

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 61 NO. 3

OCTOBER 2023

61st Annual ICSOM Conference in Review

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

The musicians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and the Milwaukee Musicians' Association (AFM Local 8) hosted the 61st annual ICSOM conference at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee August 23–26, 2023. The tradition of holding a community event prior to the opening of the conference continued this year as a small ensemble of ICSOM officers and delegates performed for an appreciative group at the Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin. Music therapists Amanda Grettie Koch and Nancy Dexter-Schabow led the orchestra in arrangements of popular pieces while encouraging the teens to participate in various ways.



Participating musicians included violinists Laura Ross (Nashville Symphony) and Kimberly Tichenor (Louisville Orchestra), violists Meredith Snow (Los Angeles Philharmonic) and Helen Reich (Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra), cellist Brad Mansell (Nashville Symphony), horn players Paul Austin (Grand Rapids Symphony) and Peter de Boor (Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra), with Debbie Brooks (cellist, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra) playing a shaker. To view photos of many of the week's activities, visit [icsom.org](https://www.icsom.org) and navigate to the Conference tab.

For twenty years ICSOM has hosted a new delegate breakfast to give new and alternate delegates the opportunity to meet their colleagues and the governing board and to get a peek at what to expect during their first conference. Conference attendees discuss a great deal of information over three-and-a-half days, so this icebreaker helps prepare new delegates for the work they do on behalf of their orchestras.

The conference began with the roll call of orchestra delegates; introduction of attending AFM officers and staff, local officers, and guest musicians; and welcome remarks by conference host musicians and the local and orchestra administration. This year MSO musicians Helen Reich (who serves as MSO ICSOM delegate), Assistant Principal Trombonist Kirk

Ferguson (who served as conference coordinator), as well as Principal Violist and Local 8 President (and ICSOM Chairperson Emeritus) Robert Levine welcomed attendees; MSO President and CEO Mark Neihaus, a former MSO musician himself, also welcomed everyone to Milwaukee.

In her address to the conference, ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow reviewed the current state of the orchestra industry post-COVID. She reflected on successes and struggles regarding the inclusion of musicians of color in our orchestras and touched on a few of the changes orchestras have been making to their audition processes. Snow encouraged musicians to work with their colleagues at home to recognize and understand their own implicit biases. Stepping down after seven years as ICSOM chairperson, she finished by noting positive changes in our orchestras, but added that there is still a great deal more to do (see page 2 for the full remarks).

ICSOM President Paul Austin included photos during his address of the orchestra site visits he attended during the past season. ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross, Treasurer Peter de Boor, and Editor Mike Muszynski (Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra) also presented abbreviated summary reports as all ICSOM officers submit written reports before each conference. Early in the conference, delegates accept these reports and the minutes from the previous conference (which can both be accessed at [icsom.org](https://www.icsom.org) after logging in). ICSOM Nominating Committee Chair Brad Mansell announced a list of candidates for the offices of chairperson, treasurer, editor, and member-at-large, and nominations remained open through Thursday afternoon for elections beginning Friday morning.

Milwaukee Area Labor Council President Pam Fendt invited attendees to attend a protest rally a few blocks away from the hotel during the first Republican debate that evening. Newly elected AFM International President Tino Gagliardi, who took office at the beginning of August, introduced other International officers and executive board members in attendance, offered some brief remarks, and outlined some of the major national negotiations he will lead that begin in the next few months. There were also presentations by Caen Thomason-Redus, vice president of inclusion and learning at the League of American Orchestras (LAO), about a new project, Inclusive Stages, that is being established to gather more information on racial diversity in American orchestras, and from current LAO Board Chairman Doug Hagerman, who is also a former MSO board chair.

Some members did attend the Republican debate protest rally that evening, joining conference attendees afterward at

More In This Issue

Chairperson's Address	2
President's Column <i>An Honest Partnership</i>	3
The Jonah People	4
Adopted Resolutions and Bylaw Changes from the 61st Annual ICSOM Conference	8

Conference Report continues on page 6

Chairperson's Address

by Meredith Snow, ICSOM Chairperson Emeritus

ICSOM Chairperson Meredith Snow delivered the following remarks to the opening session of the 61st annual ICSOM Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 23, 2023. The address is reproduced here as a farewell.

Overall this has been a good year for our orchestras. Things still feel a little shaky and tentative—kind of like your first day out after a long illness—but we are, in fact, well on our way to a post-COVID recovery. A number of our orchestras came out of the pandemic with their finances in the black, thanks to the government subsidies in the American Rescue Plan Act, the Paycheck Protection Program, and Shuttered Venue Operator Grants. Plus, our managements saved a fair bit of money by not producing concerts for a year, not to mention reducing our salaries—or in a few cases, not paying them at all.



Diane Alanraig Photography

But for the most part, we are now seeing progressive contract settlements with salary increases—some modest but some have been unexpectedly successful. Our audiences are returning and ticket sales have rebounded faster than was anticipated. In my own orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, ticket sales to this summer's Hollywood Bowl season were higher than they have ever been.

Of course, in orchestras where we have had long standing issues—both financial and administrative—recovery is more challenging. Our opera orchestras continue to face difficult situations as managements look to cut overall production costs on the backs of musicians. Nothing new there.

