

# Senza Sordino

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## COVID-19 Agreements: Trends and the Takeaway

By Keith Carrick

**W**hen the Coronavirus Pandemic brought our industry to a sudden halt in March, it became clear that a series of contract-reopening negotiations were soon to follow. The scope of the financial losses experienced by our orchestras meant that many of these negotiations would likely be difficult. This difficulty was only compounded by the incredible uncertainty surrounding when we can begin fulfilling our mission.

Arguably one of the most important tools for any committee facing a tricky negotiation is information, typically provided by an ICSOM Delegate or the AFM Wagechart. Something similar would be helpful and necessary to assist our orchestras going forward, hence the governing board decided to create a document summarizing some of the most salient features of the various contract modifications. The result is the COVID-19 spreadsheet now posted on the ICSOM website. Many thanks to all of our wonderful ICSOM Delegates who sought out and provided all the information quickly and efficiently. We'll do our best to keep the document current in the coming weeks and months (*Note: See the spreadsheet at <https://icsom.org/covid/>. Login required*).

Looking over the spreadsheet, a few things become clear. First, as of this writing in late May, every orchestra, with the notable exception of the Met, is paying its musicians some substantial part of regular salary, and a little over half are still receiving full pay. Larger-budget orchestras and orchestras who are part of a larger performing-arts institution are trending towards steeper pay reductions than smaller-budget orchestras, generally in the range of 10–30% (with a few outliers). Only six orchestras reported that their cuts were implemented unilaterally by management, and about half of all orchestras have either already ratified a media side letter or are in the process of doing so.

Many orchestras that have avoided furloughs or deep pay cuts have done so in large part due to federal assistance, primarily in the form of forgivable loans under the Paycheck Protection Program. Within the next few weeks, that assistance will have run its course. It is certainly possible that

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## ICSOM Musicians Get Creative

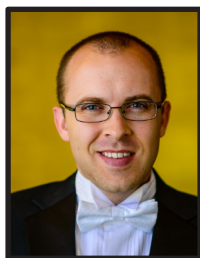
By Greg Mulligan

**T**he global health emergency caused by the novel coronavirus stopped life as we knew it in mid-March. The effects of COVID-19 have been a shock to all, performers and music lovers alike. Shut out of concert halls and denied the ability to be together physically, ICSOM musicians immediately harnessed their creativity. They have launched diverse initiatives to help fill the gaping hole that the absence of orchestra, opera, and ballet performances have left in our culture. They have continued making music, and they have increased social media outreach to audiences and supporters, adapting quickly and imaginatively to the new circumstances.

ICSOM musicians in many orchestras have worked cooperatively with their orchestras' staffs to produce new online content, allowing more flexibility in the organizations' ability to take advantage of various platforms to reach listeners. The AFM's Symphonic Services Division's Rochelle Skolnick and Deborah Newmark have helped make this possible through intense negotiations for a series of special side letters to the Integrated Media Agreement for this unusual period of time. Musicians and orchestra managements have made recordings and live streams widely available on social media, as well as on traditional media platforms.

One of the first and most ambitious types of projects to emerge was the creation of videos of orchestral works in which individual musicians recorded their parts from their own homes. More than 60% of ICSOM orchestras have produced at least one of the now familiar "gallery view" video recordings that can be viewed on Facebook and/or on YouTube. Musicians of the Indianapolis Symphony have created their own YouTube channel, called "Music in a Time of Distance" in recognition of the current period, featuring recorded excerpts from Beethoven and Dvořák symphonies. Minnesota Orchestra musicians released a video with Dessá, a local rapper/singer/songwriter, as part of a local fundraiser for arts organizations. Lyric Opera musicians produced "Ride of the Valkyries", which made a cameo appearance at the League of American Orchestras' online conference. Baltimore Symphony musicians recorded the final seven minutes of the

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Scott Jarvie



Brian Praehl

## Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

I am sorry to say that just over two months into this coronavirus pandemic, the crisis for our orchestral industry is only beginning. Most of our summer employment is canceled. When we do return to work, it is unlikely that we will be able to perform as full orchestras, with some semblance of audience in attendance, before January of 2021. And it may well be longer. While some orchestras are already looking at possible opening scenarios in late August and early September of this year, it is hard to imagine that this could occur in any salubrious or monetarily advantageous way. We are faced not only with the issue of work safety for our musicians but safety protocols and reassurance for our audiences as well. There are simply too many risks and too little scientific consensus of what a "safe" return to work is going to look like.



