

Senza Sordino

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New York Philharmonic Goes to Pyongyang

by Kenneth Mirkin

On February 7, 2008, the New York Philharmonic embarked on a three-week tour of Asia, playing 13 concerts in Taipei, Kaohsiung, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Pyongyang, and Seoul. It was an emotional roller coaster that few of us were prepared for.

When the Philharmonic first received an invitation from the North Korean government (otherwise known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK) in August 2007, our management had to consider whether it might be a prank. The matter was discussed with the State Department and the Korea Society, a non-partisan group that promotes dialogue between the two Koreas, and it was determined that the invitation was indeed serious. Management responded that we would consider such a trip only with the full support of the State Department and that we could not yet make any commitments.

Somehow, the invitation leaked into the press while the orchestra was on vacation in August, and many of us read about it in the *New York Times*. Most of us considered it to be one of many bizarre rumors that gets into the papers and didn't think too much about it. When we returned from our vacation in September, Philharmonic Executive Director Zarin Mehta met with the tour committee and informed us that he was indeed considering a concert in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, and that he had been in contact with Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill about the potential trip. Ambassador Hill was an old friend of the Philharmonic from our previous trips to South Korea, when he had served as U.S. Ambassador to South Korea. He was now serving as the head of the U.S. delegation to the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. Ambassador Hill felt that progress was being made with North Korea and that the time was right to have some type of cultural exchange to help warm up relations.

Zarin decided to make an exploratory trip to Pyongyang in October. He was accompanied by tour committee member Fiona Simon, Director of Public Relations Eric Latzky, Operations Coordinator Brendan Timins, and TravTours President Guido Frakers. After they returned from their trip with a positive outlook on the potential concert, it was time to discuss it with the orchestra, which was still in the dark due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The announcement was met with a combination of shock, horror, dread, and amusement. How could we even consider a trip to a country with one of the worst human rights records in the world? What about the safety of our many South Korean colleagues? Wouldn't Kim Jong-il use this concert as propaganda to help boost his own deadly and corrupt regime? The Philharmonic played in the Soviet Union in 1959, and the Philadelphia Orchestra made a groundbreaking trip to China in 1973; but U.S. presidents had previously visited those countries, and dialogues had already begun. Somehow, this felt very different and much more distasteful. The questions went on and on, and Zarin seemed to be caught off guard by the orchestra's concerns. Christopher Hill agreed to speak with the orchestra, and the larger issues were put on hold until Ambassador Hill could meet with us a couple of weeks later. Frankly, many orchestra members were suspicious of Hill because of the political nature of his position, but he immediately won the orchestra over with his candor and common sense.

There were still doubts in many of our minds about the concert, but the decision was made to tag on an extra two days to our scheduled China tour in February. We had only three months to put all the details together. The orchestra made it clear that, as a condition of our performance in Pyongyang, we would have to be able to meet with local students and musicians, and the concert would have to be broadcast on television and radio within North Korea. Only 1,500 of the party elite would be able to fit into the East Pyongyang Grand Theater. Though we had no control over who would be invited to the concert, we did insist on opening up the dress rehearsal to students, musicians and teachers. We were also able to set up master classes at the music school and joint chamber music sessions with North Korean musicians.

The final issue to be settled was the flight from Beijing to Pyongyang. The North Korean airline, Koryo, was considered too unsafe for the orchestra, so we had to find a respectable charter. In January, Zarin made a final trip to China, Pyongyang, and Seoul. He was able to

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



In the immortal words of Roseanne Roseannadanna, "It's always something."

No sooner had I returned from a whirlwind three-day visit to Jacksonville—a trip that saw a settlement of the egregious lockout of the musicians of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra—than we heard disturbing news from the Midwest. The board and management of the Columbus Symphony had secretly devised an insidious "plan" to decimate that great orchestra and turn back the progress of a 56-year investment the citizens of central Ohio had made in their orchestra.

But first, the good news.

On December 4, ICSOM issued a *Call to Action* to our members to help save the Jacksonville Symphony (JSO), and, once again, you responded. In a five-week period that encompassed the holiday season, the musicians of North America sent nearly \$100,000 to assist the JSO Players' Association in their battle. Ninety-four percent of ICSOM orchestras participated in this campaign, and support was also sent by our friends in OCSM, RMA, ROPA, and TMA.

This latest *Call to Action* again demonstrated the power of collective action and sent a message far and wide that wherever an orchestra is in need, the members of ICSOM will rise to their aid. The donations and letters of support poured in from across the United States and Canada, making an irrefutable statement to the management and board in Jacksonville that this was indeed a national issue.

But the real heroes are the musicians of the JSO and the citizens of Jacksonville. Time and time again the audience turned out for benefit concerts as they evinced a belief in their orchestra. The musicians stood with their leadership through many difficult moments, and they can now look ahead to what should be a very bright future.

Everywhere I went in Jacksonville I met citizens who professed their pride in their orchestra, as well as their desire to see that orchestra grow so it can serve all of Northeast Florida in new and innovative ways. There was tremendous support for the musicians, and winning the public relations effort was key to the settlement. The citizens were tired of the negative portrayal of the future of the arts in their city, and they were hungry for the positive message from the musicians and ICSOM.

Crucial to this effort was the support of our ICSOM orchestras. Had our member orchestras not answered the *Call to Action*, there was a very real possibility that the JSO might have met its demise as the orchestra we have come to know. Instead, the JSO is returning to the stage of their beautiful concert hall and is working toward a better future as it builds on its historic past.

In my address to the delegates of the 2007 ICSOM Conference in Minneapolis, I said: "We should be ever vigilant in seeking
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Orchestras

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Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
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Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
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Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony Orchestra
National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
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Secretary's Report by Laura Ross



In December I attended the Recording Musicians Association (RMA) conference that was held in Nashville. (How convenient for me!) This conference is very intimate, with guests sometimes outnumbering the delegates!

During the RMA conference, Maureen Kilkelly, Executive Director of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund (AFM-EPF, or the Fund), gave a very informative presentation. It was interesting to hear about the percentage of contributions received versus the amount of wages reported. Much of the recording income and contributions derived from recording work (TV, motion picture, jingles, and audio recording) are broken down by work type, and contributions average between 2 percent and 5 percent of total Fund contributions for each contract type.

Fifty percent of the the wages reported to the Fund are from symphonic sources, and they are responsible for 39 percent of the total Fund contributions. Surprisingly, 20 percent of the Fund's contributions come from casual engagements. I can only assume this large number is due, in part, to the recent introduction of the LS-1 form. This form, available to any member of the AFM, allows musicians, bands, pick-up orchestras, and others to receive pension contributions for concerts, weddings, shows, parties, etc. This has been especially successful in locals where pension may not be included in their "Miscellaneous Scale Wage" charts.

Maureen also spoke about the past few years' changes to the AFM-EPF's multiplier as well as some of the reasons for those reductions. One point of interest related to the trustees' application to the IRS for an amortization extension. One IRS requirement included a prohibition on benefit improvements for 30 years. Because the IRS requirements were unacceptable, in the end the trustees chose to lower the multiplier a second time (on April 1, 2007). This was done to ensure that the Fund would not have a funding deficiency through 2042 (based, of course, on all the actuarial assumptions). By the trustees' refusing to accept a freeze on benefits for such a long period of time, we might see a multiplier or other benefit increase sometime in the future, hopefully long before 30 years passes us by.

Many were not aware of a requirement to name a primary beneficiary (on a form available from the AFM-EPF office) and to keep that information current at all times. That includes participants who have not yet begun receiving pension benefits as well as participants who started receiving pension benefits before normal retirement age (usually age 65) and who then continued to earn additional pension benefits before achieving age 65 (what the Fund calls a *re-retirement* benefit). The pre-retirement death benefit was changed effective in January 1, 2004, and that change was significant. Now, the spouse or other designated beneficiary of a vested participant

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Member at Large Report by Paul Gunther

ICSOM and Education

Education was the topic for a breakout session at last summer's ICSOM Conference. The ICSOM Governing Board heard a clear mandate to address this topic further. In an effort to address the need for our colleagues to remain informed about education and how it impacts our institutions, *Senza Sordino* will continue to produce articles exploring various aspects of education in music and the arts, both in general and as it pertains to the lives of performing musicians.

Further, the Governing Board is exploring the possibility of forming an education committee. Such a committee would research and report on relevant education-related topics. The committee's aim would be to pinpoint issues, to create recommendations, and to present an action plan to the Governing Board. While we know there are others, here are some potential topics of interest that impact arts education: arts funding, student orchestras (both public and private), the Sphinx Organization, public school arts enrollment, the NEA, grant opportunities, government lobbying, medical and sociological research, successful programs at home and abroad, the business of arts and education.

The Governing Board considers arts education in general, and music education in particular, to be crucial not only to our own futures as performing musicians but, perhaps even more importantly, to our future generations' quality of life. While there is a wealth of information about arts education itself as well as a body of research that supports its importance, that information is not particularly well organized or easy to obtain.

Our entire ICSOM membership stands at a cultural crossroads, ironically struggling for dollars and concertgoers in a nation that is both wealthy and culturally knowledgeable. We are committed to doing what is in our power to further the cause of music education for artists and audience alike. We hope and believe that this can lead to successful orchestras in thriving communities, and to a richer nation.

If you would be interested in participating in this effort, or if you know someone in your orchestra who would be interested, please contact your ICSOM delegate or any ICSOM Governing Board member.

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.

Orchestra Newslets

Newslets are compiled with the help of ICSOM's delegates and members at large from sources that include direct submissions, member orchestra websites, and topical news items. The editor encourages input and submissions.

In January, months before contract negotiations were to begin, the management and the board of the **Columbus Symphony Orchestra** publicly issued a 50-page strategic plan proclaiming that the orchestra's financial problems would be best solved by firing 22 musicians at the end of the summer, thus reducing the number of full-time core musicians from 53 to 31. They also announced their intent to exact a 30 percent wage reduction from the remaining 31 musicians by cutting the current 46-week season by 12 weeks. Their plan was developed in secret over several months. Musicians learned of the plan by reading about it in the newspaper. The musicians and the local union have stated publicly that they will not accept any firings, even if that means the end of the orchestra and the loss of all jobs.

Doug Fisher, Local 103 president and CSO bassoonist, said that CSO musicians voted to make a live recording of standard Tchaikovsky repertoire to memorialize the achievements of their orchestra, now at its artistic peak after decades of development. Music Director Junichi Hirokami, who publicly condemned the board/management plan despite possible career consequences, will conduct. The recording is being personally underwritten by the former board chair, Gene D'Angelo, father of actress Beverly D'Angelo and grandfather of her twins with actor Al Pacino.

Following a series of payroll problems that started in October 2007, musicians of the **Honolulu Symphony Orchestra** were told on December 13 that paychecks scheduled for the next day would not be issued, that the symphony was insolvent, and that there would be no further payroll paid until some time in January at the earliest.

Since that time, HSO Musicians have been playing with pay delayed by as much as five weeks. The HSO musicians' emergency fund has extended loans to players who have needed assistance in getting through this challenging time. The hardship has been too much for some, though. They've had to travel off-island in order to find work. Paychecks have been issued sporadically, and HSO management has not been able to give a firm timetable on any future pay.

According to Honolulu's orchestra committee chair, Paul Barrett, HSO musicians are encouraged by significant community support, including \$450,000 in public donations in response to media coverage of the crisis and a well-attended rally in support of the musicians organized by students of the Hawaii Youth Symphony. The Honolulu orchestra committee continues to consult with ICSOM Counsel Lenny Leibowitz and the officers of Local 677 as it carefully monitors the situation.

The **Detroit Symphony** is looking forward to Leonard Slatkin's April return to Detroit for his first concert series since being named music director. Even before Slatkin's tenure as music director begins in September, he has already begun meeting with orchestra and staff members and helping plan future seasons.

The DSO is grateful to Honda Motor Company for its generous \$1 million grant for education programs. The grant, to be paid out over five years, will fund ensemble experience and private beginning string instruction in underserved local communities. Delegate Brian Ventura says that the grant will enhance the Detroit Symphony's already strong support for music education, which currently includes a total of 10 civic orchestras, wind, jazz, and chamber ensembles.

The **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** has been engaged in an endowment campaign with a \$30 million goal since fall 2005. Then, BPO's endowment stood between \$6 million and \$7 million, which placed the BPO 35th among U.S. orchestras in endowment size.

Buffalo's ICSOM delegate, Robert Prokes, notes that the campaign was in a "quiet" phase until the season opening gala concert in September 2007, when it was announced that \$13 million in cash and pledges had already been secured. The campaign currently stands at \$18 million in cash and pledges, of which \$8.4 million was raised from board and former board members.

The endowment campaign recently received a \$6 million challenge from a private foundation. If a total of \$24 million is raised by the end of the year, the foundation will add \$6 million to complete the endowment drive. The chair of the endowment campaign is the current chair of the Buffalo Philharmonic Board of Trustees, Dr. Angelo Fatta.

The **Chicago Symphony's** new in-house recording label, CSO Resound, has just released its third CD, *Traditions and Transformations: Sounds of Silk Road Chicago*, according to Delegate Rachel Goldstein. In December, CSO Resound released its first download-only recording, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, which was an immediate success on iTunes.

The CSO launched three new concert series two years ago: a rush hour series, a Friday night film music series, and a lecture/multimedia series called *Beyond the Score*. While the rush hour concerts have not been particularly popular, the other two series have been quite successful, and *Beyond the Score* has received critical acclaim. Its website, www.beyondthescore.org, provides free video downloads of the lecture/demonstration portion of the concert (produced under the Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Audio-Visual Agreement).

Ticket sales for the **Oregon Symphony** this season have already surpassed \$5 million. According to Oregon's delegate, Dolores D'Aigle, that's almost half a million dollars better than they were doing at the same time last year. The success marks a change in direction for ticket sales in Portland, which were in decline for the last five years. This season has also seen an increase in average paid attendance at Oregon Symphony's home, the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. It is up a whopping 20.5 percent over last season.

The Florida Orchestra ratified a three-year contract in December. The agreement's concessionary tone reflected a seven-year erosion in subscriptions and chronic long- and short-term debt that hobbled the institutional cash flow.

TFO Player's Committee Chair Harold Van Schaik explained that the agreement was contingent upon a multiyear bridge fund as well as board and management accountability benchmarks, all of which have been met or exceeded thus far. The \$6.5 million bridge fund goal is nearly two-thirds complete, and the 2008–2009 season subscription renewal campaign was launched in mid-February—four weeks earlier than usual and ten weeks earlier than last year. For the first time in many years, TFO also successfully navigated through the tight-cash-flow months of December through March without tapping into lines of credit or endowment loans.

The board and the administration are continuing a “retooling” to improve quality and efficiency in areas of institutional advocacy, marketing, and fundraising. Although TFO still has a long way to go on its road to recovery, if these past few months are an indication of what is to come, they seem to be headed in the right direction.

The Recording Academy announced three Grammy Awards for the **Nashville Symphony** and its music advisor, Leonard Slatkin, for *Made in America*, a CD of works by American composer Joan Tower. The orchestra won in the categories of Best Classical Album and Best Orchestral Performance, with the third award going to Tower for Best Classical Contemporary Composition (*Made in America*).

In a long list of firsts, this was the first Grammy win for the orchestra as well as its first project with Music Advisor Leonard Slatkin for the Naxos American Classics series. The CD, which includes Tower's *Tambor* and *Concerto for Orchestra*, was the first recording made by the orchestra in the new Schermerhorn Symphony Center. The title piece, *Made in America*, was the first composition resulting from a project known as “Ford Made in America.” The 65 participating orchestras, smaller-budget orchestras from all 50 states, jointly commission and individually perform the project's works. The project is spearheaded by the League of American Orchestras and

Meet the Composer, with major support from the Ford Motor Company Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts. Joseph Schwantner has been selected to write the next commissioned work for the project.

In addition to four previous Grammy nominations, the Nashville Symphony also received a Regional Emmy award in the Special Event/Live category at the 2008 Midsouth Regional Emmy Awards for *One Symphony Place*, a live broadcast of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center opening. Other nominees for this year's Grammy Awards included **Atlanta Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Minnesota Orchestra**. Nashville's delegate, Brad Mansell, says that it was truly an honor for his orchestra to be nominated along with those orchestras.

The **San Francisco Symphony's** *Adventures in Music* (AIM) program is celebrating its 20th year of providing music education to students in the San Francisco Unified School District. Believed to be the longest-running program of its kind among U.S. orchestras, AIM reached more than 22,000 children during the 2006–2007 season. Cathy Payne, San Francisco Symphony delegate and ICOSOM member at large, reports that each year the SFS Education Department creates a curriculum for the San Francisco Unified School District that links music to fields such as language arts, science, geography, or history. Teachers receive books, CDs, simple instruments, and other materials to support the program. Students also attend in-school performances that reflect the diverse musical traditions of the Bay Area, including classical, jazz, and world music. A major component of the AIM program is an annual concert by the San Francisco Symphony in Davies Symphony Hall that incorporates the concepts students studied in their classrooms.

In May, the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** will open the 12,000-seat Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park in Alpharetta, Georgia. In so doing, it will become the only orchestra in the U.S. simultaneously operating two amphitheaters. The orchestra also operates the Chastain Park Amphitheater, home of the Atlanta Symphony's Classic Chastain summer series. According to Atlanta's long-time delegate, ICOSOM Treasurer Michael Moore, the ASO's annual budget will top \$50,000,000 as a result of the new operation.

The ASO also announced a new \$1 million, three-year grant awarded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support three ASO programs: recordings, the Atlanta School of Composers, and Theatre of a Concert. This represents the first Mellon Foundation grant to the ASO in more than thirty years, as well as the largest grant from a national foundation outside Atlanta earned by the ASO in its history.

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Summary of Report Released by Robert F. Flanagan by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

Delegates attending the 2004 ICSOM Conference in Salt Lake City will remember a discussion forum headed by ICSOM Counsel Leonard Leibowitz and then-Member at Large Richard Levine. The topic was *structural deficits*, a buzzword that had been appearing at bargaining tables around the country. That discussion, which centered on whether orchestra financial problems were cyclical or structural, was quite similar to the dialogue begun in late spring of 2003 by the Elephant Task Force (ETF), a subcommittee of Mellon Forum participants (funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation).

Following a year of discussions, the entire ICSOM Governing Board was invited to attend a presentation of the findings of the ETF, much of which concluded that each orchestra's financial situation is unique and that each orchestra has a unique place in its own community. The ETF also identified four areas for individual orchestral self-assessment: community relationships (how the orchestra meaningfully connects with the community to create true public value), internal culture (how orchestra constituents can work together in mutually supportive and cooperative ways), artistic activities (how the orchestra uses resources in service to the community, to orchestra constituents, and to the art form), and financial structure (how an orchestra secures its revenues and handles its expenditures to achieve balance and fiscal viability). At that point, the ETF had devised a financial structure model for orchestra self-evaluation.

Once this information was presented, the ETF appeared to have completed its task. Many months later, however, Mellon reconvened ETF members—though by this time some members, including ICSOM President Brian Rood, no longer participated in the ETF or other Mellon activities. Their task, as funded by Mellon, was to identify an economics scholar who could assess the “cyclical versus structural” question. As a result of their discussions, Professor Robert J. Flanagan of Stanford University's Graduate School of Business was commissioned in March 2006 to conduct an analysis of the economic health of orchestras, with the objective of assessing the cyclical and structural influences thereon.

Needless to say, there are no earth shattering conclusions in “The Economic Environment of American Symphony Orchestras,” released by Flanagan in March 2008. (Mellon chose not to publish the report and requested that its release be delayed, but that request was disregarded.) The report itself goes into great detail about the so-called *performance income gap*, which is the shortfall between performance revenue and performance expenses that orchestras sustain. Flanagan notes that when orchestral salaries and expenses rise, the performance income gap increases. (Surprise!) In addressing the many issues that lead to this gap, his report gives an overview of trends in concert attendance, artistic costs (i.e., musician costs), and public and private support and endowments. Some of the newer charts show changes in distribution of expenses, but, again, there are no big surprises. The financial and operational data on U.S. orchestras used by Flanagan,

which were supplied by the League of American Orchestras, were controversial. For more than three years, representatives from the League, ICSOM, ROPA, and the AFM have been meeting for the Collaborative Data Project, trying to reconcile the different financial reporting methods used when data is submitted to the League. So far, there has been no resolution in this project. Flanagan's conclusions are culled from data provided on 63 sample orchestras, but only 32 had the full 17 years of data covered by the report (from 1987 to 2003). Those 32 orchestras are: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Fort Wayne, Fort Worth, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Knoxville, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Minnesota, National, New Jersey, New York, Omaha, Oregon, Pacific, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburg, Richmond, Saint Paul, San Francisco, Seattle, and Utah. Other sample orchestras had gaps in reported data occurring at different times. Those orchestras reported between 4 and 16 years of data.

In July 2007, ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge, President Brian Rood, and I attended a two-day meeting to critique an earlier draft of the report titled “American Symphony Orchestra Finances at the Turn of the Century.” I can report that certain changes were made, including the removal of some graphs and exhibits, as well as language changes and the arrangement of the document. However, our key concerns, that there are so many unmentioned and unexplained idiosyncrasies in our industry that fair comparisons cannot be made without misinterpretation and misrepresentation (as has occurred in the past), as well as concerns that publication of the document could do damage to our industry, fell on deaf ears.

I also found that certain references in the report have been changed. For instance, comparison groups, which were previously classified as “professional white collar,” “blue collar,” and “service industry workers,” are now identified as “unionized workers in the United States,” “nonunion workers,” and “other professional service workers.” There are also references to the fact that musician wages, benefits, and terms and conditions (including orchestra size) are negotiated through collective bargaining and that the resulting agreements cause an impediment to adjustment or change during economic and financial downturns. (At this point I ask myself how many times musicians and unions have reopened their contracts when all parties are convinced it is the appropriate thing to do. Unions are not as intractable as Flanagan would have others believe.)

One of Flanagan's key mistakes in this report (aside from appearing to go well beyond the scope of his original mandate to assess the cyclical and structural influences) is his attempt to compare the orchestra industry to the manufacturing industry, especially when productivity cannot realistically be a comparable factor. As orchestral musicians know, *we are the product*. If you cut weeks from a season or reduce the size of an orchestra, it is comparable to selling a car without doors or seat belts. Who would buy that?

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First, Do No Harm

by Bruce Ridge, ICSOM Chairperson

In recent days, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding the release of a report by economist Robert J. Flanagan, commissioned by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, titled “The Economic Environment of American Symphony Orchestras.” On behalf of the ICSOM Governing Board, I thought I would share some brief observations about the report and the work of Mellon as well as the oft-referred to “Elephant Task Force.”

It seems that every few years or so a new report is commissioned and released about the symphony orchestra industry in America that suggests that orchestras are not sustainable, and they generally place the blame, at least partly if not occasionally entirely, on musician salaries. It is difficult to determine just when the industry became so committed to proving to its public that failure is inevitable, but the self-destructive pattern of behavior has been around for decades. A United Press International article from 1970 famously depicts the findings of the death sentence report of that era, titled “25 Symphonies Doomed to Die.”

But still, no matter how deeply our industry is committed to publicizing its impending death, some orchestras somehow manage to survive. In fact, in many places, they are thriving. This is due to the leadership of creative managers and active boards who are able to effectively demonstrate the relevance of the arts in their communities. It is a relatively simple formula: people will invest in things that serve the citizenry, and they won't invest in things that they are repeatedly told are unsustainable.

Three officers of ICSOM attended one meeting to discuss the Flanagan report, in July of 2007. At that meeting, we vociferously expressed our concerns with what we saw were faulty conclusions based on faulty data. But even more than the findings of the report, we were concerned that the release of the report would lead to yet another onslaught of press that would trumpet the end of the orchestra in America similar to what followed the publication of the 1990s' version of this phenomenon, the Wolf Report.

All of these doomsday reports are filled with *USA Today*-like charts and graphs that serve to support the assertions of the text. However, the text is generally written in such a way that only the most ardent masochist would actually be able to plod through it all. The graphs, with their plummeting lines of revenues paired with their rising lines of musicians salaries, are welcome release from the numbing prose. I suspect that for many readers, their eyes are drawn to the illustrations as they beg for mercy.

Since the release of this report, some of our fears have been realized: There certainly has been a lot of coverage, both on-line and in some print media. But, to our relief, the report has been, frankly, ridiculed more often than not. Perhaps the most telling review came from Mr. Andrew Druckenbrod of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, who wrote, “Duh!”

Inherent in Mr. Druckenbrod's “Duh!” is the fact there is some truth in Professor Flanagan's report. Mr. Druckenbrod goes on to say “Other conclusions are so obvious they are laughable.”

We don't dispute that there is a need to analyze our field, but we believe that we are researching the wrong things. The Elephant Task Force acquired that sobriquet because it determined that there is a proverbial elephant in the room no one is discussing—that pachyderm being the economic situation of the symphony orchestra in America. We would suggest that the real elephant is still being ignored, even as it wrestles with the 800-pound gorilla and crushes the coffee table.

We must learn to effectively market our orchestras, promoting them as vital, and branding them as indispensable. In a world where other businesses that offer far less to the common good have mastered the art of promotion and the utilization of free media, orchestras remain, by and large, dramatically behind the times.

Where is the report that analyzes the great success stories? Why are we not studying the places where creative managers and musicians have led their orchestras to new heights of community service and artistic excellence? What other business uses the stories of its failures to build a model for the future?

We have seen it all before. We are seeing it again now.

Bankruptcy used as a fund raising tool. Ridiculous.

An orchestra with half the musicians will be the panacea for a lack of endowment. Absurd.

Put that on a glossy brochure: “The Columbus Symphony: To Cure You We Must Kill You.”

A fair criticism of what I have written here would be that I have not disputed the Flanagan report point by point. Frankly, I just don't have the time. There are musicians working to support their families that need our assistance, and there are underserved communities that need our ideas. I am very grateful to those who have taken on the task of pointing out specific concerns with the Professor's findings, and those observations are easily found online. In this brief essay, I have merely attempted to muse on the phenomenon of our industry's penchant for reports that promote such negative aspects of the field.

We have no doubt that the Mellon Foundation cares deeply about the preservation of our great art form, and about the community service we provide. We know that all involved are fine human beings, all trying to do what they think is right. But, we encourage them to re-evaluate the process they are undertaking. Musicians are frequently invited into the room for these discussions, and those

(continued on page 13—see *THOUGHTS ON FLANAGAN*)

Pyongyang

(continued from page 1)

secure an Asiana Airlines 747 for the approximately 280 orchestra members, guests, and press for the trip. The back half of the plane would be used to transport our cargo. In exchange for the use of the plane, we added another concert at the end of the tour, this one in Seoul, for the benefit of Asiana Airlines.

With less than one month left before our departure for Taiwan, the North Korea trip was finally official, and the staff worked nearly around the clock making preparations. Amazingly, the North Korean government gave in to every request from the orchestra to accommodate our needs. They wanted this concert to happen and seemingly would do anything to make it work. Food would be flown in from China and Japan; temperature-controlled trucks would be allowed in from South Korea to transport our instruments from the airport to the hall; extra heating oil would be brought in to make sure that the gigantic and normally empty Yanggakdo Hotel would be heated; and generators would supply backup electricity in the event of one of their frequent power failures. Special equipment would even be brought in to service our aircraft, as no 747 had never landed in Pyongyang before.

We boarded our chartered flight from Beijing to Pyongyang on February 26, after spending five nights in Shanghai and two in Beijing. The full impact of what we were facing didn't really hit us until our 747 landed at the Pyongyang airport, and we caught a glimpse of the giant red letters spelling "Pyongyang" on top of the terminal—next to the huge portrait of the Great Leader, Kim Il-sung, who is still president of the DPRK despite having died in 1994.

Under a light snowfall, the tarmac was filled with local and international press, and our plane also carried a large international press contingent to cover our arrival. As we walked down the ramp onto the tarmac, our cameras were aimed at the press on the ground and at the Pyongyang terminal with the huge smiling portrait of the Great Leader. Camera shutters blazed away, recording our musical D-Day invasion as the throngs merged. Orchestra members posed for a few group photos in front of the terminal, and then we were ushered onto buses to take us to the Yanggakdo Hotel.

