

Senza Sordino

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Conference Report

By ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross

The 56th annual ICSOM conference was held August 22–25 and hosted by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Local 1. The conference was held this year at the Cincinnati Hilton Netherland Plaza, a magnificent historic hotel in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. The conference included the usual variety of reports, presentations and discussions. The schedule also included more opportunities for smaller break-out groups and closed sessions, which allowed the delegates to choose the topics and issues being discussed.

One of our pre-conference events is becoming an ICSOM tradition: delegates and guests arrive early enough on Tuesday to perform (and sometimes serve dinner) at homeless shelters and food pantries in the host city. This year was no exception; the volunteer event was held at the David and Rebecca Barron Center for Men. Musicians from the Alabama Symphony (Kevin Kozak), Atlanta Symphony (Michael Moore), Buffalo Philharmonic (Dan Sweeley), Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra (Matt Comerford), Cincinnati Symphony



Dan Sweeley

Brad Mansell and Joey Grimmer

Orchestra (Paul Frankenfeld), Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (Debbie Brooks), Grand Rapids Symphony (Barbara Corbató), Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra (Joseph Grimmer), Louisville Orchestra (Kimberly Tichenor, Bert Witzel, Dan Kasteen) and Nashville Symphony (Brad Mansell, Laura Ross), along with two attorneys (ICSOM counsel Kevin Case and Local 802 attorney Harvey Mars), entertained an appreciative audience on Tuesday afternoon.

Tuesday evening a number of delegates, local officers, AFM
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Minnesota Orchestra's Music for Mandela

By Valerie Little, Minnesota Orchestra ICSOM Alternate Delegate

In celebration of the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth, the Minnesota Orchestra recently performed in five cities throughout South Africa following a return performance at the BBC Proms in London. The orchestra had the distinct honor of being the first professional orchestra from the United States to visit South Africa. Following our historic—and for the orchestra, transformational—tour to Cuba in 2015, and Maestro Osmo



John Chisham

Vänskä's previous experience as a guest conductor for the South African National Youth Orchestra (SANYO), our orchestra, the Board of Directors, and the Nelson Mandela Foundation were all inspired to make a tour to South Africa a reality. Led by the stellar staff of Classical Movements, the tour included more than 300 Minnesotans, including the orchestra members and their family members of all ages, staff, patrons, board members,

members of the press, the Minnesota Chorale and their guests, Minnesota Public Radio, and members of the Minnesota

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Travis Anderson

Tim Zavadil speaks to students at Cape Town Elementary School

Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

Confronting Uncomfortable Truths

One of the responsibilities of my position that I feel most acutely is the need to be the public voice of ICSOM. I am afforded several opportunities to do so on a regular basis, including this column in each issue of *Senza Sordino*, and the opening address to our annual conference. While it feels gratifying to be an advocate for our orchestras and our art form, there are times when some uncomfortable truths must be spoken. In my opening speech at this year's conference, I addressed a number of issues that are of paramount importance to our ICSOM orchestras and to our Union.



Diane Alvarado Photography

The American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) was at the top of the agenda.

While many of our members and our colleagues in the wider union are understandably very upset about the critical state of the AFM-EPF, and some are searching for someone to blame, I do not believe there has been any malfeasance or incompetence on the part of our Fund trustees. No one wants to cut benefits, but whatever solutions can be found must be equitably borne by all members of this Union.

It is deeply disappointing that the Congressional Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Funds has chosen to change the parameters of the proposed Butch Lewis Act such that our pension fund would no longer qualify for relief under the new guidelines. Every member of the AFM needs to contact their Congressional representatives and the Joint Select Committee to urge them to support legislation that will assist our Fund in this crisis. Make your voice heard by using the tools on the AFM-EPF website to contact your Members of Congress and the Joint Select Committee. (<https://www.afmepf.org/Participants/ContactCongress.aspx>). The millions of Americans whose pension funds are in jeopardy need to speak up and vote for representation at the Federal level this November that will help solve this crisis.

In my address, I called out the insidious problem of our own ICSOM members accepting non-union recording work. Later in the conference, the Players Conference Council (the heads of ROPA, OCSM/OMOSC, TMA, RMA, and ICSOM) held a panel discussion that also touched on internal organizing and educating our members on the vital importance of holding the Union line. AFM leadership cannot negotiate progressive contracts with the major production companies if those executives know they can hire, under the table, from amongst the best players in the country. It is essential that we understand the larger context of our actions within our industry. The recovery of our pension fund is dependent on contributions made through legitimate union work. The ICSOM delegates unanimously adopted a resolution calling on all ICSOM musicians to reject any and all offers of employment for non-union recording.

With the backdrop of the #MeToo movement, a growing number of allegations have been made by our musicians against visiting artists as well as some of their own colleagues. It is the >



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responsibility of our employers to provide a safe workplace, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Where accusations are brought forward, our employers must follow through with an investigation and appropriate action. At the same time, it is incumbent upon all of us, managers and musicians alike, to create an environment in which musicians who have been so affected are comfortable coming forward to speak about their experiences. It is becoming increasingly clear that even though the public persona of the accused might seem incompatible with the alleged acts, that does not mean the accusations are false. Because there is at the very heart of many of these wrongful acts an imbalance of power, the victim must be accorded an unbiased and safe environment in which to be heard. The delegates unanimously adopted a resolution calling on our employers to ensure a workplace that is free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying, and for employers and musicians to foster a culture in which musicians are comfortable coming forward to report instances of abuse.

