

# Senza Sordino

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## Minnesota in Cuba

By Member-at-Large Paul Gunther

Only a few weeks after President Obama announced that relations between Cuba and the USA would be normalized, the Minnesota Orchestra began working on the prospect of a tour. With the help of many parties—and in particular the Orchestra's artistic staff, along with the experience of the Orchestra's touring company, Classical Movements, in traveling to Cuba—the tour became a reality just five months after normalization had begun.

Any orchestra tour is complex. Most are planned two, three or more years out. This one, covering an intense four nights and five days, with all the additional requirements of cultural exchange and person-to-person contact required by the various government agencies, was planned minutely, and with successful outcome, in only a few weeks.

The timing was superb: musicians agreed to give up a May vacation week so the orchestra could join this year's Cubadisco festival (somewhat akin to our Grammys) as a featured performer.

### The Tour Group

The entire group, 165 people, traveled all together on a unique Delta charter flight—unique because Delta assured us it was the very first nonstop flight between MSP and HAV, that is, between the Twin Cities and Cuba. It was the first of a number of firsts.

On board were 105 musicians, nine administrators, one tour doctor, and five stagehands, including a retired audio specialist brought for his expertise in making necessary adjustments in the multi-purpose hall in which we performed. Nothing particularly unusual so far. In addition, there were eight local and national press, reporters and photographers; five broadcast personnel from MPR, the local public radio behemoth that produced and simulcast each concert live both in Havana and 'locally' in the Twin Cities; three local and national PR people; and five members of the touring company.

Finally, several members of the Board of Directors, as well as local community members, joined the tour under the auspices of People to People International. One of the

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Paul Gunther

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## Project 440

Preparing a generation of civic-minded, socially conscious musicians to be leaders both on and off the stage

By Joseph Conyers

There is no combination of words that aptly describes my love of music. I love music so much, in fact, that I earnestly believe all children should have access to music in their lives—not just because of its beauty, but because of its ability to transform lives, to save lives. As a lifelong ambassador for music, I feel it's my duty to spread this message to as many people as possible, whenever possible, wherever possible.

And that philosophy is the foundation for my nonprofit organization: Project 440.

Project 440 was created in Savannah, GA, almost ten years ago, as a response to the closing of the doors of the former Savannah Symphony Orchestra. Through their teaching, members of

that orchestra had created a vibrant community of young musicians—many of whom have pursued music professionally or been life-long supporters. Our aim as an organization was to fill a music-educational void left by the absence of the orchestra. Within a year, the Project 440 team found itself playing in every community center and library within Chatham County. Our shows were immediately successful, and the kids we worked with left our programs with an earnest desire to learn more about classical music. It was thrilling!

As the founding members of Project 440 grew older, we had a hard time finding musicians among our peers who had the skills needed to do our work in Savannah. Despite their superb educations, they weren't prepared to lead masterclasses, excite young people, and speak to different audiences about the art form in a way that was fun and engaging. Frankly, most of our colleagues at the time were more concerned about a fingering in a difficult excerpt, or preparing for an upcoming competition or audition. We decided that this was a problem that not only needed to be addressed, but ultimately solved.

In 2010, Project 440 shifted its focus from an organization that solely provided community engagement opportunities to one that taught other young musicians how to share their art

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Carolyn Stanish

## Chairperson's Report

By Bruce Ridge

### Brian Rood Steps Down...But Not Away

ICSOM has both a Chairperson and a President. Our bylaws identify the Chair as "chief executive officer" and state that "the President shall be responsible for the supervision of the operation of the organization." Even with those distinctions, there is occasional confusion in the field over just what the titles mean. But in practice there has been no confusion at all—at least since I became Chair in 2006—that ICSOM has clearly had co-chairs.



When Brian Rood steps down from his role as ICSOM President at the conference in Philadelphia this August, he will have held the office as long as any other musician, being tied with David Angus for number of terms. But in truth he has served more years as President than anyone before him, and likely anyone that will follow.

Brian joined the Kansas City Symphony in 1995, and he has been a leader since his first day on the job. In fact I can think of no other musician who has served as many roles in service to musicians everywhere. He has chaired the players' committee in

his own orchestra, negotiated numerous contracts, and served on the Joint Retirement Committee, as well as the Symphony's Board of Trustees and Finance Committee. Nationally, Brian is a trustee for the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund and also a trustee for the AFM Symphony-Opera Strike Fund. His knowledge of the many issues that affect musicians' lives on a daily basis is extraordinary.

But it is not just the roles in which he has served, or the knowledge he has brought to so many tables, that makes Brian stand out as a singular figure in the history of ICSOM. It is rather simply the man himself: a person of such unassailable integrity and courage that I am humbled by his friendship.

It is a direct result of his courage that the Kansas City Symphony has a union contract. The recent successes for the Kansas City Symphony have not been easily achieved. Brian and the musicians faced a great deal of criticism all those years ago, when a long-term contract was agreed to in order to achieve their union recognition clause. But Brian had the vision to know that the right decision had been made, and his vision has been leading and inspiring us all for two decades.

In my opening remarks to the 2013 ICSOM Conference in Kansas City, I said "I often wonder what Kansas City would be like had Brian Rood never come here. In a George Bailey type of scenario, I imagine that the Kansas City Symphony would probably be very different, and we might not be here celebrating this success. The entire field benefits from Brian's leadership and vision, and like George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, when it comes to friends and people that he has helped, Brian Rood is the richest man I know."

Brian approaches every situation, no matter how difficult the issue might be, with unfailing courtesy to friend and foe alike. While some can only identify the problems, Brian is unique in his ability to identify the solutions. Through everything we have



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experienced together in the past decade, he has never acted rashly, never shown a trace of resentment or spite toward any individual, never been dismissive of anyone's ideas, and never been impatient with anyone who seeks his assistance no matter how inconvenient their requests might be.

And when it comes to the patience he has shown towards me, Brian deserves a Nobel Peace Prize.

In these ten years, we have spoken nearly every day. Together we have been through countless crises for our member orchestras, and personal crises as well. In late night conversations too numerous to even contemplate, he has counseled me on every decision I have made as ICSOM Chair, generously showing me the way to a solution and a strategy to succeed. He has wisely guided me toward the right decisions, and graciously led me away from my bad ones.

