

# Senza Sordino

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## William E. Roehl and the Roehl Report

by Bradford D. Buckley

In 1990, I wrote the following letter to then-president of the AFM, J. Martin Emerson:

*Dear Marty,*

*I am pleased to report that the officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA have accepted the amended version of the Roehl report as adopted by the International Executive Board on March 31, 1990. You and the IEB are to be commended for the continuation of the AFM's policy of openness and availability to its membership.*

*We look forward to implementing the report as soon as reasonably possible.*

*Sincerely and fraternally yours,*

*Bradford D. Buckley, Chairman ICSOM, on behalf of the Player Conferences' Council*

The Roehl report mentioned in that letter is one of the most significant documents in the history of ICSOM, and indeed of the AFM. It called for the old AFM Symphony and Recording Departments to be replaced with much larger and better-funded entities, called the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) and the Electronic Media Services Division. Each division was to be administered by its own director, who would be an assistant to the AFM president, and advised by a steering committee consisting of rank-and-file player representatives. The first director of the SSD, appointed at the urging of the symphonic player conferences, was Lew Waldeck.

In addition, the Roehl report created the Player Conference Council (which consisted of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA), and directed the International Executive Board (IEB) to meet with the Council. This was very important since it created direct institutional access to the leadership of the AFM for rank-and-file symphonic and recording musicians

The Roehl report had two dramatic effects on how symphony musicians were represented by the AFM. It greatly increased the clout that symphonic issues had within the bureaucracy of the Federation, and most importantly it increased the ability of rank and file symphonic and recording musicians to advise and influence the leadership of our union on issues that are important to us.

The influence of this report on the AFM is still being seen today 16 years after the report was adopted by the IEB. Through their player conferences, symphonic musicians now have the ability to propose changes to AFM bylaws and to speak on the floor of the AFM Convention. The concept of the Player Conference Council worked so well that the AFM created a similar group for local union conferences as well. We now take for granted that the leadership of the AFM will seek the advice of the player conferences on all issues that affect the musicians who are members of those conferences. Before the Roehl report the union did not always work that way.

Given the importance of the Roehl report, who was Bill Roehl and how did he come to be associated with us? Carolyn Parks, a long-time ICSOM delegate for the Kennedy Center Orchestra and an ICSOM officer, found him through her AFL-CIO contacts while she was a member of the ICSOM Trade Division Committee. At the time Bill was working as a consultant to various unions. Carolyn called me and said, "You have to talk to this guy; he is terrific." When I talked to him on the phone, I quickly understood that he had insights and experience that we needed. The results of Carolyn's discovery speak for themselves in what was and continues to be accomplished as a result of the Roehl report.

For me and many others, Bill was both an inspiration and a mentor. He was a real union guy who never failed to stick up for working men and women and whose sense of humor never failed him no matter what the situation. I particularly remember the AFM convention when we were working to pass many of the AFM bylaws that symphonic musicians now take for granted. We were meeting stiff opposition. I and other ICSOM officers were frantically working the floor of the convention garnering votes. Bill got my attention, and when I came over to him he said, "Relax; your union delegates have the worst looking rugs of any union I've ever worked with." I roared with laughter, especially since a certain union president from New Jersey (now departed), who indeed had a truly bad toupee, was speaking to the convention at the time. I relaxed, and the rest was history. Bill's importance to ICSOM cannot be overstated. The Roehl report is arguably the single most important document in the history of ICSOM.

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## Chairperson's Report

by Jan Gippo



Back in October 2005 I wrote the following: "We still have enemies....If you have had a sense that there has been progress, I believe you are right. There are some enlightened managers in the field, but very few. We are still beset by managers that have very little financial knowledge and some education in the arts, but few have the imagination or artistic understanding

to make the correct decisions for the future of our profession." I went on to talk about the language barrier between the financial/managerial/business side of symphony institutions and the artistic/preparation/performing side. When we talk to each other, each side has different assumptions of what is being said. When musicians say, "We want to be the best of the best," we mean that we want the orchestra to have the finest performers available. To us this means paying whatever it takes to obtain new players and to keep the players we already have. I believe that managers instead ask how to achieve the most excellence for the least amount. Neither position is incorrect at face value. Getting to an agreement that fully services both sides, however, seems to re-create the war between the Hatfields and the McCoys.

How can we break this continual logjam? I believe the only way is through communication. (Where have we heard that before?) Over and over again, everyone, including wives and little children, ask, "Can't you just get along, be nice, be reasonable, and come to an understanding?" How many times have negotiating committees been asked this question? It never seems to work. Why?

