such as Jake Heggie and Kevin Puts). The annual festival has also allowed the works to be seen and heard by other organizations that are commissioning composers and librettists.

While it may not be rare in the symphonic world to play premieres of new works or to get a chance to work with the composer in rehearsals, it is far less common in the opera world. My first experience with AOI was playing in the then-hour-long opera *An American Soldier* by composer Huang Ruo and librettist David Henry Hwang in 2014. The work is an account of the tragedy of Private Danny Chen during the ongoing war in

Afghanistan. Interestingly, the parts in the three-person brass section (which included *Senza Sordino* Editor Peter de Boor as the hornist) called for doubles on two unusual instruments: the whirly tube and the didgeridoo. To me, they contributed to Huang Ruo's depiction of fear, uncertainty, and darkness.

An American Soldier is one of several works that have seen notable further development and performances. In 2017, it was expanded and received performances at Opera Theater of St. Louis with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. *Proving Up* (2018), by Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek, which tells the story of a family's quest to achieve the American dream in 1860s Nebraska, was a co-commission with Opera Omaha and has also appeared at the Aspen Music Festival and Columbia University's Miller Theater. Other works receiving subsequent productions include Christopher Weiss and John de los Santos's opera *Service Provider* and Nathan Fletcher and Megan Cohen's piece *Bridge For Three*.

Several AOI participants have gone on to further achievements. Missy Mazzoli was named the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Mead Composer-in-Residence, and has received a commission from the Metropolitan Opera. Composer Nicolas Benavides has been appointed as Glimmerglass Composer-in-Residence, and Rene Orth became a composer-in-residence at Opera Philadelphia. Many have received commissions to create additional new operas. It is our hope that through efforts like AOI, American artists will continue to utilize opera as a way to express themselves and capture the American experience. 

Note: the author is the Assistant Principal Trombone and ICSOM Delegate for the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra/Washington National Opera Orchestra.

Newslets

New Contract and New Leadership

The San Francisco Symphony (SFS) recently announced two positive developments. In November, the musicians ratified a four-year agreement with increases in wages and in the defined-benefit pension plan. The contract also includes a provision for shared equity funding, in which the administration will lend money to a musician to help fund a portion of the down payment for a home, in return for sharing in the appreciation of the value of the home when the loan is repaid. This will be a great help, given the current real estate market in San Francisco, especially to younger musicians.

In December, Esa-Pekka Salonen was named the twelfth music director in the symphony's 107-year history. He will begin his tenure in September 2020, at the conclusion of Michael Tilson Thomas's 25th and final season. MTT will retain the position of Music Director Laureate. Along with Salonen's appointment, the SFS will introduce a new artistic leadership model with eight collaborative partners from a variety of cultural disciplines, including a film producer, an artificial intelligence entrepreneur and roboticist, a jazz musician and singer, and a composer. This experimental model will allow for the exploration of new ideas, as well as a discussion of what music is and what it means to us. The new artistic leadership model is intended to create new experiences in and out of the concert hall. 

Hollywood Walk of Fame

Gustavo Dudamel, Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, received the 2654th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on January 22, 2019, in the category of Recording. The dedication took place in front of the Musicians Institute where the star is embedded at Hollywood Boulevard and Highland



Dustin Downing/Los Angeles Philharmonic

Avenue. Dudamel joins the ranks of esteemed conductors Toscanini, Stokowski, Ormandy, Pierre Monteux, Bruno Walter, John Philip Sousa, Andre Kostelanetz, Arthur Fiedler, Leonard Bernstein, Zubin Mehta, Robert Shaw, William Steinberg (Pittsburgh Symphony 1952-1976) and Frederick Stock (Chicago Symphony 1905-1942). Dudamel is celebrating his tenth season with the LA Phil at the same time that the orchestra is celebrating its 100th anniversary season. The orchestra,

led by Dudamel, was featured on this year's Oscar awards ceremony in February, performing "The Journey Home" by John Williams from *Superman: The Movie*.