To see the impact that Brian has had on ICSOM, one must only revisit the 2002 Conference in Ottawa where he was elected, along with the equally indispensable Laura Ross and others. This was a difficult time for ICSOM and the organization was divided, as many questioned its relevance in the new millennium. Headlining one of the pages of the August, 2002, issue of *Senza Sordino* is the announcement that the ICSOM Directory was not published that year "due to a variety of problems...." But by the December issue, you can see Brian's impact as he worked with the newly elected Chair, Jan Gippo. The organization had a new vigor that could be read on those pages, and by the February issue Brian had already assembled a President's Council in Chicago to discuss the major issues of the day.

In reinvigorating ICSOM, Brian reached out to everyone who could offer him the benefit of their wisdom. Former chairs were engaged, conversations were held throughout the field, and ICSOM was on the right path that would serve us well for the next decade and through some of the most difficult economic times that orchestras would ever face. ICSOM, and the field, have emerged stronger and well-poised for the next generation.

Brian would want me to hasten to point out that he did not accomplish this alone of course. There were other leaders that rose up at that time as well. Jan Gippo served admirably as Chair for four years, even though he never intended to run for the office. Michael Moore became the best treasurer ICSOM could have. Tom Hall stepped in as editor of *Senza*, and paved the way for Richard Levine to serve in that role for so many outstanding years. Former Chair Robert Levine continued to assist the Governing Board, and helped lead ICSOM into the on-line world. And Laura Ross...well, Laura Ross has done everything!

But through it all, it has been Brian's calm leadership and perfectly suited demeanor that have consistently led us through good times and bad times alike. I am very pleased that as Brian steps away from his position as President he has accepted the Governing Board's appointment as the next Chair of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, even though he has already done more for orchestral musicians than we ever had the right to ask. It is in his nature to continue to serve others, and to build positive relationships throughout the field, and his life.

I think that Brian's philosophy can best be stated in his own words, so with my all-too-inadequate thanks to him for everything, I'll close with this passage that he wrote in 2003:

"The world as we know it changes more and more every day.

These changes permeate every aspect of our lives—economic, political, social, and cultural. We musicians can choose to become active participants in the discussions about the future of our orchestras and to use the tool of self-determination to ensure their viability. Or we can just sit by and let the rest of their world determine the fate of our orchestras without becoming involved to the fullest extent possible. 'What,' you may ask, 'is the risk of just sitting on the sidelines?' The answer is the very future of our orchestras and, therefore, our livelihoods. I can think of no greater investment one can make than in our orchestras. Can you?"



## Secretary's Report

By Laura Ross

### Once More with Feeling

Recently I heard retired *New York Times* correspondent John Burns speak about his Pulitzer award-winning profile, written more than 20 years ago, of cellist Vedran Smailović during the Bosnian war. Dressed in formal evening attire, Smailović sat in the same spot every afternoon in the middle of the same Sarajevo street—which was more bomb crater than street—and played Albinoni's Adagio in honor of Sarajevo's dead, and in particular for the 22 people killed on that spot while waiting in a bread line. The cellist's explanation about why he played was simple and from the heart, "I am nothing special, I am a musician, I am part of the town. Like everyone else, I do what I can."



Robby Klein

This was a significant story for NSO musicians and my former colleague, Joe Rasmussen, who spearheaded a Nashville Symphony players' concert to raise funds to purchase and mail emergency supply packages to every member of the Sarajevo Symphony. Just as Smailović performed in the street every day, his orchestra colleagues were dodging bombs and artillery to go to work every day. They knew how important music was to a citizenry in desperate need of solace and healing. With assistance from our management the musician-initiated concert successfully raised enough money to meet its goal.

On September 11, 2001, the world was brought to a standstill by the senseless destruction of the World Trade Center, the carnage at the Pentagon, and the mass murder of more than 3,000 individuals. Within days, orchestras around the country were scheduling and performing free concerts to offer comfort and reassurance to its citizens. Our orchestras were performing for a world turned upside down, and demonstrating their resolve to continue providing communities with music to heal and inspire.

Just days after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans on August 29, 2005, our musicians, management and corporate sponsors banded together in an effort to bring the Louisiana Philharmonic musicians to Nashville. We shared our homes and hospitality and offered them the opportunity to perform together for the first time since their city had been ravaged



and their concert hall drowned in flood waters. It was a sight to behold, as musicians reunited and rehearsed with their colleagues who had been spread across the country. Gratitude was expressed by many as they shared information about playing opportunities offered to them by other orchestras, and I heard determination that they would find a way to rebuild their season and continue to perform for the people of New Orleans.

Assisting these musicians, and having the opportunity to perform with them twice—first in Nashville, and a year later in New Orleans—was one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences I’ve ever had. It seems unbelievable at times that the simplest gestures could make such a difference, but they really do have an impact. We did what we could, and the sincere gratitude and thanks that I and my Nashville Symphony colleagues received were overwhelming.

In great crises personal differences are set aside, as people work together to move forward. When Nashville and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center flooded in May 2010, the city banded together; volunteers were offering assistance to those in desperate need. Everywhere signs read “We are Nashville.” The homeless Nashville Symphony’s response was to join with Christopher Cross, who had been engaged to headline that weekend’s pops series, to perform a free concert for more than 5,000 grateful Nashvillians just four days after the flood.

We must remember the acts of kindness and generosity done for or by our orchestras, rather than spending our time caught up in the negativity of various injustices and slights. It’s important to remember these acts, and to remember the feelings they engender. Recently ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge wrote in *Senza Sordino*, “I have no delusions that we can eradicate violence from the world, and when I rise each morning I am aware that new accounts of human suffering will greet me should I turn on the television or read the paper. But I do believe that every concert we perform is an act of defiance in the face of destruction. Every note we play advocates peace. Every lesson we teach advocates knowledge. Every piece of music we learn and share advocates understanding.”