Primarily it may be because both parties don't come to the table ready to listen without an agenda. In some of the seminars that have been offered, the technique is called "active listening." During heated negotiations, some ideas are rejected even before the other side has completed their explanation. That is a different kind of active. It is not listening. Of course, if both sides don't listen, then everything is a battle. But for argument's sake, let's assume that each side does actively listen. What's the next step? Here is where, I believe, the vortex of *Sturm und Drang* lives and devours everyone not willing to learn and to endure the tedium that is sometimes a product of active listening.

When we speak, every image created in our story is replayed in the mind of the listener in the listeners' own language. These images and intellectual understanding reflect the assumptions we carry with us everyday. For an illustration, think about a Christian, a Jew, and a Muslim talking about religion, faith, prayer, food, and ultimate sacrifice. Each hears the other in the tongue of his own father. Nothing is ever settled. How to break this circle is the trial we all have to face. We must check out what is being said at every important juncture and discuss the implications of the proposal so that everyone understands exactly what is meant, what is implied, and what outcome is expected. During the entire time of this process, each side must actively listen and trust that the other side is trying to understand and truly wants to "get to yes."

(continued on page 5—see CHAIRPERSON)

## International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

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

[www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org)

### Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra  
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra  
Boston Symphony Orchestra  
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra  
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra  
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra  
The Cleveland Orchestra  
Colorado Symphony Orchestra  
Columbus Symphony Orchestra  
Dallas Symphony Orchestra  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
Florida Orchestra  
Florida Philharmonic Orchestra  
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra  
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra  
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra  
Houston Symphony Orchestra  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra  
Kansas City Symphony  
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Louisville Orchestra  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Nashville Symphony Orchestra  
National Symphony Orchestra  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
New York City Ballet Orchestra  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
New York Philharmonic  
North Carolina Symphony  
Oregon Symphony Orchestra  
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## President's Report by Bruce Ridge



### Is Anybody Reading This?

If you are a musician reading this issue of *Senza Sordino*, I hope you are doing so for reasons that extend beyond those 68 measures of rests you are counting. Sometimes I have a gnawing feeling that our managers are perusing these missives just as often as our musicians—which is great, and I welcome them to this latest edition. I just can't help but wish that I had a stronger sense that our musicians were reading them in greater numbers.

Writing these articles can be a little intimidating, knowing that copies will be sent to every colleague in ICSOM. As I write I can't help but think of the time when, as a rejected and forlorn teenager, I returned a "Dear John" note to the girl who had written it, with my marks for grammatical errors and a big red grade of C-. (Hard to imagine why she might have been breaking up with me, isn't it?) Fearing that what goes around just might someday actually come around, I am oddly comforted by the suspicion that these articles are not being read. But it is not at all comforting, and in fact rather disturbing, that ICSOM could possibly inspire apathy when it once inspired activism.

Maybe the battles were more romantic back then. Maybe the enemies were not so elusive that they were even difficult to identify. Probably there were those who worried about apathy then as well. I suppose that every generation produces indifference as well as revolution. Perhaps we have talked about the scourge of apathy so much that no one really cares about it anymore.

But at some point in every generation there comes a time to band together and to offer challenges of inspiration for a singular moment of opportunity. For orchestral musicians, and indeed artists as a whole, that moment of opportunity is before us. With the ubiquity of the Internet, our performances can travel farther than ever before. But to utilize this tool to its greatest extent, we must bond with our communities and "brand ourselves," if you will, as indispensable assets.

Recent weeks have seen positive news about our industry. Leaping out in bold and colorful print from the front page of the *New York Times* "Arts and Leisure" section were headlines proclaiming "Rumors of Classical Music's Demise Are Dead Wrong," and "Classical Music: This is the Golden Age." The *Philadelphia Business Journal* reported that the Kimmel Center, new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, generated three dollars for every dollar spent, creating a positive economic impact of \$321 million for the community over a three-year period. When the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* interviewed corporate business leaders, they understood that one of the ways to lure businesses to a community is to demonstrate "the quality-of-life improvement that the arts bring." One business leader went further: "Big companies have recognized the value of the arts. It's not necessarily philanthropic in the purest sense, it's  
(continued on page 10—see ARE YOU READING THIS?)

## Secretary's Report by Laura Ross



### Y'All Come to Nashville

There are a few times each year when I find myself trying to keep my head above water—obviously, the annual ICSOM conference is one of those times. Another one is during the preparation for the Conference, which began in May. The packets are prepared and mailed out. Then I wait. And wait.