Massey on the Move

In January, the Jacksonville Symphony announced the departure of its CEO and President, Robert Massey. Less than six weeks later, the Louisville Orchestra announced that it had concluded its search for a new Executive Director with the appointment of Massey to the position. His tenure in Louisville will begin almost immediately, in March.

Massey served in the leadership role in Jacksonville for four years. His time there was marked by a landmark progressive collective bargaining agreement, signed in 2017, which reversed a long-standing trend of concessionary agreements (*Note: See the March 2017 issue*). He also oversaw the creation and execution of a new strategic plan that added new programs in and outside of Jacoby Symphony Hall, expanded student and adult music education initiatives, and added new staff conductor and composer-in-residence positions. All of this was made possible by an increase in revenue, to such an extent that the organization's net assets have increased 60%.

Todd Lockwood, Orchestra Committee Chair in Jacksonville, said, "In the few years that Robert was here he created a new vision and direction for the Jacksonville Symphony. After bringing together musicians, board, and staff, Robert facilitated a new strategic plan centered on growing the orchestra and launched a capital campaign to achieve these goals. Robert was an inspiration to everyone and we are sad to see him leave but wish him and Louisville the best success."

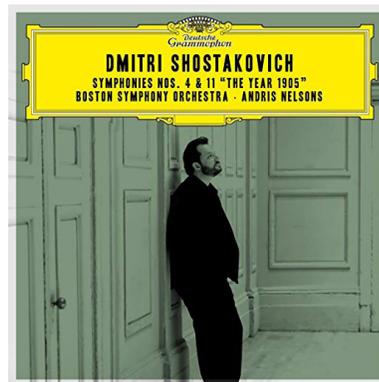
In Louisville, Massey will succeed Andrew Kipe, whose tenure began in November 2013, ending in August 2018 with his departure for the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. He oversaw double-digit growth both in ticket

revenue (59%) and in contributed income (18%).

Clara Markham, co-chair of the Musician's Committee, said, "We are very impressed with Robert Massey's excellent qualifications and accomplishments in Jacksonville, and are looking forward to his leadership as the new Executive Director of the Louisville Orchestra."

ICSOM at the Grammys

At the 61st annual Grammy awards in February, the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recording of Shostakovich's Fourth and Eleventh Symphonies (under the direction of the BSO's music director, Andris Nelsons) won the awards for Best Orchestral Performance and Best Engineered Album (Classical). Recorded live at Symphony Hall, the album is part of a project to record all the symphonies of Shostakovich with Nelsons for Deutsche Grammophon. Two previous albums in the series also won Grammys for Best Orchestral Performance (*Note: see the March 2016 and March 2017 issues*). In all, the project accounts for four of the 11 Grammys won by the BSO.



Other ICSOM orchestras receiving nominations were the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Beethoven *Eroica* Symphony and Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1) and the San Francisco Symphony (Schumann Symphonies 1-4) for Best Orchestral Performance; and the MET Orchestra (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for Best Opera Recording. The PSO's recording of Beethoven and Strauss was also nominated for Best Engineered Album (Classical).

Concert for the Deaf

In December, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) performed a concert intended to be fully accessible to the deaf.

The concert, the Deaf and Loud Symphonic Experience, was born out of a collaboration between Dame Evelyn Glennie, the Grammy-award-winning percussionist, and Sean Forbes, a hip-hop artist from the Detroit area, both of whom are deaf.

The performances of songs by Forbes's long-time collaborator Jake Bass, as well as a selection of Motown classics, were all done in American Sign Language, and were accompanied by large-screen videos with the lyrics.

Immediately after the concert, there was a Silent Disco, with a vibrating dance floor.

"The DSO prides itself on being the most accessible orchestra on the planet, so we were eager to collaborate on the very first Deaf and Loud Symphonic Experience when the idea was brought to us," said DSO Vice President and General Manager Erik Rönmark.

The concert benefited the Deaf Professional Arts Network (D-PAN), a non-profit co-founded by Forbes to make music accessible to the deaf community.

Readers Respond

Meredith Snow's article on implicit bias is a wonderfully informative read. It was her reference to the McGurk Effect that got me thinking about the way humans perceive musical performance and the way we orchestra musicians respond to visual conducting gestures. I have often said that audiences listen as much with their eyes as with their ears, and that our stage demeanor influences how they "hear" the performance; a study from 2013 (link below) speaks to this intriguingly.