Diane Alarcon Photography

A grim picture to be sure. But not one without hope.

First and foremost, we must always remember that our patrons and donors feel a dedication to our music, and a passion for its performance, that is as deep as ours. We have developed long-standing relationships within our communities. Those relationships will not simply be forgotten in the interim. We are already reaching out through our orchestra websites and social media platforms to maintain those connections. Virtual performances, in-home recitals, and good old-fashioned phone calls, are all avenues we are using to connect with our audiences. We, and they, are not going anywhere. Literally.

Just as this pandemic has revealed the inequities in social, economic, and political access in our democracy, the principles of our unionism—our ideals of solidarity and fairness—will be challenged in the coming months. When the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) money runs out, which it inevitably will, we are going to be put to the test. Managers, who measure this crisis by entirely different criteria from ours, will try to preserve 'the institution' of our orchestras above preserving the musicians they comprise. We will need to stand together to ensure that all our musicians receive the same protections and pay, and that we are not pushed into returning to work before it is safe (*Note: see "Safety in an Era of Uncertainty" on page 5*). Orchestra committees and the Local must bargain with managers for safety protocols before any musician returns to work. To the best of our ability, those protocols must align with the (ever-changing) scientific consensus and civil authority. When in doubt, err on the side of caution. Any individual musician who reasonably believes that returning to work would jeopardize their health, or the health of a family member, must not be penalized. NO ONE should ever be asked to sign a liability waiver, releasing the employer or facility, as a condition of returning to work. And finally, as we do take the stage again in socially-distanced, smaller ensembles, we must ensure that ALL of our musicians are paid—performing or not—and that the »



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work is spread equitably to the extent possible.

Which brings me to the subject of media. We will most certainly be streaming performances online before we can play them for a live audience. We have already had live-streamed and newly-recorded performances from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra, respectively. When, what, and how we get paid for media, or even our base salary, is going to be the next battleground. The AFM has already been approached by the Electronic Managers Association (EMA) to discuss eliminating restrictions and payments in the Integrated Media Agreement (IMA). Managers are asking for unlimited rights to past performances, archival material, and anything we are able to create in the near future—no limits, no guarantee of pay. This is a treacherous slope. If Congress does not increase money to the PPP, we will most certainly be looking at another bleak landscape of furloughed musicians. Keep in mind that ticket sales—earned income—are a diminishing slice of our overall budgets. Our institutions will not be permanently hampered by a season without that percentage of revenue. But I fear if we give away payment for media, we may never see it again.

I know that many of our musicians want greater freedom to connect with their audiences through all the media platforms. There is a strong desire to keep our patrons engaged and perhaps a justified sense of panic that our jobs are dependent on that connection. But this rush to give away unlimited media risks overwhelming the potential audience. We need to present well-curated, personalized events that are targeted at our individual audience and patrons. Until we are able to return to live performance and confidently invite our audiences back to our halls, our benefits and salary are inextricably linked to media. We must tread carefully here.

As dire as this situation is, we will survive. It is not only we, the musicians, who will fight to keep our orchestras alive. Our audiences and patrons, and yes, managers and boards too, want our industry to weather this crisis and thrive. As we navigate the personal and economic fallout from the pandemic, we are seeing how intimately connected we are. We cannot move forward without taking everyone into account—we are all living on the same planet, breathing the same air. 

## President's Report

*By Paul Austin*

### Your Virtual Presence is Requested

There is no question that right now is an incredibly challenging time for all of us. This pandemic is causing both a health and economic crisis like none other we have seen. The number one concern that ICSOM has is for the health and well-being of the nearly 4000 musicians of our 52 orchestras, who have not been able to perform their jobs in person now for months due to COVID-19.