The mood was more subdued on the dreary 45-minute ride to the hotel. We were introduced to some of our "minders," who rarely left our sides except when we were alone in our hotel rooms or performing on stage. The minders told us that their purpose was to make our trip as enjoyable as possible, but we knew that their real purpose was to make sure that we would not have unsupervised contact with the locals or do anything objectionable. To make sure that the minders were doing their jobs, there were also minders for the minders—usually stone-faced non-English speakers.

All of the rooms in the hotel were stiflingly hot, with the heat blasting on high and the windows sealed shut. The North Koreans wanted to impress us with how well they could heat a building, but we had a horrible feeling it was at the expense of ordinary citizens who rarely had enough heat. I turned off the heat and cracked open the window. We had just enough time to drop off our bags before being shuttled to a performance of the Pyongyang Performing Arts Troupe, which was followed by a huge 19-course dinner banquet at the People's



Photo by David Finlayson

The New York Philharmonic, just after arriving at the Pyongyang airport. The picture was taken by second trombonist David Finlayson.

Palace of Culture. Everything was so over the top that guilt and shame made it hard to appreciate the kind gesture and honor they extended. While there was enough food for a group ten times our size, millions of North Koreans faced starvation. We settled into our assigned tables, where my family met the four grim-looking minders who were assigned to us. (My wife and her parents came on the tour, along with many other guests.) It had all the markings of a long, agonizing evening until Ryu, one of the English-speaking minders, picked up his glass of Insamsul, a fiery liquor made with ginseng, and said, “Mud in your eye!” We burst out laughing, and after we all had a few glasses of Insamsul, even the robotic minders’ minders were smiling and having a good time.

Politics was not to be discussed, but we talked about families. We admired the pins of the Great Leader (which all citizens over age 17 were required to wear over their hearts) and learned that there were at least 12 styles of them. My wife, Lyn, was asked what she did for a living, and she replied, “psychotherapist.” The minders got excited because they thought she said “Secret Service”—but judging by the blank stares while she explained the role of a psychotherapist, she should have stuck with “Secret Service.” Ryu had worked with Madeleine Albright when she brought a delegation in 2000, but the other three minders had never really had a chance to sit down and chat with Americans before. One of the English-speaking minders, Gyong, was getting quite chummy with my father-in-law. Near the end of the long dinner, and after a lot of good laughs, one of the hardcore minders told us (through Ryu) that even though the day before we were all sworn enemies, today we are brothers and sisters. It was the first time during the trip that I was deeply moved. At the end of the evening, we gave each other slightly inebriated hugs and said goodnight. I wasn’t sure I understood what had just transpired, but I think we all surprised ourselves at how much we enjoyed each other’s company. We went back up to our rooms where the windows had again been sealed shut and the heat was blasting on high.

The next morning, after an outrageous and over-the-top breakfast buffet, we had a rehearsal in full dress for the cameras at the East Pyongyang Grand Theater. Driving through town to the hall, we passed many highly stylized posters of happy North Korean workers, soldiers, children, and, of course, the Great Leader and his son Kim Jong-il (the current head of the DPRK, known as the Dear Leader). We were told that most of the anti-U.S. posters had been taken down for our trip, but near the hall there was one large poster of a giant fist crushing an American soldier. The rehearsal was supposed to be open only to students and musicians, but it seemed to be used as another concert for the slightly less elite who couldn’t secure one of the 1,500 seats for the evening concert. After the rehearsal we met

with some students and gave them gifts of strings and rosin that were generously provided by the D’Addario Company as well as woodwind and brass equipment donated by orchestra members. We also presented the students with a huge stack of orchestral scores donated by Countess Yoko Nagae Ceschina, a devoted Philharmonic patron who provided most of the funding for the trip.

Between the rehearsal and concert, some orchestra members gave master classes at the conservatory, and there was a chamber music performance with local musicians. The level of playing was very high, but little personal interaction was allowed. For the rest of the orchestra, a tour was offered of the unbelievably boring Korean Central History Museum, but it was the only opportunity to get out of the hotel and see glimpses of the town outside the bus window. (The Yanggakdo Hotel is on a conveniently isolated island, and we were told that it was highly inadvisable to walk off the island. Some managed anyway, but one of our colleagues was turned back by two machine gun-toting guards.) At the museum, our guide suggested that we all bow to a statue of the Great Leader in the entry hall, but she had to settle for a solo bow.

It was finally time for our 6PM concert. Before our trip, the orchestra had a long discussion concerning our displeasure at the thought of standing for Kim Jong-il, should he decide to attend. We decided that the best way to handle it would be to make a group entrance and remain standing to play the North Korean and U.S. anthems. That way, the Dear Leader would be forced to stand for us. First we played the North Korean anthem and then the “Star Spangled Banner.” Flags of both countries were on the stage, and the audience stood throughout. The Dear Leader did us all the favor of staying home, presumably to watch it on television. The Philharmonic has played the “Star Spangled Banner” in China,

East Germany, and the Soviet Union, but this time my hair really stood on end. I could not believe we were actually playing our national anthem in North Korea. Afterwards, audience members sat down as politely as they had stood, and a very passionate North Korean hostess in traditional dress introduced the official program. The concert was performed without intermission and consisted of Wagner’s Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin*, Dvorak’s *New World* Symphony, and Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, with encores of Bizet’s *Farandole*, Bernstein’s *Candide* Overture (performed without conductor, as we always have since Bernstein’s death), and “Arirang,” a traditional folksong much beloved in both Korea. The televised show was broadcast live in both North and South Korea and shown worldwide on a tape delay. It was also available live on the Internet for those who were awake and curious.

(continued on page 10—see PYONGYANG)



Author Ken Mirkin and wife, Lyn, pose in front of poster at East Pyongyang Grand Theater announcing historic concert.

Pyongyang

(continued from page 9)

The orchestra played beautifully. At least in the beginning, though, there was nothing really remarkable about the concert (other than the fact that it was happening at all). The audience applauded politely but sat emotionless through the Dvorak and the Gershwin. There were few smiles and no toe tapping. They seemed to liven up for the encores and appreciated our conductorless *Candide*. But something magical happened when we played “Arirang.” I noticed that, for the first time, the audience was really reacting, and I noticed a few people wiping tears from their eyes. I was moved by seeing this and enjoyed the repetitive beauty of the folksong. The applause was thunderous after “Arirang,” and the standing ovation lasted five minutes or so. Lorin Maazel eventually took Concertmaster Glenn Dicterow’s hand and led him off stage, and we all began to follow.

The audience was just not ready to let us go. The applause kept growing louder and louder until we had no choice but to turn around and come back on stage. Then something really remarkable happened: this audience of 1,500 of the DPRK’s most elite Communist Party members lost control, and they were really enjoying it. They waved and shouted at us with tears in their eyes, and we looked at each other on stage, stunned, and waved back. Most of us were getting teary-eyed, too. We just stood there and waved back and forth for a few minutes. I couldn’t help thinking about how, not too far away, North Korean and U.S. soldiers were pointing guns at each other across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), while here we were crying and waving to each other across a concert stage. And then I really lost it.

Back to the Yanggakdo Hotel for an over-the-top celebratory dinner banquet. Tonight it had been reduced to only 16 courses. We were all really drained from this incredible day, and dinner ended slightly early so we could get back up to our rooms, unseal the windows, turn off the heat and get some sleep.

There was another over-the-top breakfast buffet before our afternoon departure for Seoul. We had some time to hit the hotel’s souvenir shop with its large selection of English-language books, most of which were purportedly written by the Great and Dear Leaders. By far the most popular title was *The U.S. Imperialists Started the Korean War*. It felt strange to purchase this from the kindly matronly cashier. After that, I visited the hotel’s small grocery store. The young woman at the register clapped her hands and said, “Viola!” I was astonished—even our music director doesn’t know who I am. Much of the press went with Maestro Maazel as he led a rehearsal of the State Symphony Orchestra of the DPRK. They played the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* and the *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture. He was astonished at their high level of playing, especially knowing that Western music is considered “morally corrupt” in the DPRK.

The majority of the orchestra checked out of their rooms and were taken to the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren’s Palace for the final event of our North Korean adventure: a performance of some of North Korea’s most talented young musicians, dancers, and singers, aged 7–14. They could not have been more astonishing. The

precision and artistry were beyond belief. As moving and incredible as the performances were, we had to wonder what kind of lives they lived, and what would become of the talented kids who don’t make the cut to attend the programs at this school. An eight-year-old flutist, Kim Jon Ri, blew us all away with her virtuosity on a traditional wooden flute. A chorus of tiny girls sang an adorable rendition of “Clementine” and “Jingle Bells,” with a gangbusters finale of “We Are Faithful Only to General Kim Jong-il” (which included gymnastics). That last one went over especially well with the large contingent of minders and children who were in the audience, and we clapped a bit uncomfortably. As we left the theater for our bus ride to the airport, the children in the audience were very hesitant to make eye contact with us as we said goodbye.

When we arrived at the tarmac of the Pyongyang airport, it seemed less imposing than it had two days earlier. It was a sunny day, and we were now used to all of the press around us. My family and I spent our final moments saying goodbye to our favorite minders, who were clearly upset to see us go. There were no exchanges of e-mail addresses, because North Koreans are not allowed Internet access. I gave Gyong a big hug, and he had tears in his eyes. I told him he was a good friend and I hoped to see him again soon, maybe even in New York. He gave a good laugh at that, knowing it was impossible. The plane was about to leave, so we gave Ryu hurried hugs and exchanged hopes of reconnecting soon. A final goodbye wave before walking onto our Asiana 747, and our whirlwind trip to North Korea was over.

Once in the air for the short flight to Seoul (made slightly longer by the need to fly over the ocean to avoid the Korean DMZ), we were able to catch up on the news that was being streamed on the televisions. We knew that our concert was a big media event, but were amazed to see that it was the lead story everywhere. When we arrived in Seoul, we tore through all of the newspapers to catch up on the news we missed by being in the center of it. Much of the media coverage before our trip was negative, suggesting that we were being used by Kim Jong-il. Right before our trip, the *New York Post* headline, “New York Foolharmonic,” was only made worse by Maestro Maazel’s unfortunate remarks that the U.S. was in no position to criticize North Korea because of our own human rights abuses. Now with the North Korea concert behind us, even many of the most skeptical members of the orchestra felt that the trip had gone very well, and it was entertaining to read the reactions of pundits in Washington and the press. The White House and State Department had distanced themselves from the event, and no active high-level U.S. government official attended the concert. Perhaps it was out of a desire to maintain a hard-line stance against North Korea, or perhaps the reason was revealed in the State Department response to Condoleezza Rice’s invitation to the concert: “We regret to inform you that Secretary Rice will not be able to attend your concert in Pyongyang, China.” She was in Seoul the day before the concert for the inauguration of the new South Korean president, Lee Myung-bak.

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On Houston's Recent Settlement by Eric Arbiter

I have certainly seen my share of stressful and contentious contract negotiations in my 35-year career with the Houston Symphony. My last stint on the negotiating committee was in 2003, the negotiations that resulted in the first strike called by the musicians of the Houston Symphony. During those negotiations, our negotiation committee held out until March against pressure from musicians to strike earlier in the season. I could write a lengthy article on this subject alone, but a much more positive and productive story is that I feel much was learned from that strike by the management, the board, and the musicians.

Many of the chronic cycles that have repeated themselves every three years for as long as I can remember were finally addressed during the recently concluded negotiations. It was certainly painful for the musicians to have had our salaries frozen and our healthcare benefits reduced, as well as to have seen the deficit reduction financed in large part by leaving positions within the orchestra unfilled and using furlough weeks. On their part, the board pledged to demand more from board members and to recruit new members who wanted to leave behind past practices. The management, under the then new CEO, Matthew VanBesien, gathered a group of talented people on staff not only to seek new ways to solve our problems, but also to address the common problems all American orchestras face in the twenty-first century. Maybe it's because Houston was the first orchestra to hit the wall in 2003, but I think we finally began to see that the rules of the industry were changing and we needed to adapt.

The results, though hard for the musicians to bear (since we had taken similar sacrifices in previous contracts), have brought us three years of balanced budgets and helped us in our fundraising efforts. Our audiences have increased and progress is being made in raising the level of our endowment.

As to our recent settlement, salaries have started once again to increase modestly, the furloughs are being phased out (ending next year), the vacancies are being gradually filled, our healthcare premium has returned to earlier rates (the premiums had doubled a year ago), and a ten-year dispute regarding the status of our now-frozen defined benefit pension plan was resolved in the musicians' favor. (The Houston Symphony is currently in the AFM-EPF pension plan.) Through the tireless work of our negotiating committee, our attorney, Mel Schwarzwald, as well as our board and management, the process was completed well in advance of the contract deadline (pending the pension issue resolution).

From my long perspective, these seem to be positive signs. All sides are starting to see that if our organization is to prosper, each branch is needed and must function together with the others, as pulling in the same direction is always most effective. To harm one part of the organization inevitably harms the whole.

Eric Arbiter is Houston Symphony's ICSOM delegate as well as its associate principal bassoonist.

Secretary on AFM-EPF

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who dies before beginning to collect a pension benefit may receive the pre-retirement death benefit only as a monthly annuity; a lump sum payment is no longer available. Because the pre-retirement benefit is paid as a monthly annuity for the life of the beneficiary, naming an estate or trust as the beneficiary is prohibited. For purposes of the pre-retirement survivor annuity, a participant may designate up to three primary beneficiaries and an equal number of alternate beneficiaries (unless there are more than three children). Until recently, participants were only allowed to designate one beneficiary, so you may want to check with the AFM-EPF office or your local to update your beneficiary information once the new forms become available.

Additionally, it was pointed out that same-sex marriages are not recognized by the federal government. Because of that, a participant should not assume that a same-sex spouse would receive an annuity should the participant die before designating that partner as the beneficiary.

These were just a few of the facts that Maureen covered in her fascinating presentation. The pension discussion at last summer's ICSOM Conference was well received, and the Governing Board is considering continuing our education with more pension-related topics at the next ICSOM Conference. I'd like to thank Maureen Kilkelly for her assistance with this article.

Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra

The musicians of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to everyone who supported us during our lockout. The support of our colleagues touched, inspired and sustained us during our ordeal. We were surprised and overwhelmed by your generous support and kind words. Also, ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge and SSD Director Laura Brownell visited Jacksonville at a crucial time, and that really meant a lot to us.

We were able to come to an agreement when a group of community leaders stepped up to try to bridge the gap between what our management was willing to offer and what we were able to accept. The Friends of the Jacksonville Symphony are now working hard to raise money to add weeks to our season. Already they have raised enough to add one week this season. The concerted response of both the orchestral community and the Jacksonville public serves as a great source of encouragement and hope for the future.

Susan Pardue, Orchestra Committee Chair

Summary

(continued from page 6)

There is one important point we noticed buried in the report's Executive Summary. Holding the influence of general economic conditions on symphony orchestras constant, it says that "there was a modest trend improvement in the overall surplus/deficit position of orchestras in the late 20th century." (Yes, *improvement*.) Also, there is interesting information contained in a statement from the Stanford Graduate School of Business that accompanies Flanagan's release of his report. It first mentions that most orchestras ran deficits with endowment money excluded. The statement then has this to say about the 17 orchestras in the report that normally remained in the black even with that important resource excluded: "Flanagan said the study's scope did not try to identify similarities among the 17 symphonies that usually did have surpluses. Overall, he said, he noticed how widely all orchestras studied varied in terms of expenses, sources of income, and even how they invested their endowments." Now, that's food for thought.

Missing from this document, over serious objection by ICSOM, ROPA, and the AFM last July, are: comparisons of administrative salaries; the rapid and significant increases in music director salaries, which, in terms of percentage, are well in excess of those of musicians (this reference was removed from the draft viewed last July); recognition of the massive amounts of free education and community performances provided by our institutions; and the recovery that seems to have occurred since the devastating effects of the bursting tech bubble and of the 9/11 attack (the report's data ends only two years later).

I suppose the only consolation we can take from our two days spent in Chicago last July is in the Acknowledgement section of Flanagan's report: "... while I have benefited immensely from the comments of these parties, I have not always accepted their suggestions." No kidding!

Pyongyang

(continued from page 10)

The question remains whether the concert was a "success." If success is measured in immediate de-nuclearization or regime change (theirs, not ours), the concert is unlikely to be hailed as successful. But those of us who were in Pyongyang know that, at least for a brief moment, we pried open even the hardest of hearts and touched a group of people in a way that no politician or soldier can dream of. In the process, many of us returned forever changed, reminded that music and the arts, along with the freedom to express them, are perhaps the greatest gifts we possess.

Kenneth Mirkin joined the New York Philharmonic as a violist in 1982. He has served on that orchestra's negotiating, orchestra, tour, and pension committees for as long as he can remember. He currently serves as the Philharmonic's ICSOM delegate.

Newslets

(continued from page 5)

The **Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra** played its debut performance in Carnegie Hall on January 26. Over 500 Texans traveled to the Big Apple for the experience. ICSOM Delegate Karen Hall reports that orchestra members ran into friends, neighbors and patrons at every turn in Manhattan!

The nearly full concert received critical acclaim, including from *New York Times* critic Anthony Tomasini, who said that "[t]he Tchaikovsky was first rate." Mr. and Mrs. Sid Bass hosted a formal dinner at their New York City home for the event and expressed their pride in the symphony by donating a second million dollars this season. Another formal dinner was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Bass after the concert for the orchestra members and patrons.

On January 27, the Symphony returned to the Carnegie Hall stage for a sold-out performance of *Peter and the Wolf*, narrated by John Lithgow in English and Spanish. The Carnegie Hall trip was a welcome change for the Fort Worth musicians, who usually find themselves playing educational programs to small towns in Texas when they go on tour.



Fort Worth violinists, left to right, Kristen Van Cleve, Amy Faires, Swang Lin, and Sergey Tsoy pose in front poster at Carnegie Hall announcing the orchestra's debut performance there.

Chairperson

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opportunities to implement our network of activism. Whenever an orchestra is in need, let us all respond. Wherever a musician is in need, let us all respond.”

In ICSOM’s *Call to Action* for Jacksonville, we included these words: “...unfortunately, there can be no doubt that we will issue similar *Calls to Action* to assist other orchestras in the months and years ahead.” I assure you, we did not intend this statement to be so immediately prophetic.

It was on January 17, less than 48 hours after my return from Florida, that we learned of a “plan” from the board of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO) to cut their budget by \$3 million, to implement a pay cut of 30 percent for the musicians, and to fire 22 of the 53 full-time musicians. While there are many unprintable words I could use to describe this “plan,” for the purposes of this article, I think I will go with *ghastly* and *absurd*.

Again we find ourselves disputing false and negative claims. Again we find ourselves asserting this inherent truth: offering an inferior product to consumers can never be the basis of a viable business model for an orchestra. In fact, far from solving any problems, this ludicrous “plan” would most certainly sentence this cherished cultural institution to extinction. The unified musicians of the CSO, the citizens of Columbus, and every musician in ICSOM will simply not allow this to happen. We will all rise once again to shine the national spotlight on the failed policies of a board and management that would appear to have been derelict in their duties as community stewards.

We ask the board that devised this scheme to explain themselves. Why, at this time of promise for the arts in America, are they spending time and money producing a glossy document in a futile effort to convince the citizens of Columbus that their city is not world-class, instead of exploring new avenues of support for the growth of the institution they are charged with maintaining?

In a time when the Fort Worth Symphony is receiving rave reviews for its Carnegie Hall appearance, the Florida Orchestra is announcing gifts totaling over \$3 million to their stabilization plan, the Nashville Symphony is winning three Grammy awards, the Buffalo Philharmonic is aggressively building its endowment, the North Carolina Symphony is recording the works of Pulitzer Prize winning composer Christopher Rouse, the Oregon Symphony is announcing a 20% increase in attendance, and the New York Philharmonic is receiving more press coverage than the Oscars, why does the management of the CSO profess that the arts in Columbus are not sustainable? To even contemplate making such a claim one would have to ignore the fact that the non-profit culture industry in Greater Columbus results in over \$330 million in economic activity every year.

In the coming months, we all must direct our attention to Columbus. It is our hope and belief that this situation will be resolved and

that a positive message will be heard, as it ultimately was in Jacksonville. I am convinced that the citizens of Columbus will demand that the board and management that devoted more time to this plot than to nurturing their institution must explain themselves.

I have no doubt that the Columbus Symphony will endure. And I have no doubt that if another *Call to Action* is needed, the members of ICSOM will once again rise to the aid of their brothers and sisters.

The ICSOM *Call to Action* issued for Jacksonville went on to say: “...if we effectively respond to every call, we will demonstrate the power in collective action. We can and will make a powerful statement to our managements and boards as we work to spread the positive community message of the musicians of ICSOM.”

There are truly more positives than negatives to report about symphonic music in America, and I wish I could spend this column exclusively recounting the many successes. But, as we rally to the cause in Columbus, we must also turn our attention westward, where the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony are engaged in a struggle of their own. You might have read reports that headlined, “Honolulu Symphony Bounces Back.” But those reports are premature. The musicians there are facing serious difficulties. You can read about them in the Newslets in this issue of *Senza Sordino*. It is a different type of battle, one not so much with their management, but rather with the perceptions of a community weary of ongoing financial difficulties. There, as in many places, we must convince the citizenry of the orchestra’s relevance.

All too often, and in far too many places, we must be our own advocates for our communities. In places where the bastions against progress stand silent when confronted with fallacies, and where the purveyors of negativity are blind to the opportunity that investment affords them, we must ensure that they hear our voices as well as our music. Our audiences are eager to hear the positive message that we offer, and they are ready to reject the rhetoric of those who would suggest that their cities cannot achieve all that they deserve. Let us never rest in this cause, and let us remember that with every victory a new challenge awaits.

Thoughts on Flanagan

(continued from page 7)

gestures are certainly appreciated. But every time we enter, we emerge with the knowledge that we have participated in a process that leads, seemingly inevitably, to a public reporting that we feel harms the field, or in other circumstances labels the salaries through which we feed our children “A Road Map to Extinction.”

The Mellon Foundation, the Elephant Task Force, and the Flanagan Report all call for change in our industry. We agree. We must change. We must stop doing this to ourselves.

Nominating Committee Seeks Input

In accordance with ICSOM bylaws, there will be elections at the 2008 ICSOM Conference for the positions of ICSOM Chairperson, Treasurer, *Senza Sordino* Editor, and two Members at Large. Also in accordance with ICSOM bylaws, the Governing Board has appointed a Nominating Committee that may, at its discretion, nominate candidates for those positions. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Conference.

The Nominating Committee will consider all worthy candidates, including those incumbents intending to seek re-election. The duties of all ICSOM officers are spelled out in the ICSOM bylaws. The ICSOM bylaws are available online at icsom.org, and a copy is included in the ICSOM delegate manual. Among the criteria applied by the Nominating Committee are candidates' personal abilities, experience and activity in ICSOM, compatibility with ICSOM policies and personnel, and willingness to serve. Balance of orchestra size and diversity on the Governing Board are also considerations.

As part of its procedure, the Nominating Committee is soliciting comments and opinions, favorable or otherwise, regarding the incumbent officers and the dispatch of their duties. Delegates and members of ICSOM orchestras may contact any member of the

committee. The committee also welcomes suggestions of other possible candidates for these positions.

All input to the nominating committee will be held in the strictest confidence. Committee members may be contacted by telephone or e-mail. The deadline for input is June 10.

Members of the nominating committee are:

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Fifty Years and Counting

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

It is important to pass along our memories about the formation and advancement of our orchestras, for orchestra histories can reveal a great deal. Just take a look at our collective bargaining agreements—between the lines they document many instances of improvements and abuses that explain what might otherwise remain puzzling. I suspect there are a great many stories attached to CBA clauses that would either entertain or horrify a listener.

While I've been "through the wars" with my own orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, it's only been for 24 years of the orchestra's 62-year history. I believe it's important to tell our story to each new member that joins the orchestra, not only so they understand where our contract came from, but also to help them understand what motivates our musicians over time.

I have the greatest admiration for our colleagues who survived the hard times. They faced strikes, shutdowns, pay cuts, and more, and they have been able to share in the vast improvements we achieved over time. When I was growing up, I had no idea what orchestra life was really like. In hindsight, I would have appreciated knowing a little more about what I was setting myself up for (though I very much doubt I would have changed my career plans).

I love a good story, and it occurred to me that some of our colleagues have good ones to tell. When I saw the *International Musician* advertising auditions for Stanley Drucker's position as principal clarinet in the New York Philharmonic, I began to think there are surely others like Stanley who have had interesting careers with their orchestras and who might be willing to share their memories. (I was honored to meet Stanley last year when we both played in a Hurricane Katrina-related concert with the Louisiana Philharmonic.)

I began researching members of ICSOM orchestras who had served their orchestras for at least 50 years. I wasn't disappointed, and the

fruits of my labor appear below. Jerome Wigler from the Philadelphia Orchestra relates the history of his orchestra's struggles, his direct involvement in those efforts, and his early involvement with ICSOM. Frances Darger of the Utah Symphony responded to me directly about her 65 years of experience. Jane Little reveals war stories about touring as a charter member of the Atlanta Symphony. Phil Blum explains how much auditions have changed since he joined the Chicago Symphony. Harriet Risk Woldt, who retires from the Fort Worth Symphony at the end of this season, relates some unusual memories of her years as a musician. Richard Kelley joined his father in the Los Angeles Philharmonic and speaks of his experiences under various music directors over the years. Sadly, just after I requested these stories, I received the news that Detroit Symphony violinist Felix Resnick had died. (I knew of him while growing up in the Detroit suburbs.)

These musicians' many years of service and fortitude are to be praised and acknowledged with great admiration and respect. My thanks go out to the delegates, friends, and musicians who responded and contributed to these fascinating reminiscences.

Detroit Symphony—Felix Resnick (66 years)

On April 2, 2008, Detroit Symphony violinist Felix Resnick passed away at age 89. He was a member of the Detroit Symphony for 66 years and was an active member of the orchestra until succumbing to cancer. He served for decades as assistant principal second violin, and then as a member of the second violin section. He was born in 1918 in New York City, and raised in Detroit. Felix joined the DSO in 1942, and served under Music Directors Karl Kruger, Paul Paray, Sixten Ehrling, Aldo Ceccato, Antal Dorati, Gunther Herbig and Neeme Jarvi.

While Felix joined the DSO in 1942, he was unable to begin his tenure until the 1943–1944 season due to a one-year shutdown. (There was supposed to be a 21-week 1942–1943 season. However, in July 1942, management insisted they could manage only 14 weeks, and regardless of the many concessions offered by the musicians to retain the 21-week season, management said it would be 14 weeks or nothing. The national music press condemned the shutting down of the orchestra during a time of national crisis when such institutions were so essential.) There was yet another shutdown from 1949 until 1951, when the orchestra was restarted in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Detroit. The DSO became

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



The North Carolina Symphony recently performed an unusual concert, the brainchild of our music director, Grant Llewellyn. Maestro Llewellyn wanted our audiences to experience some of the musicians' other unique talents, besides the ones they are known for week in and week out. My talented colleagues were given the chance to perform in activities as disparate as flamenco dancing and bluegrass jamming. Our audiences loved every second.

As I enjoyed the concerts from the bass section, I was especially impressed by the bluegrass band that had been assembled. They were fantastic, and over four nights they truly brought down the house.

That band, known humorously as "*Jackie and the Back-stage Boys*" (a nod to one of our orchestra's young stars, Jackie Saed-Wolborsky, and to the members of the stage crew who joined in on mandolin and guitar), was composed of members of the NCS with tenures ranging from over 35 years to less than 8 months. As great as they were musically, I think I enjoyed the diversity in tenures as much as anything. Musicians who had been in the orchestra since before some of the others were born were performing together perfectly and with a camaraderie that demonstrated that this orchestra is truly a family. The embrace of our loyal audiences served to confirm even more the strength of the community that surrounds this orchestra.

In this issue of *Senza Sordino*, ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross has compiled several stories of amazing musicians who have served their orchestras for over fifty years. I encourage you to read through the stories of these remarkable people, and I guarantee you will be inspired. I often consider how rare it is in today's world to find true loyalty. But throughout ICSOM, we have musicians who have dedicated their entire lives to their orchestra, and to serving their community and educating its children.

