

Senza Sordino

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Good News Across ICSOM

Positive Stories as our Orchestras Recover from a Global Pandemic

Over the course of the past two years, there have been countless examples of ICSOM orchestras facing tremendous adversity. While the effects of the pandemic still remain for a large number of our members, the recovery has begun in earnest for quite a few orchestras. In this article, five delegates from across the country share some positive news about their organizations.

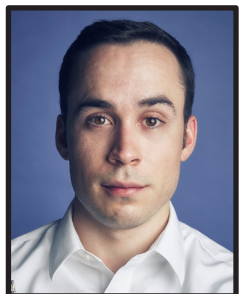
Colorado Symphony

Jason Shafer

The Musicians of the Colorado Symphony are thrilled to announce two exciting developments from the end of 2021. First, we are entering a period of new-found, exceptional financial stability, thanks to major growth in our endowment. And second, we have ratified our first new CBA since 2013.

In 2015, our endowment stood at about \$9 million. However, by the end of 2021, it grew to approximately \$88 million, an incredible increase largely due to the relentless efforts of Jerry and Dr. Mary Kern. Both Jerry and Mary spent years as Co-Chairs of our Board of Trustees, and in addition to that role, Jerry served as CEO of the Colorado Symphony Association. Jerry took over as CEO directly after the Colorado Symphony's financial crisis about ten years ago, performing those duties for many years without a salary.

In addition, in November 2021, a new CBA was ratified between Local 20-623 and management. The Musicians of the Colorado Symphony have been operating under an expired CBA since 2013, and this new agreement has much to celebrate. Although we received 2% raises a few times during the last few years, this new CBA secures an 8% raise in base pay, in addition to raising our substitute musician pay. Since the duration of the



Willie Petersen

new CBA is only for the 2021-2022 season, negotiations will start soon for a new multi-year agreement. We express gratitude to our Negotiating Committee—John Kinzie (chair), Susan Cahill, Steve Hearn, Nick Recuber, and Michael Thornton—as well as Local President Mike Allen for all their hard work throughout the negotiating process.

Cleveland Orchestra

Katherine Bormann

While the first of January marks the beginning of a calendar year, those of us in the arts tend to feel that our new year takes place in the fall, with the launch of a fresh season of concerts. This September in Cleveland had a tangible feeling of festivity: it was the return of our beloved audiences in greater numbers to Severance, the return of guest conductors and soloists experiencing fewer travel issues, and the return to 100 percent salaries.

It is humbling to reflect on the bumpy pandemic journey of so many ensembles. While no institution made it through unscathed, we were truly fortunate in Cleveland to have fiercely devoted audiences and trustees who gave generously to our Orchestra Preservation Fund. We had staff, management, and an Orchestra Committee who worked long hours to navigate safety protocols and secure funding from available sources.

Our musicians adjusted to the distanced programs recorded for our new digital platform, *Adella*, and this portal has bloomed into an enormous upgrade of tools for the Cleveland Orchestra to connect with patrons. The second season of our captured *In Focus* concerts is moving ahead with new robotic cameras, production equipment, and artistic staff.

Lastly, we were all stunned this September at the announcement of a \$50 million dollar grant to the Orchestra from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation of Cleveland. The largest gift in our history, the monies will bolster the endowment, support digital infrastructure and artistic programming, and increase the Orchestra's impact in our local and global communities.

That a local foundation would purposefully invest in classical music (and in strengthening a fellow Cleveland institution) has truly felt like a beacon of light and hope.



Roger Mastroianni

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Chairperson's Report

By Meredith Snow

Building Inclusion into our New Normal

The 60th anniversary of ICSOM's founding comes at an interesting inflection point in our history—as in “may you live in interesting times...” As the dust settles from the unforeseen and nearly catastrophic pandemic shutdown, we are returning to full concert schedules, attendance restrictions are lifting, and our audiences are coming back. We are nearly back to “normal”.



Diane Alancraig Photography

But it doesn't feel normal. So much has changed in our social and political landscape that it seems impossible to just pick up where we left off.