While we have been isolated from the concert stage or pit, it is good to see that social distancing has not made us disappear altogether. Thanks to social

media, many of you have made this pandemic an opportunity to expand your virtual presence.

To those players' associations who have turned to social media during this time, thank you. Your posts not only send a message to your online followers, but also to your orchestras—their managers and staff, board members and donors, conductors and audience. To have active social media accounts at a time when the world is home-bound provides the rare opportunity to widen our reach in promoting orchestral music and the arts.


In the past I have asked delegates if their players' associations are active on social media. While some have flourishing accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as websites and online newsletters, others have mentioned that they haven't found time to do this and have noted that upkeep of the accounts is too big of a commitment during the regular performance season. Since the pandemic has changed everyone's daily schedule, some have discovered an opportunity to explore activities that previously had been on a wish list.

If expanding the online presence of your players' association is on that list, now is the time to act! Creating social media accounts for your players' association would provide an excellent opportunity for the musicians of your orchestra to band together in a common task. In addition, if your Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram accounts have become dormant over the years, I ask you to consider refreshing those platforms right away.

Should you have any concerns about finding content to post on your account, I encourage you to consider using ICSOM as a resource, by sharing our posts on Facebook (ICSOM), Twitter (@ICSOM), and Instagram (ICSOM1962). In addition, take a moment to visit [icsom.org](https://www.icsom.org) to view current and archived news about our orchestras, including a new page for COVID-19 items (under the Reference tab after logging in). To obtain a login for ICSOM's website, which is available to all active and emeritus ICSOM musicians, go to <https://www.icsom.org/contact/members.php>.

Interacting with the posts of other players' associations, arts organizations, and labor unions is another great idea. By doing so, you may find new online supporters who are happy to reciprocate by sharing and liking your posts as well as following your account.

Today about 80% of the players' associations of ICSOM orchestras have Facebook accounts, 60% have Twitter accounts, and 75% are on Instagram. Bravo to all who contribute to and maintain these platforms, and thanks to all who assist in keeping the accounts active by liking and sharing the posts. Links to these social media accounts are provided in the Orchestras section of our website, <https://www.icsom.org/orchestras/>, by orchestra (under the Social Media heading).

The online presence of your players' association is your virtual voice, speaking to both your local community and the arts world at large. The people in these communities are eager to hear from you in order to brighten their confined world. Know that ICSOM will support the social media accounts of its players' associations by continuing to tag them on our posts, as well as liking and sharing their posts. Join us in exploring ways to make this challenging time a rare opportunity to improve your presence, virtually. 



Tony Johnson



## Secretary's Report

By Laura Ross

### The Value of Communication

This is the second time in my professional career that I have been forced into an extended work stoppage over which I had no control. The first was four years after I joined the Nashville Symphony, when the board shut the orchestra down in early February 1988, ostensibly because of the effects of the October 1987 market crash. Our return to work took nearly nine months. In those nine months, I saw the orchestra, which had been a united group of musicians, torn apart by suspicion and ill will.



Initially, the orchestra members worked together to get the message out: we were still contributing members of the community. We fanned out and performed wherever we could, thanks to friends, patrons, and Jobs With Justice (who paid the hall rental fee to allow us to repeat our final concert the very next day.) Our Music Director, Kenneth Schermerhorn, joined us to conduct a pops concert that included an arrangement of How Do You Keep the Music Playing, which was then recorded in a studio for a series of public service announcements featuring numerous artists and community leaders. We were united.

As time progressed, some musicians were able to find work with other orchestras; others found work in other fields of employment and did odd jobs, all with the goal of joining together again as the Nashville Symphony. The orchestra committee became the de facto negotiating committee (to avoid committee burn out we elect two separate committees, with the ICSOM Delegate and Union Steward serving on both committees.) The committee negotiated for a few weeks at a time but kept running into roadblocks and changing board representation, which meant they had to start over.

Other committees scheduled public concerts and media events, but with colleagues scattered across the country and busy working, we didn't have much contact. It was only at these concerts, events, and periodic meetings called by the committee to update the orchestra, that we were able to see and catch up with each other. However, with little being accomplished with regard to returning to work, I suspect the committee felt it wasn't worth pulling everyone into numerous meetings if there was nothing to report.