We lost the San Antonio Symphony to bankruptcy last August, and the musicians of the newly formed San Antonio Philharmonic are starting their long climb back to solvency and full-time employment.

Not that we ever had a surfeit of good administrators, but many have left the field or were laid off during the pandemic. Managements, having let go of staff, are now short handed. Positions which are critical to our non-profits' survival are understaffed or empty. You can't raise money without a development department and you can't sell tickets without PR.

Even before COVID we had a number of musician vacancies, positions that had remained unfilled. Since then, more musicians have left and we are facing a generational shift in membership through retirement. Probably close to 10% of ICSOM musicians will be retiring in the next few years. I will be one of them. This is going to be a big change for us, but it can also be a big opportunity.

In the seven years I have served as ICSOM Chair I have worked—alongside the Governing Board, our DEI Forum, the Sphinx Organization, the League of American Orches-



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

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

www.icsom.org

Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
The Florida Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony
Grant Park Orchestra
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra
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 Philharmonic
North Carolina Symphony
Oregon Symphony
Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico
Pacific Symphony
The Philadelphia Orchestra
Phoenix Symphony
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
St. Louis Symphony
The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
San Diego Symphony Orchestra
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
San Francisco Opera Orchestra
San Francisco Symphony
Symphoria
Utah Symphony
Virginia Symphony Orchestra

Governing Board

Keith Carrick, Chairperson
Utah Symphony
1529 E Parkway Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84106
301-639-6614
keith.carrick@gmail.com

Paul Austin, President
Grand Rapids Symphony
561 Madison Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-304-0869
austinpaul@gmail.com

Laura Ross, Secretary
Nashville Symphony
1609 Tammam Drive
Nashville, TN 37206
615-227-2379
lar2vln@comcast.net

Peter de Boor, Treasurer
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
431 North Kenmore Street
Arlington, VA 22201
703-465-9157 • Fax 866-832-7838
pdeboor@gmail.com

Mike Muszynski, Senza Sordino Editor
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
450 E Ohio Street, Apt. 114
Indianapolis, IN 46204
224-558-0342
mmuszynski@gmail.com

Nicole Jordan, Member at Large
The Philadelphia Orchestra
1401 Spruce Street, Apt. 1711
Philadelphia, PA 19102
470-891-1386
njordanigb@gmail.com

Jessica Phillips, Member at Large
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
610 W 110th Street, Apt. 7E
New York, NY 10025
917-270-9411
jphillipsigb@gmail.com

Rob Schumitzky, Member at Large
Pacific Symphony
3 Coral Reef
Newport Coast, CA 92657
714-906-4024
rschumitzky@aol.com

Kimberly Tichenor, Member at Large
Louisville Orchestra
3034 Peale Avenue
Louisville, KY 40205
502-418-7210
kiagriff@yahoo.com

Kevin Case, ICSOM General Counsel
Case Arts Law LLC
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1241
Chicago, IL 60604
312-234-9926 • Fax 312-962-4908
kcase@caseartslaw.com

Subscriptions: \$10 per year, payable to ICSOM Inc.,
c/o Peter de Boor, Treasurer, 431 North Kenmore Street, Arlington, VA 22201.
Report delivery-related problems to Mike Muszynski, Editor, 450 E Ohio
Street, Apt. 114, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Senza Sordino, the official publication of the International Conference of
Symphony and Opera Musicians, Inc., is published four to six times a year.
Copyright © 2023. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction prohibited.

DMCA and DCA Notices may be found at <http://www.icsom.org/notices.php>

tras and, of course, Symphonic Services—to raise awareness around the lack of diversity and inclusion in our orchestras. The door has been barred to people of color for as long as our orchestras have existed. Yes, we have made some progress, especially with gender, but despite serious, well-intentioned efforts—going back as far as the 1960s—we have not moved the needle towards greater diversity in our musician ranks. In fact, according to the latest survey by the League of American Orchestras, we are going backwards as the few musicians of color we do have are also retiring.

We are making some progress towards adjusting our audition practices. In this most recent round of negotiations, more orchestras have codified fully screened auditions. In the next few days, we will be taking a close look at our tenure review processes with an eye towards greater transparency.

But ultimately, the audition and tenure practices we employ are only as fair and free of bias as the individuals who utilize them. It is our responsibility—especially those of us here who hold positions of influence—to examine ourselves and our attitudes, to recognize implicit bias and microaggressions at work, and to help our colleagues at home do the same. I am excited that we are going to spend these next few days together exploring these ideas in greater detail.

As you know, this is my last ICSOM conference as Chair. It has been an honor for me to serve this great organization and to work closely with this amazing group of multitalented, dedicated individuals who comprise your governing board. They make me look better at this than I actually am. A few of them are most likely going to say things about me between now and Saturday—some of it may be true. But here is the thought I would like to leave you with:

I did nothing alone. The *power* of ICSOM is that we all participate—everyone here in this room, the governing board, you, our delegates, our Locals, Symphonic Services and the AFM. We act together, sharing knowledge and pooling resources to strengthen our orchestras and improve the lives of our musicians at home. The passion that drives us to volunteer our time is to preserve our music and to keep the doors to our halls open. It is a passion that reaches far beyond our individual lives into our communities and our schools and into the practice of our art.

The American Federation of Musicians and our Locals comprise the political framework that allows us to stand together, under the law as a union, to harness the power we possess to preserve our art, our livelihood, and our way of life.

