

# Senza Sordino

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## New Orleans and the Louisiana Philharmonic One Year Later

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

I was recently invited to travel to New Orleans to join the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) in one of their two concerts celebrating living composers. Since my return I have had the hardest time gathering my thoughts to write this article, and it finally struck me that it's because they are really two stories, though one is intrinsically tied to the success of the first.

As I arrived in town for the first time since 1984 when I took an audition for the New Orleans Symphony, a billboard caught my attention: "Free Demolition with the Purchase of Flood Insurance." Beyond the sign was the Superdome, recently reopened for New Orleans Saints football games. Another facility that had housed the thousands trapped in the city was the Convention Center, venue for this LPO concert. What I found was a city that is still in the process of rebuilding, with many areas still as abandoned as they were when the city evacuated fourteen months ago.

New Orleans is a study in resilience. Although so many who left have not come back, those who returned do for themselves, because it doesn't appear anyone else is going to help. As one example, our "official guide," Sharon, told us one afternoon that her house had been beneath 1½ feet of water. To fix it up, she hired workers and purchased all necessary supplies except sheet rock, and brought them all down from Chicago.

The French Quarter seems mostly undisturbed as it sits about fourteen feet above sea level; it sustained solely hurricane damage. Repairs there, many quite substantial, were undoubtedly covered by insurance. For these folks it was about finding workers and supplies to rebuild. (Knowing the difficulties Nashville faced following the tornadoes that ripped through downtown and East Nashville a few years ago, it had to be a monumental task with so much damage throughout the city.)

Many attribute the failure of the levees to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Until you experience fully the magnitude of the devastation—miles and miles of abandoned and gutted homes—you might not understand how angry the residents were.

When you visit the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward you notice that the streets have been cleaned up, that the sand and dirt has been hauled away, but that the gutted houses remain. In this area it's very rare to see a trailer in front of a house, meaning the tenants expect to rebuild. The houses are covered with giant spray-painted X's that tell whether pets and people were found. This area is one of several that lie two feet below sea level.

Lakeview is a more affluent neighborhood, memorable for the photos taken there after the storm of the cleanup of thirty-foot piles of garbage, homes, cars, trees—you name it—stretching as far as the eye could see. Some brave souls there have actually rebuilt their houses. They did this despite their proximity to the 17<sup>th</sup> Street levee that also failed. Word has it that the levee is not yet fixed.

There is bitterness, but there is also incredible hope. In the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward we found two ladies selling candy bars to raise money. They were living in one of those tiny trailers and spoke about others in the neighborhood who had plans to return. The musicians performing at K Paul's Restaurant were extraordinarily grateful to the tourists that came to New Orleans, publicly thanking the restaurant's patrons after each set.

On our way to rehearsals at Loyola, we traveled on St. Charles Avenue where, a year ago, trolleys ran up and down the boulevard. Those tracks lie buried in mud, but we saw workmen just beginning to dig around the tracks. Meanwhile, the cables and trees all along the boulevard are strewn with beads, undoubtedly left over from a previous Mardi Gras celebration.

In so many ways, the orchestra reflects the spirit of the city. It is resilient. Its members are doing it themselves, and they are persevering. Once, years ago, the orchestra had to start from scratch. It's sad to realize now that they are all too familiar with starting over again. They rehearse and perform in at least six different venues, and it's not likely this will change anytime soon. They have been forced to break the rules to make things work.

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## Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



### Breaking the Fourth Wall

I still remember vividly the first time I heard the Boston Symphony in a live concert, a 1978 performance of Schubert's C Major Symphony with Sir Colin Davis. For many years, I have had a book about that great orchestra called *Community of Sound*, by Louis Snyder. Twenty-seven years after its publication, it is enjoyable to read about a few of my teachers when they were younger and to see pictures of mentors sadly now absent. Of course, when I bought the book I was much younger too, which is a fact I find slightly less enjoyable. I've kept my copy for all of this time, and I've always especially liked its title. I've thought a great deal over the years about the phrase "community of sound." What does that really mean, and what could it come to mean in its full potential?

"Community" is a bit of a buzz word in the orchestra world today. I use it all the time. It appears more and more in the literature that surrounds the field, but I wonder if we are all using the word with the same meaning. We must strive to make sure that "community" refers not only to an investment in us, but that it also means that we musicians invest in the community. To establish indelibly the positive sense of community that our Players' Associations seek to develop, musicians must learn to break the fourth wall.