Every orchestra has a unique sound, a product of the individuals who have developed that sound over time. It is a mix of the young and the more experienced. I find myself reinvigorated by that relationship, both in my own orchestra and as I observe it in others.

Our orchestras and indeed our communities are enriched by our diversity. I have seen how the newer members seek to learn from the history of the orchestra, and how we all can be invigorated by youth.

Every person is in a period of transition every day of their lives. When I joined the North Carolina Symphony, I was the youngest member at the time. I have now lost that distinction—by several decades no less. How can it be true?

Occasionally, we will hear managers talking about "generational shift." That would be fine if they were speaking of the natural process of time, but we know they aren't. There are some managers, including several

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Orchestras

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Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
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President's Report by Brian Rood



Sphinx Competition

This past February, at Orchestra Hall in Detroit, the 11th annual Sphinx Competition was held. Violinist Danielle Belen Nesmith was awarded first place. Second and third place went to violinists Karla Donehew Perez and Luisa Barroso.

Many thanks to Detroit delegate Brian Ventura, who was in attendance and represented ICSOM and the Governing Board. ICSOM continues to provide support to the Sphinx Organization and its Sphinx Competition through ongoing scholarships for the competition's Senior Division semi-finalists.

A New Initiative to Diversify Orchestral Repertoire

Sphinx recently launched a new initiative designed to increase the number of works by Black and Latino composers heard nationwide. The Sphinx Commissioning Consortium (SCC) will be administered in partnership with 12 orchestras from across the country, including Baltimore, Chicago Sinfonietta, Cincinnati, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Nashville, New Jersey, New World, Philadelphia, Richmond, Rochester, and Virginia.

Compositions by Black and Latino composers now account for less than one percent of classical music performed. The SCC will commission a new orchestral work from a Black or Latino composer annually. Each member orchestra will perform the commissioned piece during its concert season. The SCC, through its members' joint financial commitments, will have resources exceeding \$70,000 each year to cover commissioning fees and other associated costs.

For further information regarding the Sphinx Organization, visit www.sphinxmusic.org or write the Sphinx Organization at 400 Renaissance Center, Suite 200; Detroit, MI 48243.

Negotiating Orchestras

Back by popular demand, our negotiating orchestra caucus will return to this summer's ICSOM Conference in San Francisco's Hotel Kabuki. The caucus will start at 7:30PM on Tuesday evening, August 19, the night before the opening session. All orchestras currently in negotiations are invited, as well as those that recently completed or are about to begin negotiations. This has proven to be an important session in the past. If more time is needed for the caucus, additional time will be available during the Conference.

Over the summer months, the Governing Board will again host conference calls for negotiating orchestras wishing to participate. These calls will take place as needed and will offer delegates, committees, negotiators, and local presidents the opportunity to discuss and share experiences from and strategies for negotiating tables throughout the country. Delegates or committee chairs may contact me to have an orchestra included.

Flanagan Report Response

Much has been written about Robert Flanagan's recently released report on orchestras, "The Economic Environment of American Symphony Orchestras," commissioned by the Mellon Foundation.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation should be familiar to orchestra musicians because of its Orchestra Program, a ten-year, \$30 million initiative intended to strengthen a select group of leading American symphony and chamber orchestras. The main component of the Orchestra Program is the Orchestra Forum. Attendees of the Orchestra Forum include executive directors, board chairs, and musicians. The musicians were originally intended to have been selected by the full orchestra either through direct election or appointment. There were times, however, when these appointments were made by executive directors without the approval of and/or consultation with musician leadership. From the beginning of the Orchestra Forum, ICSOM leadership vigorously pursued AFM, ROPA, and ICSOM participation as observers, and this ultimately became a reality late into the Orchestra Program.

An outgrowth of the Orchestra Forum was a subcommittee called the Elephant Task Force (ETF). It was the work of the ETF that eventually led to the Flanagan commission. My perspectives are not only those of an ICSOM Governing Board member but also of a member of the original ETF, which I served on from 2003 to 2004.

Professor Flanagan's report is troubling in several key areas.

One is the process used to choose Flanagan and the circumstances surrounding that choice. Another is the financial data used, which constitutes the very foundation of his research and, therefore, his conclusions. Also of great interest is the lack of attention paid to many types of expenses within orchestras' budgets. Flanagan chose to focus solely on musicians' salaries rather than those of other workforces within our orchestras. One can only ask why. And, finally, what was the rush for this particular report over other worthy projects?

First, let's take a look at the process involved. Flanagan was commissioned by the Mellon Foundation to research orchestral economics in 2006, with support from the League of American Orchestras. (At that time, the League was still named the American Symphony Orchestra League.) The main focus was to study whether the deficits encountered by orchestras at the turn of the century were structural or cyclical.

This very subject was one of the first discussed by the ETF in late 2003. The ETF was composed of Mellon Forum participants and included board presidents, executive directors, musicians, and Mellon officers, along with two consultants. One of the burning questions discussed was the structural/cyclical issue. Musicians on the ETF maintained that the deficits were cyclical—due, in no small part, to the horrific events of 9/11. Another view was that orchestras

(continued on page 11—see PRESIDENT ON FLANAGAN)

Orchestra News and Newslets

The **Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico** (Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra) has announced the appointment of Maximiano Valdés as its new music director and principal conductor. His appointment will commence with the 2008–2009 season, coinciding with the orchestra's 50th anniversary. Born in Santiago, Chile, Valdés was the music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic from 1989 to 1998.

ICSOM delegate Jeff Solomon reports that the **Alabama Symphony Orchestra** has successfully concluded its search for a new executive director and will welcome Kurt Long, formerly of the Dayton Philharmonic, to the ASO family. Jeff says that they are excited by this appointment and are optimistic that Long's expertise will help them continue building the momentum established during the tenure of Music Director Justin Brown.

In January, the **North Carolina Symphony** held recording sessions for two CDs to be produced under the BIS label. The first CD features Branford Marsalis and his quartet and includes works by Michael Daugherty, John Williams, Ned Rorem, and Christopher Rouse. The second CD includes piano concertos by Rachmaninoff and Medtner, with Yevgeny Sudbin as soloist. Anticipated release dates for the CDs will be in 2009–2010.

The **Nashville Symphony** announced a new education initiative called "One Note, One Neighborhood" in April. The program will initially target eight schools in East Nashville over a five-year period. In addition to a comprehensive package of education services, including the NSO's traditional outreach concerts, Young People's Concerts, and education ensembles in the schools, the program also incorporates master classes and professional development for music and regular classroom teachers. The model focuses on improving one neighborhood at a time in all levels of the education process. An additional classroom component is a partnership with the W.O. Smith School, named for William Oscar Smith, a bassist and violist with the Nashville Symphony as well as a Tennessee State University professor. The W.O. Smith School was created to make quality music instruction and instruments available to talented, interested, and deserving children from low income families. Students participating in the after-school component will receive music lessons from Nashville Symphony musicians, professional non-symphony musicians, or advanced students two to three times per week, all free of charge. These participants will later train to become music mentors to younger students in the program. "One Note, One Neighborhood" is a part of the Nashville Symphony's education plan "Music Education City," which is based on research showing that schools with comprehensive music and arts education show improved academic performance, a decline in violence and conflicts, higher graduation rates, and greater parental involvement.

Louisiana Philharmonic member Annie Cohen reports that despite everything, the LPO is doing just fine. They are back up to a 36 week season, and despite having to ferry around the region to various churches and other venues to do their concerts, they have essentially the same number of subscribers as during pre-Katrina days.

Honolulu Musicians End Season Without Full Pay

It was an exciting but difficult 2007–2008 season for the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony. Our organization's strengths—particularly artistic and community service—and weaknesses—most glaringly financial instability caused by the lack of a strong board of directors—were all highlighted.

On the positive side, new board leadership, along with Executive Director Tom Gulick, has attempted to move the Symphony in the direction of expanding and improving its service to the public. For the first time in decades, no one blamed musicians' salaries for the financial problems of the organization. Among the board's accomplishments have been the complete restoration of pay after the cuts inflicted on HSO musicians in 2003, the hiring of Andreas Delfs as principal conductor, and the revival of inter-island touring for the first time in over a decade. The belated receipt of \$4 million of previously allocated state funds for our endowment was also welcome news. The HSO is starting to take steps to become an organization that once again serves the whole state of Hawai'i.

Unfortunately, a problem with our venue brought the board of directors' inability to raise sufficient funds to the fore. In 2006, Honolulu officials informed HSO management that Blaisdell Concert Hall, the municipal facility where the orchestra performs, would be unavailable from September till December 2007, in order to make way for a touring production of *The Lion King*. In the summer of 2007, Executive Director Tom Gulick announced the appointment of a special fundraising "Campaign Cabinet" composed of prominent community members who were not already on the board. The cabinet was immediately charged with raising \$1.8 million in new and increased contributed support as a way of addressing both weaknesses on the board and the losses expected from being kicked out of the concert hall for four months. Unfortunately, as the season began, the Campaign Cabinet had not raised the money that they had hoped for, and the future began to look shaky.

The 2007–2008 season opened in late August with a triumphant concert inaugurating Maestro Delfs' tenure with the HSO. A week later the orchestra was booted out of the concert hall. Publicly, the HSO tried to make the best of it, portraying it as a time to perform in different parts of town and as an opportunity to reach new audiences. The reality was less positive. Even as the HSO tried its best to serve the public better, the displacement from the concert hall meant that we reached fewer people and served them less well. The smaller facilities we had to perform in could not accommodate the full orchestra. That meant we could not play anything except chamber orchestra pieces all autumn. In addition, it seemed that many older concertgoers, accustomed to the familiarity of Blaisdell Concert Hall, stayed home rather than venture out into an unfamiliar part of the city. On the other side of the coin, some of the halls were so small that they couldn't accommodate all of the patrons who wanted to be there. This situation meant a loss of HSO earned revenue as well as increased expenses from moving orchestra and equipment all over Honolulu.

In December, during the orchestra's first week back in Blaisdell Concert Hall, our executive director and board chair informed the orchestra that we would not receive the paychecks due that Friday and that they didn't know when we would be paid. They asked us to continue to play the concerts that weekend. We did. After much internal discussion and consultation with ICSOM Counsel Lenny Leibowitz and AFM advisors, we continued to play the entire rest of the season with delayed pay, keeping the Honolulu Symphony's mission of service to the community alive, even as the board was failing to honor its commitment to us.

Throughout this time, HSO musicians were paid sporadically and fell further and further behind in pay. By early March, we had fallen four weeks behind; by the end of April we were nine weeks behind. The burden of not being paid on time was worsened by never being given a firm date about when the next paycheck would arrive. Musicians have had to live with the uncertainty that the next month's rent might not be there.

We have found some ways of getting help. We have used our internal musicians' fund to provide interest-free loans to players who could not pay their bills. More recently, we are grateful for the assistance of the MusiCares Foundation and a generous, unsolicited gift from Local 802 to help us through. ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge and other ICSOM officers have continually monitored the situation and offered to assist us if possible. Other help included a rally organized by the young musicians of the Hawaii Youth Symphony in front of the concert hall, waving banners to remind the public that their music teachers needed to be paid. Still, some musicians were not able to complete the season and were forced to leave the orchestra and travel off-island to look for work elsewhere.

In early May, Tom Gulick announced a \$1.175 million gift from an anonymous donor. It did not come a moment too soon. On May 8, the day that musicians would have fallen 11 weeks behind in pay, we received 7 weeks of much needed back pay. After our season ended on May 18, we received another two-week paycheck on May 22. As of May 31 we are still owed four weeks of pay.

One major difference from previous HSO crises is that musicians' salaries were not blamed for the financial difficulties. The executive director and the board have made it clear that the problem is not that we are paid too much, but rather that community support needs to step up. This is a departure from some past times when cuts were seen as the way to solve budget issues.

As we look forward, it is still a very unsure situation here in Honolulu. As of May 31, we have not yet been told when we will get any of the back pay we are owed. Our collective bargaining agreement is about to expire, and negotiations will have to happen by the time next season begins. Most importantly, the board will need to find the resources necessary to provide financial stability and to grow the organization—a huge task which they have only begun to face.

Submitted by Honolulu ICSOM Delegate Steven Flanter

Fifty Years Plus

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a 52-week orchestra during the 1972–1975 contract. In 1975 the orchestra was out of work for nine weeks to assure their job security (it was neither a lock out nor a strike), and in 1982 musicians had a successful nine-day strike over whether they would keep their role in the selection of the orchestra's music director.

Felix Resnick was a conductor of many Detroit-area orchestras, including the Pontiac Symphony and the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony, each for 30 years, and the Grosse Pointe Symphony for 40 years. Felix also loved teaching and mentoring many students in the area. He remained active with swimming and yoga until his death. Felix will be sorely missed by his colleagues in the Detroit Symphony.

—Brian Ventura, with assistance from Paul Ganson

Utah Symphony—Frances Darger (65 years)

George Brown forwarded my request to Frances Darger, who is completing her 65th year with the Utah Symphony this season. She relates that she was born and raised in Salt Lake to an opera-singing mother who started her on the violin at the age of nine and sent her to the local youth symphony, which was conducted by renowned Tabernacle Choir organist Frank W. Asper. It was at these rehearsals that she fell in love with music.

The Utah Symphony began in 1940, although there were previous incarnations, including a WPA orchestra. Because of World War II, the Utah Symphony needed players, so Frances felt fortunate to start playing with this fledgling group in the summer of 1942. According to Frances's records, the 1942 season consisted of 18 weeks, with the six-service weeks paid at the rate of \$6.25 per service (\$37.50 per week). That first season included five concerts, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, Jose Echaniz, Albert Coates, Christos Vronides, and James Sample. The 1946–1947 season, under Music Director Werner Janssen, increased to 20 weeks at \$50 per week; however the 1949–1950 season was reduced to 18 weeks, again at \$37.50 per week, two years after Music Director Maurice Abravanel took over. According to Frances, he built the orchestra "upward and onward magnificently," and in the 1979–1980 season, the Utah Symphony became a 52-week orchestra.

Frances Darger played during the 1942–1943 and 1943–1944 seasons and then spent a year in Los Angeles with her four sisters trying to break into the "swing-singers" world. When that did not materialize, they all returned home, and Frances returned to the Utah Symphony for the 1945–46 season. She has played there ever since and says she has loved the whole adventure. What follows are some remembrances in her own words.

"It has truly been a joy to watch the progress of our Utah Symphony. I actually began playing five years before Maurice Abravanel arrived, and there were a number of conductors during these war years. I particularly remember a wonderful concert with Sir Thomas Beecham. As for music directors, I have 'survived'

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Philadelphia Orchestra Project: *Music from the Inside Out* by Don Liuzzi

A ten-year project meant to reach new audiences, educate young listeners, and engage musicians of every age is now coming to final fruition for Philadelphia Orchestra members. The core of the project, *Music from the Inside Out*, a documentary film completed in 2004, has seen many milestones. It was released nationally in arthouse theaters in 2005, seen on PBS nationally in May 2006, and released by New Video as a DVD in 2007.

The project has now reached its final mission by being published as a textbook (by Daniel Anker, Carol Ponder, and Donna Santman, preface by Eric Booth, published by Alfred Publishing Company) with an accompanying “teacher’s guide” DVD. A group of very innovative educators led by Eric Booth conceived of the text for grades 5–12. Moments from the film (and some moments that never made the film) are viewed by the classroom as a send-off for various units of study and discovery. Some of these many lessons include: discovering one’s musical personality, creating an individual musical timeline, explorations of composition, and developing listening strategies by creating musical listening journals and listening discussion groups.

The inception of this entire project dates back to the orchestra’s strike in 1996. The resolution of that strike empowered musicians and board members to create new educational electronic media projects. What was first meant to be a television series became a movie to explore some basic questions: What is music? How is music made? Why does it exist? What are the human stories behind music-making? The resulting film was not at all a Philadelphia Orchestra story, but a music/musician story, going deep into the exploration of motives and aspirations we all share as music makers. The discussions and the interviews of musicians that were filmed touch upon universal stories and themes about how we came to be musicians, how music affects us, and how our music-making relates to every day life. This film is a snapshot view of our musical lineage, without regard to the name of any particular city, person, instrument, or orchestra history.

Award-winning producer/director Daniel Anker and his company, Anker Productions, filmed Philadelphia Orchestra musicians over a period of years on three continents. Over five hundred hours of footage were molded into a ninety-minute film. Our gratitude for the editing prowess and perseverance of Anker and his company is profound. One member of the Philadelphia Orchestra’s artistic committee commented on an early screening, “I am glad there was so much music-making that was allowed to be heard and seen.” The new textbook/teacher’s guide with its accompanying hour-long DVD is their culmination as well. The film’s themes and message—including that music will always be an expression in sound that performers and listeners alike can equally and deeply experience—have an audience far beyond that for the film’s release. The curriculum incorporates many writing activities and extensively utilizes principles of literacy-based learning. It was piloted over a three-year period in New York and Nashville schools. The text and DVD represent a fresh new approach to teaching music.

Philadelphia Orchestra musicians learned some important lessons from this project. Some of these include:

- Get real support and team involvement of your orchestra administration/management. We wasted many months by struggling to get all the constituents of the organization “on board.”
- Try to involve as many of the orchestra members as possible in any project, and share the wealth of the organization. We tried to involve lots of orchestra members but still had to deal with disappointments in the editing process. We had to discover that the greater purpose of the project—the universal message of the film—was more important than who got on camera.
- Trust your colleagues and the experts. Once a film maker was chosen, many moments of trust were tested. At some point we had to let go and realize that the result could not be controlled.

In this project, the positives far, far outweigh the negatives. We created a growing tool for use in schools, conservatories, and music festivals, and that enhances the orchestra’s reputation. There is much new and renewed appreciation among orchestra members of each other’s comments and insights that were in the film. The project fostered cooperation, patience, and understanding among the musicians, even though there was disappointment that not every musician’s voice was heard in interviews.

Many patrons saw the film in the Philadelphia region, either at the theaters or on PBS, which helped the audience get closer to the orchestra and its members. After the strike, our public needed, and we created, a positive and moving view of music-making. A number of our new members even say that seeing the film enhanced their desire to audition here.

The film was recently released with subtitles in Japanese and Chinese, with a potential Korean translation as well. This coincided with a recent tour to Asia. Next year during tours to Europe, a European release in German, Spanish, and French is planned.

A huge thanks is due to all the members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, who allowed a camera to follow them around, backstage and on tour, for four years. Their patience and good will were tested, and the orchestra passed with flying colors.

Please visit the film’s website at either www.mftio.com or www.musicfromtheinsideout.com. The DVD and text can be ordered from that site or from major booksellers and video stores, including Emerging Pictures (emergingpictures.com), Amazon and NetFlix.

Don Liuzzi has been Philadelphia Orchestra’s principal timpani for 19 years. He also played for seven years in the percussion section of the Pittsburgh Symphony. As the film’s coordinating producer, Don acted as the link between the musicians and the film maker.

From the Dressing Room to the Boardroom

by Roger Ruggeri

As a bassist volunteering on the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra board's governance committee last season, I was both surprised and somewhat alarmed to be designated to chair a small subcommittee charged with developing a procedure for annual evaluations of the orchestra's music director and executive director. This situation arose out of our governance committee's desire to be responsive to the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act. That federal legislation protects whistle blowers and requires financial disclosure and accountability in public companies. It also requires boards of public companies to develop oversight mechanisms ensuring high-quality operation. Dependent as orchestras are upon significant donor support, they, too, will do well to ensure demonstrably effective oversight of top leadership.

Our discussions revealed that fair and meaningful evaluation, particularly of a music director, would not be easily achieved. Perhaps the most striking dichotomy to emerge was that very few board members felt qualified to make value judgments regarding a music director, while anyone frequenting an orchestra dressing room recognizes that many colleagues hold finely detailed opinions. On the other hand, musicians were less enthusiastic about evaluating an executive director, while a number of board members were quite comfortable with this more business-like task. Our subcommittee's challenge was to corral this panorama of views into a broadly credible process.

Working with a lawyer/board member, we cobbled together guidelines for an internal evaluation process with an intentionally flexible structure. The process for the music director could be supplemented by information obtained through ICSOM's excellent conductor evaluation program. This is a very young process, and it's expected that it will evolve to achieve its mission. I hope that this sharing of our approach might ultimately benefit any number of ICSOM organizations.

Essentially, the subcommittee's report recommends annual, reliable, objective evaluations of the executive director and the music director. The process should be timed to aid in compensation reviews and the renewal of applicable contracts. Highlights of the report and evaluation process follow.

The evaluation committee, composed of three directors and one musician-elected representative under the direction of the governance committee, should gather and consider information, ultimately making its recommendations to the board chair and the executive committee. Without the musician member, the evaluation committee should also make compensation recommendations.

The evaluation committee is encouraged to gather information as widely as it wants, possibly involving all of the board, all committee chairs, or the executive committee. The report suggests that it might be helpful to maintain the involvement of respective search committees (or members thereof) in the evaluation process.

For both the executive director and the music director, questionnaires would be sent to the heads of the operations, development, marketing, and finance departments, as well as to the orchestra's personnel manager. Additionally, the executive director and the music director would evaluate each other.

The evaluation committee's process should be informed by data from the musicians' artistic liaison committee. That committee will likely gather ICSOM conductor evaluation reports about our music director from our own and other orchestras, taken from ICSOM's database at Wayne State. Information from other arts organizations and constituencies may be gathered as desired by the evaluation committee.

Proposed questions for evaluation of the executive director explore issues including whether the executive director:

- demonstrates a clear grasp of the organization's mission
- accomplished the board's objectives and priorities for the performance period
- supports the current staff and selects qualified new staff
- maintains morale among musicians
- ensures the provision of high quality programs and services
- effectively generates resources for the fulfillment of the organization's mission
- ensures financially informed decision-making
- works effectively with the board and with ancillary organizations
- cultivates positive relationships with public officials, consumers, and relevant community organizations
- responds effectively to challenges
- has a positive image in the local community

Three narrative questions for the executive director would ask about leadership strengths, areas that could benefit from added development, and areas that should receive more emphasis.

ICSOM's longstanding conductor evaluation program, while not designed specifically for the evaluation of an orchestra's music director, can enhance our internal music director evaluation process. Potential questions not covered by the ICSOM form include whether the music director:

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Fifty Years Plus

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Maurice Abravanel (32 wonderful years), Varujan Kojian, Joseph Silverstein (a fantastic musician), and Keith Lockhart.

“During my many years of playing there have been many memorable experiences but my favorite was to play at the base of the Athens Acropolis in 1966 with the lights ablaze on those timeless rocks. And it is still a joy to play all that beautiful music.”

Atlanta Symphony—Jane Little (61 or 64 years)

When counting her years with the Atlanta Symphony, it depends on how you look at it! Atlanta Symphony bassist Jane Little is not only a charter member of the Atlanta Symphony, in September 1944 she joined the youth orchestra that, in May 1947, became the Atlanta Symphony. Jane was recently honored by the Georgia State Senate with a resolution commemorating her many contributions to music in Georgia and declaring that “the State of Georgia is honored to have such a gifted and dedicated individual as one of its citizens.”

When the orchestra became a professional orchestra and began hiring professional musicians in 1947, Henry Sopkin came down from Chicago to lead the youth orchestra and became the first of only four music directors of the Atlanta Symphony. (The other three are Robert Shaw, Yoel Levi, and Robert Spano.) The first season, the budget of the ASO, with a six-concert season, was \$5,000. Needless to say, Jane believes that the increased salaries, implementation of benefits, and essential improvements in touring conditions have been the major changes she has witnessed over her fifty-plus years as a member of the orchestra.

Many of Jane’s most memorable experiences are tied to travel and touring. For example, Jane said that Music Director Henry Sopkin always rode the bus with the orchestra for tours. On one occasion he forgot his tails, so Maestro Sopkin called someone to bring them; the entire orchestra waited on the side of the road for their delivery. Maestro Sopkin also liked to reverse the order of the last two movements of Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony in order to maximize the applause. One evening on tour, he decided to do them in the correct order. After the third movement, he bowed and left the stage. He was perplexed that there were no applause. Once someone clued him in backstage, he returned to conduct the last movement.

A defining moment in the early days set the orchestra on its course to change travel conditions. A bus breakdown on a runout caused the orchestra to return to town at 7AM. That morning, as the neighbors were leaving for work, Jane’s boyfriend, Warren, took her to her mother’s house in evening wear, causing quite a little scandal. Warren, by then Jane’s husband, participated in another travel debacle during the orchestra’s 1991 European tour. While in Vienna there was an early suitcase pickup call. Warren packed all of Jane’s clothes except for the plain little blue nightgown she slept in that night. Jane had to fly to the next city and travel all the way to the hotel in her nightgown!

Touring problems also had a hand in the formation of the ASO Players Association back in 1966. While the orchestra was on a South Georgia tour, the inept management got the date wrong for the concert in Norman Park. The stagehand (a violinist in the orchestra) got to the venue early and started knocking down a theatrical set. The theater manager had a fit, pointing out that the contract was for the next night. That very evening at the hotel, the orchestra had a long orchestra meeting in the ballroom. Jane remembers that they were mad as hell and weren’t going to take it anymore. The ASOPA was formed that very night. It was also decided then and there that the season needed to be expanded beyond the 22-week season and that salaries had to increase.

The orchestra did have fun on tour though. During a February tour in the early seventies with Robert Shaw, the orchestra had a concert scheduled at Radford College (now Radford University) in Virginia. Due to snow and ice on the roadways, the concert was cancelled, so the orchestra went back to the hotel. There was a big hill behind the hotel, so everyone got round tabletops from the pool area and sledged down the hill all night long.

Mishaps were not exclusive to touring, however. Arthur Rubinstein performed the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto at the old Municipal Auditorium, which the orchestra had to share with wrestling matches and the circus. The stage was not level, and at the concert the stagehand forgot to lock the wheels of the piano. It rolled all over the front of the stage and almost into the audience, with Rubinstein chasing it. Once the wheels of the piano were secured, the orchestra began again, but the horns forgot their transpositions the second time.

—with assistance from Michael Moore

New York Philharmonic—Stanley Drucker (60 years)

When Stanley Drucker, principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic, retires at the end of the 2008–2009 season, he will have completed an amazing sixty seasons with the orchestra. Some other numbers make one’s head spin: When he joined the orchestra in 1948 at age 19, it was the orchestra’s 4,616th concert since its founding in 1842. Stanley’s last concert will be the orchestra’s 14,868th, which means that Stanley will have played more than ten thousand concerts with the Philharmonic. He has missed almost no services during his career. The numbers are almost impossible to comprehend. To top it off, Stanley is retiring in top form and with the same enthusiasm and love for music he had at age 19.

Movies made from the late forties reveal that Stanley even looks the same as he did in 1948—except for some grey hairs and smile lines around his eyes. Stanley is a genetic wonder, but clearly he has been doing something right for the past 78 years. Hired by Music Director Bruno Walter in 1948, other music directors during his career have included Stokowski, Mitropoulos, Szell, Boulez, Mehta, Mazur, and Maazel. When asked about the most important changes during his sixty seasons, Stanley said: “By far, the most significant

change has been the 52-week season. The Philharmonic was only a part time job at 28 weeks in 1948.” His most memorable experiences with the Philharmonic include his two Grammy nominations for recordings of the Corigliano Clarinet Concerto (1982) and the Copland Clarinet Concerto (1992). His other great memory was being named Musical America’s Instrumentalist of the Year in 1998.

Stanley has appeared as soloist with the NY Philharmonic over one hundred fifty times. He has given performances of the Copland Concerto with only a few minutes’ notice when scheduled soloists have taken ill or failed to show up. With Stanley around, there is never a question of who can get up and dazzle the audience at a moment’s notice. There is no way possible to sum up Stanley’s career, other than to thank him for his inspiration to countless musicians and fans, and to revel in the honor of performing with him during his glorious years in the NY Philharmonic.

—Ken Mirkin

Philadelphia Orchestra—Jerome Wigler (57 years)

Violinist Jerome Wigler has been with the Philadelphia Orchestra since 1951, and prior to that he was a member of the Minneapolis Symphony, having joined in 1942. He lists the following important changes that symphony orchestras have seen over the past fifty years: tenure; musicians gaining the ability to retain a lawyer; pension; health plan; travel conditions; age discrimination; ICSOM, with all the orchestras working together; season length; compassionate, maternity, and paternity leave; and instrument insurance.