On a certain level I guess I can understand that rationale, but unfortunately, with so many fearful musicians questioning whether we'd ever return to work, little cracks became gaping chasms of suspicion and ill will—including name calling and members filing charges against other members with the Local—and the orchestra became seriously divided.

Yet, in the midst of this atmosphere of ill will, I attended my first ROPA Conference and began to find direction and answers to help guide me and my colleagues, as we spent the next few years trying to heal those divisions. We did it by communicating with our musicians through newsletters, phone trees, and meetings. It was the advice I received at


those ROPA (and later ICSOM) conferences, hearing other delegates speak about how their orchestras handled communication, that guided me as a committee member and as union steward for 25 years, as we tried to educate our new members, to bring them into the fold, and to make sure the lines of communication were open. That's not to say mistakes weren't made over the years, but it was always our goal to make sure our musicians were kept in the loop as much as possible.

I have shared what I learned with delegates, friends, and especially those who were about to face their own work stoppages. One of the best examples of musician communication I am aware of was provided by the musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra, who stayed united while weathering a 16-month lockout. I attribute much of their success to scheduled weekly orchestra meetings. Even when there is nothing to report, musicians need the chance to talk and air their questions and concerns—they need to know they're being heard.

I raise this issue now because the fear factor is even higher now—but our inability to perform is industry wide. There are no options to find employment with another orchestra. Plus, we have no clue how long this situation will last. We all watched back in March as nearly every performance in the country was cancelled within 24 hours. This was followed by cancellation extensions that have obliterated our seasons; we're not only questioning when we'll return, we're asking how we'll return. Reports about possible orchestra configurations abound, but there is no definitive science yet to tell us the best way that our orchestras can reconvene. The government isn't helping, as politics and financial and economic concerns seemingly take precedence over our personal safety. We are lucky to have great minds such as our own ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case, and AFM-SSD Director Rochelle Skolnick doing everything they can to offer advice and guidance about how to approach these issues with management.

The other day I asked my colleagues on the ICSOM Governing Board whether they felt communication was being handled well in their orchestras, both between management and the musicians and between the orchestra committee and musicians. Many reported that management had communicated via email and zoom but the amount of communication consisted of few—or in one case, no—meetings. Communication between the committee and musicians appeared to be mixed as well. Some communicated during management's video meetings, while others were also holding separate meetings with musicians alone, without management. With so much unknown, musicians not only want answers, but many have ideas that might be worth discussing.

During negotiation preparation, we in the Nashville Symphony schedule roundtable and potluck dinner discussions to listen to issues of concern. These are obviously not possible in the days of COVID-19, but as we consider what our workplaces will look like in the future, it's important to hear everyone's opinion and try to reach consensus. We must be united in determining how to ensure that we are safe when we return to work. We cannot put people at risk by returning to work too early without proper testing and social distancing, and we should not pressure colleagues who have serious concerns that they or their families could be harmed by their return. ➤

We should also make extra efforts to connect with our friends and colleagues in this difficult time. Our own families are certainly our first concern, but consider reaching out periodically to check on your friends in the orchestra. Not everyone uses social media; they may be unaware of what is going on with the rest of their colleagues. They may live by themselves and would appreciate hearing from others and sharing their thoughts. Now more than ever we need to keep the lines of communication open: we need communication between management and the orchestra, between the orchestra committee and the musicians, and between each other. The only way to fight fear and suspicion and to build unity is to make sure our musicians receive updates and feel their voices are being heard. For more than 30 years I have argued that management should be listening to our musicians, because we have history and knowledge and ideas that should be heard and considered. I still believe that argument—we're strongest when we have our best minds and ideas engaged in obtaining the same goals—and it's how we communicate that can help us achieve the best results. 

## Safety in an Era of Uncertainty

By Kevin Case

**S**ymphony orchestra musicians in the United States are increasingly consumed with a single, burning question: When and how can we come back to work?