My own thoughts on how sight influences orchestral musicians stem from the observation that, for many musicians, a visual gesture may supersede the sound of the music as the arbiter of when to play. Ceding to the visual, instead of what we're hearing, results far too often (daily, as a matter of fact... at every rehearsal and every concert), in less than optimal ensemble. Lip service is often given to the notion that an orchestra is just a big chamber ensemble, and that we should listen and play together according to the tenets of chamber music. But few baton-wielders conduct in a manner that reinforces that sensibility. Gestures/motions come too early, whether out of intent or ineptness, or perfunctory timekeeping, and encourage the visually-distractable to play ahead of those who are actually listening. The problem is exacerbated by conductors who angrily demand, "play with the stick!" Something related to the McGurk Effect is at play here, too.

Regarding the phenomenon of how humans perceive musical performance, I am providing a link to an eye-opening Harvard study, published in the Harvard Gazette in 2013: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/08/the-look-of-music/>

"In a study by Harvard graduate Chia-Jung Tsay, nearly all participants — including highly trained musicians — were better able to identify the winners of classical music competitions by watching silent video clips than by listening to audio recordings. 'In this case,' says Tsay, 'it suggests that the visual trumps the audio, even in a setting where audio information should matter much more.'"

For our music-making there should be more than meets the eye. There is no denying that what we see influences what and how we hear, but I believe that any orchestra musician worthy of the job must be able to reconcile what they see with what they hear, and not fall prey to "The McGurk Effect". The ability to hear through the visual distractions from the podium is one of the extraordinary demands of the work, and crucial to attaining the finest ensemble.

James Orleans

Retired Boston Symphony Orchestra bassist

The litigation between Elizabeth Rowe and the Boston symphony has now been settled, and I am very grateful that my peers have been patient and supportive of their colleagues—most particularly, of course, of Elizabeth, who has earned that support every day, the last 14 years.

As trying as the litigation has been for everyone, the controversy surrounding it dovetails with what has been an ever-growing concern of mine—that of whether orchestra audi-

tions, in the modern era, have been "open". It may also provide us with a teachable moment. I have begun to read a great deal in the national press about how the issue of equality in hiring is handled in our profession, replete with statistics. Great concern has been expressed for having a level playing field. We are now, officially, under the microscope of the national media, and the consequences of that are not yet clear.

It may be wise for both employers and musicians to review and even standardize, on a national level, what "open" means. We need to avoid any sign that we are running auditions in the US to maintain a special status as a privileged club (and here I intend no disrespect to the BSO, whose auditions, I firmly believe, are already "open"). Newcomers of all shapes, sizes, colors and creeds must be welcomed as applicants and potential future colleagues.

So what does "open" mean, at least to me?

- To allow a competent player a live hearing is critical, even though the sheer number of competent, trained musicians is overwhelming, of course.
- When a player is playing a preliminary audition, that preliminary should be run in a way that clearly gives the benefit of the doubt to the player. Rather than eliminating someone in an early round with many positive qualities who has uttered one questionable note, we are admonished in Boston to err on the side of giving that person a chance to play again.
- An ongoing problem is that of prelims yielding very low totals of players, and later rounds containing relatively high numbers of invitees. The result is an environment where players listening are looking forward to "the real audition" or "the real applicants". If one advances 5% or less of auditionees from a first to a second round, it results in a totally random selection.
- Despite the difficulties during the transitional period to a new hire from a retiring player or one who has been released, with or without tenure, orchestras must be careful not to create "realities on the ground". Too many national auditions in recent years have had obvious orientation towards players who, by invitation rather than audition, have had the inestimable advantage of being a familiar colleague to panels, rather than an anonymous peer—worthy of consideration, but not of advantage in the process.
- A critical element in auditions is closely regulating discussion, particularly in the presence of a Music Director, avoiding identifying language which might bias members of the panel towards a particular, known candidate. However, there are other reasons that discussion can get out of hand—for instance, explaining to the uninitiated the virtues or weaknesses of particular schools of playing, either specific conservatories or national schools of playing. The playing itself should show the merits or faults of the player.
- Finally, we may have arrived at a moment where it is necessary to propose that all orchestras maintain the screen through the entirety of an audition. We must avoid the slightest appearance of impropriety.