It is unbelievable to me that I stood before you nearly seven years ago at the beginning of my service in this office and spoke about the insidious tyranny of the Trump presidency. And here we are again, or perhaps still, standing at the edge of that precipice.

In Timothy Snyder's book, *On Tyranny: 20 Lessons From the 20th Century*, chapter two talks about defending the institutions that uphold our democracy. Snyder says, "Institutions don't protect themselves; they go down like dominoes unless they are defended from the beginning".

Our institutions are ICSOM, the AFM, and our orchestras. These are what we must stand and defend through our active participation.

We here in this room are the backbone of our orchestral industry. The work you do through ICSOM and the AFM promotes the health and sustainability of your orchestras. It keeps our industry alive and, in its own way, it preserves our way of life and our democracy. It can be an onerous and exhausting task at times, but it is your dedication to your art, to your colleagues, and to this union that keeps our orchestras on stage and our musicians employed.

So let's get to work.



President's Column

An Honest Partnership

by Paul Austin

At the close of our 61st annual conference, Meredith Snow ended a lengthy eighteen-year tenure as a member of ICSOM's Governing Board.

When she attended her first ICSOM conference in 2002, Meredith served as the ICSOM delegate for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Three years later in San Diego, the delegates elected Meredith as a member-at-large on the Governing Board, a position that she would hold for eleven years before becoming ICSOM chairperson in 2016.

I first got to know Meredith when the Grand Rapids Symphony (GRS) musicians applied for ICSOM membership in 2012. Meredith was a member of the Membership Committee and worked with me on the application process. The photo below, from August 2013, was taken at the ICSOM conference in Kansas City right after the GRS was accepted into ICSOM. The photo includes the musicians who became ICSOM's lead officers four years later: ICSOM Secretary Laura Ross, Meredith, and me (and a photo bomb by ICSOM Treasurer and former Editor Peter de Boor).

The following year Meredith hosted the ICSOM conference in Los Angeles, and two years later she became ICSOM



Paul Austin



Paul Austin

Left to right: AFM President Ray Hair; Laura Ross, Nomination Committee Chair Bradley Mansell, Meredith Snow, Paul Austin, and Peter de Boor

Honest Partnership continues on page 5

The Jonah People

by Laura Ross

On April 13–16, 2023, the Nashville Symphony performed a monumental work by Hannibal Lokumbe, *The Jonah People: A Legacy of Struggle and Triumph*, which was influenced by family history passed down from his great-great-grandmother.

The collaboration between Lokumbe and the Nashville Symphony began in 2019, when he visited for a performance of his piece *Crucifixion Resurrection: Nine Souls A-Traveling*. After attending an orchestra rehearsal of *Carmina Burana* and having a discussion with Nashville Symphony President and CEO Alan Valentine, the stage was set for the development of *The Jonah People*. Anyone who has ever been to the Schermerhorn Symphony Center knows the hall doesn't have a traditional orchestra pit, so figuring where to put a full orchestra, African drums and other indigenous instruments, thirty actors and dancers, over one hundred chorus members (from the Nashville Symphony chorus, the Lloyd Mallory Singers, the W. Crim Singers, Lane College, and Tennessee State University)—as well as the massive sets and scrims—was quite an undertaking that required full engagement by a large portion of the staff. As with the Symphony's performances of *Carmina Burana*, rows of audience seats had to be removed to fit the orchestra, and the chorus was seated behind a transparent screen behind the stage.

Throughout the 2022–23 season, various workshops, concerts, and activities were scheduled in middle and high schools, community colleges, universities (Vanderbilt and Lipscomb Universities) and historically black colleges and universities (Fisk University, Tennessee State University), churches, community organizations, and the National Museum of African American Music. The orchestra also performed Young Person's Concerts with Lokumbe, exploring

differences between Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* and Duke Ellington's alternate version. There were quartet concerts featuring African American composers' works that were linked thematically to portions of *The Jonah People* libretto—links that Lokumbe also shared with the orchestra prior to the first rehearsal of his work.

The project also generated other partnerships, including a pop-up installation allowing time to reflect, converse, and collect prayers from the community on cotton fabric that was later dyed to reveal these collective prayers. In many of these programs, Lokumbe related the story of his great-great-grandmother, Asase, who was kidnapped from Africa and sold into slavery in Charleston, South Carolina. Asase's descendants would pass on the story that inspired a portion of the opera—how she crawled toward her new enslaver on her belly while being whipped, begging in a language he didn't understand to purchase her children so they wouldn't be separated.

At the beginning of our first rehearsal Lokumbe told the orchestra how music had not only saved his life but also helped him realize he wanted to dedicate his life to music. He related a story about a piece he was learning in band class that he wanted to play for his mother, but on his way home from school with his instrument, some bullies beat him badly; it was that desire to play for his mother and to keep playing music that kept him going during the healing process. In the program notes, Lokumbe states: “[Music] has had the ability to save my life. It saved my ancestors in the cotton field as well and gave them the strength to withstand the unrelenting sun. They withstood that by singing when it got too hot to even talk.”

