

# Senza Sordino

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## Partly Sunny Skies in Louisville

By Bert Witzel, LO ICSOM Delegate

In December 2011, the Louisville Orchestra Inc. filed for bankruptcy and attempted to reject the musicians' contract in federal court. Upon advice of labor counsel, Liza Hirsch Medina, the Louisville Orchestra musicians immediately engaged the most reputable local bankruptcy attorneys and defeated that effort. We were able to keep our contract and continued to work for its duration. After the contract expired came an infamous lockout that lasted an entire season. However,



ONeil Arnold

from the nadir of the concessionary agreement that ended the lockout, the orchestra has been making steady progress—in contract terms and in innovative programs that are raising its profile in the community.

The one-year lockout-ending contract settlement reduced salary (through loss of weeks of work) and the number of full-time musicians (through attrition and retirement—no musicians lost their jobs, we are proud to say). The orchestra went from 37 weeks and 71 musicians to 30 weeks and 55 musicians. But in subsequent negotiations we agreed



ONeil Arnold, courtesy of the Louisville Orchestra

on a three-year contract with some modest gains. After that contract expired last year, we reached another three-year contract, with significant gains in salary, weeks of work, and the restoration of lost full-time positions. Three full-time positions

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## San Antonio's Wild Ride

By Marisa Bushman, SAS ICSOM Delegate

The last year has been tumultuous for the Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony. Our collective emotions have ranged from cautious optimism to total despair as the events of the last year have unfolded.

Last spring, the Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony were notified of a plan for a takeover of the Symphony by three of the largest foundations in San Antonio, the Tobin Endowment, the Kronkosky Foundation, and HEB. These foundations joined together to form a new non-profit called Symphonic Music for San Antonio (SMSA); and under the plan, the old non-profit, Symphony Society of San Antonio (SSSA), which had run the SAS since its founding in 1939, would transfer all its assets to SMSA and cease to exist. Publicly, SMSA vowed to pay the musicians what they deserved, all while returning financial stability to the San Antonio Symphony. It sounded like a dream come true. However, numerous SSSA board members were not in favor of the takeover plan and resigned in protest. Dr. Alice Viroslav



Shaw Niklos

was then named board chair of the old board (SSSA) to help with the transition to the new board (SMSA). At the time, Dr. Viroslav also was a board member of the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, an independently-run non-profit that operates the concert hall that houses the San Antonio Symphony.

Preceding the takeover, the Tobin Center and SSSA entered into a "shared services" agreement to market the Symphony. The shared services initiative came from the CEO of the Tobin Center, Mike Fresher, formerly of the Horace Bushnell Memorial Hall Corporation (The Bushnell) in Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Fresher previously participated in a similar plan with the Hartford Symphony, which ended up having serious adverse consequences for the musicians there. The premise was that the Tobin Center would provide the marketing services for the San Antonio Symphony, at a discounted rate to help reduce expenses.

In August, SMSA instated its own CEO, Tom Stephenson, who was the former editor of the *San Antonio Express News*

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## Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

### ICSOM at SphinxConnect

The 21st Annual Sphinx Competition and SphinxConnect conference were held at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center, January 31 to February 4. ICSOM has been a supporter of the Sphinx Competition since 1998, and this year President Paul Austin and I attended, along with AFM SSD Director Rochelle Skolnick; Susan Ayoub, Secretary-Treasurer of Detroit Local 5; Alfonso Pollard, AFM Legislative-Political Director and Director of Diversity; and Tino Gagliardi, President of New York Local 802 and member of the AFM International Executive Board.



Danae Anagnostis, Chairperson

The conference was filled with thought-provoking panels, live music performances, and master classes. The

Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, an all Black and Latino orchestra, comprising professional musicians from orchestras and institutions all over the country, performed twice under the direction of guest conductor Carlos Miguel Prieto at Orchestra Hall, home of the Detroit Symphony. The first-place competition winner of the Senior Division was Venezuelan violinist Rubén Rengel; and the winner of the Junior Division (17 and under) was cellist Levi Powe, from Tucson, Arizona.

Having attended the League of American Orchestras' (LAO) conference in June of 2017, Paul, Rochelle, and I became involved with the LAO Diversity Forum, which brings together activists in and around orchestras—to exchange information and perspectives and to take collective action. Created in conjunction with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Diversity Forum has been exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in American orchestras, in order to better understand the barriers to achieving greater diversity among musicians in orchestras. Four task forces that had been formed in the 2016 Diversity Forum are working to promote DEI in orchestras:

- **Build an Audition Support System:** Create a national fund to provide travel, financial support, and orchestra audition training to pre- and early-professional musicians from under-represented communities, also establish a mentor network and audition training initiative. Co-chairs: Howard Herring (CEO of the New World Symphony) and Stanford Thompson (Executive Director of Play On, Philly!)
- **Strengthen Music Education Pathways:** Determine orchestras' optimal roles in strengthening local music education. Co-chairs: Lee Koonce (President of Gateways Music Festival) and Leni Boorstin (Director of Community and Government Affairs at the Los Angeles Philharmonic)
- **Support Increased Board and Staff Diversity:** Identify strategies and resources to support the diversification of orchestra boards and staff. Co-chairs: Shea Scruggs (Director of Music Admission and Assistant Dean at the School of Music, Ithaca College) and Jim Hirsch (CEO of the Chicago Sinfonietta)
- **Promote Organizational Readiness:** Explore how existing orchestra organizational cultures help and/or hinder di- ➤



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versity, equity, and inclusion goals and what can be done to develop highly supportive cultures. Co-chairs: Alex Laing (Principal Clarinet, Phoenix Symphony) and Megan Balda (Executive Director of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies)

At this year's Sphinx conference some of the initial results of the first task force, now called Audition Readiness Initiative, were announced. With funding from the Mellon Foundation, early professional musicians of color will be provided with financial support for travel to auditions, reimbursement of potential lost income, lessons, and mentorship; and an audition 'boot camp' will take place at the New World Symphony facility in Miami, Florida.