We do what we can, and what we do as musicians does make a difference. In the May 2015 *Senza Sordino*, my friend Michael Lisicky wrote this about the Baltimore Symphony concert he organized during Baltimore’s recent unrest: “The efforts of the Baltimore Symphony musicians did not go unnoticed. It was a very special and personal moment in the orchestra’s, and the city’s, history. It demonstrated the power and the purpose that a symphony orchestra can provide during times of struggle and soul-searching.”

Over the past few years, many orchestra musicians have found their job descriptions changing. We must still perform concerts at an exceedingly high level, but the types of concerts have expanded. Now we back up rock bands and play live underscoring during movie exhibitions, we perform educational and outreach concerts—and we continue to perform classical concerts. More and more we are called upon to be advocates for our institutions and for symphonic music.

Editor Peter de Boer reinforced this in his timely and powerful column about the importance of participating in activities that put our orchestras forward in a positive light. He said “we can act to exemplify our values. Our art form requires participation, and we can lead by example, whether that means

attending neighborhood association meetings or serving on the orchestra’s social media committee. We can attend rallies to support causes we believe in, or write (polite) letters to the editor...We can establish ‘Ask a Musician’ programs in our orchestras and then volunteer to interact with the audience. We can play concerts to raise money for earthquake victims or cancer research. We can participate.”

Our lives are jam-packed and seem to get busier every day, which means there is less time to offer assistance or volunteer our services for worthy causes. So when an opportunity presents itself, we should participate and lead by example.

## Let’s Do What We Can

The ICSOM Governing Board has had ongoing discussions to find ways to give back to the communities that host our conferences. But these discussions had not come to fruition since 2000 (my first ICSOM conference), when delegates and guests participated in, and provided a brass ensemble for, a nurses’ rally in Louisville, Kentucky.

At this summer’s conference in Philadelphia, delegates will, as usual, participate in various presentations, workshops and small discussion groups, ask questions and bring back information and ideas to their orchestras. In addition, on Tuesday afternoon, August 25, from 3-6PM, ICSOM participants will have the opportunity to become advocates and helpers, and live up to the name ‘City of Brotherly Love’. The Governing Board and Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Gloria de Pasquale have organized an opportunity to volunteer at Broad Street Ministries, which not only provides meals to hundreds of members of the Philadelphia community but also supports the arts and creativity by offering a performance space. Delegates will be asked to help serve meals or perform for the guests, and if volunteers are unable to travel with their instrument, Gloria has offered to find instruments for those willing to perform.

With a little luck, this opportunity will be the first step to paying it forward in other host cities in the future. We hope you will join us.

*Note: Conference packets should be received by this time. All attendees must register by filling out the conference registration form on the ICSOM website by August 3rd. If interested in this project, please indicate how you’d like to participate when filling out the conference registration form. Information will also be included in the conference mailing. Service event participants should plan to arrive in Philadelphia by early afternoon on August 25.*



## President’s Report

*By Brian Rood*

Serving as ICSOM president has been one of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences of my life. I often remark that I wish every ICSOM musician could have the opportunity to be president. Over the past thirteen years, I have enjoyed meeting with delegates, committee chairs, and many musicians from every ICSOM orchestra as well as ROPA and OCSOM orchestras. I have been fortunate to work with AFM leadership and staff that support us in our never-ending quest to be treated fairly by employers and properly compensated. On a daily basis I am reminded of what it means

to be a union activist whose mission is to improve the lives of ICSOM musicians everywhere.



As many of you know, I decided not to seek re-election this summer. ICSOM is in my blood, sweat, and tears and will always have a special place in my heart. I cherish the friendships formed with so many people, especially your governing board and Counsel.

My plan is to continue serving as a trustee of both the AFM Symphony-Opera Strike Fund and AFM-EPF for as long as they will have me. Recent events caused me to consider another possible role within ICSOM—albeit sooner than I had initially planned. With the departure of our friend and colleague Matthew Comerford as Chair of the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, I carefully contemplated serving as the next chair. Jessica, my better half, chuckled a bit when I asked her about yet another position. I am pleased to report that I have accepted ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge's appointment and appreciate the Governing Board's support as your next ICSOM Electronic Media Committee Chair.

Over the next few months, we will continue to discuss the electronic media needs of our orchestras in various forums, including the 2015 ICSOM Conference, future issues of *Senza Sordino*, the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, and possibly another electronic media summit to be held in the future.

As Matthew Comerford reported in the March 2015 *Senza Sordino* ([http://www.icsom.org/senza/issues/Senza\\_53\\_1.pdf](http://www.icsom.org/senza/issues/Senza_53_1.pdf)), a new Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) was recently ratified that allows for even greater flexibility with media projects that directly promote our orchestras. It is key to remember that the IMA has always been intended for use by employers and musicians to promote our orchestras in ways that directly benefit our institutions. It was never intended to include commercial ventures, since these would undercut existing AFM agreements and our colleagues who depend on this work for their livelihoods.

Developing consensus on electronic media agreements and whether they work or not for ICSOM orchestras has often been contentious. Shortly before I joined the governing board in 2002, an issue of *Senza Sordino* was devoted entirely to this subject. The issue is titled "The Great Electronic Media Debate" and may be found here: [www.icsom.org/senza/issues/senza402.pdf](http://www.icsom.org/senza/issues/senza402.pdf).

The current ICSOM Electronic Media Committee (ICSOM EMC) structure was established in early 2003 following an ICSOM/AFM electronic media summit held in Chicago. One of my first duties as the new ICSOM President in 2002 was to organize this summit to include delegates, committee chairs, local officers, and AFM leaders. We held three meetings over two days: an ICSOM meeting of several founding orchestras and governing board members in an ICSOM President's Council, an ICSOM-wide meeting the next morning, and then an open forum/meeting with AFM officers and staff participating.

Through the work of the governing board, the AFM, and the ICSOM EMC, led then by William Foster of the National Symphony, progress was made in creating agreements such as the IMA that maintain national standards while allowing greater local autonomy and flexibility, particularly for promotion.

We may well be at another watershed moment when—because of the extreme financial pressures facing their orchestras—musicians feel they must give away electronic media product at bargain-basement rates and outside of appropriate AFM agreements. We must rally around those colleagues to help them understand that giving away our media services for token amounts devalues the product we have worked all our lives to create. Mission statements and collective bargaining agreements of ICSOM orchestras are designed for live performances that reach our audiences and enrich the quality of life within our communities. Electronic media will be an increasingly important enhancement of those missions going forward. Even thinking about changing that paradigm deserves a thorough examination, with a discussion of the ramifications not only locally but also across the country.

Perhaps above all things ICSOM is a resilient organization whose orchestras "weather the storm" to often bounce back stronger than ever. We are hard pressed to find a better example than that of the amazing comeback the Minnesota Orchestra has achieved since the long, dark days of their sixteen-month lockout. Recently, they announced a new CBA extension to 2020 settled two years before the expiration (*see page 11*), a contract extension for Music Director Osmo Vänskä to 2019, and two large gifts totaling \$6.5 million designated for general operations and not the endowment. These remarkable and enlightened gifts will help fund the two extensions. Congratulations to the musicians, board, community, and management alike!

In Denver, however, a great deal of uncertainty exists for our Colorado Symphony Orchestra (CSO) colleagues. Recently, musicians signed cards seeking new union certification to replace the AFM and Local 20-623. Chair Bruce Ridge and I traveled there on Mother's Day to visit with members of the orchestra, to learn of their concerns, and to offer our support and assistance. We are working together with AFM leadership to explore every avenue to help keep the CSO as an AFM and ICSOM orchestra. We are scheduled to travel again to Denver in mid-June to meet with our colleagues.

It is heartbreaking to lose even one ICSOM orchestra through bankruptcy or other form of shutdown. We recognize that what happens to one orchestra affects us all. The ability to draw upon the strength and resources from one another is a hallmark of ICSOM and our role within the orchestra industry. But to lose an orchestra from the AFM and ICSOM because it feels under-served or under-represented would truly be a tragedy. We will discuss more about the CSO situation in the near future. Rather than jump to conclusions about this evolving chain of events, let us now come together to be as supportive and understanding of our CSO colleagues as possible.

As I leave the governing board, I find myself reflective of my tenure and of those with whom I served. Governing boards are a lot like families. They have their ups and downs but in the end love and respect each other. I would like to take a few moments to recognize a few of the governing board members I have been fortunate to work with these past many years.

Current SSD Director Jay Blumenthal was a Member-at-Large (MAL) in 2002 along with former Baltimore Symphony Orchestra librarian and current Local 40-543 officer Mary Plaine. Mary and Jay provided me with valuable insight and di-

rection then as they both do today. Former MAL Michael Moore was tapped just after the 2002 Conference to become ICSOM treasurer, a position ideally suited to his personality and work ethic. Soon afterwards Michael earned the moniker “IHAT”, ICSOM Hard-Assed Treasurer, as he is still affectionately called from time to time.

Richard Levine, who just last summer stepped down after ten years as *Senza Sordino* Editor, was appointed first to be a MAL in late 2002. Richard may be the most brilliant man I know, yet his real strength lies in an incredible work ethic coupled with union activism at its highest level. The Directory continues to be one of ICSOM’s most useful resources, due in no small measure to Richard’s continued hard work, expertise, and ingenuity.

My long-time friend and fellow AFM-EPF trustee Laura Ross began her tenure as ICSOM secretary in Ottawa. Laura is the “rock” that holds each ICSOM Conference together logistically. We might well be lost each summer and throughout the year without her.

MAL Paul Gunther has contributed greatly these past few years and I will miss the many phone calls and conversations we held regarding ICSOM. MAL Meredith Snow is the “heart and soul” of the governing board. Her continued devotion to ICSOM is rivaled only by her uncanny ability to lighten any serious moment and to remind us when we are due for a cocktail. MAL Matthew Comerford’s contributions have been many, with his role as ICSOM EMC Chair just his most visible. I want to also recognize our newest governing board members, Editor Peter de Boor and MAL Jennifer Mondie. They are leaders of our future—and the future is in very good hands.

It has been a distinct privilege to work with three unique and talented individuals who served as ICSOM Counsel. Lenny Leibowitz remains a legend, a bigger than life figure, who served during much of ICSOM’s history. I learned immensely from him and continue to use his advice on a daily basis. Special Counsel Mike Okun gave carefully considered and wise advice to us during a critical time for ICSOM as the governing board transitioned to the current organization found today. The truth is that I might never have become ICSOM president or even a delegate had I not met and worked with current ICSOM Counsel Susan Martin. Without Susan there would have been no AFM union certification cards signed in Kansas City in 1997, no ICSOM membership for the KCS in 1998, and no ambitious and progressive collective bargaining agreements that have proven crucial to the success of the Kansas City Symphony. I will forever be in Susan’s debt and am proud to call her my friend.

Every musician in ICSOM and across the AFM owes Chairperson Bruce Ridge an incredible amount of gratitude for the work he continues to do on our behalf. ICSOM has never had a better advocate or friend. Nor have I encountered anyone that approaches the most difficult of situations with as much thoughtfulness and integrity as Bruce. Over the past ten years

we developed a close partnership and friendship that I will always treasure. Bruce and I have spent countless hours, sometime late at night, working through challenges and developing strategies to help solve issues on every conceivable level. One wonders how he finds time for his “day job”, as Bruce, from personal observation, works 24/7 for ICSOM.

In closing, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. I would like to think of this as a transition for me, one that opens a door for a future ICSOM leader. In my new role as ICSOM EMC Chair, I will endeavor to work with you and the other committee members to uphold what is important to us while exploring new ways to promote our orchestras. I am never more than a phone call or email away, and I look forward to continuing my service to ICSOM.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank my family (Jessica, Grace, and Robert) for all they have sacrificed in order to allow me to pursue this great passion and love of mine: ICSOM.



The Author with his family: Jessica Nance (KCS violinist) and children Grace and Robert

## LiveArts in Grand Rapids: A Night To Remember!

By Paul Austin, GRS ICSOM Delegate

On April 24, 2015, the Grand Rapids Symphony celebrated its 85th anniversary with LiveArts, a large-scale multi-media event that included about 1,500 performers for a ticketed audience of over 7,000 in the city’s Van Andel Arena.



LiveArts recognized and honored the performing arts in western Michigan. The Grand Rapids Symphony shared the stage with the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus and Youth Chorus, the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, the Grand Rapids Ballet, Opera Grand Rapids, Broadway Grand Rapids, and two high school marching bands. The program included moments

from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Stravinsky’s *Firebird* Suite, Puccini’s *Tosca*, and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*.

Planning for such an event occurred over one year in advance. Media coverage, ranging from interviews and stories to blogs, occurred on all local television and radio stations. Of the social media coverage, 55% was Twitter, 35% was Instagram, and 10% was Facebook.

Audience members ranged from local dignitaries to those accustomed to attending hockey games at the arena. The atmosphere was festive and alive. AFM Negotiator Nathan Kahn was in the audience and noted that “LiveArts was perhaps the greatest showcase of a community’s first class performing arts I have ever seen.”

Final ticket revenue for LiveArts was \$134,074, with 7,393 tickets sold and 7,149 in attendance. In all, LiveArts raised \$1.2 million, with all proceeds going to the Grand Rapids Symphony.



Michael Kaiser, Chairman of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management, properly predicted the success of LiveArts in an interview before the performance: "I think it is going to be an evening that people in Grand Rapids will never forget."



## A Collaborative Settlement In Cincinnati

By Paul Frankenfeld, CSO ICSOM Delegate

The recent successor master agreement reached between the Cincinnati Musicians Association, Local 1, American Federation of Musicians, and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra represents another step forward in an ever-increasing process of collaboration between the parties. There has been a considerable history of cordial relations among the musicians, union, Cincinnati Symphony



Board of Trustees, and management for decades. The complete absence of grievances or work stoppages for over forty years, despite challenges that might have created problems in less co-operative environments, is strong evidence of the shared goals of institutional stability and success. Much of the groundwork for this atmosphere was laid by former Local 1

President Eugene V. Frey and former Cincinnati Symphony President Steven Monder, who both believed in the necessity for compromise over confrontation. Another key element has been the growing ties between musicians and symphony board members since the inception of musician board participation and the formation of joint fund raising committees following a financial shortfall in 1992.

Despite earlier efforts for a stable and invincible financial future for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, contract discussions in 2009 began against the backdrop of the recession of 2008. The eroded value of the endowment investments had diminished credit limits to levels insufficient to maintain cash flow, and the cessation of future recording projects by Telarc Corporation resulted in the temporary loss of Electronic Media Guarantee payments. The union and musician negotiators, along with newly appointed Cincinnati Symphony President and CEO Trey Devey, forged a concessionary agreement that

would restore previous salary levels and include a small increase by September of 2013. Bridge funding provided by a group of board members helped ease cash problems, and the creation of the Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund in 2009 provided further stability.

Lurking behind the scene of all these cautious steps forward was another difficulty, namely, funding requirements for the private defined-benefit pension plan that had been frozen in 1994. In order to procure \$10 million to fully fund this plan, the CBA was modified and extended until 2015, freezing salaries at the restored 2008 level and providing increases in the extra two years. The termination of the pension plan and subsequent sale to Massachusetts Mutual guaranteed continuing benefits to all participants of the plan, and the orchestra was freed from any future financial obligations to the pension plan. The symphony board was also charged with the adoption of a set of responsible business practices and with fully funding two extra weeks of work for the orchestra, despite the loss of two vacation weeks for the musicians.

Since 2009, monthly meetings have taken place that include the management, the Cincinnati Symphony Players Committee, the union president, the two musician board members, and the business agent for Local 5 of IATSE. This joint group is known as the Communications Committee, and the latest financial positions of the institution have been shared openly. The negotiating counselors, Barbara A. Jaccoma, who represents Local 1, and Mark Stepaniak, representing the Cincinnati Symphony, also receive this information. By early October of 2013, Trey Devey announced that he was hoping to raise an additional \$15 million for the endowment before the commencement of contract negotiations in 2015. Devey announced a revised goal of \$20 million to the musicians during one of his semi-annual "state of the orchestra" addresses in February of 2014.

The musicians had relentlessly stressed the importance of filling orchestra vacancies from the moment of Devey's arrival in 2009. While the Cincinnati Symphony has never had a required minimum number in its master agreements, the orchestra had kept its roster at ninety-nine musicians for decades. By 2011, the orchestra complement had fallen to seventy-eight tenure-track players. At every board meeting and in statements to the audiences, Trey consistently articulated the need to restore these positions. The great challenge confronting both sides entering the latest negotiations was the creation of a balance to fill and sustain these positions while providing salary increases.

In a departure from established negotiating protocol, Players Committee Chair Ted Nelson and I (as Local President) received a pre-negotiation glimpse of the financial terms and proposal for a five-year agreement that included 1.5% salary increases and a non-salary cash payment to all current tenure-track players, as well as a roster of eighty-nine permanent musicians. Working condition "neutrality", i.e., no major changes to non-economic subjects, was another component of the proposal. In the ensuing rounds of discussions, the amount and distribution of the cash supplement was a topic of careful consideration by the committee and the union. In the end, the payment was increased to \$10,000, and it was offered to the players as either a single payment, a single contribution to a 403(b), or a combination of a payment and a 403(b) addition.

Because the endowment campaign exceeded the goal and reached an astonishing \$26 million in pledges, the number of tenure-track musicians to be hired was increased to ninety by the expiration of the agreement in 2020. The additional \$6 million will enable a reduction in the endowment draw from 5% to 4.5%.

The response from the musicians in the ratification vote was overwhelmingly favorable, with thoughtful questions posed during the contract presentation. The long-term stability of a five-year agreement was appealing to the musicians. A positive surprise, particularly to two musicians who are retiring at the end of the 2014-15 season, was that the cash supplement is to be paid upon ratification.

The widespread support for the orchestra and the generosity of the Cincinnati philanthropic community cannot be underestimated, particularly among those who have stepped forward to increase the endowment so substantially within the past year. The challenges of increasing orchestra complement and growing salary were addressed responsibly and collaboratively by all. Each negotiation is another waypoint in a continuing journey, and this settlement reinforces the achievement of the musicians, board members, union and management as joint stakeholders in the future of Cincinnati's revered orchestra. <

## Pittsburgh Fellowship Program Builds Success

By Penny Brill, PSO ICSOM Delegate

This September, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra welcomes its sixth Fellow for the EQT Orchestra Training Program for African American Musicians (OTPAAM), percussionist Torrell Moss.

EQT OTPAAM is a pre-professional, two-year program designed to mentor one young African-American musician in pursuit of an orchestral career. The selected musician spends



two seasons immersed in the working environment of the PSO and studies with members of the orchestra to train and prepare for professional auditions and performance opportunities. Training includes mock auditions, coaching sessions, and opportunities to perform with the Pittsburgh Symphony. The fellow receives a stipend and financial assistance for audition expenses, and s/he also has

the opportunity to participate in education and community engagement events.

The fellow is selected through a formal audition process and interview. In addition to playing at a very high level, the ideal fellow is also able to speak to audiences of all backgrounds and ages, eager to grow as a musician and to help others learn, and a good networker.

Our 2011–2013 EQT OTPAAM fellow, Ryan Murphy, a cellist, won a position with the San Antonio Symphony in 2012. The winner of the 2013–2015 fellowship was Adedeji Ogunfolu, a horn player, who also won a position with the San Antonio Symphony during his first year of the fellowship. The continued success of the program is contingent upon organi-

zation-wide commitment from musicians and staff. Everyone plays an important role in the fellow's musical and professional development.

Here are some quotes from past fellows that illustrate the value of the program:

- It set a high bar for playing that at first was a stretch but soon became my new standard of what was acceptable.
- The level of playing was so high, I really wanted to make sure I was contributing at that level all of the time.
- The range of dynamics and the level of expression on either end of the spectrum was something I hadn't experienced before.
- I really appreciated the level of commitment that this group has toward getting a message across.
- It accelerated my growth technically and musically.
- My playing matured a lot just by experiencing a high level of music-making on a day to day basis.
- Everything I picked up [in playing with the PSO] translates directly to my new job.

Before Adedeji and Ryan, previous fellows were Chris Davis, bass trombone; James Stroup, double bass; and Geoffrey Johnson, oboe.

We are heartened by the success of all of our fellows and hope this will encourage other orchestras to establish equally successful initiatives. >

## A New Path to Agreement in Utah

By Julie Edwards, USO ICSOM Delegate

In 2007, the Utah Symphony had just signed a newly negotiated CBA, the symphony was embarking on an exciting search for a new Music Director, and things were on a positive trajectory.

In the late fall things began to change. I recall when our CEO, Melia Tourangeau, announced to the orchestra that as a result of the financial crisis, the situation was so dire that they might not be able to make payroll. Management asked for a reopener of the recently settled CBA,



but rather than put all the working conditions and benefits back on the table, the musicians and the symphony negotiated a series of several waivers over the ensuing seasons that dealt solely with wages. All told the musicians gave back \$3.8 million in salary and benefits, and by 2015 we were finally at the base wage we originally negotiated for 2010.

Over that same time period, staff and management gave back approximately \$1 million, and both CEO Melia Tourangeau and Music Director Thierry Fischer gave back portions of their salaries. Though it was a painful process for everyone, it was viewed as a shared sacrifice for the long-term health of the organization.

In the years since, the Utah Symphony Musicians began setting aside more money and working on communication strategies, and Local 104 hired a new attorney. Because we expected an unprecedented amount of cleanup in our working conditions, and we knew that there were many ambiguities in




our contract language which created misunderstandings, we anticipated a lengthy and potentially contentious negotiation. As a result, the musicians elected our negotiating team 18 months early.

Musicians weren't the only ones anticipating a time-consuming negotiation. Over a year in advance, our CEO approached the Orchestra Committee and asked if we would be willing to use the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) for the upcoming negotiations.

After several meetings with FMCS mediator Kevin Hawkins, and with the support of our attorney John Axelrod, the negotiating committee agreed to use Kevin at the bargaining table. As a committee we didn't reach the decision lightly, and each of us on the negotiating committee came to the decision to engage the FMCS mediator for different reasons. (While the financial considerations didn't play into this decision, it is worth noting that the services of the FMCS are free.) It became clear through our training sessions that neither side could have absolutes or must-haves, and that having Kevin present in negotiations would encourage flexibility from both sides.

Together, the union and management negotiating teams set ground rules for the negotiations and goals for what we wanted from our CBA. We agreed to have Kevin Hawkins at the table for the difficult topics, and that we wouldn't use our attorneys at the table unless they were needed. Rather than exchanging complete proposals, we agreed to prioritize articles for discussion. We agreed that both sides wanted clear, unambiguous contract language and that our ultimate goal was to attain the highest possible artistic product. Whenever we would find ourselves stuck in a discussion that wasn't moving forward, we could return to our ground rules and goals to refocus and direct ourselves down a more productive path. While our discussions were not always easy, and there were certainly moments of high tension and conflict, this manner of negotiating helped us stay on task.

Combined with our committee's intense preparation, this became a process that ensured thorough discussion and understanding of each side's viewpoint and a sincere willingness to listen. We were able to stay focused and accomplish an incredible amount of work ranging from simple housekeeping to the creation of brand new language. We completed our negotiations three months early and reached a balanced agreement that reflects positive gains for both sides. It's a process that worked well for us this time around and helped us move beyond past problems and look forward to the future.

There is hope that the trust and mutual respect we built will serve as a model for our future negotiations. With this new CBA, and a strong financial and artistic position, we are about to embark on our 75th year and beyond with excitement, enthusiasm, and a feeling that we are once again on a positive trajectory. 

*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.

## Project 440 (continued)

with the world around them. We emphasized the importance of service through music as well as provided the skills to show just how fun and easy it was to put together engaging and interactive presentations. Our programs proved young people did not have to wait until "Carnegie Hall" to share their talents as musicians. Instead, there were children in community centers, seniors in retirement communities, and patients at local hospitals who would all love the chance to experience and learn about our music.