While I wait, I begin updating the delegate manual (which every delegate *will* bring to the conference for updates and reference). I contact those who contribute reports to the manual and begin lighting fires under the ICSOM officers to submit their written reports.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank my dear friend Tom Hall, who retires from the Chicago Symphony this month, for his wonderful training. I don't know that I'll ever be as organized as Tom, but I will continue to give it a shot. Overseeing the delegate manual was once largely his "baby"—though with ICSOM secretary assistance—and complete responsibility for the manual was passed on to me about a year after I took office.

Regarding the officer reports, the Governing Board decided it made much more sense if we didn't inundate the delegates with reports at the conference. Since our reports were about our activities on ICSOM's behalf for the entire year, and because we didn't want to have to go into mind-numbing details at the conference, we decided two years ago that we would send the officer reports to the delegates before the conference so they could be read and digested before the conference. Additional reports, if ready, are also distributed. This way, if there are any questions or comments, delegates can be prepared to discuss the various reports.

Okay, so I'm still waiting, but now I'm calling the Conference hotel pretty frequently, talking to the Conference coordinator, contacting Members At Large (MALs), and getting nervous (along with the ICSOM treasurer) because delegates haven't sent me their registration forms or made their reservations, which could affect our quotas and cost. I am also revising agendas and attendance lists.

Plus, this year, the Conference is of special importance to me—my orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, is hosting the Conference. We are very proud that the ICSOM Conference mixer will be the first event held in our new Schermerhorn Symphony Center, which opens to the public three weeks later on September 9. The mixer will be held on stage in Laura Turner Hall. I have been visiting the hall since the site was originally a fire station and it's everything they promised. In addition, the Conference is filled with wonderful presentations—Trish Polach, an attorney from AFM Counsel Bredhoff & Kaiser, will give us a nuts-and-bolts explanation of bankruptcy. Trish will join Len Leibowitz to discuss musician board membership as it relates to the new federal Sarbanes-Oxley legislation. Len will join his lovely wife Peggy for an entire afternoon presentation and workshop.  
(continued on page 5—see SECRETARY)

## Treasurer's Report by Michael Moore



### ICSOM's Financial Outlook Healthy

As the current fiscal year comes to an end, I've had the opportunity to give ICSOM a financial checkup. I'm happy to say ICSOM passed the physical!

The past year has seen some good developments. We now have a high-yield money market account where we can park money temporarily in the same bank as ICSOM's active accounts. Transfers can be made immediately, while maximizing our interest.

We have also collected all outstanding Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) loan funds, so the ERF has grown to an historic high of \$268,000. An orchestra can now borrow up to \$40,000 if needed (up from \$34,000 just a year and a half ago). This has been made possible by the two dollars per individual that is being devoted to the ERF each year, combined with the higher interest rates.

Investment appreciation and interest during last year totaled \$12,074 (over 5% of our total income). While our money market account will be decimated by the 2006 Conference and other expenses we will incur before dues start coming in, ICSOM is in excellent financial shape. The one dollar per year automatic dues increase has proved adequate to counter the effects of rising costs.

Thank you for writing that check each year, enabling ICSOM able to continue serving you and our art form/industry while remaining in the black!

*A detailed annual financial report will be given to each orchestra's delegate at the 2006 ICSOM Conference.*

### Spending Highlights

<b>Legal fees, including contributions from musicians through ICSOM to the Leibowitz Fund</b>	<b>\$38,200</b>
<b>Travel for the Chair, President and other Governing Board members</b>	<b>\$23,258</b>
<b>2005 Conference expenses</b>	<b>\$20,283</b>
<b>Printing and mailing <i>Senza Sordinos</i> &amp; bulletins</b>	<b>\$13,532</b>
<b>The ICSOM Directory</b>	<b>\$12,205</b>
<b>Honoraria to officers and others</b>	<b>\$12,150</b>
<b>Transfer to the ERF</b>	<b>\$8292</b>
<b>Minority scholarships through Sphinx program</b>	<b>\$4500</b>
<b>Internet and Orchestra-L</b>	<b>\$2876</b>
<b>Teleconferencing and telephone</b>	<b>\$2706</b>

### Snapshot of Assets

<b>Emergency Relief Fund balance (5/31/06)</b>	<b>\$268,225</b>
<b>New high-yield money market account</b>	<b>\$111,623</b>
<b>Corpus of AGE Mendelson Fund (interest subsidizes minority scholarships)</b>	<b>\$31,907</b>
<b>Remaining reserves in AGE general account</b>	<b>\$12,687</b>
<b>Checking account balances (6/23/06)</b>	<b>\$10,243</b>

