

Senza Sordino

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Conference Report

By ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross

This year's conference, the 55th Annual ICSOM Conference, was held August 23-26 at the Adam's Mark hotel in Buffalo, New York, and was hosted by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Local 92. The week began with a 72% partial eclipse on Monday, followed by a rainstorm on Tuesday that caused all sorts of travel problems, but Wednesday through the rest of the week the weather was perfect. Unfortunately, with Harvey's impending arrival in Texas, some delegates ended up heading home early while those trying to return to Houston were forced to find alternate accommodations into the next week.

For the third year in a row, ICSOM delegates have volunteered for a special service event in the host orchestra's city. This year we partnered with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's program BPO Kids for Exceptional Kids, which is designed to make concerts more accessible and comfortable for kids with autism spectrum disorders, cancer, and other chronic



Robert Klein

physical or healthcare challenges. Musicians participating this year included violinists: Kimberly Tichenor (Louisville Orchestra), Andy Bruck (Jacksonville Symphony), Laura Ross (Nashville Symphony); violists: Barbara Corbató (Grand Rapids Symphony) and Chris Woehr (St. Louis Symphony Orchestra); French horns: Alex Kienle (Dallas Symphony), Dan Sweeley (Buffalo Philharmonic), Peter de Boor (Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra), Paul Austin (Grand Rapids Symphony); and narrator, Debbie Brooks (Ft. Worth Symphony). The group performed horn quartets, viola and horn duets, and string arrangements with narration arranged by Chris Woehr. Dan Sweeley, Buffalo Philharmonic's ICSOM delegate and Member at Large, deserves our thanks for his hard work putting this event and other conference activities together.

Paul Austin and new friend

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A Flood of Support

By Eric Arbiter, HSO ICSOM Delegate
Sasha Potiomkin, and Lauren Moore

After the deluge dropped on the city of Houston by hurricane Harvey, the lives of millions of our fellow citizens were severely affected. Some lost loved ones, and many lost everything they owned. In times of crisis, music can be a balm—but the flooding near our hall meant that the Houston Symphony Orchestra (HSO) had to cancel a number of our season-opening concerts. So we decided to bring the music to the people.

Over 25 musicians of the orchestra assembled in multiple chamber groups to perform at four different shelters a total of 20 times over the course of nine days. These shelters included the NRG Center, the George R. Brown Convention Center, the Family Residence (a Salvation Army location) and Harbor Light Men's Shelter (also a Salvation Army location). The effort was spurred by former HSO violinist Rebecca Reale, just as she was on her way to her new job in the LA Philharmonic, who handed off the coordination to HSO piccolo player Kathryn Ladner. All groups were welcomed and thanked graciously by those who stopped to listen, who also let us know they were so grateful to be reminded that there was something to look forward to.

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HSO musicians Brinton Smith, cello, Linda Goldstein, viola, Rebecca Reale, violin, Sophia Silivos, violin, in the George R. Brown Convention Center

Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

About That Pension...

America is facing a pension crisis of epidemic proportions. At the very moment when our population is rapidly aging, the fabric of our pension system is collapsing. By the year 2030, one in five Americans will be over 65. Plan assets for private pensions are grossly inadequate—underfunded by billions of dollars according to the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC). Many employers are “freezing” their pension obligations—others have been forced into bankruptcy. So many pensions have gone belly up that the federal agency that insures pensions, the PBGC, is itself in trouble. Even worse, public pensions promised to millions of present and future retired policemen, teachers, state employees, and others, are underfunded by hundreds of billions of dollars at the state level.



Dana Alexander, Chairperson

So, the AFM-EPF is not the only pension fund that is experiencing difficulty. As for how the Fund got to the place it is

in now, it is the Fund's responsibility to provide that information; ICSOM can't speak for the Fund. But I would like to discuss ICSOM's historical involvement with the Fund and the Governing Board's current view of the situation.

In the early 1990's a number of our ICSOM orchestras began to make the Fund their primary pension vehicle by “freezing” their internal defined-benefit single-employer pension plans and choosing the multiemployer AFM-EPF instead. At that time, joining the AFM-EPF often cost less than shoring up those orchestras' internal plans. In addition, with a multiplier that ultimately rose as high as \$4.65, the Fund offered a future pension benefit that was often far more lucrative than what musicians would have received under their orchestras' internal plans.

ICSOM's political involvement with the AFM-EPF began in 2002, after the retirement of the lone rank-and-file Trustee, Dave Schwartz, of the Recording Musicians Association (RMA). Back then, AFM Bylaws required that the AFM President appoint only one rank-and-file musician Trustee out of sixteen (eight on the union side and eight on the employer side). With the exception of the lone rank-and-file member, the eight AFM Trustees had typically been Local Presidents and members of the International Executive Board. Because orchestral musicians believed they deserved to have a stronger voice on the Fund, ICSOM began lobbying the AFM for greater representation. ICSOM pushed very hard to increase the number of rank-and-file trustees from one to three, and finally to change the definition of rank-and-file in the bylaws. That perhaps was the most significant change, as Local presidents and other officers could no longer be appointed to a rank-and-file position. ICSOM was largely responsible for those changes made to the AFM Bylaws, Article 22 Section 6, over the course of three AFM Conventions.

In 2003, AFM President Tom Lee appointed Phil Yao, from the RMA, to fill Schwartz's vacant position. Lee also appointed Bill Foster, a violist with the National Symphony, as an alternate Trustee who, in 2005 became a full-time Trustee. In 2007, an- ➤



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
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Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
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other resolution was adopted that required the AFM President to contact the Player Conferences immediately upon learning of an AFM Trustee vacancy.

Shortly after Bruce Ridge was elected ICSOM Chairperson in 2006, the ICSOM Governing Board lobbied President Lee to try to persuade the Employer Trustees to appoint a Trustee from the orchestral field. (At that time, all the Employer Trustees were from television, film, the recording industries, and Broadway.) That started a discussion between our orchestra managers and the Employer Trustees. In 2010, just prior to Ray Hair's election as AFM President, Bill Thomas, then CFO of the New York Philharmonic, was appointed to represent orchestra managers as an Employer Trustee.

In 2010, Ridge, in consultation with the other Player Conferences, successfully lobbied for the appointment of then-ICSOM President Brian Rood, from the Kansas City Symphony, and ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross, from the Nashville Symphony, to fill the two unassigned rank and file positions. In 2012, Mike DeMartini, then-CFO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, was appointed as another Employer Trustee.

All Fund Trustees undergo extensive training in the fundamentals of pension governance and investment skills, and are expected to attend continuing education programs. Both Rood and Ross also had previous governance experience: Rood has served as a trustee of the AFM Strike Fund since 2003, and Ross is in charge of live performance pension fund contributions for the Nashville Local 257.