Now headquartered in Philadelphia, Project 440 gears its programs towards high school and college musicians, focusing



The author working with Philadelphia's All City program

on three main components as highlighted in our Project 440 handbook, "A Musician's Guide to Social Entrepreneurship":

- **College and Career Preparedness:** What does it mean to be a musician in the 21st Century? What skills will my college/conservatory provide me so that I'm a savvy artist, proficient in my art and competitive in the work force? Who am I as an artist, and how can I use music to reach the goals I have as an individual? There are many career choices a young musician can make in 2015, many of which do not have to take place in a concert hall!
- **Entrepreneurship and Leadership Building:** We get our students to think outside the box, entrepreneurially and creatively. How can I use my nonmusical skills to further my career? How can I use music as a mechanism—a tool—for service in education, in the medical industry, or in community building? We also provide resume building, networking, and self-promotion guidance.
- **Community Engagement and Interactive Performance:** We teach the "how-tos" of creating musical presentations for various types of audiences that are relatable and most importantly, interactive! Then we charge our students with putting on these performances in their own communities.

What better way to teach leadership and self-esteem to young musicians than by having them go forth, instrument in hand, serving not only as ambassadors for music but as role models for their peers and future generations of music lovers? The skills learned are ones that can serve them for the rest of their lives whether they become professional musicians or not.

But isn't just playing or presenting concerts enough? The music alone will certainly speak to our audiences, right?

Unfortunately, due to a lack of engagement in our communities from the classical music industry, convincing the masses

that what we do is simply “good for the soul” can be a pretty hard sell. When people are trying to feed their families, pay their mortgages, and hold on to their jobs, what exactly can Beethoven and Brahms do for them? And honestly, audiences have every right to ask such pointed questions. Project 440 takes a holistic approach in addressing their concerns.

In addition to fine-tuning our craft to create the best art possible, Project 440’s philosophy is to use music as a tool in society to make the world a better place. We actively reach beyond the hallowed walls of the concert hall and aggressively infiltrate the communities that surround them. We teach that music can be used as an educational tool, as a tool for civic engagement and social change.

Then things really start to get interesting.

Think about it: what if people depended on music in their communities because it was an avenue by which young people could succeed? Given what we know about how music can help with early cognitive skills, teambuilding, discipline, patience, and a host of positive attributes, who could disagree? What if we actively used music to start conversations between those of different cultures, different backgrounds, different religions and beliefs? These conversations could be about our relationships as citizens of the earth as well as our collective experiences. Take this approach, and to the average man or woman on the street, Beethoven and Brahms just got a lot more interesting.

That is the message of Project 440. We want to harness the energy and enthusiasm of the thousands of students who receive degrees in music every year. Given the right engagement training, an entire work force is ready to take on the problems of the nation. Our strategy: rather than telling young optimistic students to quit music because they’ll “never get a job,” we emphasize the myriad of ways young musicians can engage countless communities across America and make a living while doing it. What does a 21st century performing artist look like? One part performer, one part educator, and one part social entrepreneur. Based on our own personal skill sets, the ratio for each individual will be different. However, as a collective body, our approach of including the community in both our creative process and output strengthens our art form and its value to society. People will see it, people will experience it, and communities will reap the benefits of it.

Current partners of Project 440 include the Curtis Institute of Music, where Project 440 was instrumental in helping to create the Community Artist Program, now one of the flagship programs at the school. Bourgeoning partnerships exist with other local organizations, including the Philadelphia Orchestra. We have a wonderful new relationship with the New York State Summer School of the Arts School of Orchestral Studies, where our curriculum has been imbedded into the merit-based program, and we are starting a pilot program, the Project 440 Initiative, at a Boys and Girls Club in Greensboro, NC.

Our newest and largest partner is the School District of Philadelphia’s All City Program. The students are the top-performing students of the entire district—a district that for many years has been the victim of catastrophic budget cuts. In a district where the counselor/student ratio is 1:560, Project 440 will provide much needed college and career guidance to the students of this historic program.

Our message is clear, it is earnest, and it inspires. Our pro-

grams are diverse. Our students are diverse. The communities we serve are diverse. Our program invites every aspect of our society into our daily conversation as an organization. Music can do more than just move one’s soul. It is a mechanism by which we as a musical body can transform the landscape of our country.

There are those who will say that what we seek is not possible. In the classical music world, how can there be so much talk about what the industry **can’t** do when there is so much that **can** be done? Before there were planes, the thought of flying was unthinkable; before there were space shuttles, just mentioning a walk on the moon might have gotten one institutionalized. What may look impossible now can become reality if the right seeds are sown. Project 440 plants those seeds in each and every young musician we serve, and we provide them with the tools to make a difference in the world around them. Project 440 is the future of classical music—now. The Project 440 family believes that the most exciting days for our industry are ahead of us, not behind us, and we can’t wait to get there!

*Note: For more information about Project 440, visit [www.project440.org](http://www.project440.org), or follow on Twitter @P440, and on Facebook at PROJECT 440.*



### Minnesota in Cuba (continued)

purposes of collecting this disparate group together for our shared experience was to drive home the fact that after months of darkness, not only is healing taking place in the local Twin Cities symphony community, but also the Minnesota Orchestra—staff, musicians, administration, and board—is able to accept new challenges, and rise together to meet them. This group joined the main part of the tour only for some meals and for the two concerts; otherwise, they had a separate planned itinerary.

The charter flight carried not only the usual large assortment of personal luggage and orchestra touring trunks, wardrobes and instrument cases, but also an acoustic shell, borrowed from



Paul Gunther

Side-by-side rehearsal with the Roldán Conservatory Youth Orchestra

a local high school and wrangled on board by the stagehands, in order to help manage the hall’s sound.



## Minnesota Orchestra Settlement

By Marcia Peck

In May 2015, the musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra reached a new 3 1/2-year contract agreement 21 months in advance of our current agreement's expiration. Clearly, this negotiation was unlike any in our orchestra's memory.

Our process couldn't have been more different from that of the 2012-14 lock-out. At his suggestion, Kevin Smith, the orchestra's new President and CEO, and General Manager Beth Kellar-Long met informally with our negotiating commit-

tee—Tim Zavadil (chair), Sam Bergman, Kathy Kienzle, Douglas Wright, and me. From the first meeting in mid-February to the last in mid-May, only the seven of us were present at the table (though we were grateful for the full support of Local 30-73 President Brad Eggen).