Nor, I believe, should we. The pandemic deepened the revelation of social inequities and systems of oppression that continue to exist in our country. Even before the pandemic, the emerging culture of white supremacy and authoritarian leanings over the past five years has been a step in the wrong direction. We have a responsibility as private citizens and as members of our orchestras to recognize and respond to these inequities.

The decades of 1960 & 1970 were an analogous era of tremendous social and political upheaval in this country. Racial and economic oppression gave rise to the civil rights & Black Power movements, the anti-Vietnam war protests, and a burgeoning counterculture in the youth of our society.

May of 1962 was the first meeting of ICSOM's founding orchestras, “dedicated to the promotion of a better and more rewarding livelihood for the skilled performer and to the enrichment of the cultural life of our society”. ICSOM began its campaign fighting for and consolidating power in relation to the governance of our orchestras, both with our managements and within the American Federation of Musicians (AFM). The right to bargain our salaries and working conditions was an unparalleled step in musician autonomy and leadership. Orchestras grew from part-time work to full-time employment. In 1969, ICSOM was the first player's conference to be granted full status within the AFM (*Fifty Years of ICSOM*, Tom Hall).

The establishment of a National Endowment for the Arts was the aspiration of the John F. Kennedy administration. In 1963, just months before his assassination, the first Senate bill was put forth proposing a national arts council. It wasn't until 1965, under the Lyndon Johnson administration, that the National Endowment for the Arts was passed into law, making government funds available to non-profit arts institutions (www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/nea-history-1965-2008.pdf).

Our orchestras were among the first recipients and they flourished. Throughout a decade of often contentious negotiations, salaries increased and weeks were added to seasons. New halls were built to accommodate our orchestras and neighbor arts organizations. Orchestras became a central hub in the cultural life of our cities. The growth of our industry, while not always peaceful, was remarkable in its speed and scope.



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SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

A Player Conference of the
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Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
The Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony
Grant Park Orchestra
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Houston Symphony
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony
Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Louisville Orchestra
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony
National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
New York City Opera Orchestra
New York Philharmonic
North Carolina Symphony
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One of ICSOM's stated goals from its inception was equal employment opportunities for musicians of color and an end to segregated audiences (*Senza Sordino* June '21 President's Report). Seven years later, ICSOM went on the record in support of equal rights for women in all employment, and specifically in the field of symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras. While ICSOM's goals were lofty, six decades later, we remain well short of those aspirations around racial and gender representation as well as equity. Women are approaching 50% of our ranks but principal positions and their concomitant pay remain elusive. We continue to work to build environments in our orchestras that attract and retain musicians of color, but we still have much work to do to create truly welcoming and safe environments for ALL of our peers.

So what can ICSOM do? We share relevant information with our orchestras; negotiation strategies, salaries, workload and audition practices. We can help other orchestras experiencing work stoppages through our Calls To Action and by supporting them on social media. ICSOM can promote and educate, but are we able to act together?

In 1984, musicians from ICSOM orchestras across the country volunteered to play concerts for Musicians Against Nuclear Arms (MANA) to benefit Physicians for Social Responsibility, a national organization working to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms. MANA sponsored concerts in Boston, San Francisco, Cleveland, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Zubin Mehta, who conducted the New York concert, said "The boards of orchestras wouldn't touch this. No official organization would." But the musicians of ICSOM were so eager to participate they couldn't all fit on stage. Some had to be turned away.

Last month, the ICSOM governing board engaged Jessica Schmidt of Orchestrate Inclusion (<https://www.orchestrateinclusion.com>) to help us and ICSOM's DEI Caucus to envision what we can most effectively and meaningfully do to support our members in their own DEI work. Ms. Schmidt has worked with several of our orchestras already and presented at last summer's conference in Pittsburgh. Despite our differing CBAs, locations and budget sizes, what power do we have to make lasting change as a team of musicians and as importantly—human beings? What might ICSOM be best equipped to do in support of its orchestras' DEI journeys? What might we be leaving on the table?