To Jerome, these were the most important changes, but he doesn’t think they happened easily. “There were many obstacles in our path: the Musicians’ Union, management, and members of the orchestras themselves. We as musicians, busy learning to play our instruments, and with our training and schooling, were not aware how conditions were when we decided to become professional working musicians. We are not trained in the political aspects of musical life.”

When he graduated from the Juilliard School of Music, Jerome’s first position was with the Minneapolis Symphony under conductor Dmitri Mitropoulos. His contract was less than a half page long and did not contain provisions for pension, health benefits, or vacation; but it did contain a two-week notice clause in case a musician didn’t meet the conductor’s expectations. Jerome never read that contract until many years later.

Later, Jerome joined the Philadelphia Orchestra. “I didn’t read that contract either” he says. “It was one page, tenure was available, there was very little pension, and there was a health plan to which we contributed a small amount. That contract was negotiated by the local musicians’ union [Local 77] and the board of the Philadelphia Orchestra along with their team of lawyers. Samuel Rosenbaum, a board member, was also the trustee of the Musicians’ Union Trust Fund. He had much to say in regard to any contract with us, since he

controlled the trust fund. As a result, little progress was made for each three-year contract bargained.

“After a few years, I met with other members in the orchestra who felt something had to be done to improve our lives. Little did I know what a stone wall that would be. I had no political skills at all. I played the violin! I joined the orchestra committee and was told by other musicians that I had committed suicide.”

The orchestra committee’s first objective was to hire a lawyer to negotiate their contract, and Jerome remembers that they had to convince a reluctant orchestra. “After all, the Philadelphia Orchestra management had a team of lawyers” he explains. “We had to fight the musicians’ union and the members of the orchestra themselves, who after years of struggle, and fear for their jobs, were reluctant to do anything to disturb the status quo.

“In a crucial moment, we arranged a meeting during the union’s monthly board meeting. We needed 35 members to pass a resolution to hire our own lawyer to negotiate for us. Only fifteen members came. As a result, we rounded up 25 local members who happened to be in the street to help us pass the resolution. And for the first time, around 1955, we had a lawyer.”

Jerome was at the very first meetings of ICSOM in Chicago in 1962. “Most musicians at that time worked a half-year’s season” he recalls. “The only orchestra that negotiated its own contract before ICSOM was the Boston Symphony. The union rep’s negotiator did it here.”

Jerome reports that they had a difficult time with the union and orchestra members but still managed to make progress. He said that while members voted by ballot with the committee, they were quite vocal about their disapproval—most likely because of fear of reprisal from management. He also points out the some of the most vocal were titled players who made more money and negotiated their own contracts; they had more to lose by siding with the committee.

Over the course of years the orchestra has made a great deal of progress, strikes included, and finally in the sixties came up with the idea of a 52-week season, in which they made the greatest progress of all. They also achieved a pension plan, health benefits, vacations, etc., all paid for by management. They have tremendously improved travel conditions. “After all, we do a lot of travel, and our lives have improved a lot as a result” Jerome says. “The management of the orchestra has done much to make things easier for us and try very hard in this regard. Long gone are the days, years ago, when a group of us on tour stayed at the YMCA in Ann Arbor, Michigan and found that the man handing out towels had been the first harpist of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski—this is how he ended up!

“Now orchestra members are pleased with the Philadelphia Orchestra standards they have come into. Hopefully they can learn

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Fifty Years Plus

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from the past and keep our orchestra one of the best in the land, and live a happy life here on. It was not easy!"

—Jerome Wigler with assistance from Lisa-Beth Lambert

Chicago Symphony—Phil Blum (53 years)

Phil Blum, a cellist, is the only current member of the Chicago Symphony with more than fifty years of service. He grew up in Chicago and received most of his musical education there, although he also studied for one and a half years at Eastman. Phil joined the CSO in 1955. He was hired by Fritz Reiner and describes his audition as one of his most memorable experiences with the CSO. "It was in a small room with Reiner and Janos Starker (then principal cellist). There was no preliminary, no screens, and no audition committee. Reiner asked me to play any concerto I wished, and Starker asked for two movements of a Bach suite. Then there was some sight-reading, a little chit-chat, and that was it."

The CSO was founded in 1891, so it had been around for 64 years before Phil was hired. In 1955, the CBA was one page long and was negotiated by the local president and the president of the Orchestral Association. There was no orchestra committee, and the musicians had no say in their salary and working conditions. It would be four years before the members' committee would be formed, and three more before it would be recognized by the union. It would be 10 years before an audition committee would exist, and 15 years before the CSO would have a 52-week season. To Phil, the most important changes in the CSO have been the formation of the members' committee and getting rotation in the strings.

Phil has played under music directors Fritz Reiner, Jean Martinon, Sir Georg Solti, and Daniel Barenboim. During the Reiner years he also played under Igor Stravinsky, Ernst Ansermet, Bruno Walter, Carlo Maria Giulini, Karl Boehm, George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Pierre Monteux, Erich Leinsdorf, William Steinberg, Hans Rosbaud, Charles Munch, and Paul Hindemith. Besides his audition, Phil's most memorable experiences were recording the Sibelius Violin Concerto with Jascha Heifetz and his first time playing in Carnegie Hall.

—Rachel Goldstein

Los Angeles Philharmonic —Richard Kelley (53 years)

In 1955, after a year with the Dallas Symphony, Richard Kelley at the age of 19 was hired to play in the bass section of the Los Angeles Philharmonic by Alfred Wallenstein. His father, Richard F. Kelley, played in that same section from 1931 to 1977. "I grew up in North Hollywood, and back in those days, the Philharmonic was the worst job in town. Anybody who was anybody played in the studio orchestras. The season was eight months long, no paid vacation, no pension or health insurance, no benefits at all. It paid \$105 a week."

Richard reminds us that the LA Phil was founded in 1919. "It had only been around 12 years when my dad joined. I served under

Alfred Wallenstein, Eduard van Beinem, Georg Solti, Zubin Mehta, Carlo Maria Giulini, Andre Previn and Esa-Pekka Salonen. You know, Solti, he didn't last long out here. He quit when Dorothy Chandler (the money behind the orchestra and the *Los Angeles Times*) hired Zubin for the position of assistant conductor without asking Solti first. So fine, we went with Zubin. That didn't turn out so bad, did it?

"I went on my first tour with Wallenstein in 1956—state sponsored, 10 weeks in Asia—Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines. It wasn't that long after the war. You know, everyone was still in traditional dress. It was amazing. We did an around-the-world tour with Zubin, too. Bombay, Iran, Greece, Turkey—I mean, it was awesome!

"My most memorable musical performances include Tchaikovsky 5 under van Beinem and *Falstaff* with Giulini conducting. When we recorded *Firebird* for Columbia records, Stravinsky conducted. But he was so old, he kept slowing down. See? So Robert Kraft rehearsed the orchestra, and they recorded all that, and that's probably what you're hearing on the record.

"After 53 years with the LA Phil, I still look forward to going to work every day. It's like therapy for me. I love Walt Disney Concert Hall. I think it's the finest concert hall in the world, and I'm excited about working with our new music director, Gustavo Dudamel."

—Meredith Snow

Fort Worth Symphony—Harriet Risk Woldt (51 years)

Cellist and viola de gambist Harriet Risk Woldt grew up in Muskegon Heights, Michigan. She joined the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra as principal cello in 1957 when the orchestra was reformed after disbanding during WWII. There was no season contract for the FWSO in 1957; musicians were hired as needed. Harriet cannot remember whether the salary was \$3 per hour or \$3 per service. In 1956, Harriet was a member of the Fort Worth Opera Orchestra, and she continued working with the opera once the symphony started up again. She also played with the Fort Worth Ballet Orchestra. Both the opera and the ballet are now part of the FWSO season.

In the seventies, 36 musicians were hired "full time" for 30 weeks to form the Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra, which became the core orchestra of the Fort Worth Symphony. Harriet had to decide between playing in the orchestra or teaching at Texas Christian University. She chose to teach and to continue playing with the Symphony as a part time member. Harriet believes the formation of the full-time core was critical to the growth of the orchestra.

Robert Hall was the conductor of the FWSO when Harriet joined it. Later there were various conductors who filled the position temporarily until John Giordano was appointed music director in the

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President on Flanagan

(continued from page 3)

increased their expense budgets too greatly during the economic expansion of the nineties and that revenues simply could not keep up. After a great deal of consternation, the ETF decided to leave this question alone and to focus on looking forward rather than behind.

As many know, the ETF delivered its presentation to the Mellon Orchestra Forum in 2004 and later to members of the ICSOM Governing Board. The presentation included further research and ideas on the four challenges or deficits originally described by Jamie Ireland in his paper, "Caging the Elephant." The ETF presentation contained a future orchestral model that could potentially be both artistically fulfilling and economically viable. Included were perspectives on organizational culture and, my personal favorite, community engagement. While many orchestras have made recent strides towards becoming more engaged with their communities, there is great potential yet untapped. In my opinion, we should be spending more of our collective time and energy on further developing relationships within our communities.

Returning to the Flanagan report, the ETF did discuss inviting an expert to review financial data in order to shed further light on the structural/cyclical question. Knowing that Ron Bauers had worked with many Mellon orchestras, musicians on the ETF naturally suggested that he be engaged. Others thought that Bauers may have appeared to be too "union friendly." Anyone who knows Ron Bauers knows that he is a numbers person. His interest is to help musicians and management alike understand an orchestra's true financial picture, whatever it may be.

After the 2004 presentations, the ETF lay dormant for many months. From 2005 to 2006 meetings were held that involved Mellon and League leadership as well as members of the ETF. Subsequently, Flanagan was commissioned to undertake this study. Apparently, it was thought that Flanagan would stay on track and take an unbiased approach. What is interesting to me, though, is that the decision was made to engage someone who had considerably less experience with orchestral finances than did Ron Bauers, who would have been ideally suited.

Much of the data used by Flanagan for his study was supplied by the League through its Orchestra Statistical Reports (OSRs). This data included attendance figures and financial information, including musicians' salaries and benefits. It should come as no surprise that problems with the OSRs continue to be perceived. In fact, following meetings between League and ICSOM leadership during the 2004 ICSOM Conference, the Collaborative Data Project (CDP) was created to help mitigate these problems.

Let's revisit a few of the issues with the OSRs. The numbers supplied to the League for the Flanagan report were based primarily on management-generated internal reports and not on audited financial returns. It is no secret that musicians have been skeptical of these numbers for decades. To make matters worse, musicians were routinely denied access to this information until just a couple of years ago. There were also problems with categories being

interpreted differently from orchestra to orchestra, and sometimes—due to changes in the chief financial officer and/or executive director positions, different accounting methods, and the impact of FASB regulations—even within the same orchestra from year to year.

In any event, musicians have not had much faith in the OSRs, particularly as the contents were kept from musicians even during negotiations. These points were firmly articulated during the ETF discussions and later with League leadership. It is perplexing that Mellon and the League sanctioned a study based on the OSRs. If this study was so important, then why was it not postponed long enough to allow the development and implementation of the CDP?

AFM, ICSOM, and ROPA representatives attended one meeting last July with representatives of Mellon, the League, the ETF, and Professor Flanagan. The preliminary draft we viewed included research on the dramatic rise of music director salaries, which far exceeded that of musicians. Interestingly, the final Flanagan report focused on salaries of orchestra musicians alone. Much attention was paid to the development of musician salaries in this report and even more in Flanagan's January study, simply titled "Symphony Musicians and Symphony Orchestras." Where is the focus and the research on staff and music director salaries, and why was this not deemed important to a study on orchestral economics?

Why should there be so much concern about this one report? While I have just scratched the surface, there is still a ticking time bomb. Who will be the first management and/or board to use the Flanagan Report against their own musicians during negotiations? Why I am so skeptical? Well, this is exactly what happened four years ago. As you may recall, one board president erroneously credited the work of the original ETF as supportive of the position of his orchestra's board and management that the collective bargaining agreement with their musicians was a "Roadmap to Extinction." Henry Peyrebrune and I requested that Mellon Program Officer Catherine Maciarellone set the record straight as to the true nature of the ETF's work. Thankfully, she did. In an open letter to Mellon Orchestra Forum Participants, shared by permission with the delegates at the 2004 ICSOM Conference, Catherine stated:

The (Elephant) Task Force was never intended to conduct independent research or to present conclusions about the general state of the orchestra field. As you know from the presentation, complete data was collected and analyzed for only one orchestra, and much work still needs to be done to refine the model and to determine its applicability to other orchestras. At best, the model offers a tool that individual orchestras within the Forum might use to engage all constituents in a productive dialogue about the future. None of the Task Force materials should be considered definitive, nor should they be used publicly in any way, especially to defend a particular position.

Finally, due to the release of the Flanagan report, there is renewed debate as to the merits of engaging in cross-constituency work

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Address to the FIM Orchestra Conference in Berlin

by Bruce Ridge, ICSOM Chairperson

Federation International des Musiciens/International Federation of Musicians (FIM) held its first conference on orchestras April 7–9, 2008, in Berlin, Germany. Founded in 1948, FIM is a federation of 72 unions throughout the world including the AFM. Representatives from the AFM included of President Tom Lee, Secretary-Treasurer Sam Folio, SSD Director Laura Brownell, ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge, ROPA President Tom Fetherston, and OCSM/OMOSC President Francine Schutzman. What follows is the text of an address delivered by Chairperson Ridge to that conference.

I'd like to begin by telling you just a little about the organization I represent, the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, or ICSOM. Our members are 4,000 musicians in the 51 largest orchestras in the United States. If the "international" part of our name seems a misnomer, it is because when we were founded we were indeed international, having orchestras from Canada in our membership. But, in 1975, the Canadian Orchestras formed their own conference, and they are represented here in Berlin by my dear friend, Francine Schutzman.

ICSOM represents some of the most well-known orchestras in the world, such as the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony. But we also represent smaller orchestras that are some of the finest artistic institutions found anywhere, such as the San Antonio Symphony and the Oregon Symphony. While some of our orchestras are not international names, they are intrinsically linked with their cities, and they serve their communities through the highest level of public service. I am a member of the North Carolina Symphony, an orchestra that performs free concerts for over 100,000 school children every year. In my role as ICSOM chairperson, I have traveled over 60,000 miles to hear our musicians perform, from Puerto Rico to Honolulu. It is indeed a great pleasure to be able to add to my travels this great gathering of musicians in Berlin, and it is an honor to be asked to speak with you today.



Photo by Christoph Polentz

ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge (right) is seen participating in a panel at the recent FIM conference in Berlin. The topic of the panel was the status of orchestra musicians in today's society.

The topic I was asked to address is "What can be done so people don't undervalue or overvalue musicians?" I must say that, unfortunately, in the United States we need not concern ourselves with the issue of musicians being *overvalued*. The orchestras of America face a seemingly endless onslaught of negative prognostications, and for many musicians the struggle to spread a positive message of hope to our communities is as vital as the daily regimen we undertake to maintain our craft.

While there are many orchestras that are thriving, in other places we must be our own advocates. We face governments that seek to balance their budgets by slashing arts funding, despite the fact that every dollar invested in the arts returns seven dollars in revenue. The non-profit culture industry in the United States generates over \$166 billion every year, and provides 5.7 million jobs. Together we work to counteract a negative perception of the future of classical music.

Recently, one of our member orchestras, the Jacksonville Symphony, faced an egregious lockout by their management in a plan to reduce the size of that excellent orchestra into something that their board felt was "more manageable". This absurd position was taken by people who are supposedly stewards of the community in a city that has seen a 35% expansion of the economy in the past five years.

I am delighted to tell you that the lockout was not successful, and that the musicians are now back on stage. This was largely due to an unprecedented show of support by the musicians of North America who responded to a *Call to Action* issued from ICSOM by donating nearly \$100,000 to support the musicians. The support of the unified musicians across the continent made the lockout a national issue, and demonstrated that the positive message of the musicians within their community can overcome a negative message perpetrated by an underperforming management.

No sooner had the issue been resolved in Jacksonville than another crisis appeared, this time for the Columbus Symphony in the state of Ohio. There, the board and management proposed to resolve financial difficulties by eliminating 22 musicians.

The climate that leads to these incidents is one of historic record. For many years, a pervasive sense of doom has lingered over the orchestral industry in America, at times promulgated by the industry itself. When I first joined the Virginia Symphony in 1979, I was told that the audience for classical music would soon be dead. But now, nearly 30 years later, I see the same audiences I saw then. I see the old and the young, the well-dressed and the sartorially challenged. The negative pronouncements ignore the fact that in America we are seeing a rise in attendance, a rise in classical music downloads, and a proliferation of beautiful new concert halls. The artistic level of our orchestras, with budgets both large and small, has never been higher.

The venerable Wall Street Journal recently proclaimed “Contrary to the rumors, symphony orchestras have a bright future.”

But, why do these rumors persist at all? I have a newspaper article that asserts “25 Symphonies Doomed to Die.” Disturbing news, to say the least. Until, that is, you realize that the article was published in 1970, and that all of the orchestras exist to this day. In fact, many have risen to illustrious heights.

One of our success stories is the Nashville Symphony, an orchestra that declared bankruptcy just 20 years ago. Today this orchestra is a model of excellence recognized throughout the world. The orchestra has just opened its new concert hall which is acknowledged by all as one of the finest on any continent. The community rose to save this orchestra. And now, the symphony has revitalized the historic downtown of Nashville, and brought international attention to the city through its award winning recordings.

There are many successes to celebrate. The Fort Worth Symphony is receiving rave reviews for a Carnegie Hall appearance, the Florida Orchestra is announcing gifts totaling over \$3 million, the Buffalo Philharmonic is aggressively building its endowment, the Oregon Symphony has seen a 20% increase in attendance, and the New York Philharmonic is receiving more press coverage than the Oscars. And yet, we still hear the incessant drum beat that professes that the arts are not sustainable in certain cities.

It seems to me that the arts are the only business that seeks to resolve financial difficulties by offering an inferior product to its public. Ballet companies turn to recorded music, and symphony boards propose a drastic reduction in the size of the orchestra. It is clearly a misguided approach.

I think it is less a question of whether musicians are overvalued or undervalued, but rather, how do we work to ensure that they are indeed valued? There are many ways to reach out to our communities and build the sense of family that should surround every orchestra in its city.

“Community” is a buzz word in the orchestra world today. We must strive to make sure that “community” refers not only to an investment in us, but that it also means that we musicians invest in our community. To establish indelibly the positive sense of community that our musicians seek to develop, musicians must learn to break the fourth wall.

In theater, the fourth wall is the imaginary wall between the stage and the audience, the other three walls being formed by the shell of the stage. The term has been adapted from the theater to include books, film, and television.

Musicians in symphony orchestras can adapt the term to serve a new purpose as well. All too often in our concert halls there seems to be a dividing line between the orchestra and the audience. To establish a closer relationship with our audiences, boards, and community leaders, orchestra musicians need to break that fourth wall. This would mean establishing a connection with the audience and

inviting them into the community that surrounds every orchestra. And further, it would mean expanding that community to all constituents of our cities.

At a time of uncertainty in the world, where discord seems more valued than debate, where doctrines of fear and rhetoric of violence replace the inspirational words of hope that have, at moments of past crisis, led the citizens of the world to aspire to something greater than themselves, art (as Bernard Holland wrote)...art is our fragile claim to control over our lives.

Everywhere we look there is evidence of the power of symphonic music. It is seen and heard through historical events. It was experienced internationally when Leonard Bernstein conducted Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony here in this great city at the fallen Berlin Wall. It is heard on one of my favorite vinyl records; an amazing live recording by the Boston Symphony of Mozart’s Requiem at a memorial mass for President Kennedy in January of 1964. I felt it on the lawn at Duke University immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, where thousands of people held candles as they listened reverently to their own symphony orchestra, a scene repeated throughout the world by hundreds of orchestras in hundreds of locations. It is felt in the response of our audiences and seen throughout our communities as we help attract businesses, educate our children, and spread the name of our great cities.

We must remember, this we did with our lives for a reason. While it is and has always been so in vogue for orchestral musicians to be cynical, it is not beyond us to continue to indulge in our dreams. The greatest musicians among us are those who are still inspired by the opportunity to inspire. Through uniting together and reaching out to our communities, we can and will ensure that the arts continue to thrive, and we will continue to enrich the lives of our audiences as we improve the livelihood of our colleagues, all while inspiring the next generation of musicians.

Wherever an orchestra is in trouble, let us all respond. Wherever a musician is in need, let us all respond. Wherever a negative image of the arts is produced, let us answer with a positive message of hope. Let our community of musicians serve as an example to those places across the globe that are aching to hear a positive message.

It is a right of the people that they not be deprived of hope. As they hear our music, let them also hear our voices.

While many of the issues that surround orchestras are indeed local issues, there is no doubting the power in collective good will. Let those of us in this room resolve to build an international network of support. Let us establish contacts and friendships that will allow us to shine an international spotlight that will serve as a beacon for the arts in every community across the world. We are the advocates for our art form, we are the advocates for our communities, and we are the advocates for our children. Through our music, we offer a message of hope that the world is longing to hear.

Thank you very much.

Chairperson

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who have actually said it to my face, who fail to appreciate how our orchestras are strengthened by the diversity of experience on stage. Fortunately, the federal government does appreciate it, as demonstrated through the enactment of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967.

My friends in my orchestra have served this state through changing times and decades, and long before we had a world-class concert hall in Raleigh. My longer tenured colleagues were pioneers, bringing music to school children throughout the state on old buses and rural back roads. While the accommodations and the highways have improved immeasurably, education remains a critical part of our mission. The trail blazers that arrived before me created an identity for this orchestra, and they brought the AFM to its members, fighting tirelessly for many years to achieve pensions, health care, and many other benefits that are today simply expected.

The same is true for orchestras throughout ICSOM, as you'll read in the life stories in this issue. These brief biographies consistently tell the story of hard-fought battles and victories slowly won amidst an atmosphere of incredible loyalty and ongoing artistic accomplishment.

As I watched my colleagues perform together and observed the sense of ownership our audiences feel, I couldn't help but think of the musicians of the Columbus Symphony (CSO). Indeed, they've not been far from my mind at any moment during these past few months. I was impressed with Barbara Zuck's May 11 review of the CSO in the *Columbus Dispatch* in which she points out that the popularity of the orchestra is rising at the very moment that the board threatens to destroy the community's investment in that orchestral family.

I couldn't help but contrast two recent editorials, one from Raleigh's *News & Observer*, and the other from the *Columbus Dispatch*. Here in North Carolina we are fortunate to have a great newspaper that seeks to serve its state, and they support the musicians at every turn. Throughout this recent crisis in Columbus, the citizens have not been able to rely on the *Columbus Dispatch* to serve their community in the same way.

In response to a new outreach program the NCS has initiated, the editorial staff of the *News & Observer* wrote:

Ever since its formation in 1932, the N.C. Symphony has belonged to the people. . . . Here is an appropriate gesture of solidarity from this grand group of musicians to the citizens who have long supported the orchestra. . . . OK, OK. We know this isn't a miracle-working tour. Or is it?

Compare that to the words of the editorial staff of the *Columbus Dispatch*, just a few days later, when speaking of the musicians of the CSO:

The Columbus Symphony Orchestra is at a crossroads that will determine whether it continues or folds. The outcome is in the

hands of the musicians union. . . . The union disingenuously accuses the board of being derelict in its duty to seek out more donations The musicians should stop focusing on blame and start dealing with the facts.

Can there be any doubt that the citizens of central Ohio deserve better from their hometown newspaper?

The musicians of the Columbus Symphony bring great credit to their city. Sadly, I must join with the many other voices who have reluctantly noticed that the *Columbus Dispatch* has added nothing but negativity to the debate and has offered its readership not even an illusion of fair and balanced reporting.

For me, I imagine that I am now past the midway point of my career. I remember the beginning, with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, as if I could still somehow touch it. I remember the scent of backstage—I could name every musician on stage with me that night in February of 1979. We played Brahms' First Symphony in Norfolk's Chrysler Hall. After the show I had a barbeque sandwich and a limeade at Doumars' drive-in and wondered what the future would bring. Little did I know...

To my more tenured colleagues across the nation, I urge you to be invigorated by our newest members, and to help them understand the battles that you have fought. To our newest members, I urge you to be inspired by your colleagues, and to realize that it will seem like a very brief time before you also find yourself standing at your midway point. And to any manager who speaks of any need for a "generational shift" in their orchestra, I urge them to think about music (and life) in a richer way.



Photo by David Tanner

Columbus Symphony musicians at a press conference on May 20. At the press conference, Dan LaMacchia (seated at left) presented independent research backing musician positions in their current struggles. Also in the front are ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge (standing) and Local 103 President Douglas Fisher (seated at right).

Evaluations

(continued from page 7)

- provides inspired leadership to the organization
- programs satisfying concerts
- responds to deadlines in a timely fashion
- communicates effectively
- keeps commitments for appearances
- is reasonably accessible
- has a positive effect on others' job performance
- contributes to the advancement of the organization's mission
- has a positive image in the community
- maintains morale among musicians
- ensures the provision of high quality programs and services
- cultivates positive relationships with public officials, consumers, and relevant community organizations

Narrative questions about the music director might ask which areas could benefit from added development and which should receive more emphasis. Naturally, any evaluation committee would tailor the questions and the response parameters to make them most productive.

After the evaluation committee has communicated its report, the board chair and the evaluation committee chair would meet with the executive director and the music director to review mutually held objectives, deliver the overall assessment, share affirmation of strengths and achievements, relate any gaps or concerns, and perhaps suggest avenues of professional development. Compensation decisions would be communicated at the same time; obviously, this component should resonate with the evaluation message. Throughout this entire process, demands of accountability ideally should be leavened with a sense of support and trust.

The institution of such an evaluation process can only happen with a majority buy-in from the board. It's likely that board leadership would have to be ready to actively promote such a process among its more ruggedly traditional members. It's also quite possible that an executive director or a music director might feel blindsided by the institution of such a new program; thus it may be advisable to initiate an evaluation process with an incoming executive director or music director.

The evaluation process outlined above offers an invigorating balance of potential benefits, responsibilities, and risks for all components of large musical organizations. With care, downside

risks can be minimized and benefits maximized as we strive to guide our venerable institutions into the future.

Emeritus Principal Double Bassist of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Grand Teton Music Festival, Roger Ruggeri remains active as a performer, program annotator, lecturer, and composer. A board member of several Milwaukee musical organizations, he has served as a judge for the Grammy Awards and has been a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Wisconsin Arts Board. Those desiring further details related to this article may contact Roger directly at roger.ruggeri@att.net.

President on Flanagan

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involving musicians. Many musicians feel "burned" by their participation. Others see only potential harm to musicians with no advantage to "being in the tent." As a Governing Board member and the chair of my local orchestra committee, I have to field this question on an almost daily basis. Due to the issues raised here, my ability to lead others back into "the tent" has been seriously compromised by the report and the process that led up to its release.

My address as ICSOM President to the 2003 League conference finished with the following words: "For our relationship to flourish, chances will need to be taken, continued trust will need to be earned, and respect will need to be given. Undoubtedly, there will be bumps along the road. How we deal with those bumps will tell us just how far we've come and how far we have yet to go."

My sincere hope is that this report will prove to be just a "bump along the road." Borrowing from ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge's recent response, "We must stop doing this to ourselves." Are there not more productive ways to use our collective time, energy and resources? I will gladly be among the first to sign up for groups that focus on advocacy to counter the negative rhetoric that pervades our discussions all too often.

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.

Fifty Years Plus

(continued from page 10)

seventies. Harriet credits current Music Director Miguel Harth Bedoya with helping the orchestra blossom artistically.

When speaking of memorable musical experiences, the one that tops the list was not actually related to the FWSO but involves her great love, the viola de gamba. She performed in costume in an onstage *banda* for the Houston Grand Opera. Another noteworthy experience occurred while driving home with the conductor from her very first *Messiah* gig in Michigan when she heard the news about Pearl Harbor on the radio. She still remembers that moment every time she plays Handel's *Messiah*, which has been often during her career!