In theater, the fourth wall is the imaginary wall between the stage and the audience, the other three walls being formed by the shell of the stage. In strictest terms it is the defining line between fiction and reality, or "the suspension of disbelief." In his theory of epic theater, Bertolt Brecht created the term "breaking the fourth wall" for that moment when a character will turn, most uncharacteristically, to address the audience directly, thus giving the audience an access through reality to the fictional world they are observing on the stage. The term has been adapted from the theater to include books, film, and television.

Musicians in symphony orchestras can adapt the term to serve a new purpose as well. All too often in our concerts halls there seems to be a dividing line between the orchestra and the audience. To establish a closer relationship with our audiences, boards, and community leaders, orchestra musicians need to break the fourth wall.

I realize that I am distorting the term somewhat. In music, there is not the dramatic line between reality and fiction, though I suppose some would argue that point. But, allowing for that distinction and the adaptation, what would it mean for symphony musicians to break the fourth wall?

It would mean establishing a connection with the audience and inviting them into the community that surrounds every orchestra. Further, it would entail expanding that community to all constituents of the city or region.

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## President's Report by Brian Rod



This is my first column since being re-elected as ICSOM President after a year away. I told the delegates, officers, and guests at the 2006 ICSOM Conference that I missed the tremendous energy and vast knowledge of Governing Board members and Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel (DILC), as well as the friendships created with officers, delegates, and committee chairs over the past several years.

I am thrilled to be back and look forward to working with you towards building a stronger and more successful ICSOM.

One of the Governing Board's priorities this year will be to increase our connection with all fifty-two ICSOM orchestras. To this end, here are some of the activities we will actively pursue:

- One of ICSOM's greatest assets is the ability to share information quickly with member orchestras and musicians. We will continue to develop and use tools such as *Senza Sordino*, the annual ICSOM Directory, the Wage & Scale Chart, and the mailing lists Orchestra-L and Delegate-L. The challenges of balancing budgets, reaching out to communities, evaluating and selecting conductors, increasing communication within our ranks and to boards and managements are issues we all face daily, regardless of budget size or season length.
- Chairman Bruce Ridge is expanding his travels across the country to listen to member orchestras and committees and to offer ICSOM's assistance. These site visits have many tangible benefits, which serve to remind us how much we actually have in common and that solutions for one orchestra's problem may well lie in how other orchestras have dealt with the same issue in the past.
- Negotiation conference calls are back by popular demand. During each of the past two years the Governing Board has initiated and hosted conference calls for member orchestras preparing to negotiate or already in the throes, and the Governing Board is offering this opportunity again this year. It is our intention to group orchestras together by negotiation timelines and budget sizes, as needed. Initial requests have already gone out on Delegate-L to delegates and committee chairs. All negotiating orchestra committees are invited and encouraged to participate. Just e-mail or call me.

These calls might include not only committees and their chairs, but also attorneys, local presidents and the SSD, depending on each group's unique circumstances. Conference calls normally begin a few weeks before negotiations start and continue as needed until negotiations are completed. Management proposals and strategies as well as musician responses and counter-strategies are discussed in-depth. Calls provide an ideal forum for comprehensive and confidential exchange of

ideas from ICSOM colleagues in similar circumstances regarding the difficult negotiating environment many committees continue to encounter.

- The ICSOM Media Committee continues to deal with the many complex issues associated with our recorded products. Some topics considered recently are digital downloading, archival recordings, video game music, and syndicated radio broadcasts.

This brings me to my final point as we begin 2007. It is worth mentioning again that a strong ICSOM does not depend as much on its officers and counsel as it does on strong member orchestras and, particularly, musicians. While it is important to have strong and committed leadership and expert counsel, the real strength of any group, particularly a labor organization, is with its members. The Governing Board is keenly aware of this; hence the many site visits, negotiating orchestra conference calls, media committee forums, and other important ICSOM activities.

It is an opportune time for each ICSOM musician and orchestra committee to reflect on what more can be done to strengthen our orchestras. Orchestra musicians are talented, bright, industrious, and creative people. Although orchestra life is busy and family demands often leave precious little extra time, there are plenty of ways musicians can make a difference in their orchestras. Placing special calls to donors to thank them for their support, writing letters of thanks and support to community leaders, meeting-and-greeting the audience informally before and after concerts or during intermission, speaking to audiences at more formal pre- and post-concert presentations, assisting in the design and maintenance of player association websites, serving on project-specific orchestra committees such as community outreach: these are all ways that musicians can help to make a difference in their own orchestras.