The ICSOM Governing Board has been following the AFM-EPF situation closely. As I stated at the conference, it is the position of the Governing Board that we do not believe that there was any fraud, malfeasance or incompetence on the part of the Fund Trustees. ICSOM is well represented on the Fund by Rood and Ross, and they have our full faith, trust, and confidence. In the view of the Governing Board, legal actions against our Fund are a waste of money and resources that would be better spent fixing rather than attacking the Fund.

So where do we go from here?

The biggest expenditure of the Fund is in outgoing benefits to its participants. In fiscal year 2015, the Fund owed \$152 million in benefits. It took in a total of \$63 million in employer contributions. That is a huge gap, and it will only get wider—by FY 2024, the Fund is projected to owe \$228 million in benefits annually. Although recent years have seen an increase in the dollar amount of contributions (with fewer employers making those contributions), the number of participants drawing benefits is rising, and that rise is projected to accelerate. The number of active participants per retiree has dropped from almost 3 to 1 in 2004 to about 1.5 to 1 in 2016. The percentage of benefit payments covered by contributions has been steadily declining for the past 24 years. Given that decline, the Fund has been forced to rely more and more on investment returns—which are unpredictable and never guaranteed.

Unfortunately, but realistically, it appears that the primary path to solvency may be through benefit reductions, which would be possible under the 2014 Multi-Employer Pension Reform Act if the Fund enters critical and declining status. (Please see the accompanying article on MPRA by ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case.)

In addition, the health of the Fund will be improved if there

are more sources of unallocated income—i.e., contributions to the Fund that are not attached to future benefits. For example, President Hair was able to obtain \$20 million in unallocated contributions over three years from the Sound Recording and Motion Picture Fund. The RMA should also be praised for giving 1% of their special payments, unallocated, to the Fund. Another avenue to explore is whether our ICSOM orchestras can schedule pension benefit concerts that will generate additional income to the Fund.

Finally, it is incumbent upon every member of our union to renew our commitment to each other, to work under union contracts that pay union wages and generate pension income. If we pull together, make the necessary sacrifices and work towards a stronger union, we can right the ship before it runs aground.

Note: Data cited here come from the AFM-EPF's audited financials and 5500 filings with the Department of Labor, and the AFM-EPF's "Roadshow" presentations, which are available on the AFM-EPF website (www.afm-epf.org). For another perspective on the AFM-EPF situation, also see "AFM Pension Crisis: A View from the Membership" in "AFM Pension Perspectives" (<http://afmpensionperspectives.com>) by Scott Ballantyne and Tom Calderaro.

MPRA Demystified

By Kevin Case, ICSOM Counsel

By now, most members of ICSOM orchestras who are participants in the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) are aware of the possibility that their expected pension benefit might be reduced. In this article, I discuss the legal framework under which such a reduction could take place: the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA), enacted in 2014.

MPRA is an exception to a fundamental principle of pensions: when you have earned and are promised a pension benefit, that benefit cannot be reduced or eliminated. That principle is enshrined in the employee-benefits legislative regime known as ERISA, which governs both single-employer defined-benefit pension plans and multiemployer plans like the AFM-EPF. As with any rule, of course, there are exceptions; but the overarching aim of ERISA is to preserve a benefit once it is earned.

To that end, pension plan sponsors must fund their pensions so that assets will be available to pay benefits. In a single-employer plan, the plan is typically funded by minimum annual contributions by the employer, the amounts of which are determined by an actuarial analysis of the level of assets needed to pay current and future benefits. In a multiemployer plan, like the AFM-EPF, contributions come from various employers, based on a contribution rate—a percentage of an employee's earnings that is set in collective bargaining agreements—that each employer pays to the Fund on a periodic basis.

So, what happens when the system breaks down? The back- >



Amy Klemm

stop is supposed to be the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC), a government-chartered corporation whose function is, stated broadly, to insure pensions. When a single-employer plan fails (if, for example, the employer goes bankrupt), the PBGC takes over the plan and becomes responsible for paying out benefits that have been earned—often, however, with reduced benefit amounts. Separately, the PBGC has a multiemployer insurance program, so that if a multiemployer plan fails, then (theoretically at least), the PBGC provides financial assistance to cover the plan’s guaranteed benefits—again, though, with reductions. Indeed, the benefit reduction once the PBGC becomes responsible for benefit payments can be substantial.

Before 2014, the PBGC’s multiemployer insurance program was the only option for a failing multiemployer plan. There was no mechanism for a multiemployer plan to reduce the basic level of benefits. A fund in “critical” status could institute a rehabilitation plan (like the AFM-EPF did in 2010) that could scale back certain “adjustable” benefits and impose a surcharge on employer contributions to bring in more money; but the basic promised benefit could not be touched.

Congress enacted MPRA in 2014 because it was faced with a multiemployer pension plan crisis. Many plans were failing. Even before the collapse of financial markets in 2008 that walloped virtually every pension plan, there were signs of trouble. Like the AFM-EPF, many plans were established (and benefits promised) at a time when many more people worked under union contracts. But union membership has steadily declined and the number of union workplaces has dwindled. (Note that AFM membership declined from 110,000 in 2001 to 75,000 in 2016.) As a result, fewer employers are required to make pension contributions, and thus less money comes into multiemployer plans. At the same time, though, the number of participants entitled to benefit payments is going up, as workers who earned benefits in unions’ heyday retire (and live longer than expected). The result: there is often less and less money coming in, but more and more money going out. To be able to afford to pay benefits, therefore, multiemployer plans have been forced to rely more and more on earning healthy investment returns.

The 2008 crash foreclosed that option for many multi-employer pension plans. Suddenly, a swath of plans was at risk of insolvency. The highest-profile plan, the giant Central States plan (the Teamsters’ plan in the trucking industry, with 400,000 members) is expected to be insolvent by 2025.

Relying on PBGC assistance is no longer an option, for one simple reason: the PBGC can’t afford it. In August 2017, the PBGC announced that its multiemployer insurance program is likely to run out of money by the end of fiscal year 2025 (or even earlier) under a number of different scenarios. If a plan like Central States fails, the PBGC will itself be insolvent. Hundreds of thousands of retirees would be at risk of receiving no pension benefits at all.

MPRA was Congress’ attempt to resolve this problem. What MPRA does, broadly speaking, is provide a mechanism through which a multiemployer pension plan can suspend or reduce benefits to stave off insolvency, without going to the PBGC.

The mechanism works like this: first, to be eligible, a multi-employer plan must be in “critical and declining” status.