Harriet related three memorable moments from pops concerts over the years. The first was when her four-year-old son got out of his seat and walked right up to her during a performance in an arena. He told her he needed to go to the bathroom "*right now!*" She put down her cello and took him to the little boys' room. (The incident made the "Out and About" column in the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*.) Harriet also very much enjoyed singing a duet with Garrison Keillor ("Ode to Not Too Bad") and received more phone

calls for that performance than anything else she ever played during her career. She didn't have as much fun, however, the time she fainted onstage during a Marvin Hamlisch performance. It seems she had donated blood earlier in the day and hadn't eaten.

Harriet retires at the end of this season.

—Karen Hall

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The Columbus Saga, Briefly

by Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel

On January 18, 2008, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported the results of a “Strategic Plan” prepared by the board of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO). The plan concluded, and the *Dispatch* reported, that the CSO budget was to be cut immediately by \$3 million—from \$12.5 million to \$9.5 million. This was to be accomplished, in part, by firing 22 of the 53 full-time musicians and cutting the 46-week season by 12 weeks.

The plan had never been discussed with the musicians during its development and the first they heard of it was weeks before the first scheduled bargaining session. At that first bargaining session, management made that proposal for a one-year contract to the union team (“Committee”). The union (Central Ohio Federation of Musicians, Local 103) responded with a proposal for a three-year contract with a six percent cut in musicians’ compensation in the first year, smaller cuts in the second, and recovery in the third. The union’s proposal, of course, did not include the firing of any current players, but a willingness to discuss a reduction in the size of the orchestra, gradually, by attrition. The CSO response to this proposal was to drop the demand for firing any musicians, but instead, proposed a reduction in the total compensation of the 53 full-time musicians by 40% and cutting the per service rate for subs and extras from \$150 to \$100—a 33 1/3% reduction for these musicians who enjoy few benefits and no job security. That proposal, of course, simply moved money around and the proposed budget would remain at \$9.5 million.

When that was rejected, the next proposal from the CSO was that any money raised over and above the \$9.5 million would be “shared” with the musicians. An interesting proposal in light of their position that it was impossible for them to raise any more than \$9.5 million in Columbus. When the union asked about a multi-year agreement, the response was affirmative, provided that each year was to be budgeted at \$9.5 million. Nevertheless, in a further attempt to accommodate the board, the union even proposed that if they insisted on that magical \$9.5 million, the union would accept it, provided that the musicians’ share would be \$5 million—still a reduction from

the previous musicians’ compensation of \$5.6 million by over \$500,000! This, too, was rejected and the management continued to insist that the musicians’ share be slashed to \$3.6 million.

Because the management was obviously not bargaining in good faith, the union proposed that the “bargaining” end and that the dispute be submitted to impartial binding arbitration. Once again, that proposal was rejected. The response of the union was to suggest that a consultant/mediator from the orchestra field be invited to help. That suggestion was likewise rejected.

At that point the CSO team turned their previous proposal into a “final offer.” In order to dispel any notion that the Union and the Committee were not truly representative of the orchestra, the Union agreed to take it back to the bargaining unit, albeit with a recommendation that they reject it. And reject it they did—60 to 0. At the meeting, not a single musician expressed any interest in their “final offer” despite the Committee’s admonition that rejection could mean the shutdown of operations.

Upon learning of the vote and after one more meeting with the union team, the CSO confirmed that no proposal from the union would be acceptable which did not contain a \$9.5 million budget and a 40% cut in musicians’ compensation. With no further meetings scheduled, the board then announced their intention to cancel the seven-week summer season. In our opinion, for a number of reasons, such a “shut-down” constituted an illegal lockout. When the union would not relent, the board followed through on the threat and the summer season was cancelled. At the same time, the board announced that the CBA was terminated. A grievance was filed and the filing of an unfair labor practice will follow.

After cancelling the summer season, the board finally agreed to consultation/mediation with the executive director of the Nashville Symphony, Alan Valentine. Immediately upon reaching that agreement, management insisted upon bringing in a labor mediator as well. This had never been discussed—the CSO simply chose the mediator and invited him. Nevertheless, in order not to kill the mediation, and because it is only mediation and not arbitration, the union agreed to add the labor mediator.

The mediation lasted three days, and despite the best efforts of the mediators, the “final offer” of the management which was presented to the Committee was rejected by the Committee and ultimately by the overwhelming vote of the orchestra. As of this writing no further meetings are scheduled.

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



I have been thinking a great deal recently about the importance of civil discourse. A few years back I wrote about what I perceived as a "culture of hostility" in our field. I meant this to include both the relationships between musicians and managers, as well as the relationships among musicians themselves. Every season we elect some of our colleagues to endure a most onerous task, that of serving on the orchestra committee, and then we all too frequently reward their offer of volunteer service with abuse instead of support.

Of course, the democratic process that we all embrace should welcome an avenue for disagreements and respectful debate. But all too often this disagreement is expressed in the form of personal attacks and name calling. We are all the weaker as a result.

Throughout my work in these past two years as chair of ICSOM, time and time again I have received calls from committee chairs who are facing personal criticism as they try to serve. I always counsel them with the advice that if everybody liked you, it would probably mean that you were doing something wrong.

One of my teachers told me many years ago, "If you are going to stand for anything in this world, there will be people who will stand against you. Some will oppose you because of what you stand for, and others will oppose you simply because you are able to stand."

As I look out across the ICSOM landscape, I see great reason for hope, and I feel an uplifting optimism. Every time we have asked our member orchestras to act as a unified body, they have done so. You all responded to our friends in Jacksonville during their time of need by sending nearly \$100,000. As I write this, our orchestras have sent over \$70,000 to Columbus in the first 21 days since the latest *Call to Action* was issued.

Through uniting, and through seeking a richer dialogue, we can defeat the culture of hostility. Our organization is strong enough to welcome dissension, provided that we decide not to tolerate personal attacks.

All of this occurs to me this evening because I am deeply concerned about the future of the AFM. You have all heard of the conflict that exists between the AFM administration and the Recording Musicians Association (RMA). Our concerns were so great last summer that the 2007 ICSOM delegates passed a resolution calling for unity. In that resolution, we said:

WHEREAS, The current disputes between the AFM administration and the Recording Musicians Association threaten to tear apart this great union;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the delegates and Governing Board of the 2007 ICSOM Conference implore the Recording

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MOLA Conference in Nashville

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

As ICSOM Secretary it was my great honor at the end of May to attend the Major Orchestra Librarians' Association (MOLA) Conference that was hosted by Nashville Symphony librarians D. Wilson Ochoa and Jennifer Goldberg. The conference began with a reception co-hosted by MOLA and the Nashville Symphony Players' Assembly following our Friday evening Classical Series concert. Many attended the performance and were treated to the first performance of Principal Librarian D. Wilson Ochoa's transcription of Aaron Copland's *Emblems*.

Founded only a quarter-century ago, MOLA quickly has become a truly international organization, with 248 member organizations representing 420 librarians on six continents. Nearly one hundred member librarians traveled to Nashville from as far away as Spain, Sweden, New Zealand, and Germany. MOLA also includes many U.S. military ensembles. The conference has more than two days of plenary sessions, smaller breakout sessions on established topics, and a host of opportunities to meet during breaks, breakfast, and a wonderful dinner I was invited to attend. I must thank Marcia Farabee (MOLA president, National Symphony), Karen Schnackenberg (past president of MOLA, Dallas Symphony) and Pat McGinn (conference volunteer and MOLA administrator, Milwaukee Symphony), as well as my colleagues Wilson and Jennifer for making me welcome. I hope we can reciprocate during an ICSOM Conference in the future.

The message I delivered, during a closed session for members only, had to do with the inclusion of librarians in the bargaining unit. (I'm told I was the first non-member ever to give an address during their business meeting.) I am personally committed to including librarians in our collective bargaining units and am proud to say that we in Nashville have achieved success by bringing both our librarians into the bargaining unit.

Librarians work an incredible number of hours to assure that parts are legible, and they work with string principals to assure bowings are done and marked into our parts, that notes and rhythms are corrected, and that the music is available in a timely fashion. Our principal librarian was also involved in designing the library in our new hall and designing the music drawers so the parts are available even when the library is closed. (Wilson admits borrowing the idea from Seattle's Benaroya Hall.) Our librarians serve as an additional set of ears during recording sessions and have taken on the daunting task over the years of getting all licensing clearances for our live performances and any recording or broadcast uses (like on our websites or for season demo disks). I heard a great deal during this conference about music clearances and find that it's not as easy as a simple phone call to one place. This requires a great deal of time and effort in addition to all their other duties.

And let us not forget (though many do) that our librarian colleagues are, first and foremost, musicians. They might not volunteer it, but they began their careers as performing musicians, some of them working in our finest orchestras before taking on the

(continued on page 7—see MOLA CONFERENCE)

SFS's Revolution in Music Education

by Cathy Payne, Member at Large

The San Francisco Symphony has a longstanding commitment to music education, beginning in 1919 when the orchestra performed its first group of children's concerts. At the start of the 21st century, the orchestra embarked on a multimedia project with ambitious goals and unprecedented scope: to use media in its most public and accessible forms to instill a lifelong love of music and show that classical music can speak to everyone. The *Keeping Score* project is a national, multi-year educational media program designed to make classical music accessible to people of all ages and musical backgrounds.

In an effort to bring the classical music experience to new and experienced listeners alike, *Keeping Score* encompasses a national PBS television series, an interactive web site to explore and learn about music, a national public radio series (*The MTT Files*), documentary and live performance DVDs, and an education program for grades K–12 to further teaching through the arts by integrating classical music into core subjects. "*Keeping Score* is designed to give people who have been intimidated by the rituals of classical music the chance to get past that," says Michael Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony. "If I were sitting down next to somebody before I was about to play a piece on the piano, I'd say, 'Let me tell you a few things.' One on one. As simple and direct as that. My goal is to clarify everyone's intentions—what the composer had in mind, what the performers have in mind, what kind of voyage of discipline and self-discovery goes into the process of making music."

The project began in 1999 when the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund proposed to partner with the SFS in a new and groundbreaking music education initiative. The Haas Foundation told the SFS to "think big," and according to John Kieser, general manager and director of electronic media, Tilson Thomas and the SFS creative team came up with several ideas. The idea the Haas Fund liked best was to recreate for television the popular Family Concert Series that MTT had created with the orchestra in Davies Hall. The Haas Fund wanted the shows to be produced for PBS so there would be access for all, with no economic barriers preventing anyone from viewing the programs. But as the creative team worked towards the goal of broadcasting the concerts on television, they realized that they couldn't just record them in the traditional way—since the time of Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, media has progressed dramatically and today's viewer would require much more richness and diversity.

They decided that they needed to capture live concerts in a way that had never before been attempted. First, the camera would have to bring the viewer right inside the orchestra and show people how the music and performance were constructed. Next, the television programs needed to be "experiential" documentaries that would explore why music is so powerful, would humanize the composers, and would put the music into an historical context. Realizing that television was starting to fade as a medium when compared to the World Wide Web, the SFS team decided that the project should be

(continued on page 4—see KEEPING SCORE)

Keeping Score

(continued from page 3)

like a three-legged stool, having a broadcast component (TV and radio), an Internet component, and a teacher training program to integrate classical music into the curriculum for all subjects in public schools. “We wanted to give people an entry point into classical music,” Kieser says. Another goal was showcasing the musicians in the orchestra and the partnership with MTT. “Besides educating future audiences, we wanted to clearly establish Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony as providers of an exceptional classical music experience,” says Kieser.

The initial pilot program for the *Keeping Score* series was a documentary and live capture performance of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4. After the taping and editing were completed, the broadcast was shown to focus groups in Seattle, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. The groups were composed of people of different ages who didn’t listen to classical music, but had watched at least one program on PBS in the last year. In terms of building future audience, the age group the SFS was most interested in reaching was 22–44. After watching the program all participants in the groups felt that music had an intrinsic value, but they were afraid to talk about it because they found it intimidating. “It’s like wine,” Kieser says. “Everyone has a fear of getting into it.” It was so intimidating that when asked what sort of person should lead them on the journey into exploring classical music, the groups agreed that someone with an English or German accent would be best! The groups liked the format of learning about one composer and one particular work in each show, and loved hearing from the musicians themselves, going behind the scenes to learn what goes into creating a performance. The SFS team did a lot of tweaking to the show after it was viewed by the focus groups, and the Tchaikovsky pilot aired in June of 2004 on the PBS Great Performance series to wide critical acclaim. The show was watched by over 1 million American households.

Much of what was learned from the taping of the initial program was applied to the first full series of television programs, *Revolutions in Music*, aired on PBS in November 2006. The three broadcasts in this series each feature a composer who changed the way music was written in his time, setting the course for the generations of musical evolution that followed. These documentary episodes cover Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 (*Eroica*), Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, and Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*. To date, the broadcasts have been viewed by four and a half million people nationwide. Live concert performances of the three works were also aired on High-Definition PBS stations and are available for sale on DVD, with sales approaching 30,000 units, for over \$285,000 in revenues. Currently in production, Series Two is expected to premiere nationally on PBS in 2009 with episodes on Berlioz (*Symphonie Fantastique*), Charles Ives (*Holidays Symphony*), and Shostakovich (Symphony No. 5).

The companion web site to the series, www.KeepingScore.org, provides an interactive online experience designed to give people of all musical backgrounds a way to explore the music and stories behind these works in much greater depth and detail, and at the listener’s own pace. In one section of the web site, it is possible to

follow along with the musical scores while audio and video content is seamlessly integrated as the measures of the score go by. Other sections explore a variety of musical concepts, such as Beethoven’s use of themes and keys or Stravinsky’s intricate use of meter. Separate sites for each composer feature biographical and historical information that explore the influences that led to the composition of the featured works. Alex Ross, in an excellent October, 2007 *New Yorker* article about the Internet and classical music, praises the *Keeping Score* project and web site, and hails MTT as “Bernstein’s most faithful and hopeful follower...with these programs he is performing radical acts of demystification.” Over 150,000 people have visited the site to date.

The MTT Files is written and hosted by Michael Tilson Thomas and co-produced with American Public Media. The radio program features eight 60-minute episodes where MTT metaphorically pulls out some of his “files”—ideas and musings about music and art, and reminiscences of the legendary artists he has known throughout his career. The series includes an episode featuring Tilson Thomas in conversation with James Brown in one of the soul singer’s final interviews before his death. *The MTT Files* recently won a Peabody Award for Radio Programming.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the project is the *Keeping Score* teacher training program. Designed to help students learn through the arts, the program trains K–12 teachers to integrate classical music into core subjects such as science, math, English, history, and social studies. School districts in San Jose, Sonoma, and Fresno, California as well as in Oklahoma City and Flagstaff, Arizona are currently participating in the program, with more districts planned for the future. Each district selected for the program must have socioeconomic and racial diversity in their student populations (45% of the students currently participating in the project are below the poverty line), must have an institution of higher learning (university or college), and a semi-professional or professional orchestra in the community. Most importantly, the districts selected must be seeking innovative ways to improve their schools.

Participating teachers are trained by SFS musicians, educational staff, and a variety of arts educators. The teachers come to San Francisco for a week of immersion in music during which they experiment with different instruments, attend SFS concerts, and participate in a highly structured program of workshops and lectures from morning to night. Feedback from teachers has been impressive, with many remarking that this is the only program they’ve ever been involved with that concentrates primarily on *them*—on making them better teachers by improving their skills, including being able to generate their own ideas about how to use music as a tool in their classrooms.

One third-grade teacher who was teaching about the western expansion in America used Copland’s *Billy the Kid* as a soundtrack and urged students to create a character, Billy, who was heading out west for the first time. Instead of just learning dry facts about the Louisiana Purchase, the period of western expansion comes to life for the students as they connect historical facts to their version of “Billy.” In a fifth-grade math classroom, a teacher played the

overture to *La Traviata* and asked kids what they heard. Surprisingly, the students initiated a discussion about longing and desire after listening to the powerful music of Verdi. The teacher made the point that equations are expressions of desire— x and y just want to belong to somebody. After hearing the music and participating in the discussion, the children in the group had a much easier time grasping the concept of equations.

Sometimes, there are unintended outcomes in the classroom. A fourth-grade teacher in Flagstaff assigned students the task of creating their own musical instrument out of found objects. She had two homeless students in her class, and because of their experiences, they were much more creative than their fellow students at imagining the possibilities inherent in their found objects. These two children came back to class with instruments that impressed and amazed the other students. As a result, their social standing in the class went way up, along with their feelings of self-worth.

The SFS is doing all it can to fill the void now that music education is being reduced or eliminated in public schools across the country. “As the schools have, by and large, cut arts education and music education out of the curriculum, it has become up to large organizations to help people understand the language and power of music,” says Tilson Thomas. “Our big performing arts organizations have to take the lead in picking up the slack, which is difficult, because that is not why these institutions were created; it was not envisioned as part of their responsibility...a responsibility that we have no option but to accept and undertake is to guide and encourage children and young people in their understanding of how music really works and what it means.”

It is very rewarding to work for an organization that is taking the lead in music education with a visionary project like *Keeping Score*. I am proud of the commitment my orchestra has made to making the music I love accessible to all. Of all the maestros I have worked with, MTT is the most able to connect with audiences and really get them excited about the music. He is entertaining and engaging—able to put people at ease, to tell stories that draw them in, and to show them a way to experience music on a more personal level. His ease in front of the cameras and the enthusiasm he exudes are key components to the success of the project, as are the wonderful insights and personal stories my colleagues in the orchestra provide. Already the *Keeping Score* project has come a long way to meeting its goals of enlarging the audience for classical music, reaching and educating underserved audiences, cultivating an appreciation of the art form, and establishing the SFS as a provider of exceptional classical music experiences.

The musicians of the SFS Media Oversight Committee want to extend our great thanks and appreciation to Debbie Newmark, AFM’s director of symphonic electronic media. She spent countless hours helping the committee navigate its way through issues not addressed by the A/V Agreement, including compensation for musician interviews, use of material from the SFS radio archives, and use of A/V and audio material on the web. Thanks also to Trish Polach and Lenny Leibowitz for their legal assistance.

Chairperson

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Musicians Association and the current administration of the AF of M to meet together in a spirit of unity, put aside their differences, and achieve the higher goal of reunification and solidarity for the greater good of all the members of the AFM and their families.

I’m saddened to tell you that the relationship between the AFM and the RMA has worsened, and indeed I feel that the very survival of this union is at risk. It is my hope that ICSOM might play a role in bridging the terrible chasm that exists.

The strengthening of the unity within ICSOM offers great hope for this union, its members, and musicians everywhere. But our unity must be nurtured. We are not without our problems.

Perhaps the most potentially divisive issue that symphonic musicians face is in the area of media. There is a great disparity of opinion, and these opinions are quite strongly held. As many have observed, it is interesting that media would be the source of division within the symphonic ranks, since it produces just a small amount of our income. But, it is vitally important to our future, and we will have to engage in debate as new technologies offer new opportunities. It is equally important for us to work to preserve fair compensation for the highly skilled labor we perform, especially when that labor is even more difficult to perform with a microphone and camera two inches from your bell, bow or brow.

Despite these concerns I feel the sense of community is growing among our orchestras. That strength is entirely due to the musicians who perform nightly, and their elected committee leaders who voluntarily surrender time with their families to serve all of us.

In this year, I have been inspired by the dedication and altruistic service of our musician leaders from Jacksonville, Columbus, and elsewhere across the country. I have been moved by the overwhelming response of our orchestras to their colleagues in need. While others might be mired in dissension, ICSOM aspires to a greater goal. I hope that we have only just begun to accomplish even greater things for our field. But to do that, we must reject the culture of hostility. We must continue to elevate the tone of our debates, and we must always strive to avoid expressing our disagreements through personal attacks.

Thank you all for your friendship and support, and I look forward to visiting with your elected delegates at our annual conference in San Francisco in just a few weeks.

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.

Lights, Camera, Anxiety: How Live Capture Affects Performance

by Cathy Payne, San Francisco Symphony

As a member of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, I have been involved in the AFM's Symphony, Opera and Ballet Audio Visual negotiations since last November. These negotiations were put on hold for several months while the Managers' Media Committee (MMC) and the AFM had "framework discussions" to explore the possibility of some type of integrated media agreement, which could include Radio, Internet, and A/V all under the same agreement and might simplify media projects for all parties. The final framework discussion was on June 30, when the AFM and the MMC decided to move forward into negotiations for an integrated media agreement.

As symphonic musicians, we hear again and again that managers are using media to try to force concessions from musicians at a local level. It will probably come as no surprise that the managers involved in these national discussions want us to do more media work for less money. They argue that we should give them media for free or for token payments in order to help support and promote our institutions and to build audience. They'll share revenue—why shouldn't we be happy with that? And besides, turning microphones and cameras on for a service that we're already being paid for (live recording) isn't any extra work. You're already performing! Don't you play your best anyway when you're performing? The managers say they should be able to capture that performance for no additional compensation. Why should they pay us twice for the same amount of work?

It is this argument that rankles the most. As a member of the San Francisco Symphony, I have done quite a bit of live media activity over the past few years. My management has come up with some very innovative and creative projects that we are all proud to be a part of. However, most members of the SFS feel that cameras and mikes add an enormous amount of stress to our jobs. (Full disclosure: I am the piccolo player for the SFS, so while I may feel "high" pressure more than some, I have had extensive conversations on this subject with members of all sections of my orchestra.) Our jobs change significantly when we're being recorded, and we should be well compensated for recording services.

Many of us feel that as musicians we are only as good as our last performance. We want to sound great all the time. But how do you play at your peak when you have three, four, and sometimes even five concerts a week for so many weeks of the year? Performance anxiety is a serious issue for most musicians: we all know the stories of celebrated artists who have to be pushed onto the stage, or talked into going out in front of the audience. What we do is extremely precise, requiring intense concentration and very highly developed coordination. And then there is that pesky artistry issue. Just going out and playing the notes perfectly and with a beautiful sound is not going to cut it. You need to be able to transcend the difficulties of your instrument and play with creativity and freedom in order to spin out gorgeous phrases and conjure a performance that will really move an audience. It is not enough to be a technician—you must be an artist.

When I perform, I try to tell myself: "Cathy—this is not brain surgery! No one's life is at stake here if I flub the run in Tchaik 4, or play a giant clam in this gorgeous, lyrical Shostakovich solo!" But perhaps it really is more like brain surgery. As a classical performer, you get one chance. If you make a mistake, there it goes, out into the air, out to the audience of 2,743 people (in my case). You can never get it back—it's gone. You can't erase it, readjust, or try it again. Most of us can probably picture, in alarming detail, the concerts where we have made major errors—plowing in with gusto on a fortissimo entrance while the rest of the orchestra is wrapped up in the GP that you somehow forgot to experience, or flubbing a note in a major solo (like not having the final pianissimo note speak in the *Elegia* movement of the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra, and having this low hippo death call come out instead while the whole orchestra is in tears around you trying to muffle their laughter—not that this has ever happened to me).

If you blow it, not only is it embarrassing for you professionally, but it reflects poorly on the entire ensemble. You've blown it for "the team"—you've let everybody down. Making an error in a concert feels so bad that we do all we can to try to avoid it: we take drugs to slow our heart rates down and keep our hands from sweating and our mouths from drying out, all of which seriously affect performance. We try exercise regimes, yoga, change our diets, meditate, or bring our lucky whatever with us on stage as a talisman. We do the exact same preparation we did for a "good" performance, hoping to get the same result.

This pressure to be perfect has only increased over the years as recording has gone digital and people in the editing room are able to create technically perfect recordings with no bloopers. Many people who attend concerts seem to remember these blooper moments when discussing a concert afterwards. "Didn't the horn player make a mistake?" "My Beethoven 7 recording doesn't sound like that." This adds to the performance pressure that musicians experience. I've heard section string players describe the nausea they feel when the cameras are on them because of the pressure to be perfectly unified. Their bows must be exactly in sync; they must not lose concentration and play in a rest. They see the camera coming out of the corners of their eyes and are very distracted. Chasing after perfection inhibits artistic freedom and makes us less likely to take artistic risks in performance. This, I feel, is detrimental to our mission to give audiences great live concert experiences as our ensembles sound more careful and cautious instead of more exciting and energized. The cameras only make this trend more inevitable, adding to the already extraordinary performance pressure that musicians feel.

Perhaps in our local and national negotiations we should try to get our managers to imagine doing their jobs while being recorded. How would our managers feel if they were doing a normal but difficult part of their job—for example, giving a presentation to their board, or participating in a tricky negotiation?

Let's picture an executive director sitting at a table in the board room. There is a microphone on the table in front of him or her, recording every word. As he begins his presentation, he is aware of a camera on a boom above his head. He doesn't see it, exactly...but he can feel it over him because it creates a slight breeze that makes his hair move a little bit, and he is aware that it is casting shadows on the paper he is referring to on the table. Our executive director notices that there are two cameras on either side of him, but they are far away. There is a person operating each one, moving it back and forth, but it's not so bad. He can get used to it. He notices as he is speaking that the several bald men in the room are wearing pancake makeup on their heads, which is slightly distracting—but shiny heads don't look good on camera. Our executive director has an irritating itch on his nose that he'd really like to scratch before he continues, but he's on camera, so he doesn't. He is distracted enough by the itch that he makes a mistake, but gets back on track quickly, reminding himself to concentrate. He moves on to make a key negotiating point, slicing his hand in the air for emphasis. It's dramatic. At that moment, he is distracted slightly by a low mechanical whirring sound—it is our new, good friend, the robotic camera! The robotic camera wants to be right in his face to capture this special moment—but please, executive director, make your point strongly and well, with feeling. Don't let that camera distract you.

Now let's imagine that all this captured material will be edited with no say from the executive director. (The most dramatic section of the presentation was done particularly well, but one of the bald men in the room sneezed, so the material will have to be edited out.) The finished product will be viewed by critics, colleagues in the field, and lovers of classical music all over the world. If you are wearing a stupid tie, your mascara is running, or you say something that is incorrect or controversial that wasn't edited out, your moment could be viewed by millions on YouTube.

Somehow, I don't think the managers would think this was "the same" work.

But I think I know what they'd argue next (okay, I have a lot of experience with this). They'd say that if the cameras and mikes were on all the time, we'd get used to it. And perhaps we would get used to it, but something would really be lost in the process. To be able to create a great performance, musicians need "down time" in order to "rise to the occasion" for the mikes and cameras. SFS musicians had the experience last winter of having three straight weeks of concerts and most rehearsals taped (concerts were A/V; rehearsals were audio only, in what SFS's media oversight committee feels is an abuse of the current A/V Agreement). I can emphatically say that at the end of the three weeks there wasn't a musician on stage who was getting used to it. Everyone was completely exhausted. Taping rehearsals is a bad idea. There is no opportunity to "play" with a phrase, or try out a new idea, or experiment with a fingering. There is no opportunity to "save it for the concert" because you're giving

100% all the time. The intensity leads to more exhaustion, which leads to more mistakes, and the fear of mistakes leads to more careful and boring playing. Yes, bring the media activity on—but with limits as to what material and how much material can be captured.

With the explosion of web sites like Facebook and YouTube, the managers are more interested than ever in A/V product, and as costs for A/V projects come down as technology changes and improves, musicians from more and more orchestras will be hearing these arguments from their managers. While I agree with our managers that media activity is desirable for orchestras and we need to have a major media presence in the new media frontiers of the 21st century, the workload and stress of doing our jobs is much greater when the digital wheels are spinning. Musicians need to be protected and compensated appropriately.

MOLA Conference

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responsibilities and duties of librarians. There are a variety of reasons why they chose to be librarians, but their musical background is right there for the asking. The special tasks they do for all of us are in addition to their constant attention to preparing folders, ordering music, contacting conductors and composers about their needs, etc. For example, during the last two months in Nashville, our librarians had to prepare two sets of audition books for our committees, in alphabetical order, with the first round already set up for committee use. Why any of our musicians would not want these folks to receive the benefits of protection under our CBA is a mystery to me. I don't honestly know where they find the time to do everything they are tasked with—imagine the organizational skills this job must entail!

Additionally, and most may be unaware of this fact, unless a librarian is a member of the bargaining unit, there is no obligation to pay or include them on recording contracts. The additional work that is put into part preparation for recordings can be enormous, sometimes including fixing massive mistakes in the music, but it receives no additional compensation. That just doesn't seem fair to me, but managers (and there are some who go around the country touting their displeasure over including librarians in bargaining units) as a general rule won't pay recording fees to any but those who are mandated by national agreements.