Organizational readiness—cultures that support diversity—was the topic of several panels, not only pertaining to orchestras, but also academic institutions, arts management, and non-profit foundations. "The Orchestra as an Inclusive Institution" was one of the final discussions, moderated by Alex Laing. In addition to Rochelle, the participants were; Weston Sprott, trombonist from the MET Opera Orchestra; Anna Kuwabara, Executive Director of the Albany Symphony; and Justin Laing, Managing Partner, Hillombo, LLC. This panel examined the audition process. Since the advent of screened auditions in the 1970s, the number of women musicians has now become nearly equal to the number of men, musicians of Asian descent are at 9%, yet musicians of color remain at an average of only 1% of our orchestras. Why? Many colleagues in ICSOM orchestras with whom I have spoken maintain that musicians of color do not advance past the screen because there are not enough qualified candidates of color in the 'pipeline'. The attendees of the Sphinx Conference would beg to differ. They believe there are plenty of highly qualified musicians of color and that implicit bias is part of the problem. And our ICSOM orchestras that truly hold screened auditions—where the screen does not come down in the final rounds—have the highest proportion of musicians of color.

Beginning in the early 1970s, a number of our ICSOM orchestras began fellowship programs for musicians of color in the hope that these programs would help encourage diversity onstage. In practice, the necessary awareness and cultural readiness to support them did not exist, and in truth, these early fellowship programs did not affect the proportion of musicians of color on stage, which has remained at 1%. We again have several minority fellowship and education programs, most notably in Detroit, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Saint Louis and one just beginning in Los Angeles. But are we any better prepared to make a success of these initiatives?

I believe this is a crucial opportunity for ICSOM to engage in authentic and meaningful self-examination. The issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion apply to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, education, religion and socio-economic status. The

orchestral experience is most rewarding when there are diverse participants, inclusive environments, and equitable conduct at every level of our institutions—musicians, conductors, guest artists, repertoire, audience, staff, boards, and management.

I propose that ICSOM form a Minority Network or Caucus from within our own membership to help us examine and consider the barriers to diversity and inclusion that may lie within. Is there implicit bias somewhere in the audition process? What role should a Music Director play in promoting diversity? What is ICSOM's role? What are our responsibilities as orchestral musicians to our communities and to our own institutions?

These will be challenging and uncomfortable questions, but the time to ask them is long overdue. With the help and guidance of our own members, I hope to discuss what a more inclusive culture in ICSOM would look like and explore what ICSOM's role in orchestral diversity might be.

## President's Report

By Paul Austin

### The Purpose and Relevance of ICSOM

The founding of ICSOM in the early 1960s was a result of the desire and need that symphonic musicians felt to have greater control in their contract negotiations. ICSOM was the first of what are now five player conferences within the AFM. The other groups are composed of musicians who perform in US regional (ROPA) and Canadian (OCSM) orchestras, theatre musicians (TMA), and musicians of the recording industry (RMA). Each player conference has a defined and specialized mission.

ICSOM is an important resource for symphonic musicians, with a purpose of promoting, communicating, enriching, supporting, and celebrating arts in our country. Today, ICSOM represents the professional orchestral musicians in the top 52 orchestras in the US and Puerto Rico, both within the AFM and to the world at large. Note that ICSOM is not the legal bargaining representative of our orchestras; the AFM and its Locals perform that role. We are proud of our AFM union membership and stand in support of all our colleagues in the AFM and the other player conferences.

Having been ICSOM President for just a short time, two instances of positive collaboration between ICSOM and the AFM immediately come to mind.

First, negotiations for the successor agreement of the IMA (Integrated Media Agreement) have displayed our unified working relationship. I cannot give any details, but know that ICSOM's media committee is working diligently with the AFM >



Tina Johnson



Courtesy of Paul Austin

Alfonso Pollard, Susan Ayoub, Paul Austin, Rochelle Skolnick, Tino Gagliardi, and Meredith Snow at SphinxConnect

to ensure that musicians' rights are protected and advanced in the world of symphonic electronic media.

Second, the presence of ICSOM and AFM in February at SphinxConnect 2018 in Detroit provided moments of solidarity as we represented professional symphonic musicians. Indeed, the very inclusion of ICSOM and the AFM with the Sphinx organization ([www.sphinxmusic.org](http://www.sphinxmusic.org)) in the creation of a National Diversity Audition Fund is noteworthy. To be launched later in 2018, this Fund will assist in allowing opportunities for the training and placement of African American and Hispanic musicians in US orchestras. Such support will provide travel, financial support, and training opportunities for musicians from under-represented communities to attend orchestral auditions, plus establish a mentor network with ICSOM musicians.

Viewing the Recent News column at [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org) provides a number of items further demonstrating the relevance of ICSOM. To highlight a few:

- The allegations against conductor James Levine, and the #metoo movement that sweeps our world today, were addressed. ICSOM's Governing Board took a stand a few months ago to state our views regarding the protection of musicians, that we are to be treated with dignity and respect. ICSOM advocates that our employers provide a safe and humane work place.
- The generosity of ICSOM member orchestras was shown in their donation of nearly \$225,000 to the musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony as a result of Hurricane Maria.
- The reinstatement of an ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Program occurred in January, which provides confidential feedback about those leading our orchestras today. Now updated by using an online format, the opinions of musicians in this arena once again are clearly voiced. This data is valued highly in the hiring and renewing of music directors and guest conductors. (*Note: See the President's Report in the December 2017 issue.*)

Our relevance and purpose can also be observed by reading our official publication *Senza Sordino*. Online issues may be viewed at <https://www.icsom.org/senzasordino/>. Of special note would be articles by ICSOM's legal counsel Kevin Case; his March 2017 contribution regarding musician versus musician harassment in the workplace received much attention.

Our directory provides contact information for the nearly 4000 musicians of ICSOM, as well as our emeritus members. An online search option is in place now to allow specialized viewing of the data. Current and emeritus members with emails in the ICSOM Directory may sign in at [www.icsom.info](http://www.icsom.info) to access this service.

Other examples of ICSOM's vital voice in several arenas include:

- The social media presence of ICSOM, which has grown over the past six months. Our Twitter feed, @ICSOM, continually reports news about our 52 member orchestras, classical music, and the arts (*Note: See the President's Report in the October 2017 issue*). We reached our 10,000th tweet in October 2017 and have nearly that many followers on Twitter. Feature stories can be viewed at our Facebook page (ICSOM), including our weekly ICSOM featured orchestra of the week (a project now in its second year). Photos viewed at @ICSOM1962 on Instagram showcase

our orchestras as well.