(Plans that are merely “critical” are not eligible.) “Critical and declining” in most cases means that actuaries have projected the plan will be insolvent within 20 years.

Next, the trustees must develop a plan for benefit reductions. Such a plan must meet certain criteria:

- The total reduction in benefits must be large enough to keep the plan from running out of money, but no larger than is needed to do that;
- Monthly benefits cannot be reduced below 110% of the amount that the PBGC would have paid;
- Disability benefits cannot be reduced;
- Benefits of participants who are at least 80 years old, and their beneficiaries, cannot be reduced;
- Benefits of participants who are at least 75 years old, and their beneficiaries, can be only partially reduced, and the closer the participant is to age 80, the less the benefits can be reduced; and
- The reduction of benefits must be “equitably distributed”—i.e., spread fairly.

MPRA provides guidance in what it means for the reduction to be spread fairly. The proposed plan should take into account the following factors with respect to participants, their beneficiaries, and their benefits:

- Age and life expectancy;
- Length of time in pay status;
- Amount of benefit;
- Type of benefit (e.g., survivor, normal retirement, or early retirement);
- Extent to which a participant or beneficiary is receiving a “subsidized” benefit (i.e., an unreduced early-retirement benefit, if allowed);
- Extent to which there have been post-retirement benefit increases;
- History of benefit increases and reductions;
- Years to retirement for active employees;
- Any discrepancies between active and retiree benefits (i.e., the extent to which benefit cuts would be different for retirees and those still working);
- Extent to which active participants are reasonably likely to withdraw support for the plan, accelerating employer withdrawals from the plan and increasing the risk of additional benefit reductions; and
- Extent to which benefits are attributed to service with an employer that failed to pay its full withdrawal liability.

Also note that if a plan has 10,000 or more participants (which the AFM-EPF does), then the trustees must select a “retiree representative” to advocate for the interests of retirees and beneficiaries as part of this process.

After the plan has been developed, the trustees must then submit it to the Treasury Department for approval. If Treasury determines that the plan satisfies the criteria listed above, then it goes to a vote of the plan participants. However, the vote is heavily weighted in favor of approval. That is because a majority of plan participants—not just those who cast a ballot—must vote to actually reject the plan. Members who don’t vote are considered to have voted in favor of the cuts.

Moreover, for multiemployer plans that are deemed “systemically important”—those that would need PBGC assistance valued at more than \$1 billion if the proposed benefit reductions >

were not adopted—Treasury is permitted to simply implement the reductions regardless of the outcome of the vote.

In other words, in most cases it would be virtually impossible for plan participants to successfully vote against cuts to benefits under MPRA. It is also hard to imagine why they would want to do so, for if they did and the plan went insolvent (as it likely would), then the cuts imposed by the PBGC would be more severe. (Remember that under MPRA, benefits can't be reduced lower than 110% of what the PBGC guarantees.) And that's only if the PBGC itself remains solvent.

One of the first multiemployer plans to apply for MPRA relief was the huge Central States plan, which was the most pressing concern when MPRA was passed. Ironically, the Treasury Department rejected its application in May 2016, primarily on the grounds that Central States' proposed reduction in benefits still would not do enough to stave off insolvency. (Central States may try again; but it is also pushing for legislation that would have the effect of using taxpayer money to guarantee benefits. That seems rather hopeless given the current Congress and Administration.)

More recently, three applications have been approved: an Ohio-based Ironworkers plan in January 2017; a Nashville-based United Furniture Workers fund in July 2017; and a New York State Teamsters fund in August 2017. Each plan is different, but the latter is illustrative of the kind of cuts that can be made under MPRA. About 27% of the 35,000 members of the New York Teamsters fund will see no cuts at all; about 43% will see cuts of 18%, and the remainder will face cuts of 29%. Five additional multiemployer plans have submitted applications that the Treasury Department is reviewing. (See <https://www.treasury.gov/services/Pages/Plan-Applications.aspx> for a listing of applications and their status.)

That brings us to the AFM-EPF. The Trustees notified plan participants last December that the Fund was in danger of entering "critical and declining" status, at which point the Fund would likely seek relief under the MPRA process. As luck would have it, the continuation of the bull market kept the Fund out of critical and declining status when the Fund's fiscal year ended on March 31, 2017.

But markets can't keep going up forever, and given the ever-increasing amounts of AFM-EPF annual benefit payments—rising from \$152 million in the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2016, to a projected \$228 million nine years later—it is probably only a matter of time. President Hair has been making strenuous efforts to bring more money into the Fund, and those efforts have been successful at increasing the dollar amount of employer contributions even as the number of contributing employers has fallen. But it is highly unlikely that the funding shortfall can be fixed with increased employer contributions alone, absent a massive reversal in the macro trends of declining union membership and less work done under union contracts.

I also note that there has been some talk of new legislation proposed by Senators Bernie Sanders and Al Franken, the "Keep Our Pension Promises Act" (KOPPA). KOPPA will not help the AFM-EPF. It is targeted to multiemployer plans that are in trouble for a very particular reason: employers who withdrew from the plan without paying withdrawal liability. In its current form, KOPPA applies only to plans in which

20% or more of the amount by which liabilities exceed assets is attributable to employers who withdrew and failed to pay up. That isn't the case with the AFM-EPF.

I can guarantee that you will be hearing more about MPRA going forward. This will be a major topic for ICSOM over the next several years, given that for more than three-quarters of our orchestras, the AFM-EPF is their primary retirement-benefit plan. (Full disclosure: I am also an AFM-EPF participant, as I earned benefits as a freelance violinist for a good number of years before going to law school.) The law also imposes stringent disclosure obligations on multiemployer plans that apply for reductions under MPRA. If the AFM-EPF indeed goes into critical and declining status, you will start to receive multiple notices in the mail; hopefully you are now better prepared to read them.

President's Report

By Paul Austin

@ICSOM Reaches a Wide Audience

ICSOM is very active on Twitter. Since 2009, we have generated nearly 10,000 tweets about classical music, orchestras, and the arts. Today ICSOM has over 9000 Twitter followers.

The account was created and maintained by former ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge. Upon his departure from the Governing Board in August 2016, ICSOM's social media duties were divided among several GB members. It has been an educational and rewarding experience to handle ICSOM's Twitter feed after Bruce, and I sincerely thank him for his dedicated work in this arena.

I am pleased to say that since I began overseeing the account, all 52 orchestras of ICSOM have been included in our tweets. If the musicians' group has a Twitter account, they are tagged within the 140 character limit of any post about them or their orchestra. This allows viewers to find the Twitter account of the players' association easily, and also notifies the musicians of ICSOM's tweet so that all are informed of the news item.