The opera—which is very accessible—is constructed in “veils” rather than acts and is preceded by an overture featuring the orchestra and chorus. Lokumbe chose the term “veil” because, as he says, “it has to do with our spiritual development. Sometimes in life, and in our understanding, we can

move one step forward and then digress fifteen steps behind. When the Creator lifts the veil from our consciousness, we never go back to where we were before the veil of understanding was lifted from our minds.”

The story of *The Jonah People* begins in an African village before the arrival of slave traders and missionaries. Harvest is cut short by the appearance of a slave trader, a missionary, and an African chief. The production likens the past four hundred years of African American history, comparing it to the story of Jonah and the whale: surviving the horrors of slavery and injustice and seeing the promise of the future in the past



The reconfiguration of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center auditorium necessary to fit all of the elements of Hannibal Lokumbe's *The Jonah People*



Hannibal Lokumbe takes a bow at the conclusion of a performance of The Jonah People with the Nashville Symphony

and present. Veils I and II revisit the passage of the slave ship, the slave auction, and the discovery that music can help the enslaved workers endure their labors in the fields. Veils III and IV relate attempts to escape slavery and their outcomes: the Haitian revolt, a performance at Minton's Playhouse jazz club in the 1950s with Lokumbe performing with the onstage band, and a scene in the Old Plateau Cemetery in Mobile, Alabama, which was founded by freed survivors of the last slave ship documented to reach the United States from Africa.

Sometimes life and art are synchronous. This project—one that spent several seasons in the planning stages—occurred just after the mass shooting at Covenant School, when Nashville was awash in calls for gun control. Just days later the super-majority Republican legislature chose to reprimand and expel Justin Jones and Justin Pearson—two state house representatives from Tennessee's two largest cities, Nashville and Memphis (who were reappointed by their respective cities' metro councils days later).

As a city, Nashville is steeped in cultural and social contributions by Black people. During the Civil War it was the home of the Union Army's United States Colored Troops. It is the musical home of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the TSU Aristocrat of Bands, and the National Museum of African American Music. And Nashville was home to civil rights leaders such as Diane Nash, founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) that helped coordinate integrating lunch counters; John Lewis, who participated in sit-ins and devised the code of conduct for the lunch counter activities while attending American Baptist Theological College; Freedom Riders Rip Patton and Kwame Lillard; and Z. Alexander Looby, an attorney and teacher at Fisk University who was a leader in the desegregation of Nashville schools.

The musicians of the Nashville Symphony were proud to partner in such an important project and hope the message and the work will survive and thrive. <

Honest Partnership *continued from page 3*

chairperson at our conference in Washington, DC, in 2016. This nearly coincided with my entry into the Governing Board, in 2015 as a member-at-large and in 2017 as ICSOM president.

Our time working together for six years as chairperson and president included attending AFM, International Federation of Musicians, Sphinx, and League of American Orchestras events as "Team ICSOM." Occasionally when asked about our roles, I always responded that we functioned as a CEO and COO, with Meredith as the external voice of the organization as I handled the internal matters. But, in all actuality, we worked as a team and handled our duties as one unit.

ICSOM weathered several serious storms during Meredith's time on the Governing Board: the economic downturn of 2008 and the 2020 pandemic. Her ability to remain calm during adverse times was remarkable, and as a result our organization continues to thrive today. Our hybrid conference in Pittsburgh in 2021 represents an organizational triumph that stemmed directly from Meredith's no-nonsense leadership (and serves an important touchstone to me, as I was re-elected president at the conference—see the inset photo with our ICSOM logo face masks).



Paul Austin (left) with Meredith Snow (right) at the 59th annual ICSOM Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in August 2021

Meredith conducts herself directly—and has as long as I have known her. She is not one for insincerity or excessive flattery. Rather, Meredith lays everything out there in an honest way.

At this summer's annual conference in Milwaukee, my president's address included the following paragraph to honor Meredith. It is a fitting way to end this article, too.

"Meredith is someone whom I consider to be my ride or die. You know, the pandemic really isolated some people. But, in our case, the pandemic brought the two of us closer together. The countless calls about how ICSOM was going to get through the pandemic, and our concern for all of our membership, and wondering how ICSOM could be the best resource possible, well, those were bonding moments. Meredith has a special and unique style of bringing people together, which has served ICSOM well. Her common sense approach to our challenges got us through a lot. Thank you, Meredith! Your work for ICSOM made a difference and won't be forgotten." <

Conference Report *continued from page 1*

the mixer that was held at the MSO's beautifully refurbished hall, the Bradley Symphony Center. Guests met in the atrium for food and beverages and were treated to tours of the facility by MSO members as well as by MSO President Mark Niehaus.

Thursday morning began with a report about the 102nd AFM Convention by ICSOM Member-at-Large Dan Sweeley (Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and ICSOM's third delegate to the AFM Convention). He explained that the convention had been delayed by a year due to COVID and outlined the process that led to the successful adoption by AFM convention delegates of ICSOM's Resolution No. 1, which was supported by delegates and by many of their locals. This change now empowers AFM Strike

Fund trustees to offer benefit payments when an orchestra furloughs musicians in force-majeure-like situations—a necessary change as the previous bylaws authorized benefits only for strikes and lockouts. Next came speeches by Players Conferences Council leaders of the Organization of Canadian Orchestra Musicians (President Robert Fraser), the Recording Musicians Association (Los Angeles Secretary Trevor Handy), the Regional Orchestra Players Association (President Steve Wade), and the Theater Musicians Association (President Heather Boehm).