In the next edition of *Senza Sordino*, we will be exploring the work of our orchestras who have already begun a deep dive into DEI. What excites them about the work and what are they learning? Have discussions resulted in changes at their workplace? What are the challenges they face? First up are the San Francisco Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra. Please contact me or editor Mike Muszynski if your orchestra would like to participate in sharing your organization's experience.

The pandemic shutdown could have incapacitated our industry. It didn't. I am so glad to be back at work and I'm grateful for the sacrifice, determination, and generosity of everyone who helped us come through this crisis. I look forward to exploring what ICSOM can do to continue to make our orchestras more resilient and equitable, and our cities a better place to live.

President's Report

By Paul Austin

The Sixties, Three Ways

What's in a number? This column addresses the sixties in three different ways: the 60th anniversary of ICSOM, the decade of our founding, and ICSOM's dedicated musicians who both were born in the sixties and have reached that age (or will do so soon).

2022 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of ICSOM. It is a pleasure and an honor to host our significant celebration in Grand Rapids, Michigan on August 24-27, 2022 (watch for further details at www.icsom.org). While the

event will again be hybrid—held both live and via Zoom—we hope to have as many as possible attend in person should the pandemic be at a point where everyone feels safe in doing so once again.



Terry Johnston

As our organization enters its sixties, ICSOM continues to hold importance and relevance for the livelihood and careers of orchestral musicians. Formed with twenty charter member orchestras in those turbulent sixties,

ICSOM began as a means for its musicians to have an active and respected voice in the industry. ICSOM membership has grown to include over fifty orchestras today. Looking back at the conference minutes from the 1960s, ICSOM immediately addressed important concerns, including the following:

AFM relations, which led to the founding of the Symphonic Services Division and musician representation on national media negotiations;

Internal communication, resulting in ICSOM's newsletter *Senza Sordino*, which remains our official publication today;

Contractual issues, such as hiring and tenure procedures, which then became bargained and are included in current Collective Bargaining Agreements;

National matters, supporting non-discrimination and equal rights, endorsing the 1963 *Fine Arts Bill*, and communicating to US President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 about having an ICSOM representative on the newly-formed National Council for the Arts.

ICSOM's website includes the official minutes from all past conferences, and I would encourage our membership to browse these archives (<https://www.icsom.org/conferences/conf-minutes.php>) in order to become knowledgeable of the work that has occurred.

A sizable number of ICSOM musicians who were born in the sixties will reach that age and perhaps may retire during the current decade. Many of those players have been active leaders and should be recognized for their service on elected committees.

In any group, its strength lies in being able to carry forth and prosper once a change in leadership occurs. No chairperson would want to see their dedicated efforts fall to the wayside once they are out of office. Before they retire, I strongly

The Sixties continues on page 6

Orchestra Community Building

Strengthening our Bonds in Indianapolis

Roger Roe, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

My dad was a minister, and almost all of my friends outside of the orchestra are teachers, preachers, therapists, or others in the healing and helping professions. That makes it intuitive and natural for me to look for ways to build friendships and personal connections in every part of life. When serving on various committees with the ISO, I try to remember the value of building bonds and the teachings of heroes of mine like Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “The person who loves those around them will create community.”



Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Orchestras can be strange workplaces. Loving those around us may not be the first thing that comes to mind. We come to work and sit quietly while also working in solitude at home for hours each week. There may be some time in the lounge at break or in the locker room together, but we have nothing like the daily work dynamics found in most other professions. That can create a few challenges when it comes to getting to know one another. However, with some work on-stage and offstage, I have seen our connections deepen, leading to a beautiful sense of family and commitment. One of the results of this, not too surprisingly, is a commitment to work with each other for the common good and a subsequently high willingness to serve on committees and work for solutions, even in the face of steep challenges. We have a history of highly-developed personal bonds that contributes greatly to the overall strength of our orchestral community.