We create approximately ten tweets a day on ICSOM's feed, which we may all agree would overtake an email account quickly. Instead of having your inbox bombarded with so many news items sent to an e-list, we ask you to visit @ICSOM on Twitter to view current stories at your convenience. If you do not have a Twitter account, please consider doing so and following @ICSOM to access our tweets.

An important element of our social media efforts has been a project that I envisioned, which started on Labor Day 2016, to feature one of ICSOM's 52 orchestras each week. It has been an easy and free way to highlight all of ICSOM's orchestras throughout the year, as well as increase traffic at our social media sites. The posts occur Monday mornings on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, with follow up stories during that week for the featured orchestra and its musicians. Thank you >



Tara Johnston

to the delegates who have worked with me on these “Featured Orchestra of the Week” posts.

ICSOM’s Twitter feed is a leading source of information about and for its musicians. ICSOM established the feed with the stated intent of promoting unity everywhere through tweets about orchestras, classical music, and the arts. I am proud to serve ICSOM in this way, and I welcome information about possible tweets that would further that goal. 

New Development

By Mike Muszynski and Roger Roe

It is not unheard of for orchestral musicians to get jobs in their twenties, work really hard for a number of years, and then start to stagnate. Without finding new personal and musical challenges, it can sometimes be difficult to keep growing. You finally win the big job, and . . . then what?



Courtesy of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Upon returning to work after our 2012 lockout, the musicians of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (ISO) took the opportunity to examine the ISO’s institutional culture, and we suggested that the musicians be provided with professional development opportunities in the same way that members of the management are.



Courtesy of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

This examination led to the creation of a musician-led Professional Development Committee. This group has organized movie presentations, Dalcroze classes, seminars in Alexander Technique, and various other programs over the last few years as a way for us to challenge ourselves and explore various ways to develop our craft together.

This spring saw our most successful event yet when we invited David McGill (an Emeritus member of the Chicago Symphony) to come to Indianapolis to speak about his book, *Sound in Motion*. In the book, David discusses his application of legendary oboist Marcel Tabuteau’s approaches to musicality and phrasing. The book lists examples and techniques for structuring phrasing, with an eye towards developing musical plans and strengthening the individual musician’s appreciation and application of these concepts to every musical phrase.

Before David came to Indianapolis, ISO management agreed to provide copies of the book to any musician interested in participating. Nearly every section of the orchestra joined in, and about thirty of us met in March and April in small discussion groups in members’ homes to discuss how we felt about the ideas we read. Needless to say, lively conversations ensued, and we realized both that we don’t agree on everything and that we love having a forum to talk about it.

We found out right away that we were hungry for this kind of conversation with each other. Groups of musicians spontaneously formed backstage at concerts and rehearsals to discuss note grouping, peaks and valleys within phrases, or whether a violinist would express a chromatic passing tone in the same

way that a clarinet player might.

Oboe players who had learned the Tabuteau teaching methods in school found themselves being asked to look at the concertmaster solos from *Ein Heldenleben* and talk about implied harmonic structure and the resultant melodic shaping one might use in it. Meanwhile, bassoon players familiar with David’s orchestral excerpt CD found themselves discussing bassoon excerpts with violists who had listened to the album and wanted to ask about specific phrasing ideas mentioned.

After we spent a couple of months reading, discussing, and thoroughly digesting the concepts in the book, David arrived in Indianapolis to discuss the book, his reasons for writing it, and some applications of the techniques contained within it.

Forty musicians attended the session, during which five of us played short examples that had been chosen to highlight some of the techniques that we found most interesting or confounding. Selections ranged from oboe solos from Shostakovich and *Scheherazade* to the violin part for Bach’s B Minor Mass. David’s coaching and application of ideas from the book were inspired and very educational. He started the session by admitting a sense of apprehension at working with fully-formed successful professionals in this way, rather than with students, but we assured him that we had loved reading the book together and were open to any suggestions he might have.

The experience was a resounding success. We exposed ourselves to different viewpoints about phrasing and technique, but we also grew immensely from the shared experience of opening



ISO violinist Charles Morey with David McGill

Mike Muszynski

ourselves up to our colleagues. Wind players considered the technical challenges of phrasing and expression in playing a percussion instrument. String players learned where a wind player might want to breathe and, perhaps more importantly, why it might happen in that particular place.

Perhaps more importantly, the community building and personal growth that occurred for us during these months of study and conversation proved to be quite powerful. We loved learning from each other and from David. Many of us found it refreshing to be introduced to a framework for phrasing decisions, and all of us relished feeling more connected to each other in the process of studying, reading, and exploring together.

The idea of management-sponsored and musician-led professional development efforts is a new one to our orchestra. We are finding ways to ask each other what we need in order to keep growing and what we need to keep growing closer and stronger as a group. Some of our efforts have been more successful than others, but our philosophy is that if we reach even a few of our members with any opportunity for lifetime learning, then we are doing our jobs. With the *Sound in Motion* project, we may have hit our stride in our quest to grow together both musically and communally. 

Note: The Authors are members of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Exploring the New World in Media

By Leelanee Sterrett, New York Philharmonic ICSOM

Delegate

The New York Philharmonic took an exciting new step last season when we presented three complete concerts on Facebook Live: our 2016-17 Season Opening Gala Concert, a subscription concert of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto and Brahms' Third Symphony, and the season finale "Concert for Unity", featuring guest musicians from around the world. In the Philharmonic's 175th year, we were proud to be among the very first orchestras to embrace a new media platform.

The New York Philharmonic has frequently performed on PBS's *Live from Lincoln Center* for gala concerts, and it's the sort of thing we look forward to, because it takes an already special evening and elevates it beyond the confines of David Geffen Hall. However, live television broadcasts of classical music are becoming less and less commonplace. We've experienced this directly in a reduction of the number of *Live from Lincoln Center* broadcasts of Philharmonic concerts to just one per season. It was a clever pivot on the part of our digital and marketing teams to look to Facebook Live to fill the void. And as musicians, we felt it was vitally important to maintain a tradition of sharing our performances with an audience beyond New York City (including our own family and friends who we love to have tuning in!).

Of course, there was a small amount of trepidation within the orchestra about doing the live stream, as it was a totally new format for us. Going in, we didn't know how effective advance marketing would be at drawing people to watch nor what the audio and video quality would be on the Facebook platform. Would the level of performance expected from the Philharmonic be compromised by technical limitations? And of course there's always added pressure when you're performing live for a television or online audience that can be many times the size of the crowd in the hall! Ultimately, there was strong support across the orchestra for taking a chance on a new way of reaching people.