Ken Shirk, newly-elected AFM international secretary-treasurer, gave a presentation that compared corporate and AFM structure and how decision-making and funding models differ. Debbie Newmark, AFM's director of symphonic electronic media, gave a brief Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) status report after Symphonic Services Division (SSD) Director Rochelle Skolnick's presentation had to be postponed. ICSOM Counsel Kevin Case's timely presentation explored various fellowship models along with the Supreme Court's recent affirmative action decision. Afterward, breakout groups included a DEI Roundtable discussion with Jessica Schmidt of *Orchestrator Inclusion*, IMA Basics with Debbie Newmark, and Building Cohesive Colleagues with Paul Austin and Keith Carrick (Utah Symphony). The evening was reserved for the first of two town hall meetings between delegates, alternate delegates, and the ICSOM governing board.

Friday morning began with elections: Keith Carrick was elected as ICSOM's new chairperson, Peter de Boor was re-elected treasurer, and Mike Muszynski was reelected editor of *Senza Sordino*. All four member-at-large positions were open, due to departures by Alberto Suarez (Kansas City Sym-

phony), Kenneth Thompkins (Detroit Symphony Orchestra), and Dan Sweeley—who decided to step down after seven years—as well as the continuation of Keith Carrick's unfinished term. Ultimately, Nicole Jordan (Philadelphia Orchestra) and Kimberly Tichenor (Louisville Orchestra) were elected to two-year terms, while Jessica Phillips (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra) and Robert Schumitzky (Pacific Symphony) were elected to one-year terms.

In a featured presentation moderated by Kevin Case and facilitated by Jessica Schmidt, three panelists represented various points of view in the tenure process: the musician—John Lofton (Los Angeles Philharmonic); the administration—MSO Director of Operations Terrell Pierce; and the music director—

Detroit Symphony Music Director Laureate Leonard Slatkin. Following a delegate luncheon of orchestras grouped by budget size, Jessica Schmidt presented important information and insights about implicit bias in the orchestral workplace. Afterward, a second delegate town hall was held concurrently with a meeting between SSD staff and local officers. The evening was free, but delegates participated in organized activities, including a cruise on the Milwaukee River into Lake Michigan, a visit to the Grohmann Museum—a museum dedicated to artwork celebrating the nature of work—and a Milwaukee Brewers game against the San Diego Padres.

Unfortunately, a handful of delegates tested positive for COVID during the conference, so Saturday's business was consolidated. AFM SSD Director Rochelle Skolnick's presentation *When Employers Behave Badly: Using NLRB Processes to Protect Musicians' Rights* is set to be presented virtually in November, and delegates swiftly completed member-at-large elections, the selection of future conference sites, the passage of three ICSOM bylaw changes (one which still requires ratification by ICSOM membership this fall), and the adoption of a number of resolutions (see pages 7–11).

Despite being surrounded by Republican debate participants and supporters and five rounds of election voting, ICSOM conducted a very productive and successful conference filled with excellent questions and discussions. ICSOM has a newly elected and engaged governing board, and now delegates have returned home with ideas and information to share with their orchestras.

The 2024 ICSOM conference will be held in Portland, Oregon and will be hosted by the musicians of the Oregon Symphony and the Musicians Union Local 99.



Conference attendees participated in a protest outside the Republican National Committee presidential primary debate at Fiserv Forum in downtown Milwaukee



The ICSOM Governing Board poses for a photo at the conclusion of the 61st annual conference in Milwaukee

Adopted Resolutions and Bylaw Changes from the 61st Annual ICSOM Conference

Resolution thanking Martha Warrington

Whereas, Martha Warrington was a violist with the Oregon Symphony from 1984 until her retirement in 2021; and
 Whereas, In 2012, Martha agreed to undertake the important task of re-designing the ICSOM website as part of ICSOM's 50th anniversary, followed by her service as webmaster until 2022, when additional updates and redesign became necessary; and
 Whereas, Martha's insights and perspective added needed improvements to ICSOM's website and also extended ICSOM's message to an ever-widening audience, along with helping to provide expanded information and access to ICSOM's delegates and member orchestras; and
 Whereas, Much of the work she performed during her 10 years maintaining the ICSOM website was done at little or no cost to ICSOM; and
 Whereas, Martha worked closely with new web designer Bert Witzel, from the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, to assure an easy transition to the new site before stepping away and embracing her retirement; therefore, be it
Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference extend their immense appreciation and thanks to Martha Warrington for the years of dedication in helping ICSOM continue to communicate effectively, and to wish her the very best as she explores photography, enjoys hiking, and spends time with her family during her retirement.

Resolution recognizing the passing of Melanie Burrell

Whereas, Melanie Burrell was a cellist with the Denver Symphony that later reorganized as the Colorado Symphony; and
 Whereas, During her tenure with Denver/Colorado she served her orchestra as ICSOM delegate from 1971-84 and as the orchestra's alternate delegate at the 1990 and 1991 Conferences; and
 Whereas, Melanie went on to serve ICSOM in numerous leadership positions as the western orchestras regional vice-chair from 1973-81 (this position later changed to member-at-large), as ICSOM treasurer from 1981-84, as president from 1984-86 and also from 1988-90, the last after serving as ICSOM's first female chairperson from 1986-88; and
 Whereas, As chairperson she served on the AFM Work Dues Committee that recommended passage of the AFM bylaw requiring locals to provide legal representation during negotiations and arbitration proceedings—although the bylaw was ultimately modified to call for “competent” representation; and
 Whereas, She passed away on March 3, 2023 at the age of 92; therefore, be it
Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference remember Melanie Burrell with gratitude for her outstanding advocacy on behalf of musicians in the United States and Canada.



ICSOM

Resolution honoring the passing of ICSOM Delegate Bob Rydel



Michael Harding

Whereas, Bob Rydel served as third horn with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra for 30 years; and
 Whereas, He was an incredible advocate for his orchestra serving as an orchestra/negotiating committee member and committee chair, as a musician board representative, and as the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra ICSOM delegate; and
 Whereas, Bob's contributions far exceeded his committee service, as he also served as the Charlotte Symphony's audio/recording engineer, as a youth orchestra coach, and as vice president of the Charlotte Musicians' Association Local 342; and
 Whereas, He was incredibly generous with his time and talents, serving his colleagues with devotion and passion; and
 Whereas, Musicians around the country were stunned to hear of Bob's sudden passing in June; therefore, be it
Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference offer their deepest sorrow and respect to the family of Bob Rydel and thank them for sharing this caring and dedicated colleague and friend who will be remembered and missed for his leadership and good work.

Resolution supporting the Writers Guild of America (WGA) and Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) Strikes

adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, The Writers Guild of America (WGA) declared a nationwide strike on May 2, 2023, and two months later on July 14, 2023, the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) declared its own national strike; and

Whereas, Both WGA and SAG-AFTRA are fighting for fair streaming residual payments and protection from abuse of their work and image through the use of artificial intelligence (AI); and

Whereas, Streaming and AI have the potential to drastically reduced wages and changed working conditions, making it more difficult to earn a living wage; and

Whereas, Along with WGA and SAG-AFTRA, the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM) also bargains with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers Association (AMPTA) over the wages, terms, and conditions for television and film; and

Whereas, Musicians—like television and screen actors, radio artists—and writers make personal and unique contributions creating their art that, once recorded, have value that must be recognized and compensated; and

Whereas, ICSOM has long fought for fair pay and working conditions in the production of recordings and live performances; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference stand in solidarity with our colleagues in the WGA and SAG-AFTRA and wish them a swift and successful resolution to their ongoing strikes.

Resolution honoring Barbara Corbató

Whereas, Barbara Corbató, a violist with the Grand Rapids Symphony, was instrumental in creating and serving as ICSOM's first administrator of the online Conductor Evaluation Program (CEP) for the past six years; and

Whereas, She worked closely with ICSOM delegates to send and receive CEP surveys directly to participating orchestra musicians, and prepared and sent survey results to ICSOM orchestra managers upon request; and

Whereas, Barbara was also ICSOM's point of contact for CEP inquiries from OCSM and ROPA orchestras; and

Whereas, ICSOM's online CEP is thriving today with 111 evaluations of 81 conductors; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference offer their heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude to Barbara Corbató for establishing and administering ICSOM's online Conductor Evaluation Program.

Resolution thanking Ray Hair, Bruce Fife, and Jay Blumenthal

Whereas, Ray Hair served as president of Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians' Association Local 72-147 and Bruce Fife served as president of AFM Local 99 in Portland OR; and

Whereas, Jay Blumenthal served as financial secretary of Associated Musicians of Greater New York Local 802 in New York NY, had previously been a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra and served as that orchestra's ICSOM delegate, and served on the ICSOM Governing Board as member-at-large from 1999 to 2004; and

Whereas, These three gentlemen were all elected in 2010 to serve as international president (Ray Hair), international vice-president (Bruce Fife), and international secretary-treasurer (Jay Blumenthal) of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM); and

Whereas, During their tenure in office they made great strides in improving not only the financial health of the AFM, but also the wages, benefits, and working conditions of musicians working under national agreements across the United States and Canada; and

Whereas, At the 102nd AFM Convention in June 2023, all three individuals stepped down from their positions and were, in turn, granted the honorary title of emeritus; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference offer their gratitude for the work they have accomplished on behalf of AFM musicians across the United States and Canada these past 13 years and wish them all the best in all their future endeavors.

Resolution in support of AFM Legislative Action

Whereas, The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) consistently focuses on ways to improve the lives of its members, not only by negotiating better wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment, but also through legislative action and support; and

Whereas, At this time, important issues require action and support by ICSOM members: the Fair Share for Musicians Campaign (“Fair Share” Campaign) supporting passage of the American Music Fairness Act, S. 253 (AMFA), and the Performing Artist Tax Parity Act of 2023, H.R. 2871 (PATPA); and

Whereas, Passage of AMFA by the US Congress would: guarantee musicians new revenue streams for their creative work; ensure fair compensation to performers when their songs are played on terrestrial radio and to American artists when their songs are played on foreign stations; provide protection for public performance rights and royalties of songwriters, publishers, and musical copyright owners; and establish exemptions to assist small broadcasters and qualified public, college and other non-commercial stations; and

Whereas, PATPA would reform the United States Tax Code so the Qualified Performing Artist (QPA) tax deduction would apply to a larger group of taxpayers making their living as performing artists, having a profound and positive impact on members of ICSOM orchestras by raising the income threshold for the phaseout of the deduction from \$16,000 to \$100,000 annually; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference affirm on behalf of ICSOM’s member orchestras that they wholeheartedly support the Fair Share for Musicians Campaign (“Fair Share” Campaign), passage of the American Music Fairness Act (AMFA), and the Performing Artist Tax Parity Act of 2023 (PATPA); and be it further

Resolved, That ICSOM encourages all orchestra musicians to sign the petitions in support of the Fair Share Campaign (<https://fairshareformusicians.org/petition/>) and AMFA (<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-the-american-music-fairness-act-amfa>), and to support the passage of PATPA by urging their legislators—particularly their Senators—to take appropriate action in supporting and encouraging passage of this important US Tax Code reform.

Resolution to thank Alberto Suarez

Whereas, Alberto Suarez joined the Kansas City Symphony in 2006 as principal horn; and

Whereas, During his tenure with the orchestra, Albert served as a member of the negotiating committee and as Kansas City Symphony’s ICSOM delegate, and was elected ICSOM member-at-large in 2021; and

Whereas, Albert served on the Artist Council for the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) and helped in the creation of the NAAS Recommended Audition and Tenure Guidelines in 2020, and also served on ICSOM’s DEI Forum and as co-chair for the past two seasons; and

Whereas, Albert recently announced his plan to step down as member-at-large upon his acceptance of a full-time tenure-track faculty position at University of Missouri-Kansas City beginning this fall; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference thank Alberto Suarez for his service and dedication to ICSOM as member-at-large and as co-chair of the ICSOM DEI Forum and wish him every success in his teaching career and any future endeavors.

Resolution to thank Kenneth Thompkins

Whereas, Kenneth Thompkins won the position of principal trombone of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) under Neeme Jarvi in 1997, after holding positions in the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and The Florida Orchestra; and

Whereas, As a former participant in the DSO’s African American Orchestra Fellowship program, Ken remains a passionate mentor and advocate for DSO’s orchestra fellows and also advocates for increased diversity in all our orchestras; and

Whereas, Ken has served on various DSO committees including Artistic Advisory, Standing Audition, Review, Detroit Strategy, and the Mission of Values Task Force; he has participated in various DSO DEI initiatives; and he has served on the orchestra’s negotiating team—currently as chair; and

Whereas, In 2021 Ken was elected member-at-large on the ICSOM Governing Board, managing ICSOM’s Facebook presence on a daily basis and serving as co-chair of ICSOM’s DEI Forum; and

Whereas, Ken recently announced his intention to step down as member-at-large; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference thank Kenneth Thompkins for his service to ICSOM as member-at-large and as co-chair of the ICSOM DEI Forum and wish him every success in his career with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as well as any future endeavors.

Resolution to thank Dan Sweeley

adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, Dan Sweeley joined the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra horn section in 2000, having previously performed with the Dayton Philharmonic from 1994 through 2000; and

Whereas, He has served as the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's ICSOM delegate for 12 seasons and hosted a very successful ICSOM conference in 2017 that included an exciting excursion to the American side of Niagara Falls; and

Whereas, Dan has served ICSOM in a number of leadership capacities, beginning in 2016 as member-at-large, as a representative of ICSOM as third delegate to the 101st and 102nd AFM conventions in 2019 and 2023, as an active participant in supporting and sustaining ICSOM social media programs, and a gifted photographer who provided many of the conference photos displayed in the ICSOM website's conference photo galleries; and

Whereas, Dan has announced his intention to step down from his duties as member-at-large on the ICSOM Governing Board at the end of this conference; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates and officers to the 2023 ICSOM Conference offer Dan Sweeley their best wishes and thanks for his leadership and years of service to ICSOM and to orchestras across the country, and wish him the very best in all his future endeavors.

Resolution to honor and thank Meredith Snow for her leadership and to confer emeritus status

adopted by unanimous consent

Whereas, Meredith Snow was a member of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra viola section for three years before joining the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1986; and

Whereas, She began her service as the LA Phil's ICSOM delegate during ICSOM's 40th anniversary celebration at the Unity Conference in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in 2002, serving in that capacity until 2010; and

Whereas, In 2005 Meredith was elected to the position of member-at-large, adding a lively voice and attitude to the ICSOM Governing Board for 11 years; and

Whereas, In 2014 she and her colleagues also hosted a very successful ICSOM conference that included a performance of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl; and

Whereas, In 2016 Meredith agreed to take up the mantle of ICSOM chairperson as only the second woman in its history to lead the conference; and

Whereas, During her tenure from 2016–2023 she was at the helm of conferences designed to focus on important and impactful issues in our industry, such as social justice and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and

Whereas, She led ICSOM through an unprecedented orchestra industry shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also dealing with personal tragedy, yet always with a smile and a message that we would persevere; and

Whereas, Meredith has announced her intention, following a term that was extended by an additional season during the pandemic, to step down as ICSOM chairperson at the end of this conference; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the officers and delegates to the 2023 ICSOM Conference offer their immense gratitude for the leadership, strength, and service Meredith Snow exhibited during her seven-year tenure as ICSOM chairperson; and be it further

Resolved, That in recognition of her outstanding dedication and service to ICSOM, the title of chairperson emeritus be extended to Meredith Snow, along with appreciation, admiration, and best wishes from the entire membership of ICSOM, as well as orchestras in the United States and Canada, for success in all her future endeavors.

Resolution to change ICSOM Bylaws regarding annual dues payments and suspended status

Article III: Membership

Section 2. (f) If a member orchestra should encounter circumstances that cause the orchestra undue hardship in paying its annual dues, that orchestra may apply to the Governing Board for a grant of suspended status. Such application must be made annually by December 31, and will be granted at the discretion of the Governing Board. Applications received later than December 31 are disfavored but may be considered by the Governing Board for good cause shown. An orchestra granted such status need not pay dues to ICSOM, but shall continue to be carried as a member orchestra, receive Senza Sordino, ~~be entitled to send a non-voting representative to the Annual Conference,~~ and be listed in and granted online-only access to the ICSOM Directory. The delegate(s) of an orchestra on suspended status shall be

seated at the Annual Conference or any special meeting and allowed to speak, but shall not be allowed to vote or to make any motions. For good and sufficient cause, the Governing Board may withdraw such status at the next Annual Conference, subject to appeal. An orchestra may be granted suspended status up to a maximum of three consecutive years.

Section 2. (g) The delegate(s) of any member orchestra not on suspended status whose dues are not current at the time of the Annual Conference, or any subsequent special meeting, ~~unless having requested and been granted an extension or waiver by the Governing Board, and subsequently been approved by a majority of the voting delegates,~~ shall be seated and allowed to speak but shall not be allowed to vote or to make any motions. Such an orchestra shall not receive physical copies of Senza Sordino or the ICSOM Directory while the orchestra's dues remain in arrears, though the orchestra will be listed in and granted online-only access to the ICSOM Directory. Should any member orchestra's dues be ~~three~~ two years or more in arrears one day before the start of any Annual Conference, not counting any year where the orchestra has been granted suspended status, or should any member orchestra fail to have repaid an ERF loan according to the terms under which it was made (as of one day before the start of the Annual Conference), that orchestra shall be considered to have withdrawn from ICSOM, and no delegate from said orchestra shall be seated. Should that orchestra desire to rejoin ICSOM, it must apply as would a new applicant for membership.

Resolution to change ICSOM Bylaws regarding application by a successor orchestra to ICSOM

Article III: Membership

Section 2. (d) In the event an orchestra fails to meet the criteria enumerated in Section 2.(a), it may nevertheless make application to the Membership Committee. If it demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Membership Committee why it should be admitted, the Membership Committee may approve such an application and recommend admittance to ICSOM. In the case of a successor orchestra that has formed following the bankruptcy liquidation of an ICSOM orchestra (or similar event in which the former orchestra ceases to exist), the Membership Committee shall approve the application of such successor orchestra and recommend admittance to ICSOM, provided that the successor orchestra has a collective bargaining agreement in place with an AFM local, and the application is made within three years of completion of the bankruptcy liquidation (or similar event) of the former orchestra.

Resolution to change ICSOM Bylaws to clarify annual ICSOM dues assessment *

ARTICLE IX – DUES AND FINANCES

Section 1. The funds of ICSOM shall be created and maintained by dues and contributions by member orchestras, earned interest and other additional contributions and revenue.

Section 2. All funds shall be used to further the interests of ICSOM.

Section 3. For each member orchestra, the amount of dues assessed per year shall be the sum of:

- (a) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage below \$16,000.00 times \$29.00; and
- (b) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage between \$16,000.00 and \$22,999.99 times \$34.00; and
- (c) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage between \$23,000.00 and \$39,999.99 times \$39.00; and
- (d) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage between \$40,000.00 and \$79,999.99 times \$47.00; and
- (e) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage between \$80,000.00 and \$119,999.99 times \$52.00 during the 2012-13 ICSOM fiscal year and increasing to \$57.00 beginning in the 2013-14 ICSOM fiscal year; and
- (f) the number of players guaranteed a minimum annual wage of \$120,000.00 or more times \$58.00 during the 2012-13 ICSOM fiscal year and increasing to \$69.00 beginning in the 2013-14 ICSOM fiscal year.

For purposes of the foregoing calculation, the term "minimum annual wage" shall be understood to mean base annual wage only, without regard to overscale (either contractual or personal), seniority, or similar overages. For per-service musicians, base annual wage shall be calculated by multiplying the applicable per-service rate by the number of guaranteed services.

* *NOTE: This bylaw change requires additional ratification by ICSOM member orchestras within 90 days of completion of the conference.*



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

Senza Sordino
VOLUME 61 NO. 3

Mike Muszynski, Editor
450 E Ohio Street, Apt 114
Indianapolis, IN 46204

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

MILWAUKEE, WI
PERMIT NO. 4048



MUSICIANS OF
NEW YORK CITY
BALLET LOCAL **802** FM

The ICSOM Governing Board conveys our unwavering support for and solidarity with the dedicated musicians of the New York City Ballet Orchestra in their ongoing struggle for a fair and just contract.

The orchestra musicians at the heart of this esteemed company, the New York City Ballet, are not just a part of it; they are its very essence.

We urge the New York City Ballet's management to negotiate a fair contract that recognizes the indispensable role played by their orchestra.