Surprisingly, it appears that in some orchestras, musicians have already been returning and performing to at least some degree—for example, in small ensembles for streaming concerts at the hall—while others seem to be moving ahead with plans to present live concerts in the near future. That raises critical concerns about whether it is even possible to do so safely right now, and what steps musicians and managers can and should take as plans are made.



Mina Kimman

Last week, ICSOM and the AFM issued preliminary guidance regarding how best to approach management to discuss a safe return to work. See <https://icsom.org/covid> (login required). While that guidance is intended to be confidential, because much of it relates to bargaining strategy, I want to emphasize and elaborate upon this paragraph:

... any agreement reached with your employer must contain safety protocols that are consistent with both scientific consensus and orders from the relevant civil authorities. This, unfortunately, is the most difficult issue to resolve, as **there is yet no real scientific consensus on what constitutes a safe return to work**, particularly with respect to the unique aspects of an orchestral workplace. The inconsistent and ever-changing guidance we are seeing from governmental authorities does not help, either. We hope that more certainty about safest practices will develop over the next weeks and months. Until then, **we must scrutinize carefully any proposed protocols and reject any that are unsupported by the best and most current science**

**available.** When in doubt, we urge you to err on the side of caution and safety.

The bolded language is key. To say that substantial questions remain regarding how to make an orchestral workplace safe for musicians to return during this pandemic would be a massive understatement. The purpose of this message is not to recommend any particular safety protocols; rather, I aim to point out some of these unanswered questions, and to flag certain issues that others have been discussing and how they might relate to the orchestral workplace.

First and foremost, there is still much we don't know regarding the transmission of coronavirus and the risks inherent in congregating in the workplace:

- Peer-reviewed studies have shown that speech droplets can linger in the air for several minutes before falling or dissipating, meaning “there is a substantial probability that normal speaking causes airborne virus transmission in confined environments.” See <https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2020/05/12/2006874117>.
- There is as yet no scientific consensus regarding the spread of droplets from woodwind and brass instruments, or from singers. Condensation from instruments also is an issue. There is conflicting information available online, none of which has been peer-reviewed.
- We still don't know all the ways in which the novel coronavirus can be spread besides by respiratory transmission, see <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32065057>, nor the full extent of transmissibility, see <https://www.harvard-magazine.com/2020/05/r-nought> (“COVID-19 May Be Much More Contagious Than We Thought”).

Second, there are open questions regarding the possibility of effective health screening for musicians returning to work:

- The United States has no effective testing and contact tracing system, and none is on the horizon. That may render effective screening impossible. Consider the safety proposal that Major League Baseball recently made to its players' union: “players would undergo multiple temperature screenings daily, including at home before coming to the stadium. MLB would test [players] for the coronavirus multiple times per week . . . family members would be tested too.” See [https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/\\_/id/29183345/mlb-safety-proposal-includes-10000-tests-per-week-social-distancing](https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29183345/mlb-safety-proposal-includes-10000-tests-per-week-social-distancing). That kind of robust testing system simply does not yet exist in the U.S.; moreover, there are concerns about the accuracy of even the tests that are currently available. See <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/14/856531970/fda-cautions-about-accuracy-of-widely-used-abbott-coronavirus-test>. The efficacy of so-called antibody tests is even more uncertain. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/opinion/antibody-test-accuracy.html>. Until all musicians coming to work can be tested regularly and accurately, it is literally impossible to ensure that no one coming to work is infected with the novel coronavirus.
- Substitutes for effective testing—e.g., temperature screenings, health questionnaires and the like—are useless when it comes to asymptomatic carriers of the virus. Many who have COVID-19 don't know they have it. See <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/50-percent-of-people-with-> >

covid19-not-aware-have-virus.

- There are as-yet unresolved legal issues and privacy concerns with respect to providing sensitive health information (of both employees and family members) to an employer. Yet such information is arguably critical to ensuring workplace safety.