Whether we even like each other or not, whether we agree on politics, religion, phrasing decisions or intonation, we will, one way or another, spend our lives creating art in close community with one another. That's always easier and better when we have grace and humanity in our hearts and know each other as people more deeply. I know that I have found some of my best friends along the way, too. After all, we are the Union. We are the family. We play for each other's weddings and sew that quilt for your new baby. We pick you up from the doctor's office and drop your kids off at school when you can't.

One of our most fun and successful efforts at community-building in Indianapolis has been as easy as having people over after a concert. We (in non-pandemic times) have a welcome party for each new member of the orchestra. Veteran members get together during the week of the party and invent a new cocktail or other drink to serve for the party, often based on the favorite beverage of the new member or members. We try to call it something clever, using their own name, hometown or instrument. Seoul Sister, The Blue Lou, String Theory, Jen Blossom, and The Panamaniac are a few colorful past examples. The orchestra musicians' fund pays a small amount to cover basic costs of the party, and everyone brings

a dish to share. The leaders and members of the new member's section propose a toast to them, and everyone gets to know everyone else a bit better. At one such party, our bassoonists did a skit for their newest member, our first clarinet player came out of his shell and roasted his new section mate with some pretty funny jokes, and later in the evening, that old Russian cellist told some amazing stories about his time working with Rostropovich.

My husband and I make it a point to invite new members over to our house for a meal or drinks. We ask them to perform special music as guests at our church. People want to be known and to make new connections, even and especially across generations or identities. We've had lots of revealing interactions at those events, and all of them help us to get to know one another better. Some players will have questions about the dynamics of the orchestra—“Tell me about that lockdown you guys had in 2012.” Some will tell you about a hobby you might share—“Did I see on Facebook that your first oboe player is a big runner? I love running.” Some may even tell you more personal things—“I am really introverted. It's hard for me to be around this many people for long; thanks for having me over, but I'm going to call it a night.” The ISO musicians also hold an official new member orientation, and between the informal and formal events, we build our friendships more and more deeply.

Intentional community-building fosters both camaraderie and solidarity. Our bonds have been and will be tested. We may disagree, but we can still love the folks in the orchestra who advocate for the other side of an argument. We know we will go out for a meal soon, even if we need to take a break from each other for a while. By taking our new members out to eat and helping them feel settled in town, not only do we find that next book club member or that great French cook, but we may also identify that musician who is genuinely curious about being in Union leadership down the road.

We cannot help but grow stronger if we consciously engage in love for one another and for the collective body of artists that we are.

The Panamaniac

Created in 2106 to welcome of
Pedro Fernández, section percussionist

2 parts rum
2 parts club soda
1 part lime juice, muddled with mint
1 part mango nectar
1 part sparkling wine
Agave syrup
1 dash orange bitters

Stir to combine and
garnish with an orange peel

Good News continued from page 1

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Miles Maner

As of January 3rd, 2021, compensation for the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been reinstated to 100%, thanks to three primary elements, the receipt of a Shuttered Venue Operators Grant of \$10 million, the meeting of the orchestra's financial and donation projection goals, and to quote Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) President Jeff Alexander, a new "spirit of collaboration" between the orchestra musicians and management.



Todd Rosenberg

Following the seven week strike of 2019 and elections for a new Orchestra Committee, the relationship between musicians and management shifted immediately, placing a higher value on trust and mutual respect rather than irrevocable guarantees. This shift was evident in the flexible language of the three COVID-19 side letters ratified by the orchestra. While minimum compensation and benefit guarantees were defined within each of the side letters, loosely defined triggers for further reduction or increase in pay were also included. Without specific ticket sales or fundraising goals specified, the trigger language was purposely limber to allow for ongoing conversation during a fluid season. This flexibility paid off as each of the CSOA's intentions to increase pay over the last seven months was met on time or early, greatly rebuilding the musicians' trust in their management.

The musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra are deeply grateful for the many patron and trustee donations to the Orchestra during a year with very little live performance, for the vast efforts of the CSOA including crucial work by the development department and the creation of a new streaming platform, and to the Orchestra Committee and its Chair, Jim Smelser, for forging a new productive relationship with the CSOA and its President, Jeff Alexander.

Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra

Douglas Rosenthal

In planning the 2021-22 season, the Kennedy Center decided to devote much of its calendar to commercial, for-profit performances, diminishing the presence of opera and ballet. Because of this, when we began negotiating in July 2021, the Kennedy Center and Washington National Opera managements each sought to reduce our amount of guaranteed work. This would have amounted to about a 23% cut in pay with no "snap back" provision to our pre-pandemic salary.



Ashley Booher

However, they also expressed an eagerness to utilize the orchestra for educational and non-orchestral performance projects, something for which our musicians have been advocating for a long time. Both sides had very meaningful discussions about this; unfortunately, once economics were

reintroduced to the conversation, our managements abruptly abandoned the idea, continuing to leave an unacceptable cut on the table with no restoration of wages.

As we approached a September 12, 2021 deadline, under the guidance of Randy Whatley, we laid the groundwork for a public fight. We kept our eye on a September 14 concert, the Opening Concert for the Kennedy Center's 50th Anniversary, with VIP attendees that included First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. It was an event that would celebrate the entire institution, although it omitted any participation from our orchestra. Nevertheless, our managements understood that if we did not come to an agreement soon, this concert could be in jeopardy. And so, after long days of negotiations, we ratified three-year contracts with both the Kennedy Center and the Washington National Opera on the evening of September 13.

While the first two of the upcoming seasons will include a reduction in salary and work for this orchestra, the third year will bring restoration. And we hope that by then, the Kennedy Center will have found a way to move past the pandemic in a manner that celebrates every art form without pushing opera and ballet programming aside.

Alabama Symphony Orchestra

Brad Whitfield

After far too much time off during the pandemic, the Alabama Symphony Orchestra Musicians emerged with a renewed desire to directly and more tangibly engage with our community.

In September 2021, we created a new series of neighborhood concerts free to the public entitled "Our Hearts Beat for Birmingham" where we performed two different concert programs in three houses of worship across the city. Each concert featured a different local non-profit in an effort to bring awareness and support to some wonderful organizations during a tough time for all. It was a beautiful and tangible demonstration that a symphony orchestra can unite communities across all demographics in a collective shared experience.

In November, we participated in the Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama's "Pink Up the Pace" 5k. This is a cause close to our hearts, as our ASO family has been impacted by this awful disease far too many times. Our trumpet section provided a "call to post" to kick off the race, and we even had a musician place second overall!

In December, we partnered with the Mayor's Office Division of Youth Services to provide a "musical trailer" for their second annual Youth First Holiday Toy Giveaway that assists Birmingham youth who live in moderately-low income households, shelters, and residential living facilities. We look forward to participating in this event live next year!

Most recently in January, we performed at UAB Hospital in a show of deep appreciation for all of our healthcare workers. Throughout the pandemic we provided virtual performances for COVID-19 patients in the ICU, so it felt extra special to perform live in the hospital.

We have several exciting projects currently in the works and cannot wait to share them with our ICSOM family! ➡



Matthew Moore

Puerto Rico's Governor and Financial Board Commit \$20 Million for PRSO's Musicians Pension Fund

By José M. Villegas, Secretary-Treasurer, AFM-Local 555

On January 27th, 2022, the Governor of Puerto Rico announced an agreement with the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (FOMB) to commit \$20 million dollars in annual incremental funding, over the next ten years, for the stabilization of the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra Musicians' Pension Fund. This contribution has been included in the Certified Budget Plan approved by the FOMB for Puerto Rico's next fiscal year, which begins in July 2022.



Elisa Torres

Currently, the PRSO Musicians' Pension Fund has a nearly \$30 million deficit. The deficit accumulated over several decades, in part due to previous failures by PRSO management in fulfilling their annual contribution obligations for the plan. The \$20 million contribution negotiated with the FOMB will greatly assist the Pension Fund's longevity; also, the fund's stabilization plan will include an upcoming restructuring process that would guarantee a healthy fund for current and future PRSO's retirees.