The need for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) exists in all segments of our industry: onstage, backstage, out front, and in the board room. If we are to continue to be relevant as an art form and an industry, we must be a vital part of our communities. If we do not reflect where we live, and respond to changing cultural norms while still preserving our historic legacy, we will not survive the shifting economic paradigm. The League of American Orchestras (LAO) has been working for a number of years to encourage diversifying staff, management, boards, repertoire, soloists, and conductors in orchestras nationwide. A panel which included representation from LAO, AFM, management, and musicians, explored where our ICSOM orchestras stand now in relation to DEI. While progress is being made and we are seeing more diverse hiring practices, educational initiatives, and fellowship opportunities, there is a perception that implicit bias may still be affecting our audition processes. Many of our orchestras have screened auditions up until the final round; a handful keep the screen up but still have the option, by committee vote or at the discretion of the music director, to remove screens in the final round. If our litmus test for hiring is truly what a candidate sounds like—their tone, musicianship, and virtuosity—then hearing is enough. If the screens stay up, there is no opportunity for bias to enter into the decision. We have a tenure process to test the character and ensemble capabilities of any hire. As a demonstration of good faith and to preclude the possibility of implicit bias, I believe it is incumbent upon us to hold fully screened auditions. Out of 52 ICSOM orchestras, only about a third currently keep screens up throughout the entire audition process. Delegates at this year's conference unanimously adopted a resolution encouraging all ICSOM orchestras to adopt a process that retains screens throughout every individual round of the audition.

We, the musicians of these ICSOM orchestras, are in a unique and privileged position to bring awareness of where social injustice and need exist. President Paul Austin highlighted a few of our orchestras doing just that:

- The Detroit Symphony, the Sphinx Organization, and the Detroit Pistons have partnered in a multi-year education initiative to enhance music education for local youth.
- The Grand Rapids Symphony has created a program that sends musicians into health care settings with the healing

power of music.

- Members of the Utah Symphony will return to Haiti to bring music training to young musicians from across the island nation.
- The Nashville Symphony performed and recorded on the *Violins of Hope*, a collection of recently restored instruments that were played by Jews during the Holocaust.
- The Louisville Orchestra premiered an oratorio by their Music Director, Teddy Abrams, *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*, a tribute to the extraordinary life and impact of a legendary athlete and humanitarian.

These and others of our ICSOM orchestras have created initiatives that reach beyond the doors of our concert halls and engage with communities at home and abroad. At its core, our Union is a social justice organization. Equal pay, accessibility, and equal opportunity, regardless of race, color, religion, physical ability, or sexual orientation, is a fundamental principal of union labor. The music we play is not just beautiful, it is founded at its deepest level on human aspiration and the search for meaning. By the very nature of what we do, with the talent and capabilities we already possess, we can call attention to these inequities and cut through the ignorance and rhetoric that blind us all to the suffering in our communities. It is everyone's responsibility to recognize these inequities, work to ameliorate them, participate fully in our democracy, and foster awareness of our universal humanity. 

President's Report

By Paul Austin

Orchestra-L Update

For many years, Paul Gunther has been the caretaker of Orchestra-L, ICSOM's established and official listserv. As the owner and chief moderator of the list, Paul led the four-member team that approved new subscribers as well as the news items and follow-up comments that appeared there. In addition, Paul became accustomed to the quirks of working with the Yahoo group list, and there were many.

Paul Gunther's service to ICSOM was noted with a resolution at our 2017 conference in Buffalo, when he left his position of Member-at-Large on ICSOM's Governing Board. (Note: See www.icsom.org/senzasordino/2017/10/adopted-resolutions-2017-conference/) Even after Paul retired as Principal Librarian of the Minnesota Orchestra, he was kind enough to continue this Orchestra-L work for ICSOM.

Last summer, Paul let ICSOM's Governing Board know that it was time to find a replacement for his leadership of Orchestra-L. Julie Edwards of the Utah Symphony agreed to take on these duties. Julie has served ICSOM in many ways, most recently as the Chair of our Nominating Committee. She has devoted much time representing Utah Symphony musicians on their committees, in addition to her leadership >>



Tony Johnston

for the American Viola Society. ICSOM's Governing Board is very pleased that Julie Edwards will be the co-owner and chief moderator for Orchestra-L.

However, when we attempted to transfer ownership of the listserv to Julie, we discovered that Yahoo had been sold. Requests that ICSOM was making, such as a transfer of ownership, became impossible to do on our own because of outdated technology from Yahoo, and a complete lack of customer support from them. Not only were our requests to Yahoo for assistance being ignored, but research led us to websites devoted to customer service concerns about the lack of response from Yahoo. It became apparent that we needed to have a new option for Orchestra-L.

Julie has been researching our options, which will be presented to the Governing Board for final decisions and approval. Her activities include the transfer of Orchestra-L's archival material from Yahoo. Delegates at ICSOM's 2018 conference in Cincinnati were informed of these updates, and they support the work that is being done to preserve our history.

Know that ICSOM will continue to have an official listserv, to which all AFM members can subscribe. Once the change is ready to implement, we will make sure all current Orchestra-L subscribers know what, if anything, they have to do to continue receiving posts.

Join me in thanking Paul Gunther for his dedicated work in this arena, as well as welcoming Julie Edwards to this important role for ICSOM. As noted at the end of all Orchestra-L posts, and by virtue of my office, any questions or concerns about an Orchestra-L posting should be addressed to me at austinpaul@gmail.com. 

Recovery Begins In Columbus

By Doug Fisher

After ten long and painful years, the Musicians and Board of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO) agreed to a progressive contract this summer that provides the first real economic gains for the musicians since 2008. Because central Ohio is a large and very prosperous part of our country, it has been difficult and frustrating waiting for this recovery to begin. Many CSO musicians have wondered why our neighbor cities in Cleveland and Cincinnati are able to sustain orchestras with annual budgets many times greater than Columbus.