In closing, allow me to reference President Kennedy's famous inaugural speech from 1961. In this new year, what can you do to help your orchestra and, in turn, ICSOM?

### Notice

The planned December 2006 issue of *Senza Sordino* was not published. Vol. 45 No. 1 (March 2007) immediately succeeds Vol. 44 No. 3 (October 2006), and there was no Vol. 44 No. 4 issue. The editor apologizes for any inconvenience or confusion this may cause.

## Orchestra Newslets

*Newslets are compiled with the help of ICSOM delegates and ICSOM Members at Large from sources that include direct submissions, member orchestra websites, and topical news items. The editor encourages input and submissions.*

**Atlanta Symphony** delegate Michael Moore reports that the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors and Players' Association jointly announced the ratification of a new four-year contract on November 21, 2006. The new agreement will commence August 26, 2007 and extend through the 2010-2011 season. This collective bargaining agreement, reached nine months in advance of the current contract's expiration with only 35 days of negotiation, exemplifies the institution's continuing culture of cooperation and shared aspirations to advance the ASO.

**Charlotte Symphony's** music director, Christof Perick, will step down in the spring of 2009, and the group is forming a committee to choose his successor. Perick will return for two seasons with the new title of Laureate Conductor.

His departure will open up one of the most prominent jobs in the city's cultural scene: leader of its largest performing arts group. Perick, who took charge of the orchestra in September 2001, shuttles between Charlotte and work in other cities—especially in his native Germany, where he has two other jobs. According to the *Charlotte Observer*, the conductor search group is likely to put a priority on finding someone who can spend time promoting the orchestra across the region.

After an absence of several years, the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** will begin syndication of 39 national radio broadcasts as part of a comprehensive media strategy that includes the launch of a new in-house recording label for compact discs and digital downloads. Delegate Rachel Goldstein reports that broadcasts are scheduled to begin in March 2007.

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reports that a task force aiming to renovate Cincinnati's Music Hall is now active. Music Hall was built in 1878 for the choral concerts of the Cincinnati May Festival. Today it also serves the **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra** (including its Cincinnati Pops Orchestra), the Cincinnati Opera, and the Cincinnati Ballet. The Music Hall Working Group consists of representatives of the main tenants, as well as the Society for the Preservation of Music Hall, and the Cincinnati Arts Association, which manages the Hall on behalf of the city, which owns Music Hall.

According to the article, the project was originally prompted by concerns that the massive 3400-seat hall is only half full on many symphony nights. With all the hall's tenants wanting to make the Over-the-Rhine landmark a more glamorous destination, officials are brainstorming a menu of ideas, including possibly adding a restaurant, bar, gift shop, and donor lounge, fixing up aging symphony offices, more secure parking, and improving backstage technology. Maintaining the hall's excellent acoustics will be a major concern.

On September 28, 2006, the musicians of the **Colorado Symphony** ratified a three-year agreement that continues through August 31, 2009. A significant change to this contract regards health insurance. The orchestra's management had not made any contributions toward dependent health insurance since 1989, but with this contract they will contribute increasing percentages of dependent coverage. Other changes include paid parental leave, scheduling and working condition improvements, and salary and EMG increases. Also, the librarian has been added to the bargaining unit.

The **Dallas Symphony** is experimenting with a new concert format. Friday Casual Classics is a series of six concerts spaced throughout the season. Each concert begins at 7:30 PM and comprises a condensed version of the week's program. The concert is slightly shortened to one and a half with no intermission. The orchestra wears all black for the series instead of the usual evening formalwear. The audience is also encouraged to dress down in a come-as-you-are fashion. Each of these concerts is introduced by a few minutes of talk describing the music. Delegate James Nickel says that the audience response to the series has been very positive. Meanwhile, the DSO narrows its search for a new music director and has added five new members on one-year contracts.

*From the **Houston Symphony**, we have a report of interest from delegate Eric Arbiter:*

As a longtime photographer (of 40 years or so), one of my long-held dream projects has been to do all the portraits of Houston Symphony musicians. I have photographed many of the individuals over the years. The HSO musicians were planning do a series of portraits funded by our internal musician's organization, Musicians of the Houston Symphony (MOTHS). That organization generally performs chamber music in home settings to raise funds to funnel back into the Houston Symphony. Some projects funded in the past include significