

# Senza Sordino

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## Hot Time in Houston

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

The 2010 ICSOM Conference, held August 18-21 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston, was a resounding success due in no small part to the musicians of the Houston Symphony Orchestra and the Houston Professional Musicians, Local 65-699, who pulled out all the stops as conference hosts. The delegates to what turned out to be one of the best attended ICSOM Conferences in years were greeted at the hotel with a series of projections of the ICSOM logo on an atrium wall, one of which appeared on the side of the space shuttle. The ICSOM logo also appeared on a welcome banner outside the meeting room, and delegates received a bag with the ICSOM logo containing various goodies from the local.

The Wednesday evening mixer at the Inn at the Ballpark included music provided by Houston Symphony musicians. Courtesy of Local 65-699, more than 65 delegates and guests attended the New York Mets–Houston Astros baseball game across the street at Minute Maid Park, complete with sodas, popcorn, and all-you-can-eat hot dogs. (The Mets won 3-2 in the 14th inning.) Special thanks to Local 65-699 President Lovie Smith-Wright, Secretary-Treasurer Bob McGrew, ICSOM delegate Eric Arbiter, conference coordinator Burke Shaw, and the entire Houston Symphony for an incredible conference.

The Conference theme, “It’s Time to Embrace the Future,” was a play on the recent League of American Orchestras conference theme, “It’s Time to Take on the Future.” The Conference occurred while the ICSOM governing board was in the process of identifying new ICSOM counsel who, it is hoped, will mentor the next generation and help guide ICSOM into the future. Additionally, in June there was a monumental change in the leadership of the American Federation of Musicians, with the election of President Ray Hair, Vice President Bruce Fife and a number of new International Executive Board (IEB) members. There were presentations by three distinguished attorneys from the orchestral field—Susan Martin, Liza Hirsch Medina, and Barbara Jaccoma—as well as newly elected AFM President Ray Hair and the entire International Executive Board.

The IEB has already taken a number of positive steps in an effort to work with the player conferences to improve communication. Beginning a dialog directly with the delegates is a good beginning. To that end, the keynote speaker was AFM President Ray Hair, and his message to the delegates, local officers, the IEB, AFM staff, and players conference representatives was one of unity, cooperation, and friendship. Wednesday afternoon, President Hair returned to present a slide show he called “The Life and Times of the American Federation of Musicians.” This exploration of the more than 100-year history of the AFM demonstrated that the divisiveness of the past caused a great deal of damage, while the strongest periods in the AFM’s history were due to a unified membership.

Chairperson Bruce Ridge and President Brian Rood highlighted similar points in their reports. They expressed their pride in the delegates for their follow-up on the *Call to Action* for the recent AFM Convention, when more than 85 percent of ICSOM’s orchestras responded by delivering signed petitions from their orchestras to their local officers. Many local officers brought those petitions to the AFM Convention, and petitions were presented as officers visited with ICSOM’s representatives.

Houston’s mayor, Annise Parker, delivered words of welcome on Wednesday afternoon. She thanked the delegates for coming to the fourth largest city in the U.S. and commented humorously that most people usually leave Houston in August. She spoke of Houston’s  
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Photo by Eric Arbiter

The entire AFM International Executive Board poses with the entire ICSOM Governing Board at the ICSOM Conference in Houston.

## Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



This summer I delivered speeches to the AFM Convention, the ROPA Conference, and the ICSOM Conference. The following are excerpts from each of those speeches.

### AFM Convention, Las Vegas, June 24

There can be no doubt that these are difficult times, both within our union and for the arts across North America. But we believe that every crisis is an opportunity, and we believe that the ways things are is not the way things have to be. Out of the difficulties that our orchestras have faced in this recession has come a renewed sense of unity amongst all of ICSOM, and ICSOM is truly a collection of 4,000 friends who are performing at the same time on the same night.

There is every reason for optimism about the future of symphonic music, and for all live music. But too often we fail to hear these positive facts over a din of negativity that pervasively undermines a successful future of community service for our orchestras. The media is not making our case, and our managements certainly are not making our case. We can no longer sit back and expect others to articulate the issues that the members of this union know far better than most.

It is therefore our responsibility to act in unity to advocate for the arts in America and beyond. This union could be a beacon for the future of live music of all styles, and for a thriving livelihood for all of its members. I do not doubt what we can achieve together.

In my music room back in North Carolina, I have a small piece of the Berlin Wall, given to me as a souvenir when I represented the AFM and ICSOM for a presentation in Germany. This small, painted chunk of concrete inspires me in moments of doubt. That wall stood in the middle of Berlin as a symbol of division and cost many their freedom, and many their lives. It stood for 28 years as a monument to destructiveness.

My friends, if that wall can fall, then I believe that any obstacle can be overcome.

We congratulate the new president-elect of the Federation, Ray Hair. I'd like to take this opportunity to assure President Hair, along with the new International Executive Board, and indeed every member of this union that you will be able to count on ICSOM for support. We are eager to begin the great task before us, and I know we will achieve great things together.

### ROPA Conference, Omaha, August 2

We live in a time of great fundamental change. There are new opportunities seemingly every day to reach more and more people with a positive message of promotion for virtually any idea or product. Evolving media, the Internet, and social networking provide unedited forums for expressing ideas that used to have to be filtered through the editorial process of print media or broadcast outlets.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

A Player Conference of the  
American Federation of Musicians of the  
United States and Canada, AFL-CIO

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Atlanta Symphony Orchestra  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra  
Boston Symphony Orchestra  
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Charlotte Symphony Orchestra  
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra  
The Cleveland Orchestra  
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New York City Ballet Orchestra  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
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## President's Report by Brian Rood



To say that we live in interesting times would be an understatement. Many of our orchestras face unprecedented attacks on their collective bargaining agreements. Even as I write this, the musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are on strike in order to save their venerable institution. The lack of meaningful negotiations by

the management in Fort Worth has reached a critical point. The musicians of the Florida Orchestra just ratified a concessionary agreement that reduces the number of weeks and lowers the minimum complement. Orchestras around the country are facing pressure to accept concessions mid-term in their contracts. The continued plight of our colleagues in Honolulu and their efforts to reorganize a full-time orchestra weigh heavily on the hearts of all ICSOM musicians.

Much more is at stake than compensation alone, as if that were not enough. Recent management proposals include abolishing tenure, freezing pensions, refusing to pay for electronic media services, severely reducing health insurance benefits, and redefining our jobs as orchestral musicians. Managers increasingly tout service exchange and service conversion as the next best thing since sliced bread, a cure all for orchestras' problems.

ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross and I attended the American Orchestra Summit in Ann Arbor this past January. From the opening session, Joseph Horowitz, former Brooklyn Philharmonic executive director and co-creator of the Summit, proclaimed that orchestras produce more concerts than communities can accommodate and have unsustainable fixed costs (code word for musician salaries), and that the solution is service exchange/conversion. A later panel included presentations by the executive directors in Louisville and Memphis. This was my first, but far from last, exposure to the "Memphis model." In order to preserve one's salary, according to Ryan Fleur, the Memphis executive director, a musician in Memphis must agree to participate in "approved partnership activities." These activities include teaching general music classes in public school and taking on traditional staff roles, such as concert planning, development, marketing, and presenting.

I appreciated the concerns expressed by attendees about challenges facing orchestras. I was frustrated, though, by the lack of accurate information most attendees had about today's orchestras. Many attendees appeared unwilling or unable to acknowledge other orchestras' successes. Fewer yet appeared open to alternative solutions that did not involve service exchange/conversion or slash and burn measures.

During my address at the Summit, I held up Michael Kaiser's book, *The Art of the Turnaround*. I read two of his quotes regarding the problems facing arts organizations. First: "The usual culprit is the absence of a dynamic marketing campaign that conveys the excitement of a thriving artistic program." Second: "Good art must be marketed well."

There are plenty of examples that show the current economic model still works when an orchestra fires on all cylinders. Orchestras can thrive, even during economic downturns, but only when creative programming is coupled with dynamic marketing, and when boards and managements work with, and not against, their musicians. When one of these ingredients is missing, organizations usually flounder and rarely achieve artistic success or financial stability.

All too often managers and boards are incapable or unwilling to lead our orchestras effectively. Instead of promoting orchestras, they would rather apologize for their existence. It should be clear to us by now that we, the musicians, must continue our advocacy efforts.

Randy Cohen from the Americans for the Arts delivered another inspiring and highly informative presentation during the OCSM Conference this summer in Montreal. If we could bottle up his enthusiasm and give a small dose to every manager and board chair, our orchestras would see immediate improvement!

Yes, we live in interesting times. Much has changed within our union since the ICSOM Conference in Norfolk a year ago.

The delegates at the 2010 AFM Convention decided that our union needed change. We congratulate AFM President Ray Hair, Vice President Bruce Fife, Vice President from Canada Bill Skolnik, Secretary-Treasurer Sam Folio, and International Executive Board Members Tino Gagliardi, Tina Morrison, Joe Parente, Dave Pomeroy, and Vince Trombetta.

ICSOM is eager to work with the new IEB on behalf of all AFM members. During my 2009 ICSOM Conference speech, I asked whether ICSOM and the other player conferences would be treated as friends or foes throughout the Federation. I am pleased to report that, during the 2010 AFM Convention, we were warmly received by local officers and delegates. Player conference tables typically are placed along the far side wall of the Convention hall. In past years we sometime felt like outsiders, but 2010 was different. Convention delegates came over to talk with us, and several even sat at our tables with us. We appreciated the open communication and dialogue we enjoyed with members of the various Convention committees, including Law and Finance.

None of the changes within the AFM would have been possible without the commitment and hard work of ICSOM delegates. When the Governing Board issued a *Call to Action* on May 15, 2010, just five weeks before the Convention, over 85% of our member orchestras responded by signing petitions and meeting with AFM Convention delegates and local officers. This unprecedented commitment played a huge role. Local presidents repeatedly told us how much it meant to them to hear from so many of you and our thousands of colleagues. Recommendations No. 2 and No. 24, sponsored by the previous IEB, never made it out of committee. Following testimony by ICSOM and other player conference leaders, as well as deliberations by the Law and Finance Committees, the IEB withdrew both recommendations.

*(continued on page 9—see PRESIDENT'S REPORT)*

## AFM Convention Elects New Leadership

by Matthew Comerford, ICSOM Member at Large

My trip to Las Vegas in June was the second time I visited that city. Amazingly enough for me, after never having set foot in Las Vegas before, both of my excursions to Las Vegas occurred in the space of a little over six months.

My first trip to Las Vegas had been for the January 11, 2010, AFM meeting on the state of our AFM-EPF pension, which I attended as a representative of my local. The second trip was to attend the AFM Convention as one of ICSOM's AFM Convention delegates. It was my first AFM Convention, and I had been preparing for it, in part, by reading reports of the most recent ones. After reading them it occurred to me that if this Convention were to follow the same pattern as the previous two, some fireworks might be in store for all of us. The ICSOM contingent was energized and ready to get to work. The members of ICSOM's delegation were Chairperson Bruce Ridge, President Brian Rood, Member at Large Meredith Snow (as an alternate Convention delegate), and myself. Secretary Laura Ross and Treasurer Michael Moore were also in attendance, as well as many other ICSOM delegates who had been elected as AFM Convention delegates to represent their respective locals.

The committees of the Convention had been meeting since the middle of the previous week, working on the various recommendations and resolutions that were to be presented to the delegates at the full sessions. This being my first AFM Convention, I learned that much of the work is done in these committees before the full convention begins. On Sunday afternoon of June 20, Chairperson Bruce Ridge and President Brian Rood each gave testimony before the Joint Law & Finance Committee and presented copies of the *Call to Action* petition letters with signatures from our ICSOM orchestras. Both Bruce and Brian spoke very persuasively and made very impressive arguments against Recommendations No. 2 and No. 24.

Monday, June 21, was the first day of the Convention, and it came with the traditional opening proceedings. The national anthems of both the U.S. and Canada were followed by the invocation and opening speech delivered by AFM President Tom Lee. After all these ceremonies were concluded, the standing rules of the Convention were submitted and adopted. In the afternoon, delegates dealt with most of the recommendations and resolutions from the Law Committee.

Day two opened with a memorial service commemorating all the past convention delegates, notable members, and many other friends of the AFM who had passed away in the last three years. There were tributes to Lorraine Bartlett (former AFM comptroller), Bob Crothers (former assistant to the president, going all the way back to J. Petrillo) and Harry Chanson (former chair of the Finance Committee and president of the Santa Barbara local). The recommendations from the Measures & Benefits Committee were dealt with, all favorably. Measures & Benefits was the committee on which Laura Ross and Michael Moore were members. Also considered on that day were some of the recommendations and one resolution from the Finance Committee. While business was being handled on the floor, the ICSOM team was busy gathering signatures on

petitions to ensure roll call votes for Recommendations No. 2 and No. 24, if necessary. These were the two recommendations on which ICSOM had focused its *Call to Action*. The ICSOM team secured the signatures of 20 different locals. The minimum number of signatures required on a petition to ensure a roll call vote is 15 from individual locals or 30 individual delegate signatures. We surpassed the required number of signatures from individual locals for each petition. Nominations of officers were made and concluded during that day's afternoon session.

After the preceding business had been concluded, Canadian delegate Francine Schutzman, president of OCSM, spoke from the floor. She pointed out that Recommendation No. 1, the financial package from the IEB, had not been taken up and voted on before the other recommendations and resolutions as required by AFM bylaws. Eddy Bayens, chair of the joint Law & Finance Committee, quickly put forth Emergency Resolution No. 2, which waived the Article 18, Section 1 bylaw requirement and gave the committee time to address the financial package more fully. Emergency Resolution No. 2 was accepted as amended. It ensured that Recommendation No. 1, in whatever form it came out of the Joint Committee, would be taken up by the Convention before the election of officers.

Day three was busy as delegates dealt with the remaining recommendations and resolutions. Most of these were dispatched quickly. On this day Recommendations No. 2 and No. 24, the subjects of our ICSOM *Call to Action*, were withdrawn by the IEB. Our roll call vote petitions had been submitted, so all was in place in the event that they were actually brought to the floor for consideration—but, as noted, they were withdrawn without comment. This day also brought out some rather blunt and somewhat vitriolic speeches from a few delegates on the floor. I thought this might be the moment when the real fireworks would ignite; but calm heads prevailed, and the business of the Convention continued without any unexpected, last minute maneuvers. At the end of this day, Substitute Recommendation No. 1 was brought to the floor for a vote. This recommendation would have increased dues in many areas, including membership dues, and would have hit musicians working in motion picture recording especially hard. It was a close voice vote, so a standing vote was called. The final outcome was that the recommendation was defeated by 10 votes (120 in favor to 130 opposed). After a short recess, elections of officers began at 5:10 p.m. We followed the unofficial election returns throughout the evening.

The agenda on the final day of the Convention included speeches from the five player conferences, all of which were well received. During his speech, Phil Ayling announced that this would most likely be his last AFM Convention as RMA president. ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge gave the final speech of the player conferences, and he spoke eloquently. Bruce's presentation was video recorded by Michael Moore, and Robert Levine placed a link to it on his blog, *The AFM Observer*. I encourage everyone to view it. The election results were announced, and it became official that we had elected an almost completely new IEB. There were 273 delegates from 169 locals for a total of 740 votes. Four locals did not vote.

## Adopted Resolutions from the 2010 ICSOM Conference

Speeches by the outgoing IEB members were given, many full of emotion. Tom Lee and Harold Bradley were conferred with emeritus status in their respective positions as president and vice-president. Then the new IEB officers spoke before the body of delegates. Ray Hair, the newly elected AFM president, was gracious to the outgoing officers and energizing in his remarks looking to the future of the AFM. Ray, the new board, and, frankly, all of us know there is much work to be done at the AFM in order to strengthen our union. Ray pledged to work with all groups that make up the AFM—player conferences, small, medium, and large locals, and local conferences—to resolve our conflicts and build a stronger union.

As a sign of how swiftly change can happen, Ray and the new IEB stayed up most of the night and worked with the RMA to fashion a Second Substitute Recommendation No. 1. This substitute recommendation removed the supplemental market funds work dues assessment and established provisions allowing the IEB to work with a reinstated Electronic Media Services Division (EMSD) Oversight Committee made up of three RMA members and one symphonic member. This joint effort will develop a flat fee to be assessed on musicians who make more than \$2,500 in non-symphonic recording wages and will have to be ratified by all those affected musicians. This Second Substitute Recommendation No. 1 passed and goes a long way towards healing the effects of long-waged battles between the AFM and RMA. With that, the Convention drew to a close.

I know we all send our best wishes and support to the new AFM officers. They have many difficult issues ahead of them, and with all of us working together to help them in their efforts, we will secure a great and unified AFM.

I would like to thank all of our ICSOM delegates who collected the *Call to Action* petition letters, met with their local officers, and held counsel with their local Convention delegates to express ICSOM's views on the issues of the Convention. I cannot stress enough the positive impact everyone's participation had on this Convention. Working together to make our opinions and voices heard brings about change and strengthens our union. Our actions are a true testament of how activism in the life of our union creates the greatest environment for positive change. Because of our hard work and persistence, we achieved our legislative goals and continue ICSOM's strong leadership role in the AFM.

**November 19, 2010, is the deadline for delegates to report their orchestra's ratification vote on the bylaw revision passed at the 2010 ICSOM Conference. Delegates should report votes to Secretary Laura Ross.**

### Mike Okun

WHEREAS, Attorney Michael G. Okun, of Patterson Harkavy LLC, has served as interim counsel to the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians since August, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Mike Okun stepped in at a moment's notice, at a time when legal advice and assistance were vital to the ICSOM Governing Board; and

WHEREAS, Mike Okun has been instrumental in assisting the ICSOM Governing Board with a reevaluation of ICSOM's bylaws and an updating of the ICSOM Governing Board policy book; and

WHEREAS, He has readily shared his great knowledge and has been invaluable in his assistance to the ICSOM Governing Board throughout the 2009–10 season; and

WHEREAS, Mike Okun has been a wonderful resource, especially as an advisor to ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge; and

WHEREAS, He has demonstrated tremendous respect, affection and admiration for musicians everywhere through his generous efforts on our behalf; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the officers and delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank Michael G. Okun for his invaluable work and dedication to the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians this past year, and wish him every success in his future endeavors, and express our gratitude to him for his continuing friendship to ICSOM and all of its members.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Jaime Austria

WHEREAS, Jaime Suarez Austria was a valued member of the New York City Opera Orchestra bass section for 17 years; and

WHEREAS, Jaime had a varied career as a member of New York City Local 802 for 42 years, performing with Leopold Stokowski in the American Symphony Orchestra, and then in the orchestra pits as a Broadway musician during a fifteen year run of "A Chorus Line," and American Ballet Theater; and

WHEREAS, Jaime was also a tireless advocate for many causes that were close to his heart, which resulted in the establishment of a number of successful programs; and

WHEREAS, Jaime believed that every child had the right to receive free music lessons and was successful helping to establish "El Sistema NYC;" and

WHEREAS, Jaime's concern for the American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund moved him to establish the "Informal Watchdog Network" to assure that communication between the Fund and its participants was more transparent, and his work led to the passage of a number of resolutions at the 2007 ICSOM conference that led to the recent appointment of the first orchestra manager Trustee and the continued push for a transactional AFM-EPF website for participants; and

WHEREAS, Jaime's greatest public success was spearheading a petition drive to urge President Obama to add the position of Secretary of Arts to his Cabinet, garnering more than 240,000 signatures; and

WHEREAS, Jaime's death in May, 2010, dealt a blow to those who benefited from his championing the causes that were so dear to his heart; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference express their respect and admiration as well as their sadness for the great loss of such a remarkable and dedicated advocate; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the gratitude of musicians throughout the United States, who benefited from Jaime Austria's advocacy, be expressed to his wife Christine, and to his children.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

*(continued on page 7—see ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS)*

## Orchestra Newslets

The **San Antonio Symphony Orchestra** welcomed its new music director, Sebastian Lang-Lessing, with a sold-out gala performance on October 2nd, 2010. A champagne toast followed the concert at the 2,311-seat Majestic Theater. Delegate Emily Freudigman reports that the Majestic will remain home to the SAS until the opening of the Tobin Center for the Arts, scheduled for 2013. The orchestra was joined for the gala concert by the San Antonio Mastersingers and the San Antonio Children's Chorus. The choirs were embedded in the audience to facilitate a seamless transition from the last note of the Mastersingers' unaccompanied set into the opening of Mahler's Symphony No. 1, as well as to give the audience a good look at the new music director in action.

The **Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra** has just appointed a new executive producer of digital media, Matt Thueson. Before coming to SPCO, Thueson spent nearly 10 years with Minnesota Public Radio where he worked with many aspects of the network's extensive digital media offerings, including producing numerous large news and music websites, and adapting online efforts to new platforms such as Facebook, Apple's iPad, mobile browsers, and podcasts. He will work with SPCO to help build its online archive of streamed music, as well as to create a mobile app that will allow people to stream this music on their iPhones and other mobile devices. The executive producer of digital media position is made possible by a \$1 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The four-year grant provides developmental capital for artistic and digital media initiatives.

Chairperson Bruce Ridge, President Brian Rood, and Secretary Laura Ross marched in Detroit's Labor Day Parade with and in support of **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** musicians. Also in attendance were AFM President Ray Hair and ICSOM Chairman Emeritus Robert Levine, ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, and Local 5 President Gordon Stump. DSO musicians walked at the very head of the parade, and Detroit Symphony ICSOM delegate Dave Everson performed with some of his DSO colleagues in front of Orchestra Hall.



Photo by Laura Ross

Ray Hair (left), Robert Levine, and Carla Lehmeier-Tatum support DSO musicians at the Labor Day Parade in Detroit on September 6, 2010.

### Difficult Days in Detroit

by Haden McKay, *Detroit Symphony Orchestra*

As of this writing (October 2), attempts to negotiate a new contract for the musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra have failed, and the musicians have announced a strike date of October 4. The orchestra had been working under the terms of a three-year agreement negotiated in 2007. That agreement contained some concessions in the first two years and, in its third year, a return to Detroit's traditional ranking among the top ten U.S. orchestras.

Like many orchestras, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra has suffered from the recession which followed the collapse of financial markets in late 2008. Detroit's regional economy was especially hard hit, and the DSO budget faced reduced individual and particularly corporate contributions, a decline in endowment investments, and lower ticket sales. Despite their strong concerns about management shortcomings—most notably rapid turnover in the crucial development department and a poorly structured and budget-straining bond arrangement on the 2003 expansion of Orchestra Hall—DSO musicians attempted to respond to management's request to reopen the contract in early 2009. In many American orchestras that time frame saw reopened or new contracts that called for some relief for managements in the form of pay freezes or modest cuts, followed by recovery. A series of discussions in 2009 with a newly elected DSO negotiating committee did not lead to any agreement because management would not discuss anything beyond cuts during the term of the existing collective bargaining agreement.

Spring 2010 saw the beginning of contract talks on a "normal" calendar. It soon became clear that management was seeking to go far beyond saving money to try to completely reshape the orchestra. The musicians' negotiating team, including counsel Leonard Leibowitz and Local 5 President Gordon Stump, recognized the gravity of the situation by making successively lower offers. Their last offer includes a 22 percent pay cut for the first year and limited recovery. Management placed two offers on the table. Proposal A called for a 28 percent pay cut along with benefit cutbacks, freezing of the orchestra's defined benefit pension plan and withdrawal from the AFM-EPF pension plan, and three weeks of service conversion (teaching, small group performance, and even library work for scale). Proposal A was withdrawn by management when the musicians did not accept it by August 28. Proposal B, now management's only offer, is considerably worse. It includes a 33 percent pay cut for existing members, a two-tier wage system with new hires coming in at \$61,200 (42 percent lower than previous scale), the same pension and benefit losses, unlimited service conversion throughout the entire season, very deep cuts for the orchestra's two librarians, and the elimination of the peer review committee for tenured musicians who are non-renewed. Management declared an impasse this past week and said it would implement Proposal B on September 24. The musicians responded by filing unfair labor charges with the NLRB on the grounds that management created an impasse by refusing to bargain in good faith. The strike date of October 4 would have seen the first rehearsals of the new season, with Music Director Leonard Slatkin.

League of American Orchestras President Jesse Rosen has made at least two recent visits to meet with DSO management. It appears that the financial crunch in Detroit is viewed as the opportunity to implant service conversion, a long-held goal of some orchestra managers, into a major orchestra contract for the first time. At the negotiating table, management has admitted that many current orchestra members may choose to retire or leave rather than work under their proposal. They believe that younger players will come to Detroit for these working conditions and salary, at least for a few years. Paul Hogle, the newly hired executive vice president of the DSO, wrote recently of management's desire to transform "the DSO into a reinvented model for our industry." He continued, "If we get it right, that new model can be THE destination many conservatory superstars (not to mention stars from other national and international ensembles) intentionally seek out because ... the working conditions will be dynamic and entrepreneurial."

For more than two months the musicians of the DSO have been conducting a public campaign to call attention to this situation. While they obviously feel that some contract concessions are necessary, they believe that management's proposal would irreparably damage the quality of the orchestra as many members left for other places and auditions failed to attract musicians of the same high level. The orchestra members have grave concerns about the tenure of Executive Director Anne Parsons. Her six years in Detroit have seen plummeting morale among orchestra and staff and accelerating departures from both groups. More about the musicians of the DSO and the current crisis can be found at the *detroitssymphonymusicians.org* website. As a part of their ongoing efforts to inform the DSO Board and the public about what is at stake, orchestra members are organizing a concert series. Two performances in September saw sold-out houses; dates scheduled for October include appearances by principal cellist Robert deMaine and guest conductor and violinist Joseph Silverstein.

ICSOM members can expect to read bulletins to keep them updated on the developing situation. The members of the DSO are extremely grateful to ICSOM, ROPA, the AFM, and Local 5 for their help in recent weeks, including the welcome presence of AFM President Ray Hair, ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge, President Brian Rood, and Secretary Laura Ross along with DSO members at the head of Detroit's Labor Day parade.

*[Editor's Note: Detroit musicians went on strike October 4. Donations, along with letters of support, should be sent to the DSO Members Fund; c/o Susan Barna Ayoub, Secretary-Treasurer; Detroit Federation of Musicians; 20833 Southfield Rd.; Detroit, MI 48075.]*

As this issue went to print, we were deeply saddened to learn that Fred Zenone, the fifth chairman of ICSOM, who served from 1980 to 1986, died on October 22, 2010. Fred will be remembered in our next issue.

## Adopted Resolutions

*(continued from page 5)*

### JoAnn Falletta

WHEREAS, JoAnn Falletta is a great friend to ICSOM and its member orchestras; and

WHEREAS, As Music Director of both the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Virginia Symphony, JoAnn Falletta is a recognized leader in the conducting field; and

WHEREAS, When the Honolulu Symphony musicians needed the services of a noted conductor, JoAnn Falletta agreed to lead the orchestra in their benefit performance of Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in December 2009; and

WHEREAS, This performance came just after the Honolulu Symphony Society filed for bankruptcy protection, jeopardizing the future of one of America's oldest and most resilient orchestras; and

WHEREAS, JoAnn Falletta donated her services in the interest of assisting the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank JoAnn Falletta for her leadership, dedication and generosity in assisting the Honolulu Symphony musicians in their special and emotional evening during which they said thank you to their community for their support over the years.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Robert Tim Brown

WHEREAS, Robert Tim Brown, Esq., of New York City is a colleague of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians' interim counsel, Michael G. Okun; and

WHEREAS, Tim Brown has tremendous experience in all levels of labor and employment law; and

WHEREAS, Tim Brown joined with interim counsel Mike Okun to advise the ICSOM Governing Board, and especially ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge throughout the 2009-10 season; and

WHEREAS, His expertise, friendship, and eagerness to assist ICSOM were invaluable to the whole organization; and

WHEREAS, Tim Brown has professed and demonstrated great respect for the musicians of ICSOM; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank Robert Tim Brown for his expertise, guidance, and friendship to orchestra musicians throughout the country; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That ICSOM extends its very best wishes to Tim Brown in all of his future endeavors.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Students Replacing Professional Musicians in the Workplace

WHEREAS, An orchestra of professional musicians represented by AFM Local 10-208 is being replaced by a symphony orchestra consisting of music students enrolled in the Roosevelt University Chicago College of Performing Arts to accompany upcoming performances by the Mark Morris Dance Group, a professional dance company of international standing, at a commercial venue and for which tickets will be sold to the general public; and

WHEREAS, The use of student musicians and ensembles to provide orchestral accompaniment for professional dance, opera, theater and other productions, for little or no compensation, constitutes exploitation of such students, devalues the work of professional musicians, and deprives professional musicians of their livelihood; and

WHEREAS, This action establishes precedents that will deprive those same student musicians of future employment and undermines the opportunity for them to make a

*(continued on page 9—see ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS)*

## Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 2)

It is a time of great change—and great opportunity. Unfortunately, as symphonic musicians, we work in a field that has not been quick to adapt to new marketing strategies, and in some cases has not even adapted to old marketing strategies. As a result, we find that our orchestras sometimes seem to be promoting and undermining themselves at the same time. Even while printing glossy brochures that introduce our seasons with the fanfare of the same tired slogans, the words in our inky newspapers send a message to our community that questions the sustainability and value of our orchestras.

It always strikes me as stunning that in many places our development departments are not well coordinated with our marketing departments, and that a basic tenet of fundraising is overlooked. People will donate to, and invest in, organizations that inspire them, and they will not give money to organizations that question their own sustainability.

Ideas and products that cannot offer anywhere near the level of community service that our orchestras provide have mastered the art of marketing and thrive through the promotion of a positive image. The same could be achieved for our orchestras and the all the arts in America. There is a positive message and a positive future to be promoted. But instead, in city after city, we see our managements undermining that positive message, and as a result the common reaction of the public to our orchestras is that we are a dying breed.

At a time when America is greatly concerned about unemployment, the arts provide 5.7 million jobs throughout the nation. And further, at a time when Americans are concerned about economic stimulus, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Boston Symphony alone accounts for \$166 million in economic activity annually.

Why are these positive facts not more commonly known, instead of the self-perpetuating mythology of waning interest in our orchestras? It is a self-fulfilling prophecy to promote a negative image. When the national view of our orchestras, a view that is promoted by national managerial organizations, is one of diminishing attendance, there can be no doubt that those images hurt actual attendance. After all, why would anyone leave their home to attend a concert when they've read in the paper that the orchestra's own manager and board chair have said that no one is attending?

We must be suspicious when we hear our own managements promoting a negative message. Have they become convinced by their faulty rhetoric, or are they asserting an apocalyptic view that serves only to create what they call "A New Economic Reality" that merely would reduce our organizations to a size that their skill levels are capable of managing.