Courtesy of the Author

The orchestras in Cleveland and Cincinnati have large endowments and long histories of generous support compared to Columbus, but those facts are manifestations of something deeper and more important. It would be unthinkable to the city leaders in Cleveland and Cincinnati to permanently cut back or allow their orchestras to dissolve. That is because those leaders care about their orchestras and understand their vital importance for many reasons. Sadly, that is not true in Columbus. That's the fundamental difference, and we learned this painful lesson the hard way.

Beginning in 2005, our orchestra began to run very large

deficits that were paid for by burning through the orchestra's small endowment. Though the post-9/11 economic problems contributed to these deficits, something worse was a greater factor. The philanthropic, corporate, and political city leaders had decided that the orchestra was no longer worthy of support, and most of our largest contributors withdrew or severely cut their annual contributions. All of this led to the board consuming nearly all assets and eventually locking out the musicians in May 2008, violating the no-lock-out clause in the contract, which was still in effect.

In the months that followed, the musicians pursued an aggressive public campaign through various print, radio, and television media. We also worked heavily with volunteer supporters, and filed charges against the orchestra with the National Labor Relations Board, all in an effort to pressure the board and city leaders to provide enough support to resume operations. But by the end of the summer, we learned that only two staff members remained employed, for the purpose of turning out the lights permanently. This was not posturing for negotiation purposes. The board had given up on the orchestra and was preparing for legal dissolution. We met with city leaders, and though they expressed sympathy, they were not willing to save the orchestra and were prepared to accept dissolution. This could never happen in Cleveland and Cincinnati, but we learned that it can in Columbus.

In negotiations, there is a basic assumption that both sides of the table want the orchestra to survive and thrive, but what do you do when the other side gives up and is willing to cease operations and dissolve? This was the reality that the CSO musicians were forced to face and deal with. So, instead of losing the orchestra permanently, the musicians made the pragmatic and painful decision to negotiate what we called a "life boat" contract with the board, designed to give the musicians time to decide and act upon possible professional and life changes. We accepted annual economic cuts of 20% and we resumed operations in January 2009 after seven long months.

After cutting millions from the budget, we expected donors and ticket buyers to return and resume their previous support, but most of them did not. Because of the public battle from the previous year, the philanthropic, corporate, and political city leaders did not trust the orchestra. Without their critical support, it did not take long for the orchestra to find itself in the same terrible situation again only one year later. In February 2010 we learned from management that there was enough cash to continue only through the end of the month. Management and the board concluded that Columbus would not support the orchestra, and they intended to begin dissolution without asking the musicians for more cuts.

A few days later, however, we learned that the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA), a very large institution which owns all of the major venues in Columbus and brings touring shows to the city, was willing to discuss taking over management of the orchestra, but only on a much smaller scale, which would mean more cuts from the musicians. CAPA would extend a large line of credit to the orchestra in order to avoid another shutdown. Because this all occurred only a year after the lock out ended, the musicians decided, for the same reasons as before, to accept another cut of 20%.

In the years that followed some musicians left the orchestra >>

for better jobs in other cities. Some left music and began new successful careers. Many musicians who remained found or created new additional income sources. There were also musicians who sadly lost marriages and suffered financial disasters. For the next seven years, the CAPA-managed orchestra stabilized with minimal budget growth. The orchestra finished every year in the black in large part due to the severe musician cuts. The goal was to accumulate a significant cash reserve as a large safety net against possible disasters in the future, and that goal was achieved. Along the way in 2013, for complicated reasons unique to our orchestra, we agreed to end employer group health insurance in favor of a stipend for musicians to purchase individual policies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). At first this was successful, but for political reasons beyond our control, the ACA policies soon failed to meet our needs and created further stress for the musicians.

But by the beginning of this year, significant changes had occurred. While CAPA continues to provide management support, they no longer make critical decisions for the CSO. The leadership of CAPA and the CSO has also changed completely. This last factor more than any other is responsible for the beginning of recovery. The new leadership continues to be financially conservative, but they also believe that the CSO needs to grow in order to become stronger and more relevant to the city. They are raising money for an endowment, and they agreed without obligation to restore employer group health insurance last spring, before our previous contract expired. Work weeks will be gradually added during the term of our new contract, which will have the effect of increasing annual wages by about 3.5% each season. In the last year, the minimum annual salary will be \$44,380. We still have a long way to go towards recovering completely and becoming an institution that the city will always support. This beginning of recovery provides a small quantum of hope for us, but hope nonetheless. 

Note: The Author is a bassoonist in the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and the President of Local 103.

A Whirlwind Tour

By Amal Gochenour

My International Initiation with the Baltimore Symphony

It was big news when it was announced that the Baltimore Symphony (BSO) would be going on its first international tour in 13 years, one that would include stops at some of Europe's most exciting classical music festivals. When I was asked to join the orchestra on this adventure, and as its newest member, I was positively thrilled. An international orchestra tour is something of a rite of passage, and I felt privileged to have the opportunity to familiarize myself—musically and personally—with the members of the BSO in advance of my first season with them.



Erin Reynolds

The BSO had not toured overseas since 2005. Planned tours to Europe were cancelled twice, “because of financial con-

cerns,” said Players Committee Co-Chair Greg Mulligan. “Our board and management believe that the good publicity generated by this tour will encourage enthusiasm and increased donations,” he added.

Over the course of nine whirlwind days, we visited three countries and performed three different programs for exuberant audiences.

We had the most time to explore the city of Edinburgh, our first and longest stop of the tour. Our hotel was perfectly situated within walking distance of both our performance venue and the biggest tourist destinations in the city. We were there to perform as part of the Edinburgh International Festival, the world's largest arts festival, and the city was buzzing with excitement. It felt especially significant to perform our all-Bernstein program on what would have been the composer's one-hundredth birthday. Celebrating one of the most famous American classical musicians under the fluent direction of his former pupil, Maestra Marin Alsop, was a memorable and proud moment for the entire orchestra.