The agreements for next fiscal year's Certified Budget Plan were negotiated after the Federal Court finally approved Puerto Rico's Debt Restructuring Plan (DRP) on January 18th, 2022, which subsequently allowed more flexibility to general funding requests made to the FOMB. However, commitment from Puerto Rico's Government to assist the PRSO Musicians' Pension Fund was achieved thanks to the hard work of AFM-Local 555 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the PRSO Musicians' "Save the Symphony" (Salvemos La Sinfónica) campaign, and ICSOM's extremely valuable support in these past years.



Felipe Rodríguez

Part of their trip to Puerto Rico in September 2021, Bruce Ridge (left) and Paul Austin (center-left) record an interview with Miguel Rivera (center) and José Manuel Villegas (right) at the University of Puerto Rico's recording studio to raise awareness and support for orchestral music.

On September 2020, ICSOM and PRSO Musicians organized a very successful Phone2Action campaign that pressured the FOMB to acknowledge the PRSO budget and Musicians' Pension Fund difficulties. ICSOM assistance continued through 2021, with ICSOM President Paul Austin and ICSOM's Former Chair Bruce Ridge visiting the island on September 2021. ICSOM's visit to Puerto Rico included a formal meeting with Puerto Rico's Governor, Pedro Pierluisi, at "La Fortaleza" (the Governor's Executive Office), in which the Pension Fund and PRSO's contribution to Puerto Rico's culture, economy and education where the main topics of discussion.

President Paul Austin relayed that "ICSOM was very pleased to learn of this positive news for the dedicated musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. From our meeting last September with Governor Pedro Pierluisi, he clearly was shocked when we told him that the musicians' pension fund had not been funded adequately. During his term, the Governor has been defending pension funding of all Puerto Ricans, and to see this level of commitment for the musicians' pension fund provides proof of his commitment. To know that the hard-working PRSO musicians will be able to retire with dignity is reassuring."

(Note: the PRSO is almost entirely funded by Puerto Rico's Government General Fund, and the PRSO is managed under the Corporation for the Musical Arts, a Puerto Rico government-owned corporation.)

The Sixties continued from page 3

encourage ICSOM's veteran musicians to identify potential leaders among their ranks and begin mentoring them for the next wave of committee members.

It has been encouraging to see a new generation of delegates in recent years who do an excellent job of representing their orchestras to ICSOM. In fact, we have welcomed over thirty new delegates during the past four years, which reflects a change of well over half of this group. Just one example of ICSOM's younger delegates is Brad Whitfield of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Brad and the OC have led the charge for the ASO Musicians who now have an incredibly active voice both in their community and on social media. ICSOM's legacy will continue as long as we continue to have new delegates like Brad who step forth with fresh ideas to energize their colleagues for participating in musician-sponsored activities (<https://alsymphonymusicians.org>). Brad told me recently that he was encouraged for several years by the ASO's long-time ICSOM Delegate Kevin Kozak to become involved in leadership roles. I thank Kevin for passing along the torch!

For membership on negotiation and orchestra committees, it is up to the next generation of ICSOM members to move up and take the reins in order to uphold and continue the work and achievements that have been established and reached. AFM's Symphonic Services Division provides online training for orchestra committees (<https://members.afm.org/ssd/ssd-skills>), but ICSOM and our locals are always available to support new committee members.

Whether it be our upcoming conference, our founding decade, or our seasoned players, let's celebrate the sixties.