## 2006 ICSOM Conference August 16–19 in Nashville

The musicians of the Nashville Symphony and Local 257 will host the 2006 ICSOM Conference at the Hilton Nashville Downtown Hotel, in Nashville, Tennessee. The Conference will start the morning of Wednesday, August 16, and will conclude on Saturday, August 19. The draft agenda and information packet for the Conference have already been sent to delegates. All attendees must register with ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross. This year's Conference will be dedicated to Bill Roehl.

## Secretary

*(continued from page 3)*

Public relations consultant Barbara Haig and AFM SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn are also guest speakers, along with some of our member orchestras that have faced tough times this year. Some of their issues will be directly related to resolutions under consideration on the final day of the Conference. Last year's MAL/delegate luncheon was so successful that we will repeat it on Saturday. We continue to try to identify ways to improve the Conference, and this summer we will have breakout sessions to deal with individual topics in smaller groups. The Conference will be dedicated to Bill Roehl, the man responsible for devising the structure within the AFM that officially established the Symphonic Services Division and Electronic Media Division and their relationships with the representative Player Committees. And finally, we will say thanks to ICSOM Chair Jan Gippo as he steps down after four years of service.

But again, I'm still waiting, getting nervous, and now hearing that orchestras are thinking about not attending. So far this year I am aware of two orchestras that will be on tour and not attending the Conference—they have a legitimate excuse. Some delegates can't attend but have alternates who will attend in their place—this is how it should be handled. However, I'm also hearing from delegates who, for whatever reason, cannot attend the Conference and no one from their orchestra seems remotely interested in attending the Conference. This saddens me greatly. I remember my very first conference (granted it was a ROPA Conference, not an ICSOM Conference) but I cannot begin to express the impact it had on me.

My orchestra was in the sixth month of a major shutdown and bankruptcy. The delegates I met and the stories I heard and shared were just the inspiration I needed to become more involved in my own orchestra's internal workings as well as finding a calling to serve on a larger scale. We needed support and we found it. Every year I met more people, heard more stories, shared in the shenanigans of our managers, commiserated with my colleagues, and learned as much as I could about labor law, organizing, negotiating and all the other topics on the conference agenda. I've been attending ROPA and ICSOM Conferences for 18 years and continue to learn.

Every time I meet new delegates, I think how lucky they are to be able to attend something as important as an ICSOM Conference for the very first time. I truly hope that those orchestras who are having problems finding a delegate or an alternate delegate to attend the Conference will redouble their efforts to find someone. What a shame it would be that something this important would be missed because ICSOM has become little more to your orchestra than something that provides a roster of members, a newsletter every once in a while and requires the payment of dues. ICSOM is so much more than that and every orchestra has a responsibility to assure that this generation and the next generation of musicians, the caretakers of your orchestra when you are gone, are educated. ICSOM is not just for the delegates; it's for all our members. This is why we now travel from city to city sharing our message with all our colleagues.

The 2007 Conference will be co-hosted by the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. I hope there are other orchestras who will consider bidding for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 conferences this summer. And to all of you, I hope if you're in the vicinity of Nashville from August 16–19, you'll drop by the ICSOM Conference at the Hilton Downtown Hotel, next door to the new home of the Nashville Symphony.

## Chairperson

*(continued from page 2)*

If just these two techniques, and a great serving of trust, were agreed to at the beginning of talks, I believe that the process would be a little easier.

But what of the way we treat our fellow colleagues? We see management personnel sometimes doing a very poor job, but never do we see the conductor or CEO come to us and complain about the performance of that staff member. Yet after individuals have complained to a music director or management about their colleagues (and in some cases asked that they be dismissed), we believe we can still go into collective bargaining and demand bigger checks and better conditions for everyone. If collective bargaining means anything it means solidarity! We have worked hard, each of us, to win an audition and have a career. We have won because we were a stone wall against the oppressions of egomaniacal conductors who wanted to fire musicians on the spot, without cause or due process. What is different if a musician asks management to go after a musician? We become the egomaniac, the artistic police; and someday each of us will be facing a younger player.

Musicians also need to find a way to talk among ourselves that is not adversarial, but rather instructive and helpful. There is no need to be judgmental, just fair and honest. We need to be able to hear about ourselves fairly and honestly. We cannot stand alone, and 100 musicians can't have sweetheart deals with management. We work as an ensemble, and we must live as an ensemble. Great ensembles are bonded together, understanding that everyone is in the collective and everyone is in each part; each individual is the most important part.