For my part, I found the experience of playing live on Facebook to be absolutely exhilarating. I definitely had a few more nervous jitters than I do for a typical subscription concert. The Internet seems to be a notoriously critical environment these days, but overall I found that the people watching online tuned in for the positive, shared experience. This is something all musicians need to keep reminding ourselves—we are naturally inclined to be self-critical and to want to deliver perfection, but I don't think most audience members listen with these expectations. They're looking to hear great music and experience a connection with the performers and each other. They are genuinely rooting for the artists onstage (just as I am when I attend concerts, but too often forget when I am the one performing). For some reason, this feeling was more immediate and obvious to me when concerts were being streamed on Facebook Live, versus a traditional television broadcast. Maybe it is because

Facebook is a more democratic medium than TV, a platform on which many people are already comfortable sharing their opinions, photos, and real day-to-day lives.

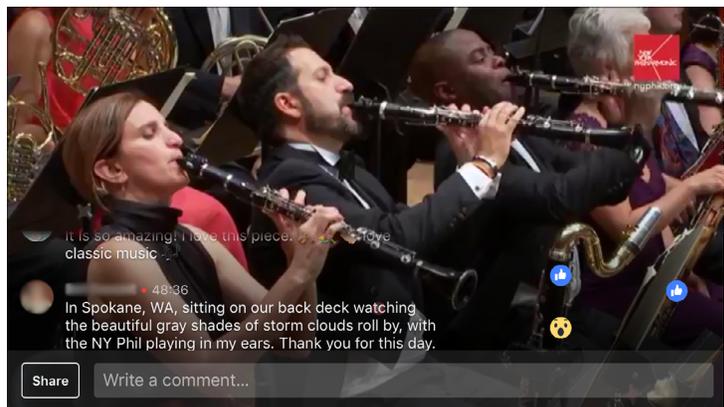
I also loved the idea that someone might casually "stumble across" our concerts while browsing Facebook, and have the opportunity to hear some incredible classical music without any preconceived notions—and without the pressure to stay "tuned in". If they liked it and kept watching—great! If not, then at the least the visibility of the arts continues to grow, and perhaps a seed or two gets planted somewhere along the way.

But by far the best aspect of playing on Facebook Live was the active online community formed around each event. Only in this format could people react in real time to what they were seeing. I was riveted in the hours following the concerts, scrolling through the thousands of comments written during the live stream. People were able to ask questions and have those answered by other viewers, to comment on their favorite parts of the music or when they saw their favorite instrument on the screen, and to have real conversations with other audience members as the performance was happening. Best of all, those orchestra members who weren't playing a given piece could be backstage also chiming in on the comments from their own devices. It added a level of insider access and, dare I say, "celebrity" to the conversation! Reading through the comments, knowing precisely what moments they responded to and looked for in the performance, I felt closer to the audience than I ever have. I would guess that they felt closer to the performers and the experience of creating music in that space as well.

Finally, I think the Facebook Live concerts were a huge success for the orchestra, and left us feeling very proud of our



Shaneen Lord Photography



Courtesy of the New York Philharmonic

NY Philharmonic musicians Amy Zoloto, Pascual Martínez Forteza, and Anthony McGill in a screenshot from the recent Facebook Live stream of a performance of Mahler's Fifth Symphony

ensemble, our traditions, and our listeners. I hope such live broadcasts will continue, and we at the Philharmonic can find a way to make these programs part of who we are as a group. In fact, by the time you read this, we'll have streamed our new season opening concert, hopefully to the sort of response and enthusiasm detailed above. There are of course discussions to be had in presenting more concerts like this—the dichotomy of offering free online access to a ticketed live event, for instance, or how the various media agreements might best be adapted to the world of social media. But all in all, the consensus at the New York Philharmonic was that Facebook Live and other platforms represent the new paradigm in media, and one we would >

be smart to take advantage of. In many ways, we were glad to be finally catching up with the trend toward live-streamed concerts, already offered by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and our neighbors across the plaza at the Metropolitan Opera, among others.

Going forward, a streaming format such as Facebook Live offers numerous opportunities for audiences to get closer to the music than ever before. In the course of our three concerts, the format expanded to include backstage interviews with guest artists and orchestra musicians answering questions from the online audience. It's easy to imagine the "backstage" element of the live stream becoming more prominent, to give viewers a closer look at who we are as musicians and what our jobs entail. I would be thrilled to see segments that show how we prepare and warm up before concerts, candid social moments that demonstrate the camaraderie and friendship within the orchestra, and other insights that you can't get just by going to a concert hall. Program notes need no longer be a printed and written affair in an online concert, or limited to a few paragraphs, when a trove of supplemental information is available at the click of a link on your screen. And for those new to classical music, who maybe aren't quite ready to step into the concert hall with all its unspoken etiquette and sense of ceremony, an online stream brings the experience to them on their own terms. I strongly believe that what classical music as a genre and industry needs to do right now is give people a reason to care about it and the people who make it happen. In speaking with concertgoers—music lovers as well as skeptics—and just about anyone with whom I talk in passing about the arts, I've come to believe that the best way to achieve this is by facilitating personal connections and dialogue between performers and audience members. More than ever before in my experience at the New York Philharmonic, our Facebook Live concerts accomplished this. I look forward to seeing how we can continue to harness the potential of social media to grow the circle of those who value live music and feel moved by it. What a fantastic way to bring people into the fold and reward them for being a part of the music!



Adopted Resolutions of the 2017 Conference

Response to Charlottesville

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board; amended by Andy Bruck (Jacksonville)

Whereas, Orchestral music enlivens the human spirit, brings people together, and comes about as the result of collective action, in which everyone's contribution is significant and appreciated; and

Whereas, The orchestras of ICSOM welcome people of all races and all religions to their audiences, memberships, managements and boards; and

Whereas, The sentiments of white supremacy, hatred, racism, and bigotry expressed by many of the participants in the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11 and 12, 2017, are antithetical to the principles of ICSOM and the fundamental objectives of the art of symphonic music; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2017 ICSOM Conference state unequivocally their opposition to, and abhorrence of, the divisive and intolerant sentiments expressed at Charlottesville; and, be it further

Resolved, That we call on all elected officials to stand with us in outspoken solidarity in support of inclusiveness.