- The monitoring of ongoing concerns regarding the AFM pension fund. This is an issue of utmost importance to our membership. ICSOM's Governing Board communicates frequently with our ICSOM Trustee representatives, former ICSOM President Brian Rood and ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross, who have our full trust and support. We continue to work with them on the issue of improved candor and transparency from the Fund.

Of course, communication is the hallmark of our organization. ICSOM's annual conferences provide tools and information that help our orchestras. This summer the conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, and will include a day that would be of special interest to all musicians, featuring a tour of the newly-renovated, historic Music Hall (*Note: see "Cincinnati Music Hall Renovation" in the December 2017 issue*). We hope that the close proximity of many ICSOM orchestras to Cincinnati will result in a fine turnout.



## Congress Delivers a ~~Tax~~ Pay Cut to ICSOM Musicians

By Kevin Case, ICSOM Counsel

In December 2017, President Trump signed a massive tax-reform bill into law. The bill was portrayed as providing big tax cuts, and indeed, it cuts tax rates and makes other changes that will result in lower tax bills for many Americans, and (particularly) for American corporations. But for ICSOM musicians? Not so much. In fact, for many of you, the bill will result in a higher tax burden—in some cases, a substantially higher tax burden—that will put a serious dent in your take-home pay.



Kevin Case

The reason is the elimination, beginning in tax year 2018, of the current deduction for what the IRS labels "Employee Business Expenses". Under prior tax law, if you were an employee, the IRS allowed a deduction for "ordinary and necessary expenses" incurred in connection with your job. An expense is "ordinary" if it is "common and accepted" in your field; it is "necessary" if it is "helpful and appropriate" for your business. The expense didn't need to be required by your employer to be deductible.

Many members of ICSOM orchestras have been taking advantage of that deduction for years. It isn't hard to see why. Orchestral musicians incur substantial expenses in connection with their employment: union dues, work dues, concert clothing, unreimbursed travel expenses (including audition travel expenses), repairs and supplies for instruments, and—most importantly—the instruments themselves. Prior law—which includes the 2017 tax year for which many have not yet filed—allowed a tax deduction for all of that. If you're a string player in particular, chances are you paid a very large amount of money for your instrument(s) and bows. You've been allowed to depreciate that property and deduct the value of that depreciation as an Employee Business Expense over a period of years or even, >>

in certain circumstances, in a single year.

No more. To put this in context, some background is required. Musicians typically receive one of two types of income: wages, which are earned when you are classified as an “employee”; and self-employment income, which you receive when you are an “independent contractor”. Wages are reported to you each year on a W-2 form, whereas self-employment income is reported on a 1099-MISC form. There is a difference. For self-employment (1099-MISC) income, you file Schedule C, which operates much like a business’s profit/loss statement: your 1099-MISC amounts are reported as revenue, and the expenses you incur in connection with your independent-contractor activity are applied against that revenue, resulting in a profit (or loss) for that activity. That resulting profit (or loss) is what you report as your “income”.

These days, few professional symphonic musicians, and no ICSOM musicians, would be classified as independent contractors in their symphony work. You are employees, which is a threshold requirement for working under a union collective bargaining agreement (*Note: See “Congratulations, You’re an Employee. (Right?)” in the June 2016 issue*). So, the money you receive in exchange for rendering services to your orchestra is not self-employment income, but wages. The amount of wages you are paid (as indicated on the W-2 form) is your income, period. Expenses incurred in connection with your employment—Employee Business Expenses—are deducted after you calculate your income from all sources, and only if you “itemize” your deductions on Schedule A, and only to the extent those expenses exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income. (Schedule A is where deductible expenses like mortgage interest, property taxes, and state income taxes are tabulated.) Employee business expenses are calculated on Form 2106, and the amount transferred to Schedule A.

Note that no one is required to itemize their deductions—the IRS provides for a “standard deduction” amount that can be taken in lieu of calculating all your deductions. But if you have a mortgage, pay high property taxes, or have substantial employee business expenses—like many ICSOM musicians—you have been better off itemizing.

Or, at least until now. The new tax bill makes a number of changes that seem aimed at dis-incentivizing taxpayers from itemizing. The standard deduction amount has been nearly doubled, from \$6,350 for individuals to \$12,000, and from \$12,700 for married couples filing jointly to \$24,000. At the same time, the deductibility of certain itemized expenses has been severely curtailed: for example, there are new caps on how much you can deduct in mortgage interest, property taxes, and state income taxes; and the Employee Business Expense deduction has been eliminated altogether.

The result? More taxpayers will take the standard deduction instead of itemizing. But taxpayers who have in the past claimed a large amount of itemized deductions—for example, an ICSOM violinist who is depreciating an expensive instrument and has substantial other work-related expenses—are now left without any avenue to use those expenses to reduce their tax burden. Even at the slightly lower tax rates that Congress included in the new tax bill, the tax they end up paying to the IRS will be higher—in some cases, much higher. Hence the pay cut.

Paradoxically, the new tax bill contains other provisions,

many too complex to describe here, that actually benefit taxpayers who receive self-employment income and file Schedule C. “Aha,” you might be thinking, “I’ll just deduct my music-related expenses on Schedule C instead!” After all, many orchestra musicians perform outside work—chamber concerts, one-off gigs, teaching, etc.—that affords them income separate and apart from wages earned as an employee in their orchestra job. So, couldn’t the hypothetical ICSOM violinist simply put his or her instrument’s depreciation expense on Schedule C, and reduce taxable income that way?

That would be risky. If you’re considering that, I urge you to consult a CPA or tax attorney first. The IRS generally takes a dim view of taxpayers who try to re-classify income or expenses in such a way as to reduce their tax burden. There is certainly no IRS guidance suggesting it would be permissible to apply expenses to a Schedule C activity if those expenses are incurred primarily in connection with a different job altogether—particularly if most of the taxpayer’s income comes from that job. If a substantial amount of income results from non-symphony, Schedule C activity, then perhaps some of the expenses could be allocated to Schedule C; but that is uncharted territory so expert advice would be critical. Also consider, however, that if you don’t have a large amount of Schedule C income and you apply a large amount of expenses against that income, you’ll run big losses in your Schedule C “business”, year after year. That is not only a potential red flag for the IRS; it also runs the risk that the IRS would classify your activity as a mere “hobby”, for which expense deductions are disallowed altogether.