## The Roehl Report As Adopted by the International Executive Committee

1. The title of the Symphony Department shall be changed to the Symphonic Services Division.
2. The Administrator of the Symphony Department and operating head of the Orchestra Services Program shall serve as Director of the Symphonic Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President, and to be designated by the President as Assistant to the President.
3. A Symphonic Steering Committee, consisting of the principle officers of ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA, shall be established. This committee shall serve as the advisory committee to the Symphonic Services Division.
4. The title of the Recording Department shall be renamed the Electronic Media Services Division. The administrator of the Recording Department shall serve as Director of the Electronic Media Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President, and to be designated by the President as Assistant to the President.
5. An Electronic Media steering Committee shall be established, consisting of three RMA representatives to be determined in consultation with that conference, plus one electronic media representative from the Symphonic conferences. This committee shall serve as the advisory committee to the Electronic Media Services Division.
6. The name of the Summit Committee shall be changed to the Player Conference Council, maintaining the present composition of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA.
7. The Player Conference Council shall meet with the International Executive Board at a time and place mutually agreed upon. The purpose of the meetings shall be to exchange information and ideas on appropriate subjects regarding the good and welfare of the American Federation of Musicians.
8. The existing AFM structure Committee shall continue its research into structural and operational improvements within the AFM, possibly including the submission of a detailed plan for a Trade Division.
9. The AFM President shall serve as an ex officio member of all the committees referenced above, and any meetings of the committees involving expenditure of Federation Funds shall take place only with the prior approval of the office of the AFM President.

## William E. Roehl July 11, 1924–November 29, 2005

After service in the Army Air Corp in World War II, Bill attended the University of Tennessee on the GI Bill and continued his involvement in the labor movement. He subsequently became a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union, the Newspaper Guild, and AFL-CIO Local 3017. He served at numerous levels of union functions, as a Local union steward, council delegate, pension trustee, and local union president. For five years prior to the merger of the AFL-CIO he was a member of the CIO Southern Organizing Committee, working among other capacities as an organizer of non-union trucking companies (dangerous work in the South in the 1950s, especially since he often worked with African American trade unionists). After the merger of the AFL and the CIO he became a regional representative of the AFL-CIO, rising to become the Assistant National Director of the AFL-CIO Department of Organization and Field services. He left the AFL-CIO in 1985 and founded Union Consultant Service.

A supporter of the performing arts, while living in Knoxville Bill supported the Knoxville Symphony and the Knoxville Arts Center, among other activities. While living in the Washington, DC area, he financed the orchestra pit at the Olney Theatre Center and produced several plays. He was executive producer for the Center's Potomac Theater Festival in 2002, and he established the tradition of having individuals sponsor productions. He also supported the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Arena Stage, and the Shakespeare Theatre.

Jim Petosa, artistic director of the Olney Theater, said that Bill had a profound belief in the need for a vibrant artistic culture. "He also believed that artists should have a reasonable quality of life," Petosa said. "During the many years of the development of Olney Theatre Center, Bill was a trusted and generous counselor and a man who could always be trusted to provide clear insight and perspective on the most confounding challenges."

Bill is survived by his wife, Lillian Roehl, of Silver Spring, Maryland.



William E. Roehl, author of the Roehl report.

## The Roehl Report Timeline

### Events Leading up to the Roehl Report

#### 1987

The ICSOM Conference adopts a resolution calling for the appointment of a structure committee to consider options for possible restructuring of the player conferences in relation to the International AFM and local unions.

ICSOM legal counsel Leonard Leibowitz prepares the Structure Committee report in July 1988. The members of the Structure Committee are:

Irving Segall, Chair (Philadelphia Orchestra)  
 Larry Bocaner (National Symphony)  
 James Clute (Minnesota Orchestra)  
 John DeJarnatt (Seattle Symphony)  
 Tom Hemphill (San Francisco Symphony)  
 Carolyn Parks (Kennedy Center Orchestra)  
 Katherine White (Denver Symphony)  
 Melanie Burrell (*ex officio*, as ICSOM chairperson)

#### 1988

The ICSOM Conference passes a motion establishing the Trade Division Committee composed of representatives of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, RMA and the AFM President.

The Trade Division Committee is officially appointed in September 1988. The Trade Division Committee's charge is to consider ways in which trade division structures in other unions might be applicable to the AFM, or if not found to be applicable, to recommend changes that would strengthen the player conferences status within the AFM.