AFM-EPF

Submitted by Debbie Brooks (Fort Worth), Julie Edwards (Utah), Alex Kienle (Dallas), Norbert Nielubowski (Minnesota), Ethan Silverman (NYC Ballet), Dan Sweeley (Buffalo); amended by Kimberly Tichenor (Louisville) and Martin Andersen (New Jersey)

Whereas, The American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund ("AFM-EPF") is a crucial part of retirement planning for thousands of ICSOM musicians and their families; and

Whereas, Significant time at the 2017 ICSOM Conference was spent discussing the current state of the AFM-EPF; and

Whereas, Great concern arose in many quarters as a result of the December 2016 letter from the Trustees; and

Whereas, Delegates continue to have many questions following the AFM-EPF Trustees' presentation at the 2017 ICSOM Conference; and

Whereas, Our member orchestras comprise AFM-EPF participants of all ages, who have a vested interest in the long-term health of the AFM-EPF; and

Whereas, Equal representation of all constituencies at all stages of their careers is vital; and

Whereas, Frank and open communication is an essential component of moving forward, finding solutions, and building trust between the Trustees and AFM-EPF participants; and

Whereas, ICSOM is grateful to Brian Rood and Laura Ross, who have volunteered their time and energy to be our ICSOM Trustee representatives; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2017 ICSOM conference wish to ensure that every ICSOM member be aware of, and understand, the challenges facing the AFM-EPF; and, be it further

Resolved, That our ICSOM Trustee representatives have our full support, faith, and trust as they conduct their business as Trustees; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM, on behalf of its members, requests continued candor and transparency from the AFM-EPF; and, be it further

Resolved, That all ICSOM members empower and educate themselves by registering on the official AFM-EPF website (<http://www.afm-epf.org>) and by availing themselves of all the information there about the AFM-EPF and their own personal accounts.



National "Right-to-Work" Legislation

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, On February 1, 2017, Representative Steve King (R-IA) introduced H.R. 785, the "National Right-to-Work Act," in the United States House of Representatives, and on March 7, 2017, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) introduced similar legislation, S. 545, in the United States Senate; and

Whereas, Certain provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 allow states to adopt anti-labor, so-called "right-to-work" laws; and

Whereas, Such "right-to-work" laws have undermined unions for 70 years by allowing individuals who work under collectively bargained agreements to "free ride" by enjoying virtually all the benefits of union representation without being required to join or financially support their unions; and

Whereas, "Right-to-work" laws have never had anything to do with workers' "rights," but instead seek to benefit employers at the expense of workers' ability to obtain improvements in the terms and conditions of their employment; and

Whereas, "Right-to-work" laws can compromise our locals' abilities to support our member orchestras; and

Whereas, A national "right-to-work" law as proposed in H.R. 785 and S. 545 will cause irreparable harm to unions in the United States and to the rights of workers generally, including musicians; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Delegates and Officers to the 2017 ICSOM Conference declare their opposition to H.R. 785 and S. 545; and, be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM supports the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada in its efforts to lobby against H.R. 785 and S. 545.



ICSOM Online Conductor Evaluation Pilot Program

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, The long-established and, in its time, groundbreaking ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Program was discontinued by Wayne State University several years ago; and

Whereas, It has proven useful for many orchestras to evaluate guest and staff conductors in a confidential way; and

Whereas, ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM have had an agreement since 1990 to occasionally share information on conductors in each conference's database; and

Whereas, It is important to provide conductor evaluation information to search and conductor renewal committees of ICSOM orchestras in a protected manner; and

Whereas, The Governing Board of ICSOM has researched methods to administer a potential new online ICSOM centralized program; and

Whereas, The Delegates have indicated when surveyed that such a program could be useful to replace or augment their orchestra's individual conductor evaluation programs and should be made available to any orchestra that wishes to try such a system; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2017 ICSOM Conference authorize the Governing Board to establish a pilot Online Conductor Evaluation Program and to report back to the Delegates at the 2018 ICSOM Conference.



George Brown

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, George Brown began his career as a member of the Coast Guard Band and the US Armed Forces Bicentennial Band; and



Blair Hood

Whereas, Following military service, he became a member of the Louisville Orchestra, and later the Colorado Springs Symphony and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in Mexico City, until in 1987 he was appointed principal timpanist of the Utah Symphony, a position he still holds; and

Whereas, George Brown has been active serving his orchestra on nearly every musicians' committee including the orchestra committee, as an executive board member of Local 104 AFM, and as

ICSOM Delegate from 2006-13; and

Whereas, He is the founder of the Utah Symphony musicians' "Fourth Wall Group" that is responsible for organizing and spearheading the musicians' public relations and outreach activities within the community; and

Whereas, In 2015 George Brown added the role of ICSOM President to his list of accomplishments, and from which he now steps away; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2017 ICSOM Conference thank George Brown for his vision and leadership, and wish him continued success in his remaining years with the Utah Symphony and in all his future activities.



Paul Gunther

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, Paul Gunther began his musical career as a percussionist, majoring in music theory and composition; and

Whereas, For two years he served as a member of the 423rd Army Band until his honorable discharge as a conscientious objector; and

Whereas, He joined the Minnesota Orchestra from 1975-78 as the orchestra's Assistant Librarian before moving to the Milwaukee Symphony to serve as its Chief Librarian from 1978-86; and

Whereas, In 1986, Paul Gunther returned to the Minnesota Orchestra as its Principal Librarian, until stepping down after 30 years and serving a final season as part-time librarian before his retirement in 2017; and

Whereas, Paul Gunther's work ethic and dedication to service and volunteerism has manifested in a wide variety of ways – as a regular blood donor, as a member of the board of his housing association, as ICSOM Delegate for the Minnesota



Eric Adler

Orchestra from 2004-07 and as Alternate Delegate on numerous other occasions, proofing countless articles and minutes for ICSOM Governing Board members, and serving as Orchestra-L moderator and working on the ICSOM Directory; and

Whereas, He must hold a very special place in the hearts of orchestral librarians everywhere as a founding member of the Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA) in 1982, for which he served six years on the organization's board and two terms as president; and

Whereas, Even in "retirement" he continues his library work, this time with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for its 2017-18 season; and

Whereas, Paul Gunther steps down after serving 11 seasons as ICSOM Member at Large, working not only with his assigned orchestras but also the wider ICSOM membership; and

Whereas, His cheery disposition, thoughtfulness and keen eye will be greatly missed by his colleagues on the Governing Board; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2017 ICSOM Conference offer their appreciation and gratitude to Paul Gunther for his tireless efforts to improve the lives of orchestral musicians and librarians around the world and wish him the very best in all his future endeavors.



Newslets

A Twenty-first Century Tradition

Lyric Opera of Chicago presented its 17th annual Stars of Lyric Opera concert on September 8. The free concert, conducted by Lyric Opera Music Director Sir Andrew Davis, featured artists from Lyric's upcoming 63rd season, along with the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus, performing highlights from several of the season's featured operas.