There really is no silver lining here for ICSOM musicians; it’s pretty much all bad news. And unfortunately, it might get worse. Charitable donations are deductible only if itemized on Schedule A. As noted above, the new tax bill contains a built-in disincentive to itemize. Accordingly, some tax experts predict that fewer people will make charitable contributions—i.e., they won’t get the benefit of the deduction anymore if they have no reason to itemize. That would result in less contributed revenue for non-profit organizations such as . . . symphony orchestras.

There are counterarguments, of course: perhaps the motivation for donating to non-profits is not quite so tied to tax deductibility; perhaps cultural non-profits have a more loyal following than other charitable organizations; and perhaps the fact that contributed revenue in symphony orchestras comes primarily from larger gifts, which easily exceed the standard deduction amount and thus remove the dis-incentive to itemize, will limit the effect of the changes. But at any rate, a challenging bargaining landscape may become even more challenging. Musicians will come to the table seeking higher wages to compensate for the pay cut Congress just imposed; and management will come to the table fearing the prospect of receiving less revenue with which to pay those wages. That isn’t a setup for easy negotiations.

What can be done? Hopefully, a critical mass of those most adversely affected by these changes—not just musicians, but all those hit hard by the new restrictions on deductible expenses—can effectively lobby Congress to come up with necessary revisions to the law. In eight months, there will also be midterm Congressional elections. If there hasn’t already been enough incentive for musicians to “get political”, perhaps the consequences of the tax law will provide even more of a nudge. 

## Conrad's Concert with the Kansas City Symphony

By Ho Anthony Ahn

On the early evening of October 19, 2017, my son Conrad was able to attend his first concert in the Kauffman Center of the Performing Arts. Being a retired member of the symphony, it was like a warm homecoming for me, but it was a special and touching moment for our family. Conrad was born with Autism Spectrum Disorder and has trouble communicating without the help of an iPad.



Courtesy of the author

He has always loved music and can listen for hours to the same piece over and over. Whenever he is in a very agitated state, he requests some cello time from his dad.

I was a member of the Kansas City Symphony for 20 seasons. While I was there, I served as the ICSOM delegate, as a board member, and as member of the Hall Committee. One of the major reasons for my early retirement was Conrad's diagnosis

and a desire to spend more time implementing home therapies. During my tenure, I was able to take a leave year to try these therapies with him, only to realize that he needed me more than what I was giving him.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a condition that affects 1 in 68 children in the world. Behavior from this condition can range from a gentle piano to a raging forte and often both in the quick measure of time. Because of this, families feel helpless to take their children out in a social setting. There are many stories that circulate in the Autism community about the harshness they can face when bringing their kids out in public. This is what makes concerts such as what we experienced so unique.

There are many articles about how music affects the autistic mind and the benefits of exposing children at an early age to it. Many orchestras have had incredible success with concerts that cater to their autistic communities. The Kennedy Center's program is an inspiration in its innovation and implementation. When the Kansas City Symphony approached me in May of 2017 to explore the possibility of a concert, the Kennedy Center's model was on both our minds.

Emma Kail, the General Manager of the Kansas City Symphony, as well as Rebecca Martin (Director of Artistic Operations), Stephanie Brimhall (Education Manager) and Jason Seber (Associate Conductor) met with a group of educators and therapists at the offices of the symphony and spoke of a concert that would welcome this community to the Helzberg Concert Hall. It was an incredibly productive meeting that had many wonderful ideas proposed by both sides. My only thought was: how could Conrad come to this concert and have a really great time? By going with what I knew, I felt we could use him as template to cater to the other kids like him. So I proposed a few ideas. First, the hall needed a little more illumination so he could experience the entire hall. Second, he needed a visual component. Third, loud and sudden noises startle him easily. We discussed programming as well. (I proposed *Nuages* from Debussy's *Nocturnes*—one of his favorite pieces.)

The week before the concert, Emma called me to tell me

that they were about to start rehearsing for this concert and asked if I'd like to say a few words to my former colleagues, which I was more than happy to do. I could see that everybody in the orchestra was excited to start work on this concert. A news crew from a local TV station came and interviewed me after the rehearsal.

On October 19, Conrad, his brother, mother, grandparents, and babysitter came for the first time to the Kauffman Center. It was an emotional moment for all of us. We were greeted by the news crew and the orchestra staff in the lobby. There were designated quiet areas in case someone needed one. When we sat for the concert, I realized that every one of my suggestions had come to fruition. The Kansas City Symphony was playing a special concert for Conrad—and 500 or so other kids and family members. The maiden concert was incredible and had an impact on every family that attended.

I'd like to thank everybody who worked incredibly hard to make this dream concert a reality. It meant so much to see Conrad enjoying himself at the crown jewel of our city and watching my friends and colleagues play beautifully. Conrad is already looking forward to the next one.

*Note: The Author is a former member of the Kansas City Symphony.*

## Musicians of the San Francisco Opera Organize Benefit Concert

By Craig Reiss

When hurricane Harvey battered the greater Houston area on August 25, the Houston Grand Opera (HGO) was devastated. The lower levels



Stephanie Herzer

of the Wortham Theater Center were badly flooded, causing damage to both stages and the wig and costume shops. In the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, our thoughts went out to our dear colleagues and friends, including HGO's Artistic and Music Director Patrick Summers, who for many years was our Principal Guest Conductor. We began to explore the possibility of doing a benefit concert to help with their recovery.

Then on October 9, right in our backyard, the North Bay wildfires began ravaging Napa and Sonoma counties, causing over \$9 billion in damage, and destroying homes of many of our patrons—and of our own Ballet Master, Lawrence Pech. With both tragedies weighing heavily on our hearts, the Musicians of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra resolved to make the possibility of a benefit concert a reality.

The San Francisco Conservatory of Music generously donated its concert hall, ticket facilities, support staff, and student stagehands. Our IATSE Local 16 colleagues also contributed their time to ensure that the benefit concert was a resounding success. San Francisco Opera Orchestra violinist and maestro Dawn Harms agreed to conduct and secured the extraordinary talents of Frederica von Stade. I organized the volunteer orchestra, comprising members and substitute musicians from >>

the SF Opera, and coordinated PR, including articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and local radio spots. Rik Malone, station announcer for San Francisco's classical music station KDFC, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Our Orchestra Committee worked extensively with SF Opera General Director Matthew Shilvock to create a seamless partnership with the managements of the San Francisco Opera and Opera Center in order to publicize the event and secure the talents of Adler Fellowship Singers Tonie Marie Palmertree and Pene Pati.