The members of the Trade Division Committee are:

Dennis Dreith, RMA President  
 Chris Durham, ROPA Governing Board Member at Large  
 Rosemary Estes, ROPA President  
 Tom Hall, ICSOM  
 Carolyn Parks, ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large  
 Evelyne Robitaille, OCSM First Vice-Chairman  
 Steve Sprague, Executive Assistant to the AFM President  
 Richard Q. Totusek, AFM International Executive Board  
 John Trembath, OCSM Chairman

#### 1989

Bill Roehl is retained to advise the Trade Division Committee in February 1989. He is given materials addressing a full range of issues pertaining to the player conferences and reflecting a series of universal concerns, including:

- A more effective and cost-effective relationship between the player conferences and the AFM, and between orchestra and recording musicians and their local unions
- A more institutionalized access to the AFM and the International Executive Board
- More status within the AFM
- More input, up to and possibly including supervisory power over a fully staffed Symphony and Recording Department

Tom Hall and Carolyn Parks report on the activities of the Trade Division Committee at the annual ICSOM Conference.

#### 1990

The Roehl report is adopted by the International Executive Board on March 31, 1990.

*The 2006 ICSOM Conference is dedicated to William E. Roehl.*

*This issue's cover story as well as the accompanying articles about Bill Roehl and the Roehl report were submitted by Brad Buckley, ICSOM Chairman Emeritus.*

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

## Orchestra Newslets

Minnesota Orchestra's ICSOM delegate, librarian Paul Gunther, was recently named the administrator of ICSOM's mailing lists. Paul reports that the Minnesota Orchestra will tour European summer festivals at the end of August. Because of the tour, this may be the first ICSOM Conference that will see no delegate from the Minnesota Orchestra in attendance. Another consequence of the August tour will be five consecutive vacation weeks during June and July for the Minnesota musicians. (That is five weeks to agonize over balancing practice with time off and family travel.) Returning in September, the usual post-tour letdown will be interrupted by an immediate subscription season opening. Simultaneously, the Minnesota musicians must gear up for contract negotiations. One subject into which they have been delving rather thoroughly is the area of long-term disability (LTD) insurance. An *ad hoc* musicians' committee, which has been researching the topic, has initiated formal talks with management about ways to improve coverage and benefits. They hope to have a report on LTD for ICSOM before too long.

Longtime delegate for the Saint. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Leslie Shank, will be stepping down from that post this year. Many thanks to Leslie for her dedication to ICSOM. She will chair the newly elected orchestra committee, which begins contract negotiations this fall. ICSOM welcomes Saint Paul's new delegate, Earl Yowell.

Another loss to our ranks is Helen Reich from the Milwaukee Symphony. Thanks to Helen for her many years of service to ICSOM as her orchestra's delegate. Now who will schedule those viola dinners at ICSOM Conferences? Alternate and ever-present delegate Robert Levine reports that the Milwaukee Symphony season began with concessionary bargaining that resulted in a cut from 43 to 39 weeks. Fortunately, things began to improve after that. Management appears to have made significant progress over the season in meeting the income goals set in their three-year recapitalization plan, especially in the area of ticket sales. Armed with a new marketing director (Stephen Duncan, who came from St. Louis), the orchestra saw an improvement in single-ticket sales, noticeable even from the stage, and more sold-out concerts than they'd had for many years. In October the MSO became the first American orchestra to make previously unreleased recordings available for sale on iTunes. So far it has not proven to be a financial windfall either for the MSO or the musicians, but it did garner some very good local and national press. They are continuing to make new material available online and are working on their own online store as well.

Alternate delegate Cathy Payne from the San Francisco Symphony writes that the SFS is launching its new multi-media project, "Keeping Score," with three one-hour documentaries that will be broadcast on PBS this November. The first broadcast examines Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, and the second and third explore Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. Additionally, two live concert programs of the featured works will be broadcast on high definition channels. The goal of this project is to make classical music less intimidating for younger as well as more mature audiences. There is a companion radio series for the project

that will be broadcast on public radio (eight one-hour shows entitled "The MTT Files"). An interactive website where users can explore the content of the TV and radio shows more deeply will enhance the audience experience for the series. DVDs of the documentaries and the concert live capture will be released internationally following the broadcasts. Perhaps most importantly, the SFS Administration has created an ambitious educational program involving teachers and students across the country. The plan is to involve 500 teachers and 75,000 students by using music to teach the core curriculum. This is a five-year, \$23 million dollar project. The SFS Local Oversight Committee and the SFS Local Internet Oversight Committee both thank AFM SSD Symphonic Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark for her tireless devotion in helping these projects come to fruition.