I promised the members of MOLA I would educate my colleagues about all the many responsibilities and qualifications of librarians. I believe it is important to understand and embrace those orchestra members who contribute so much to our livelihood and to encourage orchestra negotiators to fight to include them in bargaining units that do not already cover librarians. Honestly, it's not really

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MOLA Conference

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a cost issue for our managers since they were already included in the budget, the salaries just shift from one area to another.

Including the librarians in our bargaining unit strengthens the unit with increased numbers, reinforces the local union with additional work dues, and supports the Federation with a deeper membership base. By virtue of that action alone, these musicians receive recognition, pension contributions, recording payments, and contract protection. Let's face it: we could not do our jobs without them.

Addendum

by Paul Gunther

Laura's description, above, of the recent MOLA Conference, and her segue into the work of the orchestra librarian, is a model of concision and clarity. One thing in her humility she neglected to mention: not only was Laura the first non-member to address the MOLA business meeting, but hers was actually the opening address. At its conclusion it was greeted by applause much more enthusiastic than just polite. The time was ripe for this, and Laura's delivery was on the money.

In Minneapolis, when I give talks about the orchestra library or tours to students, donors or guests, I like to frame the librarian's duties with metrics like these: Let's say your orchestra has 75 players playing 100 different concerts per year, averaging three works

per concert. (This is just an example; the numbers will vary considerably.) Simple multiplication yields 20,000 or more pieces of music floating around, every single one of which must be located and placed in the right folder for the right concert. This does not include vocal parts for chorus numbers, scores for conductors and anyone else interested, chamber music, recordings, etc. Now, imagine for a moment a ball player with a 950 batting average; this person would have to be superhuman; and if he actually existed, would be held in very high esteem—and command a superhuman salary. If, on the other hand, the orchestra librarian could locate only 95% of the music, it would be akin to a player hitting only 95% of the notes correctly; in these cases a high number is not necessarily a great average, or even acceptable to the profession.

Also, I like to outline in this way the difference between an orchestra librarian and a librarian working in any other field: To be able to handle the work, an orchestra librarian *must* be a trained and experienced performance musician, or the job would be impossible. An education and degree in information science (the field formerly known as "librarianship")—even an advanced degree—could not help a bit in the orchestra library, unless one were first and foremost a musician.

ICSOM Member at Large Paul Gunther is the principal librarian of the Minnesota Orchestra. A MOLA founding member, he served six years on the MOLA board, including two as president.

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The 2008 ICSOM Conference

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

Three orchestras, the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, were host to the 2008 ICSOM Conference. at Hotel Kabuki, located in San Francisco's Japantown. Held August 20–23, the Conference was jam packed with presentations, workshops, reports, and opportunities for orchestra delegates and guests to interact with their colleagues from across the U.S.

Following the practice of the last few years, there was a meeting of negotiating orchestras the night before the Conference's opening session. The meeting was very informative and was well attended by delegates and alternates, orchestra members, local officers, Symphonic Services Division (SSD) staff, and Governing Board members.

Wednesday morning, the Governing Board met with new delegates at a breakfast meeting designed to help prepare them for their next four days. The opening session then began with the introduction of officers, guests and attendees. Chairman Bruce Ridge spoke about his travels this past season and the success of ICSOM's two *Calls to Action* to support the Jacksonville and Columbus symphonies during their lockouts. He called attention to the strength and unity within ICSOM and argued for a more positive message in our industry. Chairman Ridge's complete opening remarks can be found online at www.icsom.org.

The highlight of the Conference was keynote speaker Randy Cohen's presentation. Mr. Cohen, the vice president of policy and research for Americans for the Arts (AFTA), presented information about arts in the schools, various publicly funded arts programs, and studies that prove participation in the arts improves performance in school and on tests. Particularly entertaining were some of the AFTA commercials promoting arts advocacy that he shared. ICSOM is looking forward to working with AFTA to increase public support for the arts.

We were pleased that AFM President Tom Lee was able to attend the Conference and that he was joined by International Executive Board (IEB) members Ray Hair (Dallas/Fort Worth Local 72-147 president), Billy Linneman (Nashville Local 257 secretary-treasurer), and Bob McGrew (Houston Local 65-699 secretary-treasurer). All addressed the delegates. Since ICSOM orchestras are represented by 44 of the largest locals in the U.S., we welcome the many local officers who attend the Conference each year, and we especially look forward to improving our communication with all the members of the IEB. We receive a number of compliments from local officers each year commending us on the important information and workshops that are part of every ICSOM Conference. We hope the entire IEB as well as additional orchestra members and local officers will consider attending an ICSOM Conference in the future.

As usual, the first day was filled with a number of reports advising delegates about the numerous services ICSOM provides. We also heard from some of our orchestra representatives who faced great difficulties this past season. On Wednesday we heard from John Wieland, who spoke about the lockout last fall in Jacksonville. Honolulu representatives Steve Flanter and Emma Philips spoke about the payroll problems they dealt with last season. On Thursday, we heard Columbus Symphony delegate Mike Buccicone with Local 103 president and orchestra member Doug Fisher discuss their orchestra's lockout that began June 1. We were also pleased to welcome back Chicago Symphony *Emeritus* member Tom Hall, who spoke about his orchestra's wonderful Alumni Association of former CSO members (and subs and extras that worked and toured with the orchestra over the years). In addition to offering activities and perks to alumni, it also encourages interaction between current and former members. Wednesday evening, attendees were treated to a tour of Davies Symphony Hall and a fabulous mixer hosted by the musicians from San Francisco's symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras and Local 6.

Thursday morning began with Bill Foster's report as chair of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee. This was followed by a terrific presentation by American Federation of Musicians-Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) Executive Director Maureen Kilkelly who shared further information regarding the pension fund after last year's presentation by Vinni LoPresti and Will Luebking. We were also quite pleased to have AFM Pension Trustees Tom Lee (chair of the AFM trustees committee), Hal Espinosa (Los Angeles Local 47 president), Lovie Smith-Wright (Houston Local 65-699 president), Melinda Wagner (San Francisco Local 6 former president),

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



With the daily onslaught of dire economic news emanating from Wall Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, all Americans find themselves concerned for the future. Symphonic musicians confront these economic issues on an ongoing basis, and it is understandable that at this moment, musicians might feel even greater consternation about the future of their chosen profession. After all, we hear negative prognostications even in the best of times, and we often face a misinformed attitude that would hold that (as Norfolk's *Virginian-Pilot* wrote earlier this year) "In lean times, slashing money for the arts is the right call."

The stronger argument, however, is that the arts play a crucial role in America's national and local economies. The facts are well-established, and have been discussed in these pages frequently in the past few years. The non-profit arts and culture industry in America accounts for over \$166 billion in economic activity every year and provides over 5.7 million jobs. Every dollar that government invests in the arts returns seven dollars to the community.

ICSOM has long sought out partners that could help us spread the message that donating to the arts is not just a gift, it is a tangible investment in the communities where our citizens live, our children learn, and our companies do business. At this time of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to invest in the arts so that our cultural institutions can fulfill their potential to strengthen the economic health of our cities.

At the 2007 ICSOM Conference in Minneapolis, the delegates passed a resolution regarding the establishment of a national campaign to increase the public's awareness and interest in classical music. Over the past few years, we have discussed such a campaign with many entities, but we were never successful in generating interest. While the cost of such an endeavor has frequently been cited as insurmountable, it is also true that negativity is so ingrained in our culture that not everyone in our field shares ICSOM's desire to spread a positive message about our future.

I found the lack of interest in pursuing such a national arts advocacy campaign to be very frustrating and disheartening. After all, many industries have elevated their profile quite successfully by understanding the media in a richer way. The slogan "pork...the other white meat" is now part of the national consciousness. While those of us from the South might find it surprising that pork needs promoting, apparently it does. Nationally, the campaign to promote the business of pork producers was a huge success and a great investment. Other businesses have also recognized this need ("The Coffee Achievers", "Got Milk?", etc.)

The orchestral industry has long seemed behind the times when it comes to understanding the media. The field allows a negative spin to dominate, sometimes through reports commissioned from within. Managers constantly express a desire to produce media for less compensation, yet social networking websites that offer free access

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International Conference of Symphony & 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
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
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President's Report by Brian Rood



The 2008 ICSOM Conference, held in San Francisco this past August, provided an ideal opportunity to meet with delegates and to learn from our many presenters about important issues that affect ICSOM musicians and their orchestras. Special thanks go to President David Schoenbrun and AFM Local 6 (San Francisco), ICSOM Delegates Thalia Moore, Leslie Ludena, Cathy Payne, alternate delegate Steven D'Amico, and Conference Coordinator Brian Lee for their terrific work and warm hospitality.

Of particular interest was the keynote address/presentation given by Randy Cohen, vice president of Americans for the Arts (AFTA). Mr. Cohen spoke passionately about his organization's efforts to reach out across the nation trumpeting the tremendous positive economic impact and cultural value of the arts. Mr. Cohen showed several creative examples of materials designed to promote arts advocacy that were produced by AFTA for use by the Ad Council and other media outlets. ICSOM has long sought to partner with a national organization that would advocate for symphony orchestras and the arts in general. Now, ICSOM has found a willing partner in AFTA. Not only delegates, but all ICSOM musicians are encouraged to learn more about AFTA's advocacy campaigns and how we can strengthen the ties between our orchestras and communities. A laudable goal would be for each and every community to believe that *its* orchestra is essential to their own local quality of life and ultimately indispensable.

Over the past several years, a key priority for ICSOM has been to counter the negative "gloom and doom" generated by the press, a few orchestra boards, and even other arts organizations. Nowhere have the effects of this negative rhetoric been more visible and damaging than in Columbus and Shreveport.

Earlier this year Stanford Professor Robert Flanagan published his "findings" about professional orchestra budgets and musicians' compensation. Observations regarding this report have been written by ICSOM's chair, president, and secretary, and may be found in the March and July issues of *Senza Sordino*. As is the case with all issues of *Senza Sordino*, these are also available online at www.icsom.org/senzarchive.html.

In the June issue of *Senza* I posed the following question: "Who will be the first management and/or board to use the Flanagan Report against their own musicians during negotiations?" Some industry management leaders immediately expressed skepticism for and annoyance with my question.

Yet the Flanagan Report found its way onto the website home pages of orchestras in both Columbus and Shreveport just weeks after its release. In both cases, there was a clear effort to justify board/management positions that musicians' compensation, complements, and contract length needed to be radically and impetuously reduced.

How many more orchestra tragedies will it take before orchestra industry leadership truly recognizes and takes responsibility for the harmful consequences of issuing such reports? Musicians often hear business analogies when we participate in discussions concerning our orchestras. How many businesses succeed by commissioning and then circulating reports designed to display negative aspects of the very business they aim to promote, let alone using incomplete and flawed data? Would not our collective energies be better spent working to build stronger relationships nationally and within our own communities? ICSOM welcomes the opportunity to work together with AFTA and others who wish to genuinely support and promote the exceptional economic and cultural value our orchestras provide.

On a related note, ICSOM Secretary Ross and I enjoyed participating in a unique strategic planning retreat hosted by AFM Local 7 (Orange County, California) and members of the Pacific Symphony Players Association. Following the conclusion of the ICSOM Conference, Laura and I flew to Orange County where we were joined by SSD Negotiator Chris Durham and ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum. The Pacific Symphony Players Association and AFM Local 7 are now jointly studying the Pacific Symphony's current service and schedule structure to better understand what the musicians might envision for their future. They are to be commended for being so proactive with negotiations that are several years away as to allow thoughtful strategic planning before the normal crisis mode generally associated with contract negotiations hits. As a side note, this meeting might well have been the first of its kind involving an AFM local, a players' committee, and representatives from SSD, ROPA, and ICSOM.

In early September, ICSOM Chair Ridge and I traveled to the Eastman School of Music for a discussion about Polyphonic.org. Along with committee chairs from several ICSOM orchestras and others, we provided feedback to Polyphonic staff members regarding the impact of the Polyphonic.org website. We agreed that Polyphonic continues to provide a valuable and interesting resource to symphonic musicians, to aspiring musicians still in school, and to others interested in the various aspects of a musician's life.

Finally, I would like to express my utmost admiration of and appreciation to our colleagues in the Columbus Symphony Orchestra for their steadfast resolve and solidarity. Together with Local 103 and its president, Doug Fisher, and with the support of their lead negotiator Len Leibowitz (our own Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel), they stood together under the direst of circumstances at great emotional stress and financial personal sacrifice. I am equally proud of the tremendous outpouring of support that came not only from ICSOM musicians but also many other AFM musicians and friends, including Jaap Van Zweeden, the music director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. We all hope that the Columbus community will nurture the CSO board and management in order to make the changes needed to ensure the survival and continued growth of one of their greatest assets, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

Chairperson

(continued from page 2)

to a desired demographic are under-utilized by all but a handful of our orchestras.

One day about 18 months ago, I was reading a national news magazine when I saw a full-page ad with the caption: "Art. Ask for More." It was a clever and eye-catching ad promoting the need for arts education in schools. This was a very exciting discovery for me. Here, in a prominent publication, was an example of a media savvy national advocacy campaign. I saw that it was produced by Americans for the Arts, and I immediately sought them out for more information.

Americans for the Arts (AFTA) is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With 45 years of service, AFTA is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

We believe that we have found the partner we need to spread the message that the arts are crucial to the growth of our communities. In fact, our new friends are the ones responsible for undertaking much of the research that has revealed the facts that the arts are an economically sound investment. The AFTA study, *Arts and Economic Prosperity III*, was released in May of 2007. Here at last is an organization dedicated to the cause of arts education, dedicated to promoting the value of the arts in our society, and astute enough to understand the need to work within the political framework to accomplish their goals.

At this year's ICSOM Conference in San Francisco, we were pleased to welcome Mr. Randy Cohen, Vice President of Policy and Research for AFTA. Mr. Cohen is responsible for much of the great research that went in to producing *Arts and Economic Prosperity III*. Mr. Cohen entertained and inspired the delegates by citing indisputable facts that demonstrated the value of the arts in every city across America.

In this edition of *Senza Sordino*, Mr. Cohen has written a fascinating article that speaks to all of the issues of concern that symphonic musicians face in this economy, and how the arts strengthen education and our nation's economy. It is a message that AFTA is working hard to spread, and they continue to develop their national advocacy campaign through new radio and television ads, some of which can be found at

www.AmericansForTheArts.org/public_awareness

The musicians of ICSOM need the Americans for the Arts, but AFTA also needs us. We encourage all of our members to visit the website for the Americans for the Arts at www.artsusa.org or at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

As part of our exciting new relationship with AFTA, we will soon be able to provide free membership in AFTA's "Arts Action Fund". As described on the AFTA website, "*Members of the Arts Action Fund want the arts to be within the grasp of all Americans. Your*



Photo by Laura Ross

Keynote speaker Randy Cohen (right) and ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge at the ICSOM Conference in San Francisco.

membership helps to advance the arts both locally and nationally by supporting pro-arts candidates and giving the arts a voice."

In the coming weeks, you will be receiving information from ICSOM on how you might join the AFTA's Arts Action Fund. We urge you all to consider joining.

We have long recognized that for the arts to survive and flourish, musicians must be activists as well as performers. The current climate of economic distress and negativity requires a renewed activism on the part of every artist.

Throughout the years, ICSOM has been one of the most active and successful advocacy groups around. Now is the time for ICSOM to take the next step and collaborate with a national, non-partisan organization that astutely understands how to use the media and the political system to advocate for the future of the arts in America. We are all excited at the prospect of this relationship. Please speak with your ICSOM delegate and ask for a report on the presentation that Mr. Cohen made at the most recent conference on AFTA.

There is no doubt that this is a critical time for the economy of the United States and the world. There is also no doubt that the arts can play a crucial role in the economic recovery that lies ahead. This is a message that our boards, our managements, and our communities need to hear. Let's get the word out by working with our new friends and partners at the Americans for the Arts.

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.

Conference

(continued from page 1)

Gary Matts (Chicago Local 10-208 president), and Bill Foster (rank-and-file trustee from the National Symphony) in attendance.

The afternoon sessions included a discussion about the pros and cons of incorporating player associations with San Francisco tax attorney Jim Wesser and observations by Len Leibowitz about the various orchestra bylaws submitted prior to the Conference. A CD of the collected bylaws was distributed to each delegate. The afternoon ended with player conference reports from ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, OCSM President Francine Schutzman and RMA President Phil Ayling. Breakout sessions on education, electronic media, health insurance and organizing between negotiations followed in the evening.

Once again the closed town hall meeting for delegates and ICSOM officers on Friday morning was too brief to discuss all of the multiple topics of interest. There have been calls to expand this part of the agenda. In the afternoon, SSD negotiators Chris Durham and Nathan Kahn and SSD Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark spoke about their activities this past season. San Francisco Symphony General Manager John Kieser then spoke about the orchestra's successful education program, *Keeping Score*, and he included a few clips of programs that focused on Beethoven and Stravinsky. Ron Gallman of the San Francisco Symphony and Leni Boorstin of the Los Angeles Philharmonic spoke about their educational programs—San Francisco's *Adventures in Music* and LA's new Youth Orchestra LA. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to a mock-arbitration session in which six groups served as either arbitrators, union or management representatives, or witnesses, and each group held an arbitration by presenting evidence, questioning witnesses, making opening and closing arguments, and putting the decision into the hands of each set of arbitrators to make their decisions independently.

The final day of the Conference included member-at-large candidate speeches, elections, an updated AFM Diversity Committee report by Lovie Smith-Wright (interim chair of the committee), and voting on

(continued on page 14—see CONFERENCE)



Photo by Laura Ross

Three past *Senza Sordino* editors join the current one for a photo. From left: Tom Hall (Chicago, retired), Sam Denov (Chicago, retired), Robert Levine (Milwaukee), Richard Levine (San Diego).

Orchestra Newslets

The **North Carolina Symphony** began its season with an outdoor Labor Day concert broadcast on local television. The September schedule included a celebration of Raleigh's new convention center, with the premier of a composition by Robert Ward titled "City of Oaks". Delegate Beth Lunsford reports that the orchestra will record Medtner's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Yevgeny Sudbin as soloist in November. The CD is being produced by BIS Records and will also include Rachmaninov's Concerto No. 3, recorded last season.

Christoph Eschenbach will become music director designate of the **National Symphony** for the 2009–2010 season, concluding a search process that delegate Truman Harris says began about three years ago. Beginning in the fall of 2010, Eschenbach will start a four-year contract as music director.

According to former delegate Brian Ventura, the **Detroit Symphony** has completed an intensive long range strategic planning process. Their season began with Leonard Slatkin officially on board as the new music director. Mr. Slatkin (he insists that the musicians *not* call him Maestro) was in Detroit on the second day of the season to meet with the orchestra and will conduct five subscription weeks this season, beginning in December. He is involved in planning future seasons and is taking an active role in fundraising—especially important in the difficult Michigan economy. The orchestra is also beginning the Honda "Power of Dreams" teaching program, which will supplement the DSO's extensive education program that already includes seven youth orchestra, string, and jazz ensembles.



Photo by Alan Valentine

When Schermerhorn Symphony Center opened in 2006, the **Nashville Symphony** began a tradition of hosting receptions for visiting orchestras, allowing musicians from both orchestras to meet each other and, in some cases, renew friendships. The **San Francisco Symphony** was their latest visitor, on September 28, 2008. From left to right: Bradley Mansell (NSO), Cathy Payne (SFS), Laura Ross (NSO), and Linda Lukas (SFS).

The Arts: Strengthening Education and the Nation's Economy

by Randy Cohen, Vice President of Policy and Research at Americans for the Arts



Pick up any newspaper this week and you will read about the sagging U.S. economy—recession, inflation, the sinking value of the dollar. You will also see hand-wringing articles about America's global competitiveness and creativity—how businesses as diverse as Apple and Proctor & Gamble thrive because of it, and how we'll lose our international market share

without it. In today's 21st century global economy, the competitive business edge belongs to innovators—those providing creative solutions that prosper in the marketplace. Leaders in business, government, and education are getting savvy to what those in the arts have long known: To fuel creativity and innovation, you need to invest in the arts.

Creativity: Integral to Innovation

New research by business scholars demonstrates a greater understanding that creativity is at the leading edge of innovation. In the 2006 report, *Are They Really Ready to Work?*—prepared by The Conference Board for its Fortune 1000 business constituency—U.S. employers point to “creativity and innovation” as one of the top skills needed by new hires to succeed in the workplace. The applied skills that support innovation, such as critical thinking, communications, and problem-solving—all skills commonly acquired in a quality arts education—were, in fact, considered more important than the traditional skills of basic reading, writing, and math. These business leaders further stated that the importance of creativity and innovation would only increase in the future. Putting voice to these findings, Conference Board CEO Jonathan Spector offered the following testimony to Congress: “Innovation, creativity, and related skills such as entrepreneurship are clearly a top concern of senior executives....As innovation is crucial to competition, so is creativity integral to innovation.”

Arts: Integral to Creativity

So crucial were these findings, The Conference Board partnered with Americans for the Arts and the Americans Association of School Administrators (representing the nation's 14,000 school superintendents) to study this issue in greater detail. Those closest to high-school graduates (public school superintendents) and those close to the workforce entrants these graduates become (employers) were surveyed to identify and compare their views surrounding creativity. The first product of this important new strategic alliance is the 2008 report, *Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?* The study makes clear that both business and school leaders are virtually unanimous in rating creativity as increasingly important in U.S. workplaces (97 percent and 99 percent, respectively). The report, however, brings to light both provocative insights and remarkable disconnects between what business and education leaders value versus their actions.

Seventy-two percent of employers say creativity is of “primary concern” when hiring new employees. Yet, 85 percent of this group can't find the applicants they seek. How to find such workers? Both superintendents and employers agree that an “arts degree” is among the most important indicators of creativity when hiring. School superintendents rank the *arts degree* study as the highest indicator of creativity. Employers rank an *arts degree* and *self-employed work* as the top two indicators of creativity, in almost identical proportions. Very few employers test for creativity in the hiring process; a noteworthy 27 percent said they use the candidate's appearance to assess creative ability.

The Value-Action Disconnect

While it is heartening that most respondents feel a responsibility for instilling creativity in the workforce (83 percent of superintendents and 61 percent of employers), researchers found that this sense of duty is not matched by their current offerings: not in the schools, and not in the workplace. Fewer than 1 in 10 companies provide any kind of creativity training options to all their employees; in over half the companies, it is not offered at all. Students in the nation's high schools don't fare much better. Despite findings that the arts play a key role in developing creativity, most high schools offer arts classes on an elective basis only. Creative writing is the sole required course in more than half the districts. Less than 1 in 5 require a music class.

A Role for the Arts

In sharing these data with school superintendents, we hear genuine enthusiasm about the business community's growing understanding of “arts-creativity-innovation” connection. Yet, they express concern that it is these same business leaders who lean on them to cut the arts in order to balance their school budgets. This effect of killing the goose laying the golden eggs is not news to most in the arts community. There are, however, bright spots that provide arts advocates a foothold to make change.

New jobs are being created, such as “Creative Workforce Director” at Big Thought, a Dallas based organization advancing arts education, or the newly created position of “Creative Economy Director” for the State of Massachusetts, as part of a statewide economic development strategy.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has long included arts classes among its requirements for engineering students—understanding that anyone can train an engineer, but it takes a creative one to arrive at innovative solutions and to make quantum leaps in knowledge. Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable—a convening of 35 national leaders in business, higher education, philanthropy, and the arts—came to a similar



conclusion at its Sundance Preserve convening in October 2007 when it coined the 21st century prescription to America's economic ills: *Knowledge + Creativity = A Competitive Edge*.

Wisconsin's Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton (a member of the 2007 Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable) and State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster co-chair the newly formed *Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education*, established to ensure that the state has the creative workforce and entrepreneurial talent necessary to compete in the new economy. "Creativity and innovation will be the cornerstone of Wisconsin competitiveness in the years ahead," Lawton said. "We must make strategic investments now to ensure Wisconsin has the bright innovators and entrepreneurs we need to drive our state forward."

There is overwhelming agreement among business and education leaders that creativity is an applied skill necessary to succeed in the workforce—the fuel that drives innovation. The task that remains for the arts community is to connect the dots for business, education, and community leaders to help them understand that an investment in arts education is an investment in our economic prosperity.

Improving upon the Status Quo

Musicians are essential to making change. They are our artists, teachers, and advocates. What are the first steps to doing this?

Become the "Messenger." Give your colleagues, school administrators, community leaders the information they need to make the case at school board meetings, in curriculum planning, or talking with parents.

Get the factoids placed into your programs:

- An overwhelming 93% of Americans agree the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education, according to the 2005 Harris Poll commissioned by Americans for the Arts.
- The arts feed the brain. The Dana Foundation findings from a three-year, coordinated, multi-university study by cognitive neuroscientists show strong links between music, dance, and drama education and cognitive development. Their findings provide evidence that children motivated in the arts develop attention skills and memory retrieval that also apply to other subject areas.
- The fact is: arts education makes a tremendous impact on the developmental growth of every child and helps "level the learning field" across socio-economic boundaries. Art also has proven to make a measurable impact on at-risk youth by deterring delinquent behavior and truancy problems while also increasing overall academic performance. In addition, arts education strengthens student problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, adding to overall academic achievement and school success.
- The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity, and supports 5.7 million arts jobs in the U.S.

Take Action Yourself. Visit the Americans for the Arts e-advocacy center. Two minutes is all it takes to tell Congress you support the arts and art education. Add your voice to the chorus to ensure that every American has the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in all forms of the arts.



Randy Cohen, Vice President of Policy and Research at Americans for the Arts (AFTA), has developed the knowledge tools used to advance the arts in America since 1991. Randy produced the two benchmark economic studies of the U.S. arts industry—Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts, a research and mapping study of the nation's arts businesses using Dun & Bradstreet data; and Arts & Economic Prosperity, the most comprehensive economic impact study of nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences ever conducted. In 2006, he launched the National Arts Policy Roundtable in partnership with Robert Redford and the Sundance Preserve, a convening of national leaders who focus on issues critical to the advancement of American culture. Randy developed the Institute for Community Development and the Arts, which included working with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to create Coming Up Taller, the White House report documenting 225 arts programs for youth-at-risk, and with the U.S. Department of Justice to produce the YouthARTS Project, the first national study to statistically document the impact of arts programs on at-risk youth. As a spokesman for Americans for the Arts, Randy has given speeches in 48 states and regularly appears in the news media—including the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and on CNN and NPR. Randy's background includes working as a policy and planning specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts, founding the San Diego Theatre for Young Audiences and serving as its managing director, and working in medical research for Stanford University and Scripps Clinic. He is a board member of the Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance and Takoma Park Arts & Humanities Commission. Randy lives with his wife and two children in Takoma Park, Maryland.



Visit Americans for the Arts at www.americansforthearts.org or at www.artsusa.org. The nonprofit's website is a veritable treasure chest of research, information, news, and advocacy.

Settlement Stories

Utah Symphony—Negotiations and Settlement Update by Gary Ofenloch and George Brown

How does an orchestra's negotiating committee approach asking management for an extra raise (over and above the CBA guarantee) when the orchestra is facing not only a heavy debt burden but also a residual power vacuum at the top of its administration? The Utah Symphony musicians faced just such a dilemma this year when considering asking management to re-open our previously ratified 2007 contract for a base salary increase. This spring, the administration had just installed a new CEO, marketing, and operations directors, and was still in the middle of a music director search. In addition, an adventurous capital campaign had previously been put on hold owing to the startlingly sudden departure of our CEO just prior to the 2007 contract negotiations, leaving the orchestra essentially rudderless.

In spite of these extenuating circumstances, many aspects of the original 2007 contract talks went incredibly smoothly. In fact, *every* issue outside of base salary was negotiated with nary a hint of rancor. Many issues were resolved with neither attorney at the table (netting cost savings to both sides). In these talks, the musicians saw marked improvements in per diem, pension contributions and seniority pay, as well as in working conditions such as scheduling. We also held onto our health care coverage as it was—at 100%.

However, even with these many successful resolutions, base pay remained a huge hurdle, even to the point of putting the orchestra at risk of a work stoppage. Here, the musicians' attorney, Joseph Hatch, proved extremely invaluable. When the players' committee faced acquiescing to a smaller pay increase than they felt the musicians would accept, Joe successfully negotiated a clause giving the players the ability to re-open contract talks for base pay (only) the following summer for both years two and three of the contract. Mr. Hatch's insertion of that clause may, indeed, have prevented last year's negotiations from hitting a complete impasse. It also provided the recipe for a most interesting summer for our committee, for management, and for newly installed CEO Melia Tourangeau.