On November 26, the Musicians of the San Francisco Opera



Mark Dunne

Priscilla Alva, Frederica von Stade, and Christabel Nunoo

played to a capacity crowd and raised more than ten thousand dollars to support both the United Way Fire Relief Fund and the Houston Grand Opera Harvey Fund. The evening began with Matthew Shilvock reading a heartfelt message of thanks from Patrick Summers. The concert included many operatic favorites, including excerpts from *La Forza Del Destino*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Lakme*, and local favorite Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*. Frederica von Stade sang an incredibly moving trio finale from *Der Rosenkavalier* with two of her talented scholarship singers, and the concert concluded with the poignant "Nimrod" from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*.

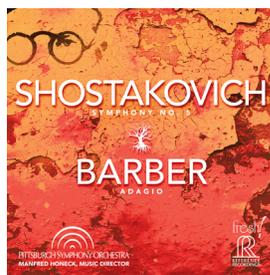
At the post-concert reception, our audience was extremely grateful, expressing how much they appreciated the opportunity to support such worthy causes while enjoying an evening of wonderful heartfelt music. It was a truly collaborative effort on the part of all the Musicians of the San Francisco Opera and an example of how an orchestra can self-produce an event to serve the community at home and across the country.

*Note: The author is a violinist in the San Francisco Opera Orchestra*

## Newslets

### ICSOM at the Grammys

A number of ICSOM orchestras released recordings in 2017 that captured Grammy awards, announced at the 60th annual ceremony on January 28. The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's recording of Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 and Barber *Adagio for Strings* won the awards for Best Orchestral Performance and Best Engineered Album, Classical. The performances were conducted by the orchestra's Music Director, Manfred Honeck. The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony



Courtesy of Reference Recordings

Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony all received nominations in the Best Orchestral Performance category.

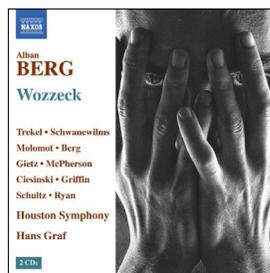
The Nashville Symphony (NSO) achieved a three-peat when its album *Higdon: All Things Majestic, Viola Concerto & Oboe Concerto* garnered the award for Best Classical Com-

pendium, the third year in a row for an NSO recording. The album, conducted by Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero, also won the award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for Higdon's *Viola Concerto*, and featured the orchestra's own James Button as the oboe soloist. The Kansas City Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra also received nominations in the Best Classical Compendium category.



Courtesy of Navos of America & Canada

The live recording of Berg's *Wozzeck* by the Houston Symphony won the award for the Best Opera Recording. Conducted by Hans Graf, the performance also included the Chorus of Students and Alumni from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and the Houston Grand Opera Children's Chorus. The MET Orchestra had two recordings that



Courtesy of Navos of America & Canada

received nominations in this category—Berg's *Lulu* conducted by Lothar Koenigs, and Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* conducted by Giannandrea Noseda.

In the category of Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra won for their album *Death & the Maiden* with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja.



Courtesy of Alpha Classics/Outlines Music

## Celebrating a Hall's Half-Century

January 2018 marked the fiftieth anniversary of Powell Hall as home of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Their shared history began as a beautiful accident when the symphony had to change venues back in 1966, as plans fell through to perform at the former Kiel Opera House. Instead, the symphony ended up presenting at the St. Louis Theater on Grand Boulevard. Longtime SLSO benefactor Oscar Johnson, Jr. donated \$500,000 for the purchase of the theater, and Peter Pastreich, at that time the SLSO executive director, oversaw the \$3 million transformation of the St. Louis Theater into Powell Hall. As of 1968, the newly minted Powell Hall was officially the beloved home of the SLSO.

As a way of celebration, the hall was opened on January 20, 2018, for a special screening of *The Sound of Music*, a tribute to its former life as a vaudeville theater and also the last film shown at the theater in its previous incarnation. Along with the >>

movie and open house, an “instrument petting zoo” was held for children wanting to try out string, brass, and woodwind instruments. Besides the event at the hall, the SLSO and the St. Louis Public Library teamed up to offer the community a free exhibit detailing the history of the building and its transformation process. The exhibit runs until March 17, 2018, at the St. Louis Public Library’s Central Library on Olive Street.

## Detroit Musicians Give Back

At the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, President and CEO Anne Parsons announced that the musicians of the DSO collectively made a \$100,000 contribution toward its endowment. The gift, a result of one hundred percent musician participation, is intended to be the first step toward a \$1 million DSO Musicians’ Artistic Excellence Fund. The fund has been opened up for others to contribute, and has already inspired some matching support from the Detroit community. This pledge of support by the musicians is in addition to the approximately \$116,000 in services they already donate each season.

The musicians specified that the revenue from the gift be used to support artistic elements of the organization, and members of the Artistic Advisory and Orchestra committees will determine how the fund is spent each year. The activities to be supported include the engagement of high-caliber conductors and soloists, digital recordings, orchestral commissions, and yearly scholarships for students who participate in the Civic Youth Ensembles.

## Changes at the Top in Atlanta

Sameed Afghani has been hired as the new General Manager of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. At his present job, Manager of Audio Media and Operations of the Chicago Symphony, he oversees the CSO Resound label, national broadcasts, as well as other audio/video initiatives and negotiating contracts.

Long-time ASO Music Director Robert Spano, who joined the conducting staff in 2000, has announced that he will step down in June 2021 to pursue other interests. He has no set plans for the next stage of his life, but enjoys his tenure at Aspen as well as composing and performing. He will continue to conduct from time to time in Atlanta as Conductor Laureate.

## A Rochester World Premiere

The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra is expanding its collaborative partnership with composer Jennifer Higdon. On May 10 and 12, the RPO and its Music Director Ward Stare will present the world premiere of Higdon’s Harp Concerto. Virtuoso harpist Yolanda Kondonassis, for whom Higdon wrote the work, will give the premiere.

Kondonassis led the commissioning project, which involved a consortium of orchestras that included the RPO as well as the Harrisburg Symphony, the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, the Lansing Symphony, the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra, and the Baton Rouge Symphony—intended “to bring the work to both large and small communities in a variety of geographic regions,” according to a press release.

The premiere will be followed on September 20 and 22 by a live recording of the concerto for commercial release.

In other news from Rochester, the RPO welcomed former ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge, who came out of “retirement” for a visit on February 6. Ridge, the longest-serving chair of ICSOM, separately addressed the RPO board, management, and musicians on how to become more enthusiastic and effective arts ambassadors in the community.

## Florida Hits New Record

One of the highlights of The Florida Orchestra’s 50th Anniversary season was the Gala Concert featuring an Evening with Sting. Conducted by TFO Music Director Michael Francis, tickets for the December 2017 concert sold out in days and, together with the proceeds from the Gala Dinner, raised \$1.5 million—an all-time TFO fund-raising record for a single event. Sting was a



pleasure to work with; he attended both rehearsals in their entirety and was truly a musician’s musician. Both the audience and orchestra were excited when new Principal Clarinet Natalie Hoe was asked to ‘step out’ and open the show, accompanying Sting in the spotlight. A rare opportunity to hear Sting with a live symphony orchestra, it was a great evening for TFO and the Tampa Bay community.

## Utah Introduces Family Pricing

Utah Symphony | Utah Opera has recently introduced an innovative pricing structure designed to reach out to patrons with young families, traditionally a difficult audience for symphonies to reach. Under the initiative, for select masterworks and opera series, a \$30 season-long ‘Family Pass’ will be made available, which includes entry for two adults and their two children, with the possibility of adding up to six additional children for \$5 each. The company has also announced the creation of a Kids Club, beginning in Fall 2018, with events and activities for children.

Availability of the Family Pass began in January 2018, and will continue throughout the 2018-2019 season. That season will also include six Masterworks concerts to be performed at 5:30 pm in an effort to provide a more family-friendly hour. The success of this initiative in reaching a very important audience will be closely watched.

## New Festival in San Francisco

This season, the San Francisco Ballet will present *Unbound: A Festival of New Works*. Some of the most innovative choreographers working today, such as Christopher Wheeldon and Justin Peck, will be premiering 12 new works, which will feature the music of composers such as John Adams, Jason >

Moran, and Oliver Davies. Beyond the stage, San Francisco Ballet will also be hosting a number of outreach activities. These will include: a series of live-stream programs that will allow viewers a glimpse into the effort that goes into creating these new works; a series of dance films that will be premiered in pop-up events around the community; and a symposium of artists, academics, and critics who will discuss issues critical to ballet in the 21st century. The festival will begin on April 20, with an opening night celebration that will feature a performance of new works, dance films, educational pop-ups, interactive installations, and a dance party. The musicians of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra are excited to participate in this unique event, and look forward to offering audiences a glimpse into the future of this exciting art form. For more information, please visit [sfballet.org/unbound](http://sfballet.org/unbound).

## Phoenix Symphony Member Honored

Alex Laing, Principal Clarinet of the Phoenix Symphony, was one of three artists awarded the 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, to be presented in Washington DC on March 21.

This \$50,000 career grant is given by the Sphinx Organization to outstanding classical artists of color who exhibit “artistic excellence, outstanding work ethic, a spirit of determination, and ongoing commitment to leadership.”

An advocate of community engagement, Alex is the founder of a non-profit, after-school program in Phoenix that brings music instruction to kids, with a focus on youth development.

Alex is on the board of directors for the Arizona School for the Arts and co-chairs the Institutional Readiness task force for the League of American Orchestra’s Diversity Forum.

Now in its 21st year, Detroit’s Sphinx Organization is a non-profit devoted to transforming lives of young Black and Latino symphonic musicians through the power of diversity in the arts.



## Buffalo on Tour

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is heading to Poland in March 2018. This is the first international tour that the BPO has scheduled in 30 years. The tour is largely the result of the orchestra’s relationship with Polish conductor and composer Krzysztof Penderecki.

The focal point of the tour is a performance at the Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw at the Philharmonic Hall. One of twelve orchestral performances to take place at the festival, the BPO’s concert will be the first performance by an American orchestra at this prestigious festival in its 20-year history.

While in Poland, the orchestra will also make stops in three other cities for performances. Prior to the performance at the festival in Warsaw, the orchestra will perform in Wrocław. Performances follow the festival in Katowice and Lublin.

The programming will focus mainly on American compositions, specifically the centennial of Leonard Bernstein’s birth, as the festival honors his legacy. Programming includes Barber Symphony No. 1, the Gershwin Concerto in F, and Bernstein’s

*Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* and the overture to *Candide*. Honoring the invitation of Krzysztof Penderecki will be performances of his Adagietto from *Paradise Lost*. The piano soloist on the Gershwin will be Conrad Tao.

The performances will be especially meaningful to two members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Horn section. Both principal hornist Jacek Muzyk and Associate Principal hornist Daniel Kerdelewicz are natives of Poland—Muzyk is from Kraków and Kerdelewicz from Czeremcha.

Prior to the full orchestra arriving in Poland, a wind octet from the BPO will perform and give masterclasses at the Penderecki Centre for European Music in Lusławice. They will also perform in Buffalo’s sister city, Rzeszów.

## A Final Gift in Columbus

In December, the Columbus Symphony announced the single largest gift in the organization’s history—an \$8 million legacy gift from the estate of Anne Melvin, long-time friend, board member, and passionate champion of the orchestra. The symphony is expected to receive additional funds when Anne’s estate is fully settled, which will add to this incredibly generous endowment gift.

Anne gave generously and consistently. While her yearly gifts will be missed, this legacy gift will serve as the cornerstone to the symphony’s endowment, helping to provide a consistent base of support for CSO programming and operations, and supporting the organization’s long-term viability. The symphony is currently engaged in an endowment campaign with a goal of \$50 million.

To the musicians, Anne was more than just a donor. She was a dear, supportive friend. Diminutive in size but not in spirit she always had a delighted smile on her face and would greet the musicians by name. She was devoted to the symphony and will be sorely missed as a personal friend. 