I am terribly worried that the public debate will begin to exert irresistible pressure on employers in our field to guarantee outcomes that are at odds with hiring the most artistically qualified. >>

Furthermore, it has been a very important part of my career to train young musicians. I have never seen the level of despair present in the conservatory and university trained population. They feel, justifiably, that they have never had less of a chance to be heard fairly. That is a cancer for the orchestral world. We are already facing great financial trials and decreasing number of jobs that pay a middle class living with solid benefits and pensions. How can we get in a pulp about the nobility of our artistic strivings when we are showing less than full sympathy and due consideration to the youngest and least experienced amongst us? We may only be seeing the tip of the iceberg when it comes to litigation against our employers, and that is a terrible waste of our industry's resources.

John Ferrillo

Principal Oboe, Boston Symphony; Faculty, New England Conservatory, Boston University

Note: An earlier version of Mr. Ferrillo's letter previously appeared on Slipped Disc (slippeddisc.com).

The editor welcomes letters discussing topics raised in the pages of Senza Sordino, reserving the right not to print such letters, or to edit them for length or propriety.

Great Mexican Sabbatical Project (continued)

cant time working in Mexican ensembles know first hand just how presumptuous these generalizations can be. We fondly recall Mexican audiences being some of the most loyal and enthusiastic for whom we have ever played. We remember them loving Rachmaninoff as much as Revueltas or Rodrigo. As a result, we often find these assumptions about Mexicans, stemming as they do from our first-world bubbles of white privilege, almost as grating to our systems as when we hear politicians calling them "rapists."

It is with these memories and sensibilities that I decided to revisit Mexico, to re-connect with orchestras and former colleagues (both Mexican and American), to get to know some of the younger Mexican orchestra musicians coming up through the ranks, and to write a blog about this as my sabbatical project. It's been my hope that folks would not only enjoy the articles, but also perhaps come to examine their own preconceived notions about this extraordinary country, its people, and their intense love for the arts.

(And because so many friends and colleagues requested this, I have gladly included a few articles on Mexican cuisine. I'm happy to oblige in this, too, as Lord KNOWS: the food is as tasty as it is still misunderstood North o' The Wall.)

So, what are some of my impressions six months in to all this?

The arts are ubiquitous here. In most Mexican cities, one can stand out in front of one's residence and find examples of it without taking a single step: on the left, a sculpture; on the right, a monument; an artist painting on a canvas in the park across the way while a flamenco guitarist plays at the corner. And when standing in the colonial centers of so many Mexican towns, one can be bowled over simply by the old European architecture, the ornate designs on many of their homes' portals and the intense splash of colors adorning the buildings. Vibrant colors seem to be everywhere else as well, from the clothing

and textiles to the food, and even the music. Not only that, the arts aren't considered elitist here the way they are increasingly perceived in the United States and even in much of Europe. In Mexico, the arts are considered basic to all human life and to the sustenance of the soul—as they should be.

The Mexican orchestra industry is alive, well, and as vibrant as ever. For example, Mexico City houses approximately a dozen professional ensembles, if one counts the service bands with the orchestras. In the three decades since I left the music scene in this country, a few orchestras have shuttered their doors (like in Veracruz) but new ones have also arisen (like in Boca del Río, just down the road from Veracruz). And many of the ensembles are sounding better than ever with this new young generation of Mexican musicians assuming positions in their orchestras.

Finally, we could learn a lesson in programming from our Mexican colleagues. Concertgoers in Mexico are accustomed to hearing their Revueltas and Moncayo woven in to programs along with their Ravel and Mahler, the same way that US audiences are used to hearing Bernstein and Copland in the mix with Beethoven and Strauss. For those orchestras looking to attract a local Latinx audience by programming more Mexican music, Mexican compositions need to find a way into their masterworks, educational, and pops series, not just a one time all-Mexican program. For, if it just consists of that one special show for the season, it will likely result in being perceived by the "target market" as simply pandering to them.