From Scotland we traveled to London, a city I had not visited since childhood. We had the privilege of performing at the biggest venue of our tour, the Royal Albert Hall, as part of the BBC Proms summer festival. With 5,200 filled seats,



Lin Ma (Clarinet) and Qing Li (violin) at the Albert Hall



BSO tour participants pose in front of Royal Albert Hall

cameras circling around us, and purple and blue lights coloring the boisterous audience below, it felt unlike any performance I have ever been a part of. We presented a challenging and politically charged program that included one of my favorite pieces to perform: Shostakovich's colossal Symphony No. 5. The orchestra seemed to react to the energy of our surroundings, and we played with a tremendous sense of collaboration >

and passion. This performance was for me the highlight of our entire trip, and I was simply in awe of my colleagues for their extraordinary efforts in this huge arena.

Following the Proms, we enjoyed a much-needed day off in London, and many spent their free time visiting popular tourist attractions. I chose to tag along with members of the oboe section, taking a train to the cozy coastal town of Worthing, West Sussex. While they visited a well-known oboe factory, I happily ventured to the nearby beach and relished the fresh air and peaceful surroundings. Back in London after our day trip, I joined some other musicians and visited the famous Globe Theatre. We took our turn sitting in the audience for a performance of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, which made for a lively and diverting evening.

Dublin was our final stop of the tour, and our experience there felt like a celebration. The orchestra seemed to breathe easier after our performance at the Proms, and traveling between cities already felt



Courtesy of Greg Mulligan

The ICSOM contingent in Usher Hall in Edinburgh: Brian Precht, Delegate; Andrew Balio, Alternate Delegate; Greg Mulligan, Member-at-Large

more comfortably routine. We repeated our Bernstein program, and it seemed that the orchestra played with even greater exuberance and swagger. The hall was small but packed, and I was particularly enthusiastic that evening as my parents were in the audience, visiting all the way from Moscow to hear us perform.

Nine days have never flown by faster—the tour ended with a bang, and I enjoyed every minute of it. After our day in Dublin, many musicians continued to travel in Europe, myself included. I spent three days with my family, driving through Ireland and stopping to admire ancient castles and quaint towns. I was eager to return, though, to begin my new life in Baltimore. I look forward to many more adventures with this great orchestra, shared with my new colleagues. 

Note: The Author is the piccolo player in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

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.

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Feeding Pittsburgh's Body and Soul

By Lorien Benet Hart

In the summer of 2016, I was looking for a non-profit organization that the Musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO) could partner with on a regular basis. I sent out a number of emails to established



Edward DeArmitt

local food pantries and one to a newer organization called 412 Food Rescue. At the time, I didn't know much about what food rescue meant, but I had seen the logo of the organization around and it intrigued me. We got an immediate "yes, let's do it!" from 412 Food Rescue, so I scheduled an afternoon of volunteering for a small group. We quickly learned that food rescue is the act of preventing perfectly good food from entering

the waste stream. 412 Food Rescue takes it one step further by partnering with area non-profits who serve food-insecure populations.

Our first run as "food rescue heroes" took place 12 miles southeast of Pittsburgh in the town of McKeesport, the ghost



Leland Seales

Adam Liu, Cynthia Koledo DeAlmeida, Rhian Kenny, Steven Turkovich (PSO Marketing Dept), Justine Lamb-Budge, Joseph Campagna, and Lorien Benet Hart with "Big Green"

of a once-thriving coal and steel town along the Monongahela River. We delivered rescued food to two family centers, a Section 8 housing development, and a senior center. At each stop, we offered people free tickets to come to hear the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in Heinz Hall. We quickly realized that it wasn't just the ticket prices that kept people from attending: it was lack of access to transportation, it was fear of not having the right thing to wear, it was difficulty in finding childcare—a myriad of obstacles that a free ticket alone couldn't surmount. This was an "aha" moment for us. We had something else to offer these communities that other 412 Food Rescue volunteers couldn't. We had the ability to bring live, world-class music.

I met with Jen England, the 412 Food Rescue Program Director for Food Recovery Operations, and we created the Body & Soul partnership. Each month, a group of PSO musicians would travel with the 412 Food Rescue truck for an afternoon and help to unload the truck while another group would play a >>

pop-up concert for the residents and community members at each stop. It would be an afternoon of feeding both the bodies and souls of Pittsburgh-area communities in need.

After two years of monthly visits, the program has been so successful that we have recently expanded it to include 1–2 additional runs per month, reaching deeper into the northern



Scott Bell, James Rogers, and Ron Samuels with residents of HACP Northview Heights

and southern parts of the Pittsburgh region. We also recently started inviting PSO staff and board members to join us on our runs. It has been an amazing way to bridge the gap and get to know each other outside of Heinz Hall. In the 2017/18 season, we had 19 Body & Soul runs as well as an extra event where 40 members of the PSO family (musicians, staff, and family members) helped to transform an inner city lot into an urban community vegetable garden and orchard.

Our goal of 100% musician participation is well within reach, and we hope to achieve it by the end of the 2018/19 season. With each run, the pool of “count me in, anytime!” volunteers grows. It is amazing to bring this dual nourishment to our fellow Pittsburghers—young, old, and all ages in between—and to experience their reactions. We have had people dance, sing, cry, and even beatbox with us—each an indelible memory to remind us of the power of live music. 

Note: The Author is a violinist in the Pittsburgh Symphony. More information about the 412 Food Rescue Body & Soul partnership is available on the Musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Facebook page. To find out more about 412 Food Rescue, visit 412foodrescue.org.