## San Antonio’s Wild Ride *(continued)*

and, like Dr. Viroslav, also a member of the Tobin Center Board. The musicians’ CBA was set to expire on August 31, and negotiations for a successor CBA had begun in June. As bargaining continued, both Dr. Viroslav, representing the old entity (SSSA), and Stephenson, representing the new entity (SMSA), sat at the negotiating table claiming the authority to bargain. Both entities were represented by the same lawyer, which in our view was a serious conflict of interest.

With the CBA expiration looming, the negotiations committee was spending an inordinate amount of time answering questions about the terms of the existing agreement, and both sides felt that the best course was to agree to a four-month contract extension. Stephenson’s first move as CEO was to cut costs and “trim any extra fat” from the symphony’s already lean budget. He immediately expanded the shared services agreement with the Tobin Center, so it would now house the administrative offices and manage payroll, marketing, and human resources, as well as the overall finances. Musicians then saw a drop in attendance for concerts and a lack of marketing materials; our season subscriptions were down 30 percent.

Throughout the fall, contract negotiations were on hold at >

Stephenson's request. In early December, he brought up at the negotiation table the claim that the orchestra's participation in the AFM-EPF represented a large liability. Our committee and the union stressed that there would be no issue or penalty for withdrawal if we stayed in the AFM-EPF. Stephenson repeatedly stressed the risky condition of the fund, and stated the only reason the transfer of assets from the SSSA to SMSA had not happened yet was because of the potential pension liability.

In mid-December, less than two weeks before the CBA extension was set to expire, the negotiating committee had another meeting with SMSA and Stephenson, accompanied by Dr. Viroslav and their shared lawyer. Shockingly, there was no offer from SMSA and the meeting lasted less than ten minutes total. Because SSSA had not yet transferred assets to SMSA, Stephenson questioned the ability of SMSA to even be at the negotiating table. Considering the fact that SMSA had been negotiating with the musicians since June, the negotiations committee found this statement to be in bad faith. SMSA and Stephenson, along with Dr. Viroslav and their shared lawyer, abruptly ended the meeting. The union immediately filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge for failure to negotiate in good faith against SSSA and SMSA as joint employers.

The Musicians of the San Antonio Symphony needed to let the public know what was happening. We held a press conference on December 21, in front of the offices of the Tobin Center, and called for Stephenson to "stop playing games and commit to bargaining with the Musicians Society of San Antonio."

After the press conference, the musicians played their last show of 2017 on December 23, uncertain of the future of the organization. The holiday season was filled with tension, anxiety, and confusion.

On December 27, SMSA and Bruce Bugg, head of the Tobin Endowment and current board member and former chair of the Tobin Center, issued a press statement announcing they were terminating the takeover process that they had initiated in early spring. Essentially, they pulled the plug on the Symphony after months of gutting the staff, consolidating shared services, failing to negotiate a new contract, and disassembling the previous non-profit infrastructure and board.

On January 3, the remaining board members of SSSA called an emergency board meeting. This group, stripped of many of its recent members, would determine the future of the San Antonio Symphony. Musicians showed up to work that same day to begin rehearsals for the upcoming program, a celebration of the city's tri-centennial. The concerts were slated for January 5 and 6 as an opening weekend celebration; instead, the collective sentiment was extreme sorrow and uncertainty from both musicians and concertgoers. We sat in our seats and rehearsed, the only thing that could be done.

Our three musician board representatives attended the SSSA's board meeting on January 3 to discuss the remainder

of the 2017-2018 season. In executive session, Dr. Viroslav and the board made the decision that with such a short amount of time to reconstitute the board and management and to raise funds, they were left with no other choice than to cancel the remainder of the season. An emergency orchestra meeting was called on January 4 and the tenuous future of the Symphony was discussed. Musicians learned that ticket revenue was being refunded to the purchasers, which was shocking; we thought that there was still a sliver of hope of salvaging the season. Halfway through the orchestra meeting Dr. Viroslav placed a call to Craig Sorgi, negotiations committee chair, and said she had resigned.

Things moved quickly in the days that followed, with musicians preparing to play their final concert of the season. Post-concert receptions were cancelled and Ticketmaster refunded ticket sales for all of the movie concerts. The Tobin Center for the Performing Arts had not yet refunded the tickets for our classical and pops shows. In addition, SSSA scheduled an emergency board meeting to determine a new board chair.

Kathleen Weir Vale was elected board chair of SSSA on January 5. Her election, the return of control of SSSA, and the orchestra's plight generated massive community support as we prepared for our last concerts of the season. The weekend's concerts were packed, with musicians receiving standing ovations both evenings.

At the beginning of the concert on Friday, January 5, however, that was not yet apparent, and the hall was filled with a wide array of emotions—sorrow at the orchestra's apparently imminent demise, regret at being deceived about SMSA's agenda, and

gratitude for one last opportunity to be, and to hear, the San Antonio Symphony. The musicians met the public in front of the hall before the concert to garner support. But even then, the Tobin Center interfered with musicians' peaceful efforts to engage patrons, summoning the police in an attempt to stop lawful leafleting. Shock at the Tobin Center's crackdown against the musicians went viral on social media. At intermission, musicians again went into the lobby to greet and thank our amazing audience, students, families, and friends. The love for both the symphony and the music that evening was palpable and inspiring.

After intermission, Maestro Sebastian Lang-Lessing came on stage to announce that our new board chair, Mrs. Vale, had reinstated the season and as many concerts as possible would be continuing as planned. The audience burst into a thunderous standing ovation, with the onstage musicians in shock, relief, and complete surprise. What began as a somber farewell performance ended with a shocking twist of goodwill and celebration of classical music in the city of San Antonio.

It turned out that in the 24–48 hour period after the season was cancelled on January 3, and before our concert on the fifth, many former board members had rejoined the board and significant financial gifts were made. We celebrated the miraculous return of our season and our Maestro's birthday >>



The roller-coaster January 5 concert

after the performance backstage on the fifth with a champagne toast in the good company of our new board chair.