One of the stated goals of Keith Lockhart upon his arrival in 1998 was to make the Utah Symphony a destination orchestra—an orchestra that would be capable of both attracting and *retaining* great talent at all levels of the organization. A few years ago, the board even adopted the notion of "destination orchestra" as an integral part of its mission statement.

In the wake of 9/11, arts organizations nationwide took a long hit until the nation began to shake-off its collective malaise. The Utah Symphony was no different. As a result, by 1997 the players went into negotiations reeling from a four-year salary freeze, irrespective of walloping cost of living increases during that time. And in spite of the board's stated intention of attracting and retaining great talent, our newer players were more active than ever in auditioning *out* of Salt Lake. Furthermore, fewer auditionees were coming to town than in earlier years when our contract was more

Columbus Symphony Lockout Ends by Bruce Ridge, ICSOM Chair

On September 22, the musicians of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO) ratified a three-year contract, bringing an end to one of the most egregious lockouts in the history of American orchestras. While the contract contains many concessions, management's initial proposal to eliminate 22 full-time positions was ultimately withdrawn, and the number of musicians will remain at 53.

The length of the season is greatly reduced, from 46 weeks to 31 weeks in the first year, and 38 weeks in the following years. Base salary decreases from \$55,000 to \$34,400 in year one, and rises to \$45,000 in year three. Pension contributions are also cut, from 8.5% to 4.0%.

On July 23, the Board of the CSO cancelled the season through November, and despite this settlement, the musicians will remain out of work until that time. By then, the span of this lockout will have reached six months. During this period, the citizens of this country's 15th largest city were deprived of their orchestra, but the musicians continued with their mission of community service by staging numerous benefit concerts.

It is exciting news that the CSO will be performing again for their audiences, but there are still difficult times ahead until the resumption of their season. Musicians everywhere hope that the CSO will gain the management and board leadership that such a great orchestra deserves. With innovative and committed management, there is no reason that the CSO should not grow, and hopefully the damage done by the current board leadership will be corrected in the years to come.

The ICSOM Governing Board wishes to thank every musician who made a donation in response to our *Call to Action* which we issued in June. An unprecedented amount of money was raised to assist the Columbus musicians in their cause, and the generosity of ICSOM members and the greater musical community of North America has been inspiring to us all. With each *Call to Action* issued by ICSOM, the response grows stronger. We also wish to thank the AFM Strike Fund Trustees who worked to ensure that the locked out musicians would receive the maximum benefits allowable under the bylaws.

We all hope that the future will be much brighter for the great musicians of the Columbus Symphony.

competitive. Fortunately, our board saw the potential danger in this, saw that we weren't keeping up with our peer orchestras, and so didn't balk when our committee requested a re-opening of the contract. Nevertheless, negotiations with management, concurrent

with new CEO, Melia Tourangeau's first weeks here, were intense. Ultimately, both sides agreed to a proposed 5% salary increase next year (2009–2010, a bump from the previously negotiated 2%), which Ms. Tourangeau felt she could take to her executive committee.

Of course, it helped that some individual members of the board came forward with donations earmarked specifically for player salary raises. Obviously, this supported Tourangeau and COO David Green, who advocated strongly and effectively for our raises. But this also may not have been possible without several years of orchestra committee members being active, voting members of the board. This arrangement forged new relationships between the two sides and snowballed as more players and board members got to know one another over time. The increased individual contact seemed to humanize the process this year, bringing both sides to a better understanding of each others' positions, and supporting a growing sense of trust all around. As a result, the mindset of the board this summer—and of our board president, Pat Richards—was supportive of the idea of a raise. Not only did they believe in the musicians, they knew what they finally had to do to truly adhere to their own mission statement.

So, how did a negotiating committee approach asking for a kicker in their raises when their orchestra was in such a strange and precarious position? In this case, it started with presenting management with a viable proposal; but more importantly, both sides were able to approach the talks from the perspective of partners, not adversaries. Finally, the leadership of Board President Pat Richards was also powerful and instrumental in advocating for the players to the board. As a result, we emerged from talks with support from the highest level of management as well as with a board that cares about the players and about its mission. And we emerged with that kicker to our raises.

National Symphony Ratifies New Four-Year Agreement *By Truman Harris, ICSOM Delegate*

The National Symphony Orchestra Committee (William Foster, chair; Mark Evans; Glenn Garlick; Peter Haase; Jennifer Mondie) negotiated a four-year contract that was ratified by musicians on Labor Day. Annual salary will move from \$107,198 (2007–2008) to \$128,568 (2011–2012), a nearly 20% gain. Weekly scale will rise from \$2,077 to \$2,504 in the fourth year; seniority will increase by the same percentage, bringing the weekly minimum for a player with 20 years of service to \$2,913. Effective June 5, 2012, contributions to the AFM-EPP will increase from the current 8% rate to 8.75% of scale plus seniority wages.

Other improvements include a new 20-minute intermission for a 2½ hour rehearsal, increased from the previous 15-minute interval, and an increase in meal per diem, rising incrementally from \$90 to \$98 in September 2011.

Baltimore Musicians Have New Three-Year Agreement *by Mary Plaine, BSO Union Steward and ICSOM Delegate*

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra musicians started their August hiatus secure in the knowledge that when their contract expired following the gala performance on September 13, 2008, there was already a new three-year agreement in place through September 11, 2011. The contract was ratified by the musicians on August 1 and agreed to by the BSO's board of trustees on August 4. The new agreement contains increases in minimum weekly scale in each of the three years, with scale becoming \$1,560 in the first year (was \$1,500 including a \$40 per week EMG), \$1,640 in the second year, and \$1,731 in the third year. The EMG included in these weekly scale figures is \$50 in the first year and \$40 in the second and third years. The annual salary in the final year of the contract will be \$90,012, up from \$78,000 at the end of the previous contract.

The negotiating committee successfully fought off attempts by the employer to reduce payments to substitute and extra musicians. Their per-service pay will remain at 1/8 of the minimum weekly scale minus the EMG amount.

An important gain for musicians was the agreement to restore the full-time complement of musicians to the traditional 96 players plus two librarians by the expiration of this new contract. In recent contracts, musicians had agreed to keep open a number of vacancies to save the institution on expenses.

The new agreement, which went into effect on September 14, 2008, contains improvements to other areas as well, including vacation and other time off, working conditions, and severance pay. Contributions to the AFM-Employer Pension Fund in the first year will remain at 5%, increasing to 5.5% in the second year and 6% in the third year. These increases will also cover the subs and extra musicians.

Oregon Symphony Settles Amicably with Mediation *By Dolores D'Aigle, ICSOM Delegate*

The Oregon Symphony has ratified a two-year contract. This is the first time in several years that a new contract was settled "on time." The musicians appreciated management's straightforward, efficient discussions.

With the musical leadership of Carlos Kalmar and the management leadership of Elaine Calder, the orchestra has made dramatic progress in recent years in artistic standards, donor support, and ticket sales. However the standard of living for musicians has steadily eroded since 2003, and the orchestra size has diminished from 88 to 76 players.

For this contract, musicians were unsuccessful in restoring the orchestra size, but with the help of federal mediation, a wage settlement was reached of a 5% increase for the 2008–2009 season and

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Settlements

(continued from page 9)

cost of living increase (CPI-U.S. City Average) for the 2009–2010 season. During this negotiation, our musicians acknowledged the financial difficulties of the orchestra, and our management/board were committed to finding a way to preserve the progress and quality of the institution.

Local 99 officers Ken Shirk and Bruce Fife were invaluable throughout the process.

Honolulu Symphony Settles Before Season Starts *by Steve Flanter, ICSOM Delegate*

On September 3, just 15 minutes before the beginning of the first rehearsal of the 2008–2009 season, the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony completed negotiations of a three-year contract. The new master agreement includes a wage freeze for the first year, followed by increases of 5% and 7% for the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 seasons, respectively. The agreement provides for increases in per diem, and a change in the way seniority pay is calculated (formerly a specified dollar amount, it will now be a percentage of weekly scale). It also includes a contract re-opener for the 2009–2010 season for working conditions and other non-wage issues.

Washington National Opera Orchestra *by Peter de Boor, ICSOM Delegate*

On August 26, the Washington National Opera Orchestra (Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra) ratified a three-year agreement with Opera management. Negotiations had been generally cordial since starting in late May but seemed in July to have ground to a halt. With contract expiration and the beginning of the new season both approaching in early September, both sides agreed to meet one last time.

The Opera has been operating in deficit for many years, and the accumulated deficit is approaching \$12 million. In the face of this, management proposed an agreement in which each year became successively worse for the orchestra, with shrinking annual and weekly work guarantees, a reduction in the third year in the number of productions (for the foreseeable future) and even a reduction (by attrition) in the orchestra's complement. Yet, they were proceeding apace with their plans to produce the company's first-ever *Ring* cycle, in the fall of the second year.

The Opera is both blessed and cursed with a long-term lease of the Kennedy Center Opera House for 26 weeks of each year in the heart of the performing season. Certainly this is prime local arts real estate, but it comes at a high fixed cost (as they reported to us across the

table). On the other hand, the Opera's lease has repeatedly been put forward by the Kennedy Center as the main reason that they were not able to put on more weeks of ballet (which forms the bulk of our income from the Kennedy Center).

While the negotiating committee (aided by DILC Lenny Leibowitz) recognized our inability to force the Opera to produce more than it was able, we felt it was imperative for management to shrink the season in calendar time as well as work time. Not only would it allow our members to try to find other freelance work in the area, it would allow the Opera to give up time in the hall, so that the Kennedy Center had a chance to present other work for us.

When we arrived for the final day of negotiations, the Opera presented us with a detailed proposed schedule for the third year, showing a reduction of three weeks in the season. It was clear that management had heard our concerns and was seeking accommodation with us. In the end we accepted a reduction in the weekly guarantee, but only temporarily. We also accepted a large cut in the annual guarantee in terms of hours (though not as large as originally proposed, and we managed a slight increase in the annual guarantee in terms of dollars), and a wage freeze for 18 months (albeit with a sizeable raise in the third year). And the proposed reduction in the complement was dropped completely. Considering the financial realities of the company, we feel it is an excellent contract.

Pittsburgh Symphony *by Joe Rounds, Orchestra Committee Chair*

The Pittsburgh Symphony is pleased to announce a three-year trade agreement with its musicians. The rather modest salary and pension increases of 3% per year coupled with many improvements in working conditions received overwhelming support from the membership. Our orchestra has recently faced two concessionary contracts with cuts in pay, third-year snap backs that were re-opened, and a diminished size of the ensemble. In spite of the current financial hardships faced by this country, we restored the number of players, and we did not make any concessions in health care, or in pension.

This contract shows an organization that has regained its footing and core values and is ready to start looking forward. We are relieved to be in position to take responsible, steady steps toward maintaining the stature of this great institution.

Our orchestra committee served with professionalism and enthusiasm, and certainly should have acknowledgement for weathering the storm. We were represented by Micah Howard, Stephanie Tretick, Rhian Kenny, Dennis O'Boyle, David Sogg, Joann Vosburgh, and Joe Rounds as chair. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of attorney Louis Kushner and local union president George Clewer.

Adopted Resolutions of the 2008 ICSOM Conference

Resolution #1—Jan Gippo

Whereas, ICSOM Chairman Emeritus Jan Gippo served ICSOM as its chairperson from 2002 to 2006 and has served his orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, in a number of capacities including Chair of the Musician’s Council, member and Chair of the Negotiating Committee and ICSOM delegate; and

Whereas, While serving ICSOM and the St. Louis Symphony in these various leadership positions, he did so with great ability and enthusiasm; and

Whereas, He also did much to champion the stature and profile of his chosen instrument, the piccolo, by commissioning numerous solo works and leading countless master classes; and

Whereas, After 36 years with the St. Louis Symphony, Jan begins a new phase in his career, his retirement; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference once again express their respect, admiration and gratitude to Jan Gippo for his remarkable body of work on behalf of the members of the St. Louis Symphony, the members of ICSOM, and the flute/piccolo field at large, and wish him every good wish in his future endeavors.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #2—Education Committee

Whereas, Now, more than ever before, the entire ICSOM membership stands at a cultural crossroads, ironically struggling for dollars and concertgoers in a nation that is both wealthy and culturally knowledgeable; and

Whereas, In the firm belief that a healthy symphonic profession can lead to successful orchestras in thriving communities, and to a richer nation; and

Whereas, In acknowledgment of the magnitude of importance, as well as the wealth of information that supports this importance, of arts education and specifically music education, for the ongoing health of our profession; and

Whereas, ICSOM is committed to doing what is in its power to further the cause of music education for artists and audiences alike; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference hereby direct the ICSOM Governing Board to form an ICSOM Education Committee; and, be it further

Resolved, That it will be the responsibility of this Committee, in collaboration with the Governing Board and Delegates, to research education-related topics, and to formulate directives and recommendations for the advancement of education and the well-being of our profession.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #3—Harry Chanson

Whereas, Harry Chanson served as President of Santa Barbara Local 308 for 66 years, beginning in 1942; and

Whereas, In 1952 AFM President James Petrillo appointed Harry to serve as chairman of one of the most important convention committees in the Federation – the AFM Finance Committee; and

Whereas, Harry continued to serve as chairman of the Finance Committee for more than 50 years through the 2007 AFM Convention; and

Whereas, Harry was one of the most respected officers in the AFM, a man whose counsel was sought by countless AFM officers, delegates and members over the years; and

Whereas, The entire Federation mourned his passing in May and celebrated his many contributions to the AFM; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference offer their admiration and condolences to his wife June Gaddis Chanson; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM send a contribution of \$250 to the Harry Chanson Music School Fund in his honor.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #4—James Nickel

Whereas, James Nickel has served ICSOM as member-at-large for the past three years as well as serving as the Dallas Symphony’s ICSOM Delegate; and

Whereas, He served in both these capacities with great enthusiasm and commitment; and

Whereas, While continuing to inspire his colleagues, he managed to raise a family and win a new position in the National Symphony Orchestra; and

Whereas, His new position and his growing family must take precedence as he steps down from his responsibilities on the ICSOM governing board; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference offer their admiration, respect and gratitude to James Nickel for all his work on their behalf and it is hoped that he will one day return to ICSOM in whatever capacity he might be persuaded to accept.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #5—Theresa Naglieri

Whereas, Theresa Naglieri has served the American Federation of Musicians for more than 50 years; and

Whereas, She began her employment as a stenographer-typist on June 24, 1958, two days after she graduated from high school; and

Whereas, Theresa’s talent was recognized early when she was promoted to Executive Secretary, having worked under seven AFM Presidents—Herman D. Kenin, Hal Davis, Victor Funtealba, Martin Emerson, Mark Massagli, Steve Young and Tom Lee; therefore, be it

(continued on page 12—see RESOLUTIONS)

Resolutions

(continued from page 11)

Resolved, that the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference acknowledge Theresa Naglieri's outstanding work for the American Federation of Musicians and offer her their thanks and best wishes for continued success in the future.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #6—Columbus Symphony Orchestra

Whereas, The Columbus Symphony Orchestra, established 57 years ago, has developed into one of the nation's great orchestras; and

Whereas, The Orchestra has served the Central Ohio community with distinction and commitment; and

Whereas, The current Board leadership has embarked on a campaign during this year's collective bargaining negotiations with the Union, to destroy the very foundations of the orchestra's artistic success, including a reduction in season length and other compensation to the musicians, which will surely ensure that its best musicians will be forced to leave the orchestra, and which will substantially inhibit its ability to attract the best available candidates for employment; and

Whereas, The imposition of such reductions and intimidation of musicians of this orchestra will reverberate throughout the field; and

Whereas, The dedication and courage of these musicians to resist these destructive measures deserves the support and admiration of everyone in the industry; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference denounce the actions of the Board of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and express their unconditional support and empathy for the musicians of this great orchestra in their struggle to maintain the level of artistic excellence it has achieved for their sake and the sake of symphony, opera and ballet musicians in the US and Canada.

Submitted by the Governing Board, adopted by unanimous consent



Resolution #7, as amended—Hearing Protection

Whereas, Recent studies suggest that as many as 40 percent of musicians have some form of tinnitus, a disease of the microscopic nerve endings in the inner ear that causes sufferers to hear ringing, buzzing, humming, roaring or chirping sounds in their head; and

Whereas, Prolonged exposure to sounds over 90 decibels is a recognized cause of tinnitus and permanent hearing loss; and

Whereas, The sound produced by some music played by symphony orchestras, and especially that produced by and with visiting Pops artists, can consistently measure over 110 decibels on-stage, which risks hearing damage in as little as fifteen minutes exposure; and

Whereas, The aural health and safety of musicians is of critical importance to their continuing ability to perform and earn their living; and

Whereas, The use of hearing protection such as earplugs and sound shields can reduce the damage done by prolonged exposure to sounds over 90 decibels; therefore, be it

Resolved, That ICSOM work with the League of American Orchestras to encourage research and identify hearing protection that is discreet and effective without negatively affecting musicians' ability to perform at their highest level, encourage orchestra managements to invest in hearing test screenings, as well as the best hearing protection for the musicians in their orchestras, and to encourage musicians to use that hearing protection.

Submitted by Emily Watkins Freudigman (San Antonio) and Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric)



Resolution #8—Shreveport Symphony Orchestra

Whereas, The city of Shreveport, LA is in the midst of an economic boom as a result of the discovery of natural gas reserves in the area; and

Whereas, The city should be proud of its great symphony orchestra; and

Whereas, Despite the fortuitous confluence of these treasures, the Board and Management of the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra (SSO) has nevertheless demanded that the musicians of the SSO accept a seventy-five percent (75%) reduction in their already meager annual income of approximately \$12,000, to approximately \$3,000; and

Whereas, Such a reduction would result in the virtual demise of this marvelous orchestra, as the musicians leave to find other employment which would provide them with a living wage; and

Whereas, Those musicians have steadfastly refused to accept such a result despite the intimidation and economic coercion of the Board and Management; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference deplore the disgraceful treatment of the musicians by the SSO Board and Management and urge that they reconsider their destructive behavior; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Delegates express their support and admiration for the gallant stand of these courageous and talented musicians, and applaud their refusal to give in to these outrageous demands.

Submitted by the Governing Board



Resolution #9, as amended—Flanagan Report and Its Abuse

Whereas, The Mellon Foundation commissioned a study and report of the finances of symphony orchestras; and

Whereas, Professor Robert Flanagan of the Stanford Graduate School of Business was selected to do the study; and

Whereas, The report issued by Professor Flanagan was based on erroneous and incomplete assumptions which resulted in conclusions which were consequently flawed in a number of respects including that the compensation paid to the musicians of U.S. orchestras was a major, if not virtually the sole cause of the financial difficulties of these orchestras; and

Whereas, The conclusions of the report have been denounced by most professionals in the field, including orchestra managers of some of the largest and most prestigious orchestras in the nation; and

Whereas, Despite these denunciations, some managers and board members

have chosen to use these erroneous conclusions to support their demands for reductions in orchestras, as well as severe cuts in musician compensation and working conditions, as evidenced by the boards of the Columbus and Shreveport symphony orchestras; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference decry this deliberate obfuscation of the actual causes of the financial difficulty of some orchestras and urge that the AFM, the League of American Orchestras, and other interested professionals in the field likewise speak out about this disingenuous behavior of those who would continue to use the false conclusions of this report to the detriment of symphony, opera and ballet musicians in North America.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board



Resolution #10—Domestic Partner Benefits

Whereas, Many ICSOM orchestras offer domestic partner benefits with the intention of providing equal benefits for all musicians working under an orchestra’s collective bargaining agreement; and

Whereas, Unlike the case for opposite-sex married spouses, the Internal Revenue Code treats the value of domestic partner benefits as taxable “imputed income” to the employees who receive these benefits; and

Whereas, Contributions by employees toward domestic partner coverage cannot be paid from pre-tax dollars the way that contributions from opposite-sex married employees can; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 2008 ICSOM Conference urges the ICSOM Governing Board to prepare and distribute to all member orchestras relevant information regarding this discrimination in the current federal tax laws affecting orchestras with negotiated domestic partner benefits; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Conference encourages all ICSOM member orchestras to become educated on the inequitable tax implications in their individual states, and to discuss these findings with their managements with the aim to address this situation such that for musicians who enroll their domestic partners under member orchestra’s health insurance plan, the employer will “gross-up” the employee’s salaries to the level where such employees will bear no more tax consequences than married employees who opt to cover their spouses.

Submitted by John Koen (Philadelphia), Leslie Ludena (San Francisco Opera), Mary Plaine (Baltimore), Warren Powell (Florida Orchestra), and Bob Wagner (New Jersey)



Resolution #11—Health Care Consultant/Advisor

Whereas, The topics of health care insurance and other benefits are some of the most important and most costly issues orchestra musicians face both during and between negotiations; and

Whereas, Many negotiation committees have recognized the need to hire independent consultants/advisors to educate and advise the musician representatives in the area of health care insurance and other benefits; and

Whereas, It would be beneficial to many negotiating committees and their musicians to have access to a knowledgeable consultant/advisor in the areas of health care insurance and other benefits, a consultant/advisor who knows

our industry and understands our specific issues; and

Whereas, Such an individual would also be valuable in evaluating an orchestra’s existing benefits coverage and brokers’ fees; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference urge the Governing Board to work with SSD to retain a health care insurance and benefits consultant/advisor to assist orchestras in the education of health insurance options and the preparation of information for bargaining with the employer.

Submitted by Mary Plaine (Baltimore) and Robert Wagner (New Jersey)



Resolution #12—Laura Brownell

Whereas, Laura Brownell has served the American Federation of Musicians for 15 years, first as the head of SSD’s Canadian office and, for the past 4 years, as Assistant to the President and Director of the Symphonic Services Division: and

Whereas, During her career with the AFM, Laura Brownell worked for the interests of North American symphonic musicians with intelligence, passion, and style; and

Whereas, Laura Brownell has accepted a new position with the Society of Energy Professionals, IFPTE Local 160, a union representing electrical power engineers in Ontario; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference express their admiration and thanks for her work on their behalf over the past 15 years, extend to her their congratulations on her new position, and express the hope that she will not lose touch with the symphonic field and will, in the future, find time to be able to continue her involvement with the orchestra industry.

Submitted by David Angus (Rochester) and Christian Woehr (Saint Louis)



Resolution #13—Change in RMA Conference Status

Whereas, The delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference passed a resolution urging “the Recording Musicians Association and the current administration of the AF of M to meet together in a spirit of unity, put aside their differences, and achieve the higher goal of reunification and solidarity for the greater good of all of the members of the AFM and their families”; and

Whereas, The relationship between the RMA and the AFM IEB has continued to deteriorate; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference reiterate their call for dialog and comity between the RMA and the AFM IEB; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2008 ICSOM Conference express their strong opposition to any change in the conference status of the RMA and their wholehearted and continuing support of the efforts of the ICSOM Governing Board to restore comity within the AFM family and maintain the conference status of all currently recognized player conferences.

Submitted by Larry Wolfe (Boston), Brad Mansell (Nashville), Ethan Silverman (New York City Ballet), and John Koen (Philadelphia), adopted by unanimous consent

Conference

(continued from page 5)

the various resolutions presented by the Governing Board and individual delegates. The Saturday member-at-large/delegate luncheon, where orchestras assigned to each member-at-large sit together and discuss issues of mutual interest, was again a Conference highlight. There is always a great deal of interaction among the delegates, and it has been a very positive addition to the Conference.

Since Chairman Bruce Ridge, Treasurer Michael Moore and *Senza Sordino* Editor Richard Levine ran unopposed, they were re-elected by acclamation. Meredith Snow (who was unable to attend the Conference due to a family emergency) and Paul Gunther were re-elected to two-year terms as members-at-large, and Matthew Comerford, who had been appointed to fill the member-at-large position vacated by James Nickel until the Conference, was elected to fill that one-year vacancy.

Resolutions adopted at the Conference included recognition of ICSOM Chairman *Emeritus* Jan Gippo's retirement from the Saint Louis Symphony; establishment of an ICSOM education committee; acknowledgment of the passing of Local 308 President Harry Chanson, along with a contribution of \$250 to

the Harry Chanson Music School Fund; recognition of the service of former member-at-large James Nickel, who recently won a new position in the National Symphony; congratulations to AFM Executive Secretary Theresa Naglieri for 50 years of service and to Laura Brownell who recently stepped down as SSD Director. Other resolutions gave special recognition to the musicians of the Columbus and Shreveport symphonies, and condemned their treatment by their respective boards; denounced the Flanagan Report; called on ICSOM to work with managers to identify and improve orchestra musician hearing protection problems; requested information regarding domestic partner benefits; and recommended that a health care insurance and benefits consultant be identified and retained to assist orchestras. Once again there was a call for unity between the AFM IEB and the RMA. The text of all adopted Conference resolutions can be found starting on page 11 in this issue of *Senza Sordino*.

Next year's ICSOM Conference will be hosted by the Virginia Symphony and Local 125. It is scheduled for August 19–22, 2009 in Norfolk, Virginia. The delegates also approved Houston, Texas as the location of the 2010 ICSOM Conference.

Senza Sordino

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Why Be an AFM Convention Delegate?

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

At the ICSOM Conference this summer, there were a number of conversations about and references to the benefits of sending orchestra members to the AFM Convention as local delegates. I have attended AFM Conventions since 1995, first as a non-voting ROPA representative, and then as a voting delegate for the Nashville Association of Musicians, Local 257. I have also attended the Southern Conference each year since I was elected as one of my local's voting delegates.

As someone who is currently going through the process of re-election to my local's executive board and for another three-year stint as AFM Convention delegate, I thought it would be important to share some information with you. As for what is expected of a Convention delegate, I attend the Southern Conference each year (two days, Saturday and Sunday, in June) as well as the triennial AFM Convention. (This was changed from a two-year to a three-year cycle at the last Convention. The AFM Convention and the Southern Conference are scheduled consecutively, so every three years we're talking Saturday through Wednesday.) The next Convention will be held in Las Vegas during June or July of 2010.

ICSOM orchestras currently have a few orchestra members serving as local officers. In some locals, this is a necessity if orchestra members want to be Convention delegates because the number of local delegates is dependent upon how many members a local has, and most local bylaws dictate that officers, by virtue of their positions, are automatic Convention delegates. If a local has 200 or fewer members, then it is entitled to only one voting delegate at the Convention; between 201 and 400 members, the local gets two delegates; 401–1,500 members garners three delegates; 1,501–3,000 members permits four delegates; 3,001–5,000 gives five delegates; 5,001–8,500 earns six delegates; and more than 8,501 members allows seven delegates (which no local sent in 2007). [Editor's Note: Article 17, Section 4(a), of the AFM bylaws omits the number of delegates allowed a local with exactly 8,501 members.]

This explains, somewhat, the inequity of the voting process when it comes to a voice vote at the Convention—there are far more small

locals. At the 2007 Convention there were 197 locals represented by the 317 delegates in attendance. Sixty-four locals had more than one delegate, but not all locals who were entitled to additional delegates chose that option. (That could be due to the cost to locals of paying expenses for delegates beyond the one delegate per local for which the AFM pays per diem and hotel expenses.) You should check with your local to see how many delegates your local is allowed to send to the next AFM Convention and how many it is planning to send.

I'd like to digress for one minute to say that I believe equal importance should be placed on attending the Locals' Conferences as well. ICSOM has made an effort in the last two years to reach out to all our AFM locals by including local officers (president and secretary-treasurer) on the *Senza Sordino* mailing list. While this publication can inform locals around the U.S. and Canada about those issues we hold most dear, the personal touch is always best. In my case, Nashville belongs to the Southern Conference, which is the largest of the 14 Locals' Conferences (some locals belong to more than one), consisting of approximately 40 locals. At the AFM Convention we all sit together at two tables because it's such a large group. The yearly Locals' Conferences are like an abbreviated version of an ICSOM Conference, with reports from various AFM officers and staff, information from the AFM-EPF (the pension fund) and the MPF (formerly known as the Music Performance Trust Fund), and explanations and demonstrations of new services the AFM provides to its members, new and old. Some conferences have discussion groups and others have workshops, plus there is almost always a dinner or a reception. In the case of the Southern Conference, many officers sit in with the band after dinner and have a jam session. Some musicians I know (this does not apply to orchestra members alone) do not feel it's as important to attend the Locals' Conference as the AFM Convention. I, on the other hand, believe that the opportunity to network and to meet fellow local officers has been invaluable—particularly once you get to the Convention. Over the years I have made a number of important connections and friendships that continue to be beneficial today.