### ICSOM Conference, Houston, August 18

We must resist the negative messages promulgated by many of our managements and by national managerial organizations that should be the most reliable sources of advocacy instead of the most consistent sources of destructive thoughts and ideas. For years, ICSOM has been alone in this wilderness, articulating our positive message

of hope for our orchestras and the communities where our children learn and our companies do business.

But lately we have been joined by other voices who are recognizing that the negative message of unsustainability is a detriment not only to our art form but also for the communities we seek to serve. Just last week I exchanged messages with a writer for New York's *City Journal*, Heather Mac Donald, who wrote, "It is a mystery to me how anyone can think that harping constantly on the allegedly dire condition of classical music is a strategy for attracting new listeners."

It is also a pleasure to read the words of Minnesota Orchestra violist and noted blogger Sam Bergman, who asks, "For exactly how many decades do we plan to allow the prophets of doom to continually shout from the mountaintop that orchestras are withering on the vine before pointing out that their dire predictions have been consistently, unceasingly, 100% wrong?"

The fact that orchestras have survived can only mean that we do have something to offer, that we do have supporters, that we do reach people of all ages, that we do contribute to a healthy business environment, and that we do achieve success when we aspire to the noblest of endeavors—the elevation of the human spirit.

It is not the music that has failed the citizens of Charleston, Honolulu, or Detroit. It is the managements of those orchestras that have failed. What other business tolerates such failure, and what other business uses its failures as examples to promulgate a so-called "new model"?

In 1965, the arts and culture industry in America was a \$3 billion marketplace. Now, it represents over \$166 billion dollars in economic activity every year. This is the message our orchestras should be expressing in times of economic difficulty. The arts should be recognized as the growth industry that it is.

There is no crisis in classical music. The crisis lies in arts management.

The musicians of ICSOM have accomplished great things, but now we must do more. We must recommit ourselves to the advocacy that is so needed. At this time in America's history, people are eager for the message of hope that we provide, and they long for organizations that truly aspire to quality. They seek organizations that create pride in their cities and restore the belief that they can have what they deserve for their children's future. Our orchestras fulfill all of those aspirations, and more.

But we each must ask ourselves "have we done enough?" We must take this message back to our colleagues. We must ask them to do more. We must continue to explore our partnership with Americans for the Arts. We must continue to build our press contacts so that the truth about the arts in America can be heard. We must continue to build relationships with the communities that surround our orchestras.

We must be our own advocates. It is abundantly clear that no one is going to do it for us.

I truly believe that ICSOM has never been more unified than we are today, and this accomplishment belongs to each and every one of you, and to my friends and colleagues who serve you on this board. But we must be ever vigilant in seeking out new opportunities to unite in support of each other and in support of the arts in North America and beyond. We must provide inspiration to our communities when our managements do not. We must believe that every crisis is an opportunity, and in this crisis before us we can offer hope and service where others offer only uncertainty.

I thank you for the honor of allowing me to serve as your chairman.

## President's Report

*(continued from page 3)*

Likewise, AFM Convention delegates understood that the issue of raising symphonic work dues was a non-starter.

We cannot thank you enough for the tremendous difference you and your colleagues made at this year's AFM Convention. What we did together demonstrated unionism at its very best. When we stand together the impossible is indeed possible.

The Governing Board came up with the title of the 2010 Conference, "It's Time to Embrace the Future," partially in response to the League of American Orchestras' June conference in Atlanta that was entitled "It's Time to Take on the Future." We believe it is time to embrace the future. We believe it is time to believe in and promote our orchestras and the value they provide to our communities rather than allowing managers and boards to apologize for our very existence.

I recently began another term as chairman of the musicians' committee in Kansas City. One of my duties is to serve on our symphony's board of trustees. In September I gave the musicians' report at our first meeting. I included the following notable excerpts from President John F. Kennedy's speech at Amherst College on October 26, 1963, regarding his vision for the arts in the United States. His words are as appropriate in the fall of 2010 as they were when spoken, a time when ICSOM was in its infancy.

I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens. I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.

## Adopted Resolutions

*(continued from page 7)*

career as professional musicians, one of the very purposes for which many of them are attending the Roosevelt University Chicago College of Performing Arts or any other performing arts university, college or conservatory; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference condemn the replacement by Roosevelt University of professional musicians by its students, or any performing arts university, college or conservatory where unpaid students replace paid professional musicians; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference condemn such exploitation of any student musicians by their college, and especially exploitation of its student musicians by Roosevelt University, the very institution that is preparing those musicians for careers as professional musicians; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference express their ardent opposition to, and hereby condemn, this blatant violation of the Code of Ethics of the MENC: The National Association for Music Education, which is "an agreement defining the jurisdictions of music educators and professional musicians;" and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference reaffirm their commitment to the MENC Code of Ethics as it applies to all performing arts universities, colleges and conservatories; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference hereby urge Roosevelt University to reverse its decision to replace professional union musicians with a student ensemble under its sponsorship and control, thereby depriving working musicians of work that should be performed by professional unionized musicians; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all ICSOM orchestras join with the AFM to communicate this message to all performing arts universities, colleges and conservatories in their jurisdictions, and to the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the organization which establishes national standards for those educational institutions.

*Submitted by Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric Opera), Robert Levine (Milwaukee), and the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Michael Greenfield

WHEREAS, Michael Greenfield has served as chief negotiator and legal counsel to negotiating committees of the Lyric Opera Orchestra of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and many other ICSOM Orchestras for over 45 years; and

WHEREAS, Mike also served as legal counsel to Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 of the AFM for over 45 years; and

WHEREAS, His knowledge, skill, insights, strategic thinking and participation in all areas of legal counsel for orchestra musicians have always been of the highest level; and

WHEREAS, He has demonstrated tremendous respect, affection and admiration for musicians everywhere through his generous efforts on our behalf; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference express their respect, admiration and gratitude to Michael Greenfield upon his retirement, for his remarkable body of work for over 45 years on behalf of ICSOM orchestras, AFM Local 10-208, and particularly as legal counsel and negotiator extraordinaire for the Chicago Lyric Opera and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the officers and delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank Michael Greenfield for his invaluable work and dedication, through the orchestras he represented, to the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, wish him every success in his future endeavors, and express our gratitude to him for his continuing friendship to ICSOM and all of its members.

*Submitted by Matt Comerford (Chicago Lyric Opera), Robert Levine (Milwaukee), Norbert Nielubowski (Minnesota), Rachel Goldstein (Chicago Symphony), Louise Alexander (Indianapolis), and Robert Prokes (Buffalo) and adopted by unanimous consent (continued on page 10—see ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS)*

## Adopted Resolutions

(continued from page 9)

### Jimmy Butts

WHEREAS, Jimmy Butts, of the prestigious Atlanta accounting firm Clack & Associates, PC, is a colleague of International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians' interim counsel, Michael G. Okun; and

WHEREAS, In conjunction with Mike Okun, Jimmy Butts assisted the ICSOM Governing Board this year as advisor on all financial matters involved with the proposed updating of ICSOM's bylaws and the ICSOM Governing Board policy book; and

WHEREAS, He has, through his expertise, assisted ICSOM in its mission of service to symphonic musicians; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank Jimmy Butts for his expertise, guidance, and friendship to orchestra musicians throughout the country; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That ICSOM extends its very best wishes to Jimmy Butts in all of his future endeavors.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### David Herring

WHEREAS, David Herring has been a longtime valued member of the Minnesota Orchestra trombone section; and

WHEREAS, On multiple occasions David has served on various Minnesota Orchestra members and negotiating committees; and

WHEREAS, David, in addition to being a professional musician and member of the American Federation of Musicians, and of the Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73, is also a professional software designer; and

WHEREAS, Working with the encouragement of ICSOM and the AFM Symphonic Services Division, David has devoted the past year to developing a straightforward, useful interactive Wage Chart web computer application; and

WHEREAS, David's application will allow orchestra musicians and their negotiating committees to compare, analyze and generate results from multiple years of relevant data over any number of available parameters; and

WHEREAS, David has successfully completed this task and has created new software that will aid current and future negotiating union musicians; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the officers and delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference wholeheartedly thank David Herring for his innovative work in developing a powerful negotiating tool on behalf of all orchestra musicians.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Robert Matisoff

WHEREAS, Robert Matisoff, of the prestigious Washington, D.C. law firm O'Donoghue and O'Donoghue, is a colleague of International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians' interim counsel, Michael G. Okun; and

WHEREAS, In conjunction with Mike Okun, Robert Matisoff assisted the ICSOM Governing Board this year when, among other things, he provided it with a lengthy training session of labor law issues, and also advised on the proposed updating of ICSOM's bylaws and the ICSOM Governing Board policy book; and

WHEREAS, He has, through his expertise, assisted ICSOM in its mission of service to symphonic musicians; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference thank Robert Matisoff for his expertise, guidance, and friendship to orchestra musicians throughout the country; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That ICSOM extends its very best wishes to Robert Matisoff in all of his future endeavors.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Richardson Symphony

WHEREAS The musicians of the Richardson Symphony Orchestra (RSO) have been the essential element of the Richardson Symphony's musical product since its inception; and

WHEREAS, The musicians of the RSO voted to be represented by the Dallas-Fort Worth Local 72-147 AFM since 1992; and

WHEREAS, Continued bargaining between the RSO and Local 72-147 since 1992 has resulted in significant improvements in working conditions for those musicians as well as significant improvements in the Richardson Symphony's musical product; and

WHEREAS, The Richardson Symphony Orchestra management's decision to refuse to collectively bargain with Local 72-147 has resulted in the placing of the RSO on the AFM International Unfair List; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference call upon the Richardson Symphony Orchestra management and board to bargain with the musicians of Local 72-147.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Web-Based Resource Center

WHEREAS, The dissemination of ideas of interest to orchestras is of the utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, The existing tools for such dissemination, namely Orchestra-L and Delegate-L, are not well-suited to the retention and organization of such ideas, nor to the dissemination of ideas in certain formats; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference direct the Governing Board to research the feasibility of establishing a web-based resource center with a searchable, organized knowledge base, available to all orchestras.

*Submitted by Penny Brill (Pittsburgh) and Peter de Boor (Kennedy Center) and adopted by unanimous consent*

### Honolulu Symphony

WHEREAS, The Honolulu Symphony, as embodied in its professional union musicians, is an irreplaceable cultural treasure central to the quality of life of Hawaii that must not be allowed to disappear; and

WHEREAS, The Honolulu Symphony Musicians have been and continue to be on the front lines of the struggle to protect professionalism, rights and dignity for symphonic musicians everywhere; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference reaffirm their support for the Honolulu Symphony Musicians in their fight to maintain their orchestra as a core community resource and a beacon of artistic excellence.

*Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent*

In addition to the adopted resolutions printed in this issue, delegates to the 2010 ICSOM Conference approved extensive revisions of the ICSOM bylaws. Those bylaw revisions may be viewed online at [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org).

## Houston Conference

(continued from page 1)

diversity and stated with pride that Houston is an arts city that supports the visual and the musical arts.

The three presentations by the attorney negotiators were distributed one a day, on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. They were greatly appreciated and provoked many questions and comments. Susan Martin's presentation on the new healthcare legislation and related considerations for bargaining was informative and timely. Liza Hirsch Medina's presentation delved into her experiences working with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers and challenged ICSOM musicians to ponder what they want the AFM to be. Barbara Jaccoma's presentation on negotiating during the worst recession since the great depression prompted numerous interactions with the delegates.

ICSOM was honored to welcome the entire International Executive Board (IEB) to the Conference for a panel discussion. Their presence was facilitated by their decision to hold their first quarterly meeting since their election to coincide with our Conference. (The entire IEB is invited to the ICSOM Conference each year, and some IEB members do attend. However, the last time the entire IEB joined us was seven years ago.) Ten ICSOM orchestras are represented by members of the IEB: Dallas and Fort Worth (Ray Hair, Local 72-147 president); Oregon (Bruce Fife, Local 99 president); Philadelphia (Joe Parente, Local 77 president); Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, New York City Opera, and New York Philharmonic (Tino Gagliardi, Local 802 president); Los Angeles (Vince Trombetta (Local 47 president); and Nashville (Dave Pomeroy, Local 257 president). The delegates were thrilled to have their local officers, along with AFM Secretary-Treasurer Sam Folio, AFM Vice President of Canada Bill Skolnik, and IEB member Tina Morrison at the Conference to introduce themselves and answer questions as they began a direct dialogue between the AFM and ICSOM.