While our season has not been restored in its entirety, we have maintained all but four weeks and added an extra week of opera. Our season, which would have been 30 weeks, is now slated for 27 weeks including the additional opera week. On January 10, just five days after our new board chair was elected, we reached a contract agreement and have raised our EMG to \$30 a week (from \$10) while maintaining our current base weekly salary. We have an Interim Executive Director, Karina Bharne, former Vice President and General Manager, who is well acquainted with the challenges of this organization and is preparing for forthcoming negotiations. The future of the San Antonio Symphony is still unknown, but with the renewed community support from patrons, students, elected officials and our board, we are now in a position to harness positive momentum moving forward. 

### Partly Sunny Skies in Louisville (continued)

will be restored over the course of the current contract. At the end of the current contract the orchestra will be at 34 weeks and 58 full-time musicians.

The Louisville Orchestra's reputation also has been making strides, both locally and internationally. In 2013 the orchestra hired a new music director, Teddy Abrams, who has become known for his innovative programming and collaborations with local artists. The orchestra recently recorded and released an album for the first time in almost 30 years. *All In* was #1 on the

Billboard charts for a full week and has received rave reviews. An original composition on the album by Abrams, *Unified Field*, was originally commissioned as a collaboration between the Louisville Orchestra and the Louisville Ballet. Also included on the album is Copland's Clarinet Concerto and a number of songs featuring the singer Storm Large.



Jecorey "1200" Arthur as Muhammad Ali in *The Greatest*

This fall, the orchestra premiered a work by Abrams about the life of Louisville-native and world-famous athlete Muhammed Ali. The work, entitled *The Greatest*, incorporated many different musical genres and forms of artistic expression: dance, singing, rap, theatre, and symphony orchestra. Featuring artists Rhiannon Giddens and local hip-hop star Jecorey "1200" Arthur, among others, *The Greatest* received international press attention and was a local success. The orchestra >

## Newsletters of Note

Several ICSOM orchestras publish newsletters, including the musicians of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. This article from their October issue, by FWSO bassoonist Kevin Hall, reprinted by permission, exemplifies the fine writing one can find there. To subscribe, visit [www.fwsomusicians.com/links--contact-us.html](http://www.fwsomusicians.com/links--contact-us.html).

### Playing with Pain

By Kevin Hall, Bassoon

Playing with pain. We've all heard about it in regard to the world of sports. However, symphony orchestra audience members rarely, if ever, hear about it pertaining to the people who make the beautiful music they have come to hear. It just doesn't fit into their highly romanticized conception of what it means to be a classical music performer.

Yet many of us play with pain on a daily basis. Repetitive limited range of motion, combined with muscle tension, for hours on end, often twisted into unnatural positions—day after day, with rarely a day off, for decades—leads to a host of physical problems: arthritis, tendinitis, bursitis; neck, back, arm and shoulder problems . . . the list goes on and on. Treatments range from long term relationships with chiropractors, to therapeutic massage and yoga, to acupuncture, to steroid injections and surgery - all done to keep us playing.

I, myself, was recently sidelined. Those are difficult phone calls to make—to the personnel manager and the music direc-

tor—to say, "I can't play." It's a sobering moment. However, the compassion and understanding with which the news was received was heartening.

Ironically, it wasn't pain that was the cause—quite the opposite—it was loss of feeling in the index and second fingers of my right hand. It would merely be an inconvenience for a non-musician, but for a bassoonist it's devastating. I can't feel two of the holes on the instrument that those two fingers cover. I knew it felt numb—I had been dealing with it off and on for a couple of years—but it had never been this bad before. I could only play for a few seconds before wrong notes started to appear.

I immediately called my hand doctor. (Yes, I have a regular hand doctor.) Some unpleasant testing of the electrical pathways (nerves), with a device quite like a stun gun, yielded a diagnosis of "severe carpal tunnel syndrome." The nerve that runs to those fingers was being choked off at the wrist. The only solution was surgery—take the pressure off the nerve and allow it to heal.

I'm writing this two weeks to the day after surgery. The incision is healing very nicely—but the numbness persists. My doctor told me that intact nerves regenerate from where the nerve is still healthy, toward the tip of the fingers, at a rate of about an inch per month. Both he and I are optimistic for a full recovery—it will just take time. I should have about 80% of my hand strength back in three months; 100% in six.

But still, I wonder, "what if it never gets better?" I hope to be back on stage in October. Only time will tell.

also recently premiered a work by composer and Louisville Orchestra pianist Sebastian Chang, *Between Heaven and Earth*, a collaboration with Iraqi-born visual artist Vian Sora. During the three-movement piece with choir, images of Sora's paintings were projected on a screen above for the audience. The result was powerful and well received by the audience.

Just last week the orchestra performed side-by-side with the Louisville Youth Orchestra on the "Gheens Great Expectations" concert featuring Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and several other works. Since five of the ten original art compositions that inspired *Pictures at an Exhibition* have been lost to history, a statewide youth art competition was held for five paintings to be projected on a screen along with the original pieces during the performance.

Since the 2013-2014 season, the Louisville Orchestra has experienced an 18% increase in the number of tickets issued and a 49% increase in revenue from ticket sales. There is a "buzz" in the community surrounding the orchestra, and the orchestra's performances continually garner positive reviews from our audiences and local press. Our Neighborhood series continues to grow as well. In this series the orchestra performs in different churches, synagogues, and community centers throughout the city of Louisville. Last fall we had our

best attended Neighborhood concert on record. Our Pops series continues to grow as well. The orchestra successfully continues to be the resident orchestra for the Louisville Ballet and Kentucky Opera.

The Louisville Orchestra also underwent a strategic planning process that lasted a year and was led by Henry Fogel. In this process, we looked at every part of the organization to see what was working and what wasn't, where we can improve, and what we can be doing differently. Orchestra board members, staff, and musicians all participated and many recommendations were given and agreed upon. But a great deal more work needs to be done to successfully implement the strategic plan.

Although there have been significant gains and positive news coming out of Louisville, we still have a long way to go. The Louisville Orchestra still has fewer full-time positions than we had before. We need to keep moving forward with our artistic goals and increasing our salary, weeks, and restoration of full-time positions. We are grateful and indebted to ICSOM and all of the orchestras in ICSOM who helped us get to where we are today. We are also thankful to all of our supporters in Louisville and elsewhere who joined us in our quest to have a flourishing full-time symphony orchestra in Louisville. We know we could not have gotten to this point without you. 



Teddy Abrams, Sebastian Chang, and Vian Sora

Neil Arnold, courtesy of the Louisville Orchestra

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