Every AFM Convention is spent dealing with recommendations and resolutions that would change the AFM bylaws; inevitably these include at least one issue of major concern to orchestra musicians. It is hard to express how effective it is when an informed orchestra musician speaks as a voting delegate on the Convention floor. Beginning in 2005, representatives from each of the Player Conferences were given the opportunity to address the delegates from the podium. At that time, I suggested to the then-current ICSOM chairperson,

(continued on page 5—see CONVENTION DELEGATES)

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



Far more frequently than ever before, I find myself turning on the television in the mid-afternoon to monitor the superimposed number that represents the current volatility of the stock market. That number, all too often a three-digit negative figure, is affecting all of our lives as our pensions, 403(b) accounts, and investments incur losses. Just as we all feel the effects of this economic crisis in our personal lives, many non-profit organizations are facing the ramifications of losses in their endowments. A few of these organizations prepared well, and the problem won't affect everyone in the same way.

I do not doubt that we will emerge from this crisis with a recovery that offers great opportunities. It is clear that the arts and our orchestras offer a sound economic investment for our communities and that we can and will play a significant role in that recovery which surely lies ahead.

But, before then, some of us will inevitably face tough decisions as our managements approach us with what they might label as "dire" news. We must be prepared to seek the answers from our managements that will allow us to verify the situation our orchestra might be facing. The news may or may not be as "dire" as it is being presented. And in all cases we should be prepared to offer our managements and boards the information they need to illustrate to our cities how vital we will be in the economic rebound that awaits.

When you are elected to serve on an orchestra committee, you take on many responsibilities for the concerns of your colleagues, as well as some liabilities in terms of the duty of fair representation. What should our orchestra committees be doing to prepare for these difficult times, and how should they be communicating with their colleagues?

1. Seek the information you need from Management.

Your management should be eager to keep you fully informed of their financial situation at all times, but especially during tough economic times. Key information you need can be found in the management generated financial reports, the audited statements, and in the Forms 990. You should have this information over a period of several years in order to identify trends.

2. Keep your colleagues informed.

In times of financial difficulty, it is easy for a sense of panic to set in among members of the orchestra. Nothing panics an orchestra more than a lack of information, which leads to inaccurate speculation that is, by its very nature, ill informed. Frequent meetings of the players' association should be held, allowing for members to ask all of their questions and express their concerns. Remember that it is natural for emotions to run high during difficult times, and some opinions will be expressed strongly. It is important to honor that, and for us all to respect the opinions of our colleagues, even if we feel that respect is not necessarily returned.

(continued on page 4—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)

International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

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

www.icsom.org

Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
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Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
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New York City Ballet Orchestra
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Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
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President's Report

by Brian Rood



It is difficult to ignore the current economy and its potential impact on our orchestras. During periods of such uncertainty, managements may seek to open up current agreements to ask for concessions. Chairperson Ridge's timely and well-written column contains many important points to consider during such discussions. My column is intended to provide additional perspectives.

Like many young men, I was a Boy Scout as a youngster. Their familiar motto is "Be Prepared." I can think of no greater advice for ICSOM musicians and committees during bargaining, especially when concessions are possibly at stake.

Being prepared includes:

- Understanding your orchestra's true financial picture
- Mobilizing the orchestra beyond just the negotiating committee members
- Enlisting the services of your local, SSD, ICSOM, and possible consultants
- Obtaining ICSOM musician support

Learn as much as you can about your orchestra's finances. Be sure to request and study their audited financial statements, IRS Forms 990, and management generated internal financial reports. Request the detailed versions as well as summary views from several years so that you are better equipped to understand the true financial picture. Also request endowment reports from each entity that holds funds for your orchestra's use, especially when not included in the audited financial reports. Part of managements' responsibility to bargain in good faith is to provide negotiating committees with financial materials in a timely manner.

One terrific resource the AFM provides to every ICSOM negotiating committee is to have AFM's independent financial consultant, Ron Bauers, available to conduct an independent third-party analysis of your orchestra's finances. The process is simple. Ask the local to make a written request to the AFM/SSD; Ron will use the necessary materials to complete a thorough review of the orchestra's finances. Also take advantage of the conference call with Ron, which will help explain the report to us neophytes. The AFM and local split the cost of this service with no additional cost to the musicians.

The phrase "information is power" has been an ICSOM cornerstone for decades. During negotiations, the responsibility falls to the committee to keep the full orchestra and the local regularly informed. Naturally, specific details about negotiating strategy and other confidential issues are not to be shared publicly. Holding regular orchestra meetings, though, will help keep the orchestra informed and address the many questions/concerns about this stressful time.

Maintaining a close connection to the musicians helps to build the solidarity needed to weather tough times. Of course, musicians should learn about the progress of negotiations through their committee and not management. Individual musician meetings with management and/or board members often backfire and create division within the orchestra. Whether by intent or not, management and board members all too often pull individual musicians aside either to pump them for information or to make their case away from the table. The best counterattack is to cultivate an atmosphere of open and frequent communication with the bargaining unit and, in return, for musicians to trust their elected committee leaders.

Many an orchestra sends representatives to the board of trustees, board sub-committees, or even the executive committee. Regular communication back to the elected musician committees and full orchestra about the work of these groups should be common course, particularly during negotiations. It is important to remember that any musician who serves on a board or related committee does so as a representative of the full orchestra. How many times have we heard an executive director or board chair assert that musicians must park their "musician hats" at the door when entering a board meeting? This is simply not appropriate and ultimately can be quite problematic for all of the obvious reasons.

One trend to watch closely is the increase in number of orchestras that use an outside consultant to perform institution-wide assessments and feasibility studies. While there may be some benefit to musicians—and that is debatable—issues abound. Consider having the musicians and the local included in the initial discussions of whether to engage such a consultant. If a decision to engage is mutually reached, there is merit to having both parties hire the consultant, not just the management/board. In addition, any interviews and/or working groups in which musicians participate should be meticulously planned. All musician representatives should, of course, be selected by the full orchestra and not simply appointed by management or the board.

Reports about declining and graying audiences continue to find their way into bargaining sessions. Rather than simply accepting these reports as fact, request the specific titles and authors. Research those reports and seek out contrasting information. Question everything. For every gloom and doom report released there is an equally compelling story of success and positive change.

The positive turnaround in ticket sales and attendance for many ICSOM orchestras following the horrific events of 9/11 took creative and energetic leadership as well as concentrated focus within those institutions. In addition, the Baltimore Symphony and the Florida Orchestra recently turned their financial pictures around with the assistance of new and improved leadership that engaged all of the different constituencies: staff, board, musicians, and their communities. A key to each success was that they did not succumb to the "gloom and doom" reports from outside (and even within) our industry.

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

Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 2)

3. Inform your local president and your orchestra's attorney.

Our committees should be as inclusive as possible during a time of financial concern. Decisions might have to be made quickly, and no one should be caught off guard. Your local president has a key interest in the events and must be fully apprised. Your orchestra's attorney can offer guidance and advance interpretation of any relevant contractual clauses that might come in to play. In times of severe crisis, we have seen managements miss payrolls, or even threaten bankruptcy or *force majeure*. The management might want to open the contract mid-term. All of these worst case scenarios have implications for the collective bargaining agreement, and the attorney should be apprised in advance of the potential for difficulties.

Often the management will bring a crisis to the orchestra, with the admonition that we have to act immediately for our survival. At times like this it is wise to remember the words of the late Lew Waldeck, who would advise "If you have to know right now, the answer is no."

While you might not know for certain what will happen, you can anticipate and prepare for a series of likely events. The better prepared that you, your colleagues, your attorney, and your local officers are, the more prudently you can respond.

4. Avail yourself of all resources.

Meet with all of the leaders within your orchestra: past, present and future. Solicit ideas openly. I have found that people can accept if their ideas aren't enacted, but they can never support actions if they feel they weren't allowed a chance to express their thoughts.

A great service available through the AFM is access to a noted CPA with a wealth of experience in analyzing the financial situation of symphony orchestras. Mr. Ron Bauers can be hired through the Symphonic Services Division to offer guidance to you in analyzing the financial

Did You Know?

The nonprofit arts and culture industry in America generates over \$166 billion every year in economic activity and provides 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs. (Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III, *Americans for the Arts*, 2007.)

There is a connection between the arts and civic duty. Half the people who regularly visit art museums, plays, or concerts also do volunteer work—compared with less than 20% of non-attendees. (Source: The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life, *National Endowment for the Arts*, November 2006.)

The percentage of adults attending a classical music performance remained at between 12% and 13% of the adult population between 1982 and 2002. (Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Research Division Report #45, *National Endowment for the Arts*, March 2004.)

In 2006, download sales for classical music grew by 22%. (Source: Newsweek, *September 17, 2007*.)

Every dollar that the government invests in the arts returns seven dollars to the community. (Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III, *Americans for the Arts*, 2007.)

65% percent of American adult travelers schedule a cultural activity while traveling, equaling 92 million cultural tourists. Cultural tourists spend approximately 40% more in their destinations compared to all U.S. travelers. (Source: *Partners in Tourism and Travel Industry Association of America*, 2002.)

The arts generate \$7.9 billion in local tax revenue, \$9.1 billion in state tax revenue, and \$12.6 billion in federal tax revenue. (Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III, *Americans for the Arts*, 2007.)

Classical music accounts for 12% of sales on iTunes. (Source: New York Times, *May 28, 2006*.)

Ticket sale income from orchestra performances grew almost 18%, to \$608 million, between the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 seasons. (Source: Wall Street Journal, *October 3, 2008*.)

Opera attendance is up 40% since 1990. (Source: Doug McClennan, Diacritical, www.artsjournal.com/diacritical, November 21, 2007.)

statements. This service is provided at no cost to the musicians, as the AFM and your local will each pay half of Mr. Bauers' relatively nominal fee.

If our managements are comfortable with their own numbers, then they should welcome the opportunity to have their findings confirmed by such an eminent person as Mr. Bauers. Of course, should they resist then that might be telling as well.

5. Consult with ICSOM.

As soon as possible, inform your ICSOM member-at-large, or call me directly. It is more important than ever for our orchestras to remain in contact so that we may share ideas and analyze trends. In order for ICSOM to prepare to be of assistance, we need to know quickly where our members might be facing problems within their organization.

Despite the current dire forecasts, I remain convinced that we all will successfully weather this economic downturn, and we will emerge with the prospect of an even greater future. We need to be ready to help our managements, boards, political leaders, and audiences understand just how important investment in their orchestras will be for the future economic health of their communities.

To face this difficult time, we have to prepare well and we must utilize all of our resources. We need to be inclusive, and we need to support each other in the most collegial way. At all times we must work to spread the message of hope that ICSOM has articulated and that our orchestras offer.

In times of difficulties, the citizens of the world turn to musicians and other artists for comfort and inspiration. The community service we provide is more important now than ever, and we must remain ever vigilant in promoting our positive message. Let the words of W. H. Auden take on new significance for us:

*The lights must never go out,
The music must always play.*

Convention Delegates

(continued from page 1)

Jan Gippo, that he ask all the delegates who were members of ICSOM, ROPA, or OCSM/OMOSC to stand. Almost 10% of the delegates on the floor stood. That was a great beginning, but we need more voices. I mean that literally—most votes are done by voice vote, and many decisions depend upon who shouts loudest! As major funders of the AFM (through our work dues and membership fees), our members should have a significant voice.

The other day, before Nashville's nominating meeting, one of my executive board colleagues commented that, aside from me, there wasn't much participation by orchestra members at meetings or on the board. I was happy to be able to say that a few of my colleagues did come to some membership meetings (though no one was there that evening—even though we do try to accommodate the symphony schedule). I then explained that many of our musicians served on the orchestra committee, board committees, or other committees, sometimes meeting far more frequently than the local does. While that explanation (along with the comment that being single without a family left me a bit more free time than some others) seemed to placate my fellow board member, it did make me wonder if we all don't become a bit too complacent when we depend upon one person to represent the significant contributions of a whole group.

One voice with authority is great; but when it's backed up by others, it shows that this message has a great deal of support. I've seen this in action at the AFM Convention. Resolutions and recommendations are submitted to the AFM. Once the Convention begins, the various subcommittees (Law, Finance, Measures & Benefits, Good & Welfare, and Organization & Legislation) hear testimony in favor of or against each resolution and recommendation. When the Player Conferences have an issue, fully 10 to 15 people are there to support the representatives who testify. This support sends a very strong message. There have even been times when the Players Conference representatives outnumbered the committee!

What I have not mentioned is that being a voting delegate increases your chance of being assigned to one of these subcommittees, a place where real influence may be had. When the resolutions are reported out, it is these subcommittees that make the recommendations to the Convention delegates—either favorable or unfavorable, with or without amendments—all based upon testimony and discussion within each subcommittee. I have been a member of the Measures & Benefits committee since 2001 and hope to be again (if I'm re-elected and AFM President Tom Lee reappoints me).

I urge all of our members to consider how important participation is in assuring that our views and opinions are heard. However, I also urge participation because there is a great deal you can learn at these Conventions, including about musicians who work without the benefit of tenured positions with guaranteed salaries. Our local freelance colleagues deserve consideration because they too need protection and service from the AFM, and there is no better way to understand this than to participate in your local's meetings, on your local's executive board, and at the AFM Convention. Speak up! Participate!

Please mark your calendars!

2009 ICSOM Conference

August 19–22, 2009

Hosted by:

**The Musicians of the
Virginia Symphony**

and

**Norfolk Musicians' Association,
Local 125, AFM**

Location:

Norfolk Waterside Marriott
235 East Main Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
757-627-4200

All attendees must register with Secretary Laura Ross

Conference packets will be mailed in Spring 2009

Thoughts on Concessionary Bargaining

by Leonard Leibowitz, Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel

The following is a reprint of an article that originally appeared in the February 2003 issue of Senza Sordino under the title "Another Opening, Another Blow." Although some of the facts may no longer be current, the advice is.



In my experience, this is the worst of times. During the last thirty years I have witnessed "troubled orchestras," and even an occasional "lost orchestra," but never to the extent and seriousness we have experienced since just before the turn of the century. Over these last few years we have suffered through fiscal crises in the orchestras of Saint Louis, Houston, Toronto, Phoenix, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Buffalo, Louisville, Colorado Springs, and others. We have heard rumblings of impending difficulties in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and even the mighty Chicago Symphony. It appears that we may have lost the orchestras of San Jose and Tulsa.

Typically, the first sign of trouble is an inquiry I receive from the musicians' committee chair: "Our board (and/or management) has asked us to reopen the contract in order to deal with the accumulated (or projected) budget deficit. If we don't agree, they say they will be forced to file for bankruptcy. What should we do?"

Typically, my answer is: do not agree to reopen—yet. That is, you may (and should) agree to meet with them, listen to their concerns, and ask a lot of questions. "How did this happen?" "What steps have you taken to remedy the situation before coming to us?" "Will you open the books to our accountant?" "What do you want us to do?" And, perhaps most important, "If we agree to some concessions, do you have a plan to prevent this from happening again in the foreseeable future?"

Verification

If you agree to make concessions based upon your collective analysis of the situation, you should be willing to reopen the contract in order to implement the agreed-upon changes only after you have been given satisfactory answers to the following questions:

- Is the situation truly as bad as they describe it?
- Are your own accountants satisfied that they have received all the data they need, and are they convinced that the books reveal that which management alleges?
- Have you gotten an analysis of the books which explains how and why the crisis has occurred?
- Are there steps other than (or at least in addition to) musician concessions which can be taken to rectify the problem? If so, are they willing to take those steps?

- What is the state of the endowment fund? What is the current value? How much of it is restricted? Are the restrictions donor imposed or board imposed? Who controls the fund—the board, or a separate entity created to hold and administer it? What happens to the money in the event the institution dissolves?
- If there is no agreement to reopen, and they choose to file for bankruptcy protection, will it be pursuant to Chapter 7 or Chapter 11?
- And, finally, what is the plan for the future and does it appear to you and your accountants to be viable?

Concessions

If you have agreed, albeit reluctantly, to make concessions, you will have to decide the form that those concessions should take. Some thoughts:

Cut weeks rather than wages. It may be that there is not sufficient demand in your town for as many weeks of work as you would like. Or perhaps your management has been unable to fully exploit the potential demand that really does exist. Not all orchestras have a year-round contract. But whether or not you have achieved a 52-week contract, the more important consideration, in my opinion, is to maintain reasonable and proper compensation for the weeks that you *are* working.

Most of the arguments we make at the bargaining table—cost of living increases, comparisons with similarly situated orchestras, the stress and practice time involved in doing the job properly—are made to persuade our employers of the value of our services and to seek appropriate financial (and other) recognition of that value. Thus it appears to me that agreeing to work for a lower salary is the very last concession that should be made, if ever.

And, of course, cutting weeks allows musicians to find other work during those dark weeks, or to receive unemployment insurance, or perhaps just to take some much-needed rest.

Moreover, if you cut salary but not weeks, the board and the community have lost nothing as a result of the crisis for which they are responsible! That is, they get the same amount of music from you, but you get paid less for it.

Think loans. Before you agree to make concessions which will involve complete loss of income which you will never recover, consider proposing that any financial concessions you make are to be treated as loans from individual musicians, to be paid back at some agreed-upon date or time in the future.

In 1985, the dancers of American Ballet Theatre (ABT) were asked to make concessions due to a fiscal crisis. At the time, their

collective bargaining agreement guaranteed them 36 weeks of work. In response to the crisis, the dancers agreed to reduce the guarantee for the upcoming year to 26 weeks, as a loan to the company. That is, the amount of earnings, including pension contributions, that each dancer lost by the cut of ten weeks was carried on the books of the company as an outstanding debt to each dancer. Since dancers' careers are relatively short, each of those dancers was paid back the full amount of the loan, with interest, as they retired, quit, or otherwise left the employ of ABT. Although the time of repayment may have to be shorter for symphony musicians, the concept is still viable.

Be creative. There are many other possible areas of concession, including those which relate to the easing of certain work rule limitations, which might save management money without actually cutting salary or weeks.

Rehabilitation

The agreement to make concessions should include a plan of rehabilitation and restoration. Indeed, depending on when restoration is made, the plan may also include increases and/or improvements toward the end of the concession period. That is, if the concessions are to occur immediately, you should insist on extending the current collective bargaining agreement by some period of time within which you are returned to the level of compensation you were enjoying before the concessions, and that level of compensation should be improved in accordance with your best estimate of the level at which you would be had there been no concessions. If you fail to provide for such rehabilitation at the time of making the concessions, you will have given up your best opportunity to achieve restoration and improvements.

Having said that, there is, of course, no guarantee that your management will fulfill the terms of the added contract period, but it's better to have a plan in writing than nothing but another negotiation in the future.

Equality of Sacrifice

With the possible exception of some shamefully low-paid staff, everyone else in the organization should suffer losses at least equal to those suffered by the musicians. The reasons for insisting on this condition before making concessions appear to me to be self-evident.

Non-Economic Improvements

There is no better time to achieve improvement in working conditions, job security, and other areas which have little or no economic impact to the board than when you are making the kind of sacrifices mentioned above. With the exception of job security issues, many of these items were probably proposed by the union in earlier negotiations but were dropped along the way when

economics became paramount. Review your contract and your bargaining notes from the recent past and insist that some of those items be part of the deal.

Bankruptcy

If, after all of this, you and your management nevertheless reach impasse and you refuse to reopen the contract, they may file for protection under the Bankruptcy Act. In that case you may need legal assistance, but you ought to be somewhat familiar with some basics.

Under Chapter 11 the institution remains in business under the aegis of a bankruptcy judge, during which time a trustee in bankruptcy, appointed by the judge, attempts to work with the board, management, and a group of creditors ("Creditors' Committee") to agree on a plan of reorganization which will include paying off the creditors (usually in some substantially reduced amount) and continuing in business pursuant to the plan, but without the ongoing oversight of the judge or trustee.

Section 1113 of the Bankruptcy Act describes a procedure for a debtor in Chapter 11 to seek to have the judge set aside the collective bargaining agreement if he or she believes it is onerous and will prevent the debtor from ever achieving solvency. It is a very complicated procedure, but for our purposes it requires that the debtor first attempt to negotiate changes in the contract with the union which are "fair and equitable" to all before applying to the court for rejection of the contract. In the event the collective bargaining agreement *is* set aside, the union has a right to strike, appeal the decision, or both.

Under Chapter 7 the debtor is seeking to dissolve the enterprise. It calls for the gathering of all assets of the organization, liquidating them, paying off the creditors with the proceeds, and going out of business.

My fervent prayer is that for those of you who have not already faced any of this, that all of the above remains irrelevant to you.

Dues Reminder

Dues for member orchestras
should be paid by the end of the year.

Thanks for your cooperation!

Michael Kaiser In Print

A Book Review by Bruce Ridge

Title: *The Art of the Turnaround: Creating and Maintaining Healthy Arts Organizations*

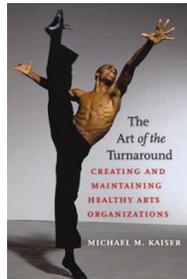
Author: Michael M. Kaiser

Publisher: Brandeis University Press

Publication Date: September 2008

ISBN: 978-1-58465-735-4

Hardcover: 204 pages



The overwhelmingly positive and inspiring message of Michael Kaiser's new book, *The Art of the Turnaround: Creating and Maintaining Healthy Arts Organizations*, might best be summarized in his statement from the penultimate chapter: "...when you do good art and market it well, you will have the funds to support your art..."

Currently president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Mr. Kaiser has earned the sobriquet "the turnaround king" for his success at taking troubled arts organizations from the edge of collapse to new illustrious heights. After success in the business world, he accepted his first appointment as an arts manager with the Kansas City Ballet. He has gone on to manage the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the American Ballet Theater, London's Royal Opera House, and, since 2001, the Kennedy Center. As president of the Kennedy Center his innovations have led to surpluses in every year of his tenure.

I took an unusually long amount of time reading this book. On every page I lingered over some thought-provoking sentence about arts management or the need for institutional marketing. My copy of the book, less than two months old, is dog-eared, underlined, and highlighted. Probably to the annoyance of my colleagues, I found myself reading passages aloud to anyone who would listen.

For everyone who cares about the arts, and especially those of us who seek a deeper understanding of how to manage truly successful arts organizations, this book is required reading.

A meaningful review could be written simply by reciting some of the quotes I underlined:

... threatening bankruptcy is not the way to create fiscal health.

In only the rarest instance is excessive spending the true root of the problems of an arts organization.

The truth is that the usual culprit is the absence of a dynamic marketing program that conveys the excitement of a thriving artistic program.

The world is littered with companies who were sick and raised extraordinary funds to pay off the debt but did not solve the problems that created the debt and fell back into the hole.

... it is easier to raise funds for a visible organization...

Arts organizations must seriously address the lack of arts education in the public schools.

... too many arts organizations were cutting back on programming just at the time they needed to expand.

In his introduction, Mr. Kaiser lays out ten rules for a turnaround. They are all relevant to the message that symphonic musicians and ICSOM has been articulating. Some of these rules are:

- You cannot save your way to health
- Focus on Today and Tomorrow, not yesterday
- Extend your programming planning calendar
- Marketing is more than brochures and advertisements

Every manager, and especially every serious board member, should read this book.

I noticed that upon the release of this book, some press accounts focused on some negative letters Mr. Kaiser received while in London. I found that coverage to be sensationalistic. In reality, the reference is but a brief passage in this book, and not even a momentary distraction from the message.

Mr. Kaiser appeared at the 2003 ICSOM Conference and delivered a brilliant speech which can be found in the October 2003 issue of *Senza Sordino* (available online at www.icsom.org). His ICSOM speech touched upon many of the subjects that he explores in depth throughout this book. Two statements in his speech seem even more relevant today:

While the economy is challenging, many arts organizations are thriving. Those organizations are well managed. Most of the others are not.

By knee-jerk reacting to short-term fiscal problems by drastically cutting artistic programming and marketing, one virtually assures additional reduction of revenue in the future.

As we once again face a period of economic difficulties, the message of Mr. Kaiser's book is perfectly timed. At the 2003 ICSOM Conference, Mr. Kaiser implored that musicians need to better understand "arts management issues" and must "understand balance sheets and income statements and be able to pressure management and boards when they see a developing problem." He added that "[b]y the time the orchestra is in Chapter 11, it is often too late to act."

I can think of no better place for musicians to gain a deeper understanding than through this book. I encourage you all to read it, and I hope you'll be inspired enough to give copies to your manager and board chair.

ICSOM's Partnership with Americans for the Arts

The October issue of *Senza Sordino* featured an article by Randy Cohen, Vice President of Policy and Research for Americans for the Arts, as well as information on Mr. Cohen's presentation at the 2008 ICSOM Conference. A link to Mr. Cohen's PowerPoint presentation can now be found on the ICSOM website at www.icsom.org/conferences/2008.

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With 45 years of service, Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

As part of our exciting new partnership, we are now able to offer Advocate membership in the Americans for the Arts Action Fund at no charge, as a benefit of ICSOM membership. Here's how their website describes it: "Members of the Arts Action Fund want the arts to be within the grasp of all Americans. Your membership helps to advance the arts both locally and nationally by supporting pro-arts candidates and giving the arts a voice."

At this time of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever that the musicians of ICSOM be advocates as well as performers. The work that the Arts Action Fund is doing to communicate a positive message about the future of the arts in America is outstanding, and we are proud to join with them in this cause. You can learn more about Americans for the Arts at www.AmericansForTheArts.org and about the Arts Action Fund at www.ArtsActionFund.org.

Your orchestra's ICSOM delegate should have all of the information you need to join the Arts Action Fund. It is literally as easy as a clicking on a link in an e-mail. Should more information be needed, please ask your delegate to contact a member of the ICSOM Governing Board.

We hope that you all will take advantage of this free benefit offered to ICSOM musicians by joining the Arts Action Fund.

—Bruce Ridge, ICSOM Chairperson



The Americans for the Arts Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit membership organization created by Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. Launched on October 4, 2004, the Arts Action Fund seeks to engage citizens in education and advocacy in support of the arts and arts education.

President's Report

(continued from page 3)

Just this past November 15, the *Houston Chronicle* published an article titled "Investment in Art Pays Off for the Houston Economy." It is truly refreshing to read an article that actually promotes the value of the arts in a community. The article reported that Houston's not-for-profit cultural organizations and their audiences generate over \$626 million annually and support more than 14,000 full-time-equivalent jobs. What a truly powerful message this is for civic and business leaders as well as for Houston residents. One of the authors is Robert Lynch, the president and CEO of Americans for the Arts (AFTA). AFTA is the leading nonprofit arts advocacy organization in the country. ICSOM is proud to have recently forged what promises to be an important partnership with AFTA. Every ICSOM musician is encouraged to learn more and to join their Arts Action Fund.

The strongest bargaining units regularly inform and empower their members. Consider exploring ways for musicians to become even more involved. Examples might include the creation of publicity campaigns and player association websites, meet-and-greet sessions with audience members before and after performances, musician announcements from the concert stage, receptions hosted for board members and donors, "take a board member to lunch" invitations, and cultivating relationships with music critics and other interested community leaders. There are many creative and rewarding ways to highlight the valuable contributions our musicians make to their orchestras and communities.

ICSOM remains ready to assist negotiating orchestras in need. In the past we have hosted conference calls with committees, local presidents, and attorneys of negotiating orchestras along with members of the Governing Board, ICSOM counsel, and SSD folks. During just the past four years, 18 ICSOM orchestras of all budget sizes have participated. We will make this service available again upon request. Please contact me for more information.

This holiday season is an appropriate time to reflect on the tremendous generosity and goodwill extended by ICSOM musicians to their colleagues in Jacksonville and Columbus. Your collective responses were heartening and continue to inspire the Governing Board. There is no limit to what ICSOM can do when we work together.

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.