Third, substantial work and expense may be needed regarding building facilities and operations:

- Significant retrofitting of facilities may be required. For example, AIHA, a nonprofit association for occupational health and safety science professionals, has issued return-to-work guidance with respect to different types of workplaces (e.g., office buildings, retail operations, manufacturing plants). See <https://www.backtoworksafely.org>. Some steps that AIHA recommends include modifying all doors for hands-free opening and closing, rather than requiring people to turn knobs or pull levers; retrofitting restrooms with no-touch water spigots, urinals, and toilets, while removing all hot-air dryers; creating “negative air pressure” restrooms; and modifying air circulation systems to be powerful enough to effectively pull air through HEPA filters. Whether these types of steps can be taken in our concert halls or rehearsal spaces—many of which are older, or have some kind of landmark status—is uncertain.
- New procedures will need to be implemented to keep people safe, including instituting a strict, frequent, professional, and thorough cleaning and disinfecting regimen that extends to all surfaces that could conceivably be touched; making hand sanitizer readily available everywhere in the workplace; or providing masks (and if so, what kind?). That all requires not just money, but a high level of institutional competence that not all orchestras possess.
- If a building has been closed for some time, it may need to be thoroughly cleaned and inspected to ensure that bacteria or mold hasn’t grown in water pipes or ventilation systems. Many of our older concert halls may be particularly susceptible.

Fourth, there are considerations unique to the orchestral workplace that raise questions for which we have little guidance:

- Can physical distancing be maintained at all times, not just on stage? Spreading out on stage is the easy part (though as noted, we don’t know enough about woodwinds and brass yet to do this safely). Are there protocols in place to ensure appropriate distancing from the moment a musician approaches the building to the moment they leave? For example, can this be done effectively in instrument and case storage areas? In cramped backstage areas? In elevators?
- We use green rooms, orchestra lounges, locker rooms, etc., all of which have entrances and exits. Can they all be designated one-way, such that it would be impossible to have one person coming through a door at the same time as someone else is leaving? Can distancing be maintained within those rooms? What about in stairwells?
- Many experts recommend training on safety protocols. Is that feasible, not just for musicians but for everyone in

the building?

- Many orchestral musicians are over 60, meaning they are much more at risk of dying if they contract COVID-19. Given that risk, is there any safety plan that would permit them to return to work? What if a younger musician has someone over 60 in his or her household, or someone with an underlying health condition?

In an ideal world, answers to all these questions, and proper safety guidance, would come from OSHA or some other government agency. That has not happened—OSHA has been useless thus far. See <https://www.businessinsider.com/american-workers-hung-out-to-dry-congress-osha-coronavirus-pandemic-2020-5>. In addition, so much has become politicized that even detailed guidance from the CDC—the very agency charged with responding to a pandemic—was shelved by the current administration out of concerns it would damage the President politically. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/us/politics/trump-cdc.html>.

The information that we do have is no substitute for governmental standards or scientific consensus. For example, musicians and scientists in Germany have studied how to make orchestra workplaces safer, and the result has been a few articles and blog posts widely shared on social media. That kind of information is a good starting point for discussion—it should not be taken as gospel. One should also keep in mind that Germany has a far more robust testing and health care system than the United States, and has been more successful in implementing societal restrictions to lessen the spread of COVID-19.

In considering all these questions, orchestra musicians working under a collective bargaining agreement must bargain with their management over safety protocols. Remember that it is always the employer’s responsibly to ensure a safe workplace. Hold them to that.

I fully understand every musician’s desire to return to performing, to help their orchestra stay relevant, and to show their value to their employer in a difficult economic environment. But I must urge caution. There is still so much we don’t know about this illness, and the stakes are simply too high for guesswork.




## COVID-19 Agreements (continued)

sometime in June many orchestras could find themselves furloughed.

The most important takeaway from all this is that labor relations and prior economic conditions—good or bad—were not reliable indicators of the outcome of COVID-19 agreements. Most managers have avoided implementing cuts, something that may have come as a surprise to some orchestras. So, what does correlate with successful agreements? Clearly, it’s managers who work closely with their musicians.