Body Mapping

Healthier Musicians, Better Music Making

By Timothy Myers, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

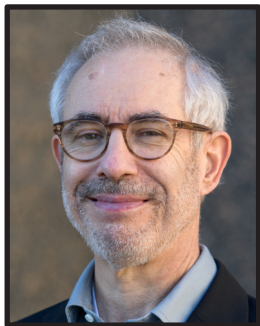
In our symphonic world, we often hear that a large percentage of orchestral musicians have suffered or will suffer from a playing-related injury that impacts or threatens their careers. Many colleagues in our industry have suffered tendonitis, nerve damage, frozen shoulder, TMJ syndrome, hearing loss, or focal dystonia (among other conditions). Many of us also suffer from the sense that something is not quite right with how we feel when we play. We might have the sense that something is holding us back from achieving full artistic expression. Is there some information that we are lacking?

My own training in the 1970s and 1980s included nothing about human anatomy or the healthy use of the body. Conservatories and music schools have only in recent decades begun to address this—music schools are far behind our counterparts in the dance world. According to Dr. Lynnette Khoo-Summers, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy at Washington University in St. Louis, and a former dancer herself, “Most, if not all, dance programs (BFA and BA) require dance majors to take anatomy, kinesiology and physiology. And a lot of them also have some component of injury prevention.” Since we use our bodies every bit as much as dancers do to create our art, why is the need to learn basic facts about our bodies not addressed in our training?

I was fortunate to study for a brief time with Arnold Jacobs, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra tubist who had a legendary command of anatomy. From my study with Mr. Jacobs, I developed a curiosity about the body, but I didn’t know how to approach learning about this topic. What if there were something that could help us prevent injuries and help us use our bodies to better realize our vivid artistic intentions? After much searching, I discovered that Body Mapping was the approach I had been looking for.

What is Body Mapping? The term body map is synonymous with internal representation or neuronal self-representation. For instance, if my body map tells me, consciously or not, that my lungs are behind my navel, I will emphasize movement in my abdomen. The concept of the “body map” was an insight of William Conable, Emeritus Professor of Cello at The Ohio State University. He saw that a musician’s own internal representation of his body, or “body map”, governed how that musician moved. He noticed that if the musician’s body map was accurate, their movement was fluid and pain-free; if their body map was inaccurate, their movement was inefficient and injury-prone. Concurrently, neurophysiologists made the same discoveries about the existence and primacy of the body map in movement.

The course “What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body” was developed by Barbara Conable, a distinguished teacher of the Alexander Method. Mrs. Conable, along with



Ray Meibaum

some of her first Body Mapping students, organized the Association of Body Mapping Educators (ABME) to train musicians to teach “What Every Musician Needs to Know...” to other musicians.

Teachers of Body Mapping aim to train musicians in three areas: attention, senses, and movement. We teach inclusive attention, or attention (or awareness or mindfulness) that includes both introspective and extrospective attention.

Introspective attention means attending to the whole self. Where do I feel tense or free? What hurts or doesn’t hurt? Extrospective attention includes everything outside of yourself. Who is with me on the stage? Who is in the audience? What is in my environment?

We also train the senses, especially kinesthesia, the sense of movement, and proprioception, the sense of position. Finally, we train movement. We emphasize that musicians need to move in a way that accounts for how our bodies really are. Body Mapping addresses incorrect body maps with skeletal models, images, and self-inquiry. Freer movement can lead to greater artistic freedom. As Amy Likar, flutist in the Oakland Symphony and Director of Training for ABME, says, “bodies love to organize around a musical intention.”

Musicians move for a living. Body Mapping offers musicians a path to fewer injuries and a freer use of the body for music-making. For more information, please check out the ABME website at www.bodymap.org.



Timothy Myers

Correction

In an article titled *Remembering Michael Morgan* in the December 2021 issue of *Senza Sordino*, a quote attributed to Kelly Hall-Tompkins incorrectly spelled her name as Kelly Hall-Thompkins. We regret the error.

60th Annual ICSOM Conference

Grand Rapids, MI

Hosted by the Grand Rapids Symphony Musicians Association and
Grand Rapids Federation of Musicians, AFM Local 56

August 24 – 27, 2022

Conference packets will be mailed to delegates at the end of May.

*Non-delegates who would like to attend should contact Laura Ross for
information about receiving a conference packet.*

More information to follow at icsom.org/conferences



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