So there you have it: random musings from our occasionally random wanderings around this unforgettable country. Our fascination with exploring Mexican culture, history, and cuisine has led us to briefly detour over to Spain and Portugal and explore Mexico's European and Moorish roots. And as I have some friends and colleagues currently working in Spanish orchestras, we're looking to hear them in concert in addition to getting their takes on being in the minority as foreigners in their adopted countries.

And don't worry: when we return to Mexico we still have musicians with whom to connect and more orchestras to check out. It should be fun, but by the time you read this, Shirley and I will likely be savoring tapas and sangria while listening to Rodrigo in Seville or Granada...or something. ¡Hasta luego!

Note: The author is Principal Timpanist of the Utah Symphony and a former ICSOM President. His blog can be found on the web at www.nomadicdrummer.com and on Facebook at [The Nomadic Drummer](#).

Baltimore's Brass Avalanche (continued)

tendees and love for the home team. More than a few seasoned listeners have been calling it the best concert they have ever attended, period. We even raised \$12,000 for My Sister's Place Women's Center, the women's shelter next door to the Basilica, in a well-coordinated collection.

Every musician of the BSO was mobilized to make this concert everything it could be, while members of our loyal audience had been already working overtime as part of an advocacy group called Save Our BSO. Before we knew it, the former mayor and governor, Martin O'Malley, was all-in as the evening's host. Baltimore's present mayor, Catherine Elizabeth >

Pugh, also joined our line-up.

The January 8th concert was overflowing well past the church's capacity—all citizens of Maryland who cared more about us than we ever realized. It was clear that this wasn't simply about a labor dispute: this was about the destiny of troubled Baltimore itself, a city with so much to offer, waiting for its inevitable ascendancy. In recognition of the state's largest and most important arts institution, people throughout Maryland have made it known that we all deserve better than what Martin O'Malley described in his remarks during our concert as "self-inflicted poverty." Indeed, this chapter of our 103-year history has turned out to be mainly a crisis of vision, resulting in a shortage of money.

While this is far from over—really just the middle of what will be a long effort—there are important lessons to be learned already. We didn't wait for a work stoppage to get organized. We had already begun to define our identity in the public mind as the musicians who are the orchestra itself. It has become abundantly clear, from the more than 10,000 letters of support subsequently circulated, that donors and community members alike are primarily behind the actual people who play the music.

Most importantly, I am happy to report that after this landmark concert, the attention has turned to raising the money we need to grow our widely loved ensemble. We hope that a recent resolution from our own city council will result in greater funding from our state legislature, funding that had been cut after the great recession and never quite replenished. (Note: Del. Maggie McIntosh (D-Baltimore), chair of the Maryland

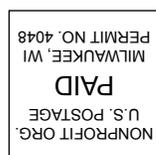
House appropriations committee, filed a bill on February 27 that provides an additional \$3.2 million to the BSO over two years.) In a recent turn of events, BSO President Peter Kjome even remarked that we are all united in the effort to restore public funding to the BSO.

It was apt that these particular peer orchestras came to add their names of major-league weight behind us: two of them had been assailed with similar attempts to drag them down in the name of fiscal prudence in previous years. It seems to be the spirit of this age, also affecting workplaces in corporate America: downsize and outsource while leaving the remaining workers to scramble to hold together the things and places they love. And despite their difficulties, it has been these very top orchestras that have, time and again, been held up as examples of what Baltimore could also achieve, should there finally be a compelling and aspirational vision for us and for our community.

To write about how music sounds is folly, of course. But it must be said this concert of spectacular, ringing sounds was inspiring not only for our community of hopeful supporters, but also for us, the Baltimore Symphony Musicians.

All of us are deeply grateful for the generosity of those musicians who came to play alongside us on that cold, rainy, January night, to make it the brightest and most hopeful of occasions.

Note: the author is Principal Trumpet of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and founder of the Future Symphony Institute, www.futuresymphony.org.



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