A Tribute to Dale Newton (1950-2018)

By ICSOM President Paul Austin

It is with great sadness that I report the sudden passing of Dale Newton, long-time ICSOM Delegate for the Grant Park Orchestra, on September 22nd.

A member of Grant Park’s cello section since 1974, Dale truly loved classical music and the arts. Upon meeting him, he would be sure to tell you that playing in an orchestra was his destiny, as his father had been a violist in the Chicago Symphony, and that both of them had performed in the Grant Park Orchestra.

While musicians wear many hats, Dale had the market cornered. Perhaps first and foremost, he was a gifted musician, both as a cellist and a composer. American composer Libby Larsen makes mention of Dale’s skill and assistance in the creation of the cello part for her 2002 composition *Bid Call* (for alto saxophone and cello), stating, “I would like to thank Dale Newton



for his creativity and guidance in developing new techniques for the violoncello.” Dale was also a long-time member and donor of the American Composers Forum. His musicianship was noted at the Minnesota Opera Orchestra, where he had been Assistant Principal Cello for 40 years. Dale’s kind and nurturing spirit would lend itself well to being a caring teacher, and he had taught at the University of Tampa early in his career. Those of us who knew Dale only through ICSOM recognized his leadership as the representative of his Grant Park Orchestra colleagues. However, Dale also was a businessman and served for 16 years as an Independent Associate at LegalShield (a provider of pre-paid legal services). Family was very important to Dale, and a visit to his social media page shows beautiful photos that no doubt will remain fond memories for his loved ones.

Dale had an important presence at ICSOM conferences. He did not speak often but when he did it was thoughtful and meaningful. I will never forget how Dale reported at the 2016 ICSOM conference in Washington DC about the great pride he had for his Grant Park colleagues as a result of their recent negotiation. After a brief strike, they managed to settle in time for the 2016 opening night concert. Fellow Grant Park cellist Peter Szczepanek said, “No one was more proud to be a member of the Grant Park Orchestra cello section, or believed more in the festival’s mission of bringing classical music to the public for free. Plus, he was unfailingly the most warm, witty, and approachable colleague you could ever hope for.”

Dale was also a cellist with the Hawai’i Symphony Orchestra. Their Orchestra Committee Chair, Scott Janusch, shared that “My colleagues and I in the Hawai’i Symphony were saddened to learn of Dale Newton’s passing yesterday. He had been a member of the cello section here for many seasons. His fine musicianship, good nature, positive attitude, and approachability will be very greatly missed by all of us, and our deepest condolences go to Dale’s family and friends on the mainland.”

It is never easy to say goodbye to a colleague. Future ICSOM conferences will not be the same without Dale’s presence. He will be deeply missed. 

Adopted Resolutions of the 2018 Conference

Bill Foster Retirement

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, Following a distinguished career since joining the viola section of the National Symphony Orchestra in 1968, Bill Foster announced his intention to retire at the end of the 2017-18 season; and

Whereas, Bill Foster held numerous leadership positions in the National Symphony, including the Assistant Principal Viola chair from 1980 to 2006, and the chairmanship of the orchestra's negotiating and orchestra committees; and

Whereas, Foster's work was exemplary as the National Symphony's ICSOM Delegate, as a long-term member and later Chairman of ICSOM's Electronic Media Committee, and as a rank-and-file union Trustee for the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund from 2003 to 2010; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates to the 2018 ICSOM Conference offer their profound gratitude and admiration to Bill Foster upon his retirement from the National Symphony Orchestra after 50 years, and wish him and his family a well-deserved rest, and success in any future endeavors.



Screen Use During Auditions

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, ICSOM is committed to a fair orchestral hiring process based solely on merit; and

Whereas, Preserving anonymity of candidates is a key part of such a fair process; and

Whereas, Nearly every ICSOM orchestra currently accomplishes the preservation of anonymity through the use of screens during auditions; and

Whereas, The use of screens was instrumental in rectifying long-standing discrimination against female musicians; and

Whereas, In many ICSOM orchestras, screens are removed from later audition rounds and as a result anonymity of candidates is sacrificed; and

Whereas, There currently exists an underrepresentation of African American, Latinx, and other minority musicians in orchestras, especially compared to the populations of the cities in which most of our orchestras perform; and

Whereas, Preserving anonymity of candidates by keeping screens up through the entire audition process is an important step towards rectifying such underrepresentation; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2018 ICSOM Conference encourage all orchestras to adopt an audition process that retains screens throughout every individual round of the audition.



Non-union Recording

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, Many for-profit employers have been actively seeking to hire union musicians for non-union recording projects, including the recording of soundtracks for video games, movies, and similar projects; and

Whereas, Non-union recording of such soundtracks is inherently destructive to the terms and conditions of employment of all musicians, and inherently destructive to our Union; and

Whereas, The loss of pension contributions from employers recording such soundtracks has had a deleterious effect on the financial condition of the AFM-EPF; and

Whereas, Some members of ICSOM orchestras are among the musicians who have agreed to participate in such non-union recording projects; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates and Officers to the 2018 ICSOM Conference call on all musicians in ICSOM orchestras to reject any and all offers of employment for non-union recording projects, including the recording of soundtracks for video games, movies, and similar projects.



#MeToo

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, ICSOM has long advocated that our employers provide a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying; and

Whereas, Alleged instances of egregious sexual harassment and misconduct in the orchestra world have been widely reported recently; and

Whereas, There is growing societal awareness that such behavior is totally unacceptable, as reflected in the #MeToo movement; and

Whereas, ICSOM fully supports musicians who have come forward to report such behavior; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2018 ICSOM Conference call on our employers to ensure that musicians are afforded a workplace devoid of discrimination, harassment, and bullying; and, be it further

Resolved, That employers and ICSOM members work to create a culture in which musicians are comfortable coming forward to report instances of discrimination, harassment, and bullying.