This September the SFS will play three concerts at the Lucerne Festival, marking the first year of a three-year residency. The final concert of this year's festival will be Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, which is the latest live recording in the Mahler series they have recorded under the Limited Pressing Agreement. The Mahler recordings will be available for download this fall. Additionally, a Lemony Snicket recording of "The Composer is Dead" (an SFS commission by living composer Nathaniel Stookey) will be recorded this summer under the Sound Recording Labor Agreement and will be released with an illustrated book by Harper Collins.

The Utah Symphony issued a new recording entitled *Symphonic Dances*, featuring composers Leonard Bernstein, Sergei Rachmaninov, and Gabriela Lena, according to delegate Lynn Rosen. The recording was intended to promote the symphony's European tour in April of 2005, but production was halted when Dorian records filed for bankruptcy. Local 104 President Erich Graf suggested that management purchase the original recordings so they would not be lost. Eventually Reference Recordings released the limited pressing CD early in 2006.

Members of Utah's orchestra and artistic advisory committees (spurred on by ICSOM alternate delegate Claudia Norton) initiated a music director review questionnaire to be presented to management. This was largely in response to the music director's last renewal, for which neither musicians nor board members were consulted.

The musicians of the Honolulu Symphony have just completed their second season of a 20% pay cut. According to Honolulu delegate Steve Flanter, the reduced wages have led to an increase in resignations and extended leaves of absence among musicians. Despite the shrinking of the budget allowed by the pay cut, the Symphony is expecting to post a season shortfall of at least \$1.5 million due to precipitous declines in ticket sales and fundraising, lack of full-time executive leadership, and a weak board of directors. However, a new leadership team, including incoming Executive Director Tom Gulick (replacing Steve Bloom, who left in the spring of 2005) and a new board chair, has initiated a fundraising campaign both to meet short-term essential cash needs and to match a \$4 million endowment allocation from the Hawai'i State Legislature. While financial terms for the 2006-07 season are yet to be negotiated (the are part of a



contract reopener), the Honolulu musicians expect compensation to be restored to the pre-cut level (adjusted for cost of living).

In September 2005 the Los Angeles Philharmonic ratified a three-year contract with significant pay increases and launched a \$100 million endowment campaign. After several initial negotiations directly with iTunes, Deutsche Grammophon, who owns Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen's recording contract, scooped them. The LA Phil has produced four live recordings now available for download on iTunes through DG: two Beethoven concerts (including the Lutoslawski *Fourth Symphony* and a newly commissioned work by Andras Hillborg), and two concerts from their Minimalist Jukebox Series. They also recorded *Rite of Spring* and *Miraculous Mandarin* for a CD release under the new, almost ratified, Live Recording Agreement. Governing Board member and ICSOM delegate Meredith Snow sends her orchestra's many thanks and best wishes to retirees Mitch Peters (timpani), Ralph Sauer (principal trombone), and Jeff Reynolds (bass trombone). All three have had long and distinguished careers with the LA Phil. Their absence will be sorely felt.

*These stories were submitted by ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large and Los Angeles Philharmonic violist Meredith Snow. Newslets were prepared with the help of each orchestra's ICSOM delegate.*

## **The Not-So-OK-Corral Mends Its Fences**

*by Christian Woehr, St. Louis Symphony*

### **Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra Picks Itself Up Out of the Dust**

Surrounded, bleeding heavily from multiple wounds, taking shots from management, media, local union, labor board, and even each other, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra had a rough few months last season. This short progress report on the SLSO's recovery is as much a testament to the seemingly boundless optimism and good will of the musicians of this orchestra as it is to the first aid efforts of its medic/musicians council. And the report is: the wounds are healing, but the remaining bullets are being counted.

Part of this season's healing was in the form of two so-called "administrative services". These were mandatory, scheduled, on-stage events, without instruments, where the orchestra and administrative staff and even Board members sat in groups at round, pencil-and-paper covered tables filling the stage, while facilitator Paul Boulian walked us through communication exercises designed to "move us forward." Although that may sound hideous to someone on the outside (as well as a number of us on the inside), these collectively run Administrative Services were actually rather interesting and strangely helpful events. The biggest plus was probably in the mixing of orchestra, staff and board members (although curmudgeons like myself did tend to clump together). The services were made possible by the existence of nearly three dozen services in the SLSO schedule that were unused due to cutbacks of concerts and staff. (As the orchestra shrinks in its day-to-day musical operations, it leaves more time for meetings). These administrative services will continue in the coming season, even as our unused service count diminishes under the onslaught of a new, high-energy music director.