Management presented a wish-list, every item of which served a rational, positive purpose that would support our mutual goals for the organization. We, in turn, were motivated to do the same. We knew the orchestra's finances are still in recovery, but we also knew we needed to see gains in four crucial areas: salary, number of players, health insurance, and pay parity for substitute and extra musicians. Risky as it felt,

we resisted padding our proposals—a typical bargaining tool.

With a little bit of back and forth, and some off-stage help from lawyers (including our attorney Bill O'Brien) on language, both sides were able to say some form of "yes" to every proposal.

We feel fortunate to have found in Kevin Smith a partner whose honesty and actions inspired trust throughout this process. As a result, both sides were able to remain both practical and idealistic, with the mission and success of the institution as our ultimate goal. We hope that this can be the model for every negotiation—one that builds mutual respect and faith in a unified vision of the future.

## The Music

In Havana we scheduled two formal concerts and a side-by-side rehearsal, all at the Teatro Nacional, a 2000-seat multi-purpose auditorium built in 1953. On Monday in Minneapolis we had two rehearsals covering the entire repertoire. Additionally there was a separate Havana rehearsal for each performance, scheduled in and around several other prescribed activities. Both concerts were sold-out.

The side-by-side rehearsal took place Friday morning on a very crowded stage, every Minnesota musician paired with a student musician from the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil del Conservatorio Amadeo Roldán (Roldán Conservatory Youth Orchestra). The repertoire was chosen because the youth orchestra would be performing it themselves later as part of the festival: Tchaikovsky *Romeo & Juliet* and Borodin *Polovtsian Dances*, conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä; and *Guaguancó*, composed by the youth orchestra conductor Guido López Gavilán. Of the 30 minutes utilized to rehearse his five-minute piece, Mo. Gavilán spent 25 minutes teaching the Minnesotans how to play the overlapping layered Cuban rhythms essential to the piece's performance, with great success in the final five-minute run-through.

On Friday, May 15, in a partial reprise of the very first concert the Orchestra (then the Minneapolis Symphony) performed in Havana in 1929, there was an all-Beethoven concert: the *Egmont* Overture, the *Choral Fantasy* with Cuban soloist and choir, and the *Eroica* Symphony. Well, not quite all-Beethoven, as we finished with an encore, a traditional Finnish polka orchestrated by Osmo.

Saturday's concert was quite different, with a number of significant pairings, real and symbolic. Perhaps the most remarkable was the back-to-back performance of the two national

anthems, possibly the first time by a symphony orchestra in Havana, and quite surely the only time in the last sixty years. Like "The Star-Spangled Banner", the Cuban anthem "La Bayamesa" arose out of a period of revolution and quest for independence—the one in the nineteenth century, not the twentieth. After opening with Caturla's *Danzón*, the Orchestra played *West Side Story* Symphonic Dances (Sharks and Jets); and after intermission performed Vänskä's suite from Prokofiev's complete *Romeo and Juliet* (Montagues and Capulets). Then the encores: two more short Cuban works and the Finnish polka further warmed the already tropical evening.

## The Exchange

While the overall purpose of this journey was to perform our music in Havana, the tour coalesced into a multi-layered cultural exchange. For me this represented the two most unexpected aspects of the trip: the welcoming warmth of the Cubans, and the music. Music seemed to be everywhere we went, and certainly part of that is because visits were arranged for us that included music both in public spaces as well as in private.

The entire first morning was spent with half our group at each of two of Cuba's schools for the arts sharing one large campus: the Escuela Nacional de Arte (high school) and the Instituto Superior de Arte (college). At each school we heard performances by the students, conducted master classes for the students, and

performed chamber music for them. Despite being hampered by lack of both equipment and high-quality instruments, these students, like the ones playing with us at the side-by-side the next day, displayed remarkably high levels of musicianship. Minnesota musicians brought personal gifts to leave with the students, such hard-to-get (in Cuba) items as strings, reeds and mallets, and exchanged e-mail addresses. (I brought and left with Mo. Gavilán several extra sets of orchestra parts, for



Wendy Williams (Flute), Julie Gramolini Williams (Oboe), Matt Wilson (Horn), Chris Marshall (Bassoon), and Greg Williams (Clarinet) perform at the Escuela Nacional de Arte

Paul Gunther



the youth orchestra.)

A completely unexpected bonus was planned for us by the wonderful people at our tour company, in the form of professional ensembles hired to perform during two of our group dinners, and at the hotel after our final concert. The chorus who sang for us the first night at the Hotel Nacional before dinner, Coro Entrevoces, was part of the choir in the Choral Fantasy at our Beethoven concert, and will tour to Minnesota in July to perform with us again. Some of our musicians (including Osmo on clarinet) sat in and jammed with traditional Cuban groups.

## The Finale

Keeping in mind that this tour took place just sixteen months after a sixteen-month lockout ended, something quite unusual occurred the last night we were there. Accustomed though we are to appreciative audiences while touring abroad (and very likely anyone in an orchestra who has toured internationally will have experienced that as well), we found ourselves being appreciated after our second concert in a most unanticipated way.

At the end of the concert musicians, photographers, friends old and new, and audience members crowded on- and back-

stage to shower warm greetings on each other. Gradually, the musicians said their farewells, changed clothes, packed up their instruments, and made their way out to the buses. One by one, at intervals of several minutes, each of the four musician buses was filled and departed for the hotel.

Then, as we arrived, one by one each bus was met outside the hotel by our People to People group of Board members, community representatives, and friends and supporters from Minneapolis who had accompanied the tour and attended the concerts. As the first bus arrived, they clustered outside the door, greeting each musician as they exited with smiles, applause and cheers. When the first bus had pulled away, they waited for the second, third and fourth with the same appreciative welcome.

Being the tour librarian requires time to collect and count folders and verify that nothing critical is left behind (tempting though it may have been to stay a few more days). Yet, although I was on the third of the four buses, and the last person off that bus, there they were, our tour companions and supporters from back in Minneapolis, cheering and smiling and applauding. For me. It was perhaps the most astonishing moment of the entire extraordinary trip, an experience that only

months earlier I could scarcely have credited would be possible.

Though without definite plans, I am very much looking forward to returning to Cuba.



The author in front of the Monument to José Martí in Havana



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
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