Librarians in Bargaining Units

Submitted by Matt Comerford (Chicago Lyric) and the ICSOM Governing Board

Whereas, Orchestra managements often view Orchestra Librarians as clerical employees, who are hired for low wages and poor benefits and without due consideration of their training and experience; and

Whereas, Orchestra Librarians are an integral part of any symphonic orchestra and are professional musicians; and

Whereas, Orchestra Librarians must have special skills to successfully service the needs of performing musicians; and

Whereas, It is in the best interests of these performing musicians to have representation in the hiring and dismissal procedures of its Orchestra Librarians; and

Whereas, ICSOM has a long and consistent history of recognizing and supporting Orchestral Librarians as colleagues to be included in their orchestral bargaining units; and

Whereas, ICSOM adopted such a resolution at the 1997 Conference; and

Whereas, Even with recent successes in several orchestras using the *Armour-Globe* NLRB decision to include their Orchestra Librarians, there are several member orchestras in which the Orchestra Librarians still are not members of the bargaining unit; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Officers and Delegates to the 2018 ICSOM Conference encourage ICSOM Orchestras in which Orchestra Librarians are not members of the bargaining unit to seek the inclusion of said Orchestra Librarians at the earliest opportunity.



Newslets

New Leadership in Fort Worth

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) announced the appointment of Keith Cerny as President and CEO. Dr. Cerny will begin his tenure on January 11, 2019.

He comes to the FWSO with an impressive educational background, having studied conducting at London's Guildhall School of Music and holding graduate degrees from Harvard Business School and the U.K.'s Open University.

Cerny also has meaningful experience as an arts leader. Most recently he has led the Calgary Opera, but DFW Metroplex audiences know him as the innovative General Director and CEO of the Dallas Opera from 2010–2017. He regularly brought new operas to Dallas and established the ground-breaking Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors.

FWSO Players Committee chairman Kyle Sherman said, "We are thrilled to have Dr. Cerny joining the FWSO. The Players Committee recently had the opportunity to meet and visit with him. His credentials, track record, and plans for future artistic >>

collaboration are both impressive and exciting. We look forward to beginning our work together in January.”

The FWSO’s CEO post has been vacant for over a year. Amy Adkins, hired in 2011, left the post in 2017. Before Adkins, Ann Koonsman had held the top job, and is widely credited with creating an atmosphere of stability and growth for the orchestra.

Posthumous Chorister Gift in Washington

The Washington National Opera (WNO) announced that it had received a bequest from Clifford Thomson of \$1.1 million. Thomson had been a member of the WNO Chorus for more than 30 years, performing in 75 WNO productions.

Tim O’Leary, WNO’s new general director, said, “We are deeply moved to receive this extraordinary and unexpected gift. This contribution is all the more meaningful coming from a member of WNO’s artistic family.”

WNO also announced the appointment of Evan Rogister as Principal Conductor. The company is currently without a music director, and Rogister will assume many of the same responsibilities. His professional conducting debut was at Houston Grand Opera in 2008, and from 2009–2011 he served as Kapellmeister at Deutsche Oper Berlin under the direction of music director Donald Runnicles. 

Minnesota Orchestra’s *Music for Mandela* (continued)

business community. Over the course of the 12 days in South Africa, the orchestra traveled to Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Soweto, and Johannesburg.

We first prepared for this tour, aptly named *Music for Mandela*, during our summer season, by presenting two weeks of programming for our community at home. This included not only performances of the music that would be featured on tour, but also an African market in the lobby of Orchestra Hall, a partnership with Books for Africa to collect donations of books for children, and a free International Day of Music, which featured local artists of all ages and genres. Second flutist Wendy Williams was particularly drawn to the four South African themes that emerged from Mandela’s leadership and the post-apartheid government—inclusivity, reconciliation, truth, and *ubuntu*, a concept of common humanity and oneness. “These are the same themes that helped our Minnesota Orchestra community heal and recover after our lockout ended in February, 2014,” said Ms. Williams.

This tour model differed from past tours because we were out in the community as much as we were in the concert hall. In each city, there were cultural exchange activities and opportunities for our musicians to work directly with the young musicians of South Africa. These included sectionals and master classes, as well as small ensemble performances at the Cape Music Institute, the University of Pretoria, Elsie’s River Primary School, and for the students who comprise the Kwa-zulu Natal Wind Ensemble. The orchestra also participated in interactive rehearsal coaching and side-by-side performances with the Cape Town Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and the SANYO. Maestro Vänskä had the opportunity to work with both orchestras in rehearsal, and our Associate Conductor,

Roderick Cox, led the SANYO in concert with a performance of Sibelius Symphony No. 2.

Each concert setting was uniquely vibrant. For example, one musician recalled how pigeons somehow happily made their way into City Hall in Johannesburg to catch some Beethoven, while other locations held a deeper, historically rooted meaning. The concert in Soweto, broadcast on Minnesota Public Radio, was held at Regina Mundi Catholic Church. During apartheid, the church was known locally as a gathering place, as political meetings in public places had been banned. It later was a meeting site for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the mid-to-late 90s. The concert ended with playing and singing traditional African songs, including the much beloved *Shosholozza*, a working song for miners that now serves as an unofficial second national anthem. Many audience members sang and danced along to this music of celebration and resistance against apartheid.

We wanted these concerts to be as accessible to the community as possible, so we were grateful to collaborate with the U.S. Embassy and Medtronic, a Minnesota-based medical technology company. In an effort to bring in as diverse an audience as possible, they helped to provide tickets and transportation to and from the concerts.