There were expanded presentations by AFM Symphonic Services Division (SSD). SSD staffer Joel LeFevre introduced the new ICSOM wage charts that were developed by consultant and Minnesota Orchestra trombonist David Herring (who joined the presentation by phone). Detroit Symphony violinist/SSD staffer Joe Goldman and attorney Mel Schwarzwald discussed various orchestra benefit comparison charts they had compiled for use in negotiations. In addition to the SSD presentations, Maureen Kilkelly, executive director of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF), was joined by the AFM-EPF director of finance, Will Luebking, and AFM-EPF attorney Anne Mayerson. They spoke about the AFM-EPF, in which more than 80 percent of ICSOM orchestras participate.

This year's Conference included two town meetings that offered a more private setting for ICSOM delegates and officers to discuss topics of mutual interest. The annual member-at-large-delegate luncheon also allowed for smaller group dialog.

Incumbent officers Chairperson Bruce Ridge, Treasurer Michael Moore, Editor Richard Levine, and Members at Large Meredith

Snow and Paul Gunther, were re-elected to two-year terms. Delegates approved extensive revisions to the ICSOM bylaws, including a portion that requires ratification by member orchestras before it is adopted. For that bylaw revision, at least 26 member orchestras must register their votes within 90 days, and a two-thirds majority of those voting is required. A number of resolutions honoring and thanking various people for their contributions to ICSOM or to individual ICSOM orchestras, supporting orchestras facing difficulties, and condemning the use of students to replace professional musicians were adopted by unanimous consent of the delegates. [Editor's Note: Because of the length of the bylaw revisions, they are not printed herein but are instead available online at [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org). All other adopted resolutions can be found starting on p. 5.]

A negotiating orchestra workshop was held the evening prior to the opening of the Conference. This meeting was nearly as well attended as any normal Conference session and covered important issues our orchestras face at the bargaining table as well as within the community. A few of our member orchestras' managers and board negotiators have taken some very nasty bargaining positions recently, particularly in Detroit. The landscape does not merit the hardball tactics our orchestras are facing, and these sessions always offer a wonderful opportunity to discuss various approaches with our colleagues.

A new-delegate breakfast held in the morning before the Conference started allowed newly elected delegates to gain some insight into the Conference itself before the general meetings began. Each member of the Governing Board welcomed the new delegates as they gave short explanations of how ICSOM functions. Delegates are conduits that allow information sharing between their individual orchestra and ICSOM's member orchestras. The new delegates were encouraged not only to attend annual Conferences, but, among other duties, to communicate with their Members at Large and other delegates throughout the year and to submit information published in ICSOM settlement bulletins, *Senza Sordino*, and the ICSOM wage chart published by the AFM.

The 2011 ICSOM Conference will be held August 17–20, 2011, in Detroit. The hotel for the upcoming Conference has not yet been determined but should be announced soon.

*Senza Sordino* is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers, or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

## Report from a Less-Than-52-Week Orchestra

by *Christian Woehr, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra Delegate*

As the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra begins its 131st season, many of the musicians (especially us old-timers) look back in amazement at the shambles things were just a few years ago. After a matched gift of over \$80 million, management began operating like a bank, putting all its eggs in the endowment basket and hinging its future plans on endowment draw. When the basket handle broke, we were left staring at a large raw sidewalk omelet.

Since the arrival of Executive Director Fred Bronstein three years ago and his pragmatic and, most importantly, balanced approach to running an arts organization, the mood is undeniably positive. Some five years of downward trends have been reversed. Here are some numbers: Earned revenue for the last fiscal year totaled \$8.1 million, up nearly 15 percent from last year. Ticket sales reached nearly \$6.5 million, up 16 percent. Per concert attendance averaged 1,792, up 9 percent over the prior year. The symphony's "structural operating deficit" (there's that hallowed name) was cut 11 percent to \$2.6 million, the smallest since 2005, thanks to growth in ticket revenue.

The symphony launched a turnaround effort in 2008 to try new types of shows, build an audience and attract first-time goers with more popular music (The Beatles, ABBA), playing live scores along with movies (*Psycho*, *Lord of the Rings*, lots of Chaplin, *Wizard of Oz*), touring to new places, and making a CD on Nonesuch Records, the orchestra's first major-label recording in 10 years. Bronstein wants to close the budget gap by 2019. Contributed revenue in fiscal 2010 remained flat at \$8.5 million with annual campaign declines offset by sponsorships and the symphony's first gala in a decade.

My overall impression is of an administration firmly rooted in present results but willing to look down the road to any possibility. Concert venues or series that had been allowed to die because of bottom-line loss were being reconsidered, but in modern form with modern marketing resources and commitment. Old plans for hall

expansion were dragged out, with new contingency plans put in place (contingent on the money appearing, not on huge mortgages). Even something as simple as an idea for patron bicycle racks (for a new audience rolling up from the downtown loft district) did not just receive a laugh and pat on the back. New audience has become the high focus of this administration, with marketing positions old and new being filled with energetic appointments.

The endowment still exists, standing at \$116.6 million, down from \$142 million in 2007, up from the March 2009 low of \$93 million. The draw for the current fiscal year, \$6.2 million, is down from \$6.4 million, a drop the symphony appears able to handle just fine. Many more initiatives are in the works to help fiscal 2011's financials. The symphony just recently launched a rebranding campaign, live broadcasts on St. Louis Public Radio, and has plans to perform with Circus Flora and other cool stuff. And, yes, we're still playing Mahler and Tchaikovsky and Adams and all those guys, to pretty full halls.

It's been interesting to me, watching our adjustment to the SLSO's shortened season (recently lengthened by a week to 43 weeks). Thanks in large part to the efforts of Brad Buckley (past ICSOM chair), we receive what would have been "unemployment pay" as "summer season pay" of \$275 per week, leaving us free to go anywhere we want for some 9 or 10 consecutive weeks. What has happened over the years since this was put in place is that many people have been able to lock into substantial summer playing gigs in beautiful places, with no juggling necessary with the SLSO schedule. The full orchestra does go without hearing itself for some four months (including our split-orchestra opera season in May/June). For me, that first *tutti* chord in September seems just that much more satisfying, returning refreshed and eager to chomp into it. I know many of us don't feel like we're a major symphony orchestra anymore after losing our 52-week status, but we still sound like one, and for at least 36 weeks a year we feel like one.

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