The tradition began in 2000 with a generous grant from the Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF), and it has been sustained by continued support from MPTF as well as a number of foundation and corporate sponsors. After a hiatus in 2004 (due to heavy scheduling demands of Lyric Opera's 50th season that year), the concerts moved from the James C. Petrillo Band Shell (appropriately a venue named for the founder of the MPTF) to the new jewel in the crown of Chicago—Millennium Park, which is now also the home of the Grant Park Orchestra.

Beginning in 2007, the concerts have been broadcast on Chicago's classical-music radio station, WFMT 98.7, and since 2010 also live-streamed on the station's website, www.WFMT.com. Lyric Opera Orchestra Committee Chair William Cernota said, "As a gift to the city of Chicago and the world at large, the Lyric Opera Orchestra, Chicago Federation of Musicians, and Lyric Opera Chorus have promoted and continuously support free live radio broadcasts of these performances on WFMT."

New "General" in Washington

The Washington National Opera (WNO) announced it has hired Timothy O'Leary as its new General Director, replacing former Executive Director Michael Mael, who stepped down in July (*Note: see "Newslets" in the June issue*). O'Leary is currently General Director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he has overseen a doubling of the organization's endowment. "His vision for opera and audiences in the 21st century is both thoughtful and fearless," said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter. O'Leary will begin in July 2018.

Also in September, musicians of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra ratified one-year contract extensions with both WNO and the Kennedy Center. The short-term nature of the agreements was due, at least in part, to uncertainty surrounding the executive vacancy.



A Flood of Support *(continued)*

A woodwind quintet accompanied an effort to feed a portion of the community of Dickinson, a small city south of Houston that was devastated by the storm. Community members picnicked on free pizza at First United Methodist Church, while the quintet played for about two hours, and spent time with members of the Dickinson High School Band who came early and stayed late to listen.

We have plans to continue with these concerts into the future as needed and requested.

Internally, the HSO organization focused on creating a support system for the dozen or so orchestra members, staff, and chorus members whose houses and possessions were lost to the storm. Task groups were sent out daily to help those who needed it by cleaning up debris, ripping out carpet and drywall, and anything else that needed to be done. The organization has since created an employee assistance fund which all can contribute to, that will directly benefit those members of our Houston Symphony Family in need.

The Union has been deeply involved as well. As of this writing, the Musician's Local 65-699 has received donations from three other AFM locals (Local 6 (San Francisco), Local 47 (Los Angeles), and local 30-73 (Twin Cities)) to help musicians in Houston. At the board's last meeting we voted to send money to eight local members who have requested aid. The Houston musicians union has an established, long-standing fund, called the Tim Harris Fund, to help with Local members experiencing medical or other emergencies. Any individuals or locals so inclined can send relief money to this fund in the form of checks to the Local:

Houston Professional Musicians Association
Local 65-699 AFM
5771 Enid St
Houston, TX 77009

or can contact Secretary/Treasurer Bob McGrew to pay via PayPal at: bmc@afmhouston.com.

Note: Eric Arbiter is a former HSO ICSOM Delegate and Local 65-699 board member; Lauren Moore is the HSO Operations Manager.

By now you will have seen news coverage of the devastation in Puerto Rico from Hurricane Maria in September. Due to the severe storm damage and the island's isolated location, it will be a challenge for Puerto Rico to restore power and rebuild its infrastructure. It may be several months before the Puerto Rico Symphony musicians are able to work again.

In advance of the storm, the Governing Board had been in touch with their ICSOM Delegate. As of this writing we continue to await word to hear how ICSOM can best help the musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony during this extremely difficult time. Please be prepared to assist once that call is made so that our contributions will help the musicians.

Meanwhile, please keep the musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony in your thoughts. We will be in touch once we hear from them in terms of how to best assist them at that time.

— The Governing Board

Conference Report *(continued)*

Prior to the "official" beginning of the conference on Wednesday morning, we have traditionally held a negotiating workshop on Tuesday evening, which addresses issues negotiating orchestras deal with at the bargaining table. During the past ten+ years that this session has been in existence, many delegates and committee chairs have participated in this session, which is moderated by ICSOM Counsel and the ICSOM President.

This year, more than one-fifth of our delegates were new to ICSOM. These delegates were invited to a new-delegate breakfast before the opening session. This allows the ICSOM Governing Board to meet with the delegates, give them a pre-



Delegates Jason Haaheim (Met) and Keith Carrick (Utah)

view of what to expect during the week, and remind them of their duties—particularly, to keep the lines of communication open so ICSOM can effectively represent and keep its membership informed.

Opening her first conference as ICSOM Chairperson, Meredith Snow's (Los Angeles Philharmonic) opening address covered issues including the economic impact of our industry on our communities, the Fort Worth and Pittsburgh settlements after extended work stoppages, and her attendance with a group of ICSOM governing board members at the League of American Orchestras (LAO) conference in Detroit (where the discussion centered on diversity) and the International Federation of Musicians' (FIM) Orchestra Conference in Montreal. Snow also addressed the recent non-union scoring of the film *Ben Hur* by a signatory label—MGM. She pointed out that as our orchestra committees have become stronger, our orchestras may come to view the AFM or "the union" as a separate entity. But the AFM are not interlopers. Musicians are the union. She said we need to uphold the value of our labor and to stand up for our colleagues. Individual actions matter, and when we work union, then there is more union work. She encouraged ICSOM musicians to reinforce their commitment to their locals and the AFM. ICSOM is here to help assure that everyone thrives.

ICSOM President George Brown (Utah Symphony) spoke about diversity within the entire orchestral organization—not just on stage, but within our administrations and boards as well. He also thanked the Governing Board and Delegates, as he would be stepping down from his position at the end of the conference.

AFM Political Director Alphonso Pollard reported on legislation dealing with Veterans Affairs, the Affordable Care Act, NAFTA, the federal budget, and the tax code. He also highlighted a number of bills that erode labor protection, including National "Right to Work" bills proposed in the House and Senate. The "Fair Play Fair Pay" bill has been reintroduced, and Pollard is working on new legislation dealing with military bands that, in order to justify their existence, have been per- >

forming off-base and doing work that was previously performed by civilian groups. He also encouraged delegates and members of their orchestras to join the TEMPO Signature Club; funding helps support various AFM legislative initiatives and candidates in both parties who share the AFM's point of view.

Symphonic Services Division (SSD) Director Rochelle Skolnick and SSD Negotiator Todd Jelen designed a series of orchestra-workplace scenarios that allowed delegates and Local officers to discover their acting abilities while finding solutions. Results were reviewed by the entire group at the conclusion of the smaller breakouts.