Following each concert, the musicians passed through the



Percussionists Brian Mount and Steve Kimball give a masterclass at the University of Pretoria

audience to get to their cases and storage trunks, making for easy conversation with concertgoers. For Acting Associate Principal Bass player, Kate Nettleman, it was the way that the music inspired meaningful personal interactions with people that made this tour special. In her own words, “I think what will stay closest to me are impressions I carried away from conversations I had with audience members before and after several of the concerts and the inspiring introductory remarks made at each concert by US diplomats, regarding the joyous power of diplomacy via the arts in today’s world. All in all, I felt centered and purposeful sharing music we all know well and love so much, and learning new South African music, too.”

Another musical highlight of the tour was performing Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with four South African soloists, our Minnesota Chorale, and the Johannesburg-based Gauteng Choristers. Classical Movements also commissioned a new piece, *Harmonia Ubuntu*, from South African composer, >>

Bongani Ndodana-Breen. This work for soprano and orchestra, which featured young South African soprano Goitseman Lehobye, is a blend of traditional classical music idioms with African rhythms. The text comes from various speeches of Nelson Mandela, opening and closing with the powerful words, “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.” Fortunately, Mr. Ndodana-Breen and the four soloists for the Beethoven were able to join us here in Minneapolis in July for one of our summer concerts celebrating the tour.

Outside of the varied musical settings, orchestra members also saw wild animals on an overnight safari, enjoyed the natural beauty of the coast outside of Cape Town, and set foot into the Indian Ocean—many for the first time. Ms. Williams recalled how the musicians, staff, and patrons deepened con-



Travis Anderson

Doug Carlsen (trumpet), Ben Odhner (violin), and Sarah Grimes (violin) work with students at Cape Town Elementary School

nections and enjoyed wonderful group dinners together, including a torch-lit buffet following an evening safari drive under spectacular stars. This was the farewell tour for outgoing CEO and President Kevin Smith, who has been a truly dedicated leader of our orchestra since the lockout; we will always be grateful for his commitment to the orchestra through these years of substantial healing and growth. His ideas, along with Maestro Vänskäs’s, drove the development of our new model for touring. Michelle Miller Burns, our new CEO and President, and her husband also joined us for the tour and were welcomed into the orchestra family. Some orchestra musicians also took the opportunity to tour several notable historical sites, such as Nelson Mandela’s Soweto residence, the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, and Robben Island, where Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of his total of 27 years of incarceration.

Though there were instances of illness and fatigue throughout the tour, the musicians were unwavering in their commitment to serving the communities with enthusiasm and open hearts. When I asked some of my colleagues to speak about some of the most important messages that they will take away from this historic tour, Ms. Nettleman said, “I came away from the trip with a greater understanding of Nelson Mandela’s impact and a real gratitude for the lessons of his legacy.”

Note: Wendy Williams, Maureen Conroy, Marcia Peck, and Kate Nettleman contributed to this article.

Conference Report (continued)

staff, and observing orchestra members attended the evening negotiating orchestras workshop, followed by a visit to the hospitality suite for some social time. Wednesday morning began with the customary new delegate breakfast, where new delegates hear about what to expect during the conference, meet ICSOM governing board members, and learn a little bit more about their duties and responsibilities as their orchestra’s delegate.

The conference convened midmorning on Wednesday with welcoming remarks from our hosts. This year, representatives from the four groups of stakeholders in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra—board chair Francie Hiltz, President and CEO Jonathan Martin, orchestra committee chair and ICSOM delegate Ted Nelson, and Local 1 President and Conference Coordinator Paul Frankenfeld—stood together to demonstrate their strong working relationship and to welcome the conference to Cincinnati. Peter McLinden, Secretary & Executive Officer of the Cincinnati AFM-CIO Labor Council, added his greetings as well.



Dan Sheehey

Paul Frankenfeld

ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow’s powerful address did not shy away from uncomfortable topics. She discussed the multi-employer pension crisis and specific issues regarding the AFM-EPF. She spoke about the League of American Orchestras and ICSOM’s ability to work with the League on issues of mutual concern and interest. She also addressed the non-union recordings in which ICSOM members are participating. Snow reminded attendees that “[w]e are living in a dangerous time for our democracy and there is no room for complacency or ignorance. We must reach out, educate and support our brothers and sisters, of all political persuasions, race and economic standing—not just in Union solidarity, but that’s a good place to start.”

ICSOM President Paul Austin spoke about the numerous successful and progressive ICSOM settlements during the past season. Wednesday afternoon, Austin moderated presentations from six ICSOM orchestras—Grand Rapids Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and Nashville Symphony—about special projects they had created within their own communities or abroad. Barbara Corbató and Paul Austin spoke about the Grand Rapids Symphony’s Music for Health initiative with Spectrum Health; Monica Fosnaugh explained the partnership between the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Pistons, Music Education and Diversity; Keith Carrick and Julie Edwards talked about the Utah Symphony’s Haiti Residency; Bert Witzel and Kimberly Tichenor spoke about the Louisville Orchestra’s salute to their hometown hero, the >

Mohammad Ali Project; Ted Nelson and Paul Frankenfeld discussed the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's multi-year project Lumenocity; and Bradley Mansell and Laura Ross spoke about the Nashville Symphony's experience bringing the Violins of Hope to Nashville for two-and-a-half months.