The Musicians Council (the SLSO's large orchestra committee/artistic committee/SWAT team) spent much of its efforts this year on the relationship with St. Louis Local 2-197, which is undoubtedly at an all-time low. After our application to the AFM Orchestra Services Program, ICSOM and the AFM leapt into the saddle and rode into town. With the ICSOM marshals posse keeping the peace, the judges of the International Executive Board (IEB), under the direction of Head Judge Tom Lee, passed a compromise sentence (thanks in no small part to Brad Buckley, Council chair) of bringing in Bill Moriarity (past president of Local 802) to act as "Symphonic Representative" in our dealings with the officers and board of Local 2-197. Bill's wonderful experience, wisdom, and level headedness have already proven themselves invaluable. His relocation to St. Louis (his old hometown) couldn't have come at a better time for us all. Head Judge Tom Lee, and IEB Judge Joe Parente even rode into town armed with pizza, to talk to the orchestra, along with Local 2-197 President Vicki Smolik, Bill Moriarity, and the Orchestra Council, all present for a nice group hug.

As far as the future is concerned, the SLSO is in pretty good shape financially, with a large endowment and a management which always has its eye on the bottom line. (We are, surprisingly, finally replacing our 35-year old chairs, which were beginning to collapse under our large Missouri bottoms). The latest dismal CBA expires in September 2008. The nine-year wage freeze/cut is wearing thin on this ordinarily friendly group of folks. Retirees are showing more of a tendency to slink quietly away into the brush without plaques and parties. Young eager fighters are joining the Musicians Council. There may be other ricochets from the last gun battle that we haven't heard zing by our ears. Stay tuned for future episodes.

*This is an update to the cover story, "High Noon at the Not-So-OK Corral," from the June 2005 issue of Senza Sordino. Chris Woehr is the ICSOM delegate of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.*

## Are You Reading This?

(continued from page 3)

'how does it work for both of us.' " The *New-Statesman* in England reported that "live music and major events are flourishing more than ever." We have read of successes in Colorado, balanced budgets in Dallas, and the impending opening of a beautiful new hall in Nashville.

Yet somehow, in spite of all of this, we continue to hear negative messages about symphony orchestras, messages that question their relevancy, sustainability, and inherent value to a city. These negative messages have been blindly promulgated for years, and yet classical music continues to exist, thrive, and inspire. In 1970, United Press International published an article that proclaimed "25 Symphonies Doomed to Die." One the orchestras alleged to be on its death bed at the time was the very same Dallas Symphony that just announced its third consecutive year of balanced budgets.

The arts and symphonic music are flourishing in so many communities across our nation, educating our children and improving the quality of life in our cities—even for those who don't attend orchestral concerts. In communities where the arts aren't thriving, they should be. Those communities are missing their chance to elevate the name of their beautiful city, to promote business, and to engage in the most noble and romantic of ideas—the elevation of the human spirit. Let us all work together to spread this message far and

wide. Through a stronger ICSOM, one that promotes our shared view of the arts and our communities, we can improve the communication that has linked our orchestras with their successes for many years.

And I suppose that brings me around to the point: ICSOM and all of its members need you to participate in this process. We need every musician, in every orchestra, reading and discussing the ideas that are before us. We need every ICSOM orchestra represented at the annual ICSOM Conference, and we need every delegate to inform and to help lead their orchestras. We need these things not only to fight for our mere existence, but also to fight for what we can become. Despite all of our achievements, there is so much more we can do and to which we can aspire. Opportunity awaits, but not where any orchestra, musician, or community can journey alone.

So, if you've actually made it to the end of this article, let me know. Or, better yet, let one of your colleagues in your orchestra know. And if by chance you didn't make it all the way through, I understand. I don't take it personally. I probably owe many of you a return phone call or an email anyway. But if you are enjoying reading this edition of *Senza Sordino*, I encourage you also to read Julie Ayer's great book, *More Than Meets the Ear*, on the 40-year history of ICSOM. As we stand at this moment of opportunity for the arts, and as we once again band together, let us wonder what they will write of us in 40 years. We hope that they will be proclaiming that symphonic music still thrives, due in no small part to the actions we will take over these next few years.

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### International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

#### *Senza Sordino*

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