

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS –
SYMPHONIC SERVICES DIVISION
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR TO ICSOM
AUGUST - 2011**

As of August 1 I return to my previous position as contract negotiator for the Symphonic Services Division. The two and one-half years I have served as Director have been even busier than usual for the SSD staff. I cannot begin to convey the level of dedication and hard work that the entire staff provides to the membership of the AFM. I commend and thank each one of them for their dedication. As well, I thank accountant Greg Dickson and SSD Counsel Rochelle Skolnick for their extraordinary expertise and work. In addition, the relationships I have developed and time spent with local officers and committees has been very special.

During this time the SSD has accomplished and laid the ground work for many important projects. We have completely revamped the wage charts and developed personalized wage and benefit comparison charts that have been instrumental in successful negotiations in several of the ten highest-budget orchestras. The Integrated Media Agreement has been signed by more than thirty orchestras in spite of the bad behavior of the employers' bargaining team. We have created and disseminated educational webinars and seminars focusing on the great need for education and continuing education of the officers and committees who spend hours, most without compensation, representing the rank and file bargaining units. The past several years have generated a more difficult and complex bargaining environment and the SSD has showed that they are equipped to handle not just those complexities but the needs of orchestras of any size and/or budget.

In the near future additional tools that are in development such as the SSD resource center, social networking and arbitration library will be available to you. These projects will take the department to a new level offering tools appropriate for the information age which can deliver vast amounts of valuable information to you in seconds.

The focus for the SSD to assist local officers and committees in the negotiation, enforcement and administration of their bargaining agreements, established at the very beginning of my appointment as Director, has not changed or wavered. The number one priority and the reason the AFM exists is to improve the lives and welfare of all members who entrust us to represent them.

My best wishes to Jay Blumenthal and the continued success of the Symphonic Services Division!

Christopher Durham
Symphonic Services Division
July 31, 2011