The Mixer at Pearl Street Grill and Brewery provided by



Delegates Joela Jones (Cleveland), Warren Powell (Florida), Bradley Mansell (Nashville), Alex Kienle (Dallas), and P.J. Cinque (San Diego) participate in the SSD workshop

our hosts offered excellent music, food, and an unobstructed view of a glorious sunset over Lake Erie. Those who returned to view a screening later in the evening of *Composed*, a documentary by John Beder, were finally able to see the full result; a twenty-minute preview had been shown at the 2016 conference in Washington DC. The documentary featured information distilled from a recent ICSOM survey and hundreds of hours of interviews with musicians about performance anxiety. ICSOM helped make this documentary a reality, and because of it, John Beder is offering a discount to ICSOM orchestras interested in purchasing a copy for their institutions; information for pre-ordering can be found on the ICSOM website at <http://www.icsom.org/links/speaker-links.php>.

On Wednesday, and continuing on Thursday, Delegates heard reports from officers, Players Conference representa-

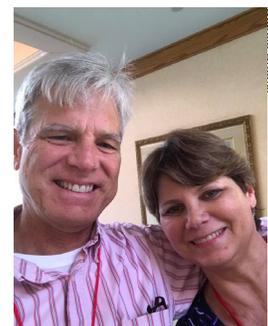


ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case and David Sywak (Dallas)

tives, and those overseeing many of the services provided by ICSOM and the AFM. We welcomed back two ICSOM Emeritus Presidents—AFM Strike Fund Trustees David Angus from the Rochester Philharmonic, and Brian Rood from the Kansas City Symphony. Rood, who is also chair of ICSOM's Electronic Media Committee, and AFM SSD Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark presented a number of scenarios and quizzed the Delegates on how the scenarios related to the Integrated Media Agreement (IMA).

Thursday's sessions continued with a presentation by ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case and David Sywak from the Dallas Symphony, as they explored bargaining various healthcare options. The afternoon session was devoted to the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) presentation by Ray Hair (Union Trustee Co-Chair), Chris Brockmeyer (Employer Trustee Co-Chair), Will Luebking (AFM-EPF Finance Director), Bob Behar (Actuary for Milliman Inc.), Alan Spatrick (Investment Advisor from Meketa), Rob Projansky (Co-Counsel, Proskauer), Jani Rachelson (Co-Counsel, Cohen Weiss Simon), and Union Trustees Tino Gagliardi, Brian Rood, and Laura Ross. ICSOM's annual Town Hall, a closed session for Delegates and the Governing Board to discuss issues of importance, was held that evening.

Friday began with elections for Members at Large (MAL) following the election by acclamation on Thursday of ICSOM President Paul Austin (Grand Rapids Symphony) and reelection of ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross (Nashville Symphony). Kimberly Tichenor (Louisville Orchestra) was reelected to a two-year MAL term. Martin Andersen (New Jersey Symphony Orchestra) was elected to a two-year MAL position and Greg Mulligan (Baltimore Symphony) was elected to a one-year MAL position.



New MAL Greg Mulligan (Baltimore) and Delegate Debbie Brooks (Fort Worth)

ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case moderated a panel of orchestra leaders that examined the dynamics of orchestra relations in a discussion called "Back from the Brink". Panelists included Louisville Orchestra Committee Chair and MAL Kimberly Tichenor, Detroit Symphony Orchestra Committee member Ken Thompkins, Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony Music Director JoAnn Falletta, Jacksonville Symphony President and CEO Robert Massey, and former Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services Allison Beck. A number of the orchestras represented on the panel dealt with labor strife, work stoppages, or major cutbacks in the past; discussion centered on the methods used by these orchestras to recover from those problems, including re-establishing and improving relations between musicians, staff, and board members. Allison Beck pointed out that open communication, especially prior to negotiations, was key to any successful healing process.

ICSOM provided a luncheon for MALs and their Delegates (each MAL oversees 13 orchestras) to discuss issues of importance. Following lunch, ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow moderated a panel discussion examining diversity within our orchestral organizations. Participants included Los Angeles >>

Philharmonic Delegate John Lofton, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra musician Don Harry, Gateways Music Festival and Oakland Symphony Music Director Michael Morgan, AFM Diversity Committee Chair and Local 65-699 (Houston TX) President Lovie Smith-Wright, and League of American Orchestras



Delegates Pat Sharpe (Symphoria) and Monica Fosnaugh (Detroit)

(LAO) Board member and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra member Robert Wagner. Phoenix Symphony musician Alex Laing, who is a leader within the LAO diversity initiative, sent a brief video presentation. Detroit Symphony ICSOM Delegate Monica Fosnaugh and her colleague Ken Thompkins spoke about how their orchestra has dealt with diversity on all levels of the institution.

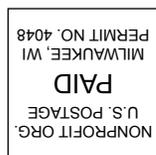
Dan Sweeley organized a runout to Niagara Falls (the American side) for 40+ conference attendees once the conference ended for the day. It was a beautiful evening to ride the Maid of the Mist, walk beneath the American Falls at the Cave of the Winds, have dinner in town or at the Seneca Casino and see the falls lit up at night.

Saturday morning began with a presentation about the Houston Musicians Credit Union instrument loan program. ICSOM's good friend and public relations consultant from Cypress Media, Randy Whatley, gave tips on how musicians can craft a community relations program. He offered practical ideas and included comments by musicians who had put these

ideas into practice in their orchestras. Kevin Case then offered a new and welcome addition to the conference—an open forum for delegates to ask him questions as ICSOM's Counsel.

As the conference moved into its final hours, Delegates adopted resolutions addressing the AFM-EPF, national "right-to-work" legislation, an online conductor evaluation pilot program, and ICSOM's response to what occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia. (*Note: See page 8*) Resolutions were also adopted by unanimous consent honoring Utah Symphony Principal Timpanist George Brown as he stepped down as ICSOM President, and honoring Librarian Paul Gunther, who stepped down as MAL after 11 years following his retirement from the Minnesota Orchestra. During the site selection portion of the conference, it was announced that the Cincinnati Symphony and Local 1 had submitted an offer to host the conference in 2018. (The Cincinnati Symphony was on tour in Europe so was unable to attend the conference this year.) The Utah Symphony and Local 104 offered to host the conference in 2019, and the Milwaukee Symphony and Local 8 submitted an offer to host the conference in 2020.

Many thanks to Dan Sweeley, conference coordinator Travis Hendra, Local 92 President James Pace, and the many BPO volunteers who helped set up and help during the conference. Thanks as well to Virginia Symphony Alternate Delegate Tom Reel, who filled in as assistant conference coordinator at the last minute. Thanks as well to Local 92 and the Buffalo Philharmonic for their generosity and for a really wonderful conference.



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