Later that afternoon, AFM President Ray Hair addressed the conference, and in part discussed the proposed Butch Lewis act that would help certain multiemployer pension funds in difficulty; he also invited Local 257 Nashville TN President and IEB member Dave Pomeroy to perform a song Pomeroy wrote



Dan Sweeney

Dave Pomeroy performs his protest song

and sang at a rally in support of the Butch Lewis proposal, in Columbus OH. (Note: A recent report promoted changes to the Butch Lewis proposal that would exclude the AFM-EPF and other funds not yet in critical and declining status.) Following Hair's address, conference attendees heard an updated AFM-EPF presentation from Trustees and Fund advisors, staff, and counsel. Presenters included AFM Trustees Ray Hair, Tino Gagliardi (Local 802 President), Brian Rood, and Laura Ross; Employer Trustee Bill Thomas (New York Philharmonic Executive Director); AFM-EPF Finance Director Will Luebking; actuary Bob Behar (Milliman); financial advisor David Druley (Cambridge, the AFM-EPF OCIO); and Fund attorneys Robert Projansky (Proskauer) and Zachary Leeds (Cohen Weiss & Simon). The presentation included Q&A from pre-submitted and written questions, followed by an opportunity for the delegates to ask questions from the floor.

That evening, conference attendees were treated to a wonderful reception at the newly refurbished Cincinnati Music Hall. Tours included a visit to the massive library that houses 125 years of music and scores for the CSO, Cincinnati Pops, Cincinnati Opera, and May Festival. Sadly, tours of the redesigned auditorium were not available because the floors were being treated. Guests were also able to try Cincinnati specialties—goetta sliders, Skyline chili (on

spaghetti is the preferred method), and Graeter's ice cream.

Thursday morning began with a number of reports covering ICSOM's Directory and online presence, the AFM Strike Fund, and activities of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, which continues to negotiate the successor Integrated Media Agreement. Tony D'Amico, President of the Theater Musicians Association (TMA) was unavailable to participate in the panel discussion by the Players Conferences Council, so he spoke briefly about TMA's activities. ICSOM welcomed back former ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge, who attended in order to announce the publication of his new book *Last Year's Words, and Next Year's Voices*, and distribute copies of it to delegates. Delegates also heard from the AFM & SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund, which continues to add more ICSOM orchestras as they distribute royalties for digital broadcast payments.

ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case's Thursday and Saturday presentations on Bookends of Bargaining covered how to prepare for negotiations, and what to do if your contract expires without an agreement. In the Saturday session, Randy Whatley of Cypress Media also participated and discussed examples from previous ICSOM work stoppages.

On Thursday afternoon, delegates heard from the Symphonic Services Division. SSD Director Rochelle Skolnick provided helpful information about dealing with sexual harassment in the symphonic workplace, and Symphonic Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark discussed the role that orchestra committees play in decision-making and approval when working with the Integrated Media Agreement (IMA). SSD Negotiator Todd Jelen's presentation addressed building solidarity through orientation.

Portions of Thursday and Friday were also devoted to small group breakouts. Trying out for the first time a type of breakout session that had been requested by delegates in the past, groups of delegates from symphonic orchestras of similar budget

size met to compare notes on a variety of subjects, as did a group of delegates from pit orchestras. On Friday, Members-at-Large and their constituent orchestras met in small discussion groups during lunch provided by ICSOM. Two Town-Hall Meetings were convened for delegates and governing board members, which covered numerous issues raised by the delegates in a closed session.

Friday morning's session began with a heartfelt message of gratitude from ICSOM Delegate Enid Collado, on behalf of her colleagues in the Orquesta Sinfónica

de Puerto Rico, for the contributions sent by ICSOM orchestras following the island's decimation by Hurricane Maria last summer. Players Conferences Council leadership—Meredith Snow (ICSOM Chair), Marc Sazer (Recording Musicians Association President), Bob Fraser (Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians President) and Mike Smith (Regional Orchestra Players' Association President)—spoke about organizing efforts >



Laura Ross

Bruce Ridge (Former ICSOM Chair), Enid Collado (new Puerto Rico delegate), and Randy Whatley (Cypress Media)

within their conferences.

Friday also included two presentations. The first, moderated by ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case, advised orchestra musicians how to best utilize their orchestra's broker when dealing with their 401(k)/403(b) accounts. Brian Rood spoke about how the Kansas City Symphony musicians and other stakeholders oversee their 403(b) fund, much of it with the assistance of Jeffrey Gratton from SageView Advisory. The second presentation—a panel discussion moderated by Meredith Snow that included Los Angeles Philharmonic ICSOM Delegate John Lofton, Cincinnati Symphony Director of Community Engagement & Learning Ahmad Mayes, and Orchestrate Inclusion's Jessica Schmidt—offered further data, exploration, and discussion of diversity within our orchestras. Lovie Smith-Wright, President of Houston Local 65-699 and chair of the AFM Diversity Committee, spoke briefly about AFM initiatives, and Rochelle Skolnick spoke about her participation with the League's new program that will assist underrepresented musicians with mentorship and financial

support to take the next step and audition for our orchestras. Saturday morning, August 25, was Leonard Bernstein's 100th birthday. To celebrate, attendees were treated to coffee and cupcakes before tackling the final important business of the conference—the resolutions. Delegates adopted five resolutions, which can be found on page 8.

Incumbents Meredith Snow, Michael Moore (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra), Peter de Boor (Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra), Dan Sweeley (Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra) and Greg Mulligan (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, which was on tour during the conference) were reelected to their current positions. Dan Sweeley was elected AFM Convention Delegate to attend the AFM Convention next summer; Martin Andersen (New Jersey Symphony Orchestra) was elected as Alternate Delegate.

Next year's conference, hosted by the Utah Symphony and Local 104, will be held August 21–24, 2019. We hope to see many of

you there, as the ICSOM Conferences are open to any member of an ICSOM orchestra.



The Texas delegation: Martha Chapman, Debbie Brooks, Dan Florio, and Marisa Bushman

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