What does this mean going forward? It’s safe to say a new round of negotiations will commence in the coming months. Workplace safety, media, work rules, and pay will certainly be on the table for discussion. I think it would be a mistake to focus on what our managers might ask for, and instead take the time to form a vision of where we want to go. Forming that vision means an honest evaluation of ourselves pre-pan- ➤



demical, a clear picture of what we want to be in the world to come, and using that insight to inform the agreements we forge right now. In addition to our most pressing concerns around getting back to work, remember that our old problems like gender and diversity issues, hearing health, workload, and more will all survive this pandemic and continue to plague us for some time. In this time of rebuilding, how will the coming agreements fit into our vision, and can we find ways to rebuild something better than before? 

*Note the author is an ICSOM Member-at-Large and a member of the Utah Symphony.*

## ICSOM Musicians Get Creative (continued)

Mahler Third Symphony, which they had been scheduled to perform beginning the day the lockdown in Maryland began.

These orchestral videos are often facilitated by creating and then sending a click track to all of the orchestra's musicians, which musicians then use as they record their own parts. The engineering feat required to produce a high quality video, combining recorded content from various recording devices individual musicians use into a finished product, cannot be overestimated. Professional recording engineers and orchestra musicians have contributed their skills to these projects, in many cases pro bono.

But these types of projects were just the beginning. Detroit Symphony delegate Monica Fosnaugh reports that musicians and management have formed an Innovation Committee. That new committee, along with all musicians and staff, has come up with lots of ideas. Lyric Opera Orchestra's delegate Amy Hess says, "At Lyric, we've developed a great relationship with the marketing department during the pandemic. They were thrilled to promote our 'Ride of the Valkyries' video, and we have also contributed content that they have crafted into blog-type articles (instruments of the *Ring* cycle featuring some of our old Facebook videos, cocktails based on the four *Ring* operas, a Spotify playlist of works featuring our musicians outside of Lyric, etc.)." Nashville Symphony Orchestra Committee Chair Melinda Whitley tells us that "many musicians . . . have now worked with our development department and made hundreds of phone calls to donors so far. The musicians . . . have over two dozen PR/social media type projects in various stages of production." Baltimore Symphony musicians and staff have created a Digital Content Task Force to highlight volunteer efforts, to connect with donors, and to present musical content.

Several orchestras have featured musicians live-streaming concerts and recorded solo and chamber music. In Baltimore, on the BSO's Facebook page, Principal Oboist Katherine Needleman, Third Horn Austin Larson and Pianist Lura Johnson give new live concerts each week at the same day and time, as part of the "BSO Offstage" initiative. The Baltimore Symphony also live-streams concerts every Sunday at 3 pm, featuring a different BSO musician each week, and the BSO viola section produces a "Lunch Bachs" series each Wednesday, in which members of the viola section play movements of solo Bach cello suites, as well as solo viola music by Reger and Hindemith. The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Trio "ZYP" musicians, who were to perform one of their coffee shop con-

certs, instead recorded their Haydn trio and posted it to Facebook as a virtual coffee break.

Individual musicians are making recordings with colleagues or by themselves, sometimes socially distanced (standing several feet apart) and sometimes remotely, in which individual tracks are combined into a whole. There are too many instances to mention more than just one here: the creative arrangement, made by Detroit Symphony Orchestra bassoonist Marcus Schoon, of "Tears of a Clown", in which he plays all four parts. (Former DSO Principal Bassoonist Charlie Sirard, who retired in 1977, was the musician on the original Motown recording made by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.)

Detroit Symphony musicians have taken this approach one step further: There is a side by side quartet project in which community members play along with a DSO quartet and submit videos to be edited together. And in Milwaukee, violinists in 8th grade and younger during the 2019–20 school year are invited to submit a video of themselves playing Part I or Part II of the first movement of the Bach Double Violin Concerto for the MSO's upcoming video compilation.

Connecting with audiences and donors has also been an emphasis of digital outreach. At the Lyric Opera, musicians have started a series on their own social media pages titled "Lyric Orchestra Rides It Out", featuring heartwarming personal updates and affirmations of the importance of music. Similarly, Milwaukee Symphony musicians, whose social media committee has separate Facebook and Instagram teams, are producing fun videos and posts that often combine music with their everyday activities. Content on their social media platforms include such topics as home life, pets, gardens, cooking, hiking, and kids. Other activities, such as mask making, have also been documented. Activities for families such as coloring pages, musical journeys, and storyboard activities are provided on the Minnesota Orchestra Facebook page by Minnesota Orchestra at Home. And the Baltimore Symphony's Lunch Bachs series always features violists' non-musical activities in addition to the music: we can accompany them remotely on their runs; their children make occasional appearances; and we learn about their pets, and what BSO violists are reading and baking.

Educational and health/wellness activities abound. "Ohm at Home", a virtual yoga class, is led by the Detroit Symphony librarian Ethan Allen, and features recorded music from DSO players, and there are educational postings and events on the Detroit Symphony's Facebook page, as there are on the Facebook pages of many orchestras.

In Detroit and elsewhere, symphony musicians provide music and messaging supportive of first responders. Baltimore Symphony musicians now have a weekly series of live streams for Johns Hopkins Hospital medical professionals, and musicians have also live-streamed concerts for staff and patients at the University of Maryland Medical Center. Lyric Opera of Chicago musicians also are planning partnerships with local hospitals. In Minnesota, musician-led organizing resulted in a donation of \$3,360 from the musicians to Second Harvest Heartland. The entire organization is working on a mask drive for community partners in need, with the goal of collecting 1,350 masks in May. And in Jacksonville, Local 444 >>

president, and JSO violinist, Andy Bruck performed several times for caregivers at Baptist Beaches Medical Center as part of the hospital's Rest and Revive program.

Detroit Symphony musicians have produced dozens of "Play on Porch" videos of DSO musicians playing for neighbors for their homes, and for digital audiences everywhere (*Note: See <https://www.dso.org/watch-listen-and-connect/keep-the-music-playing/join-the-music/keep-the-music-playing>*). In the nation's capital, several National Symphony Orchestra members and Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra members have put on porch concerts as well, sometimes in collaboration with musical family members. St. Louis Symphony horn players performed an alphorn trio on a front porch, and posted it on "SLSOatHome".

Musicians are making it easier for listeners to understand professionals' musical thinking. "Between 2 Stands" is a new weekly web series that goes on a journey inside the minds of Detroit Symphony musicians. The Baltimore Symphony hosts a weekly "Virtual Governing Members Lounge" in which Music Director Marin Alsop, BSO staff members and musicians discuss various musical topics. The Detroit Symphony hosts Watch Parties, in which several musicians and the Music Director participate in live commentary while hosting a Facebook live broadcast.

Rochester Philharmonic's ICSOM delegate and Fourth Horn Stephen Laifer reports that he and Principal Oboist Erik Behr started a Facebook group called RPO-WXXI 91.5 Broadcast Concerts (available at [https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/254234502410236/)

254234502410236/). During WXXI's re-broadcasts of last season's RPO concerts (which are also streamed on the station's website, [classical915.org](http://classical915.org)), the group has "textual chat via posts to the group page, though we will often also post photos of composers, soloists, etc.," said Laifer. "For the Sibelius Violin Concerto, Augustin Hadelich joined us for a half hour, and the listeners loved it. We generally comment on the music, some historical tidbits, ask listeners to send in pics from wherever they're listening, answer personal questions about RPO musicians, and generally poke light fun at each other. The object is to be somewhat informative, but mostly just entertaining. We've got a pretty big following in a short space of time, and as word spreads, people really seem to enjoy it. At last count we have over 1,100 members in just under a month."

Orchestras in the U.S. and all over the world continue to seek the best scientific and medical advice, along with public policy guidance, as the coronavirus crisis continues. How and when will we be able to go back onstage to perform with colleagues, and when we do, how many audience members can safely attend? As ICSOM orchestras attempt to answer those questions, ICSOM musicians will continue to be at the forefront of efforts to provide beauty, solace, and excitement to music lovers everywhere, through both traditional media and more innovative methods. The desire to reach out with great music and make positive contributions to society continues to inspire these efforts.

*Note: the author is an ICSOM Member-at-Large, and a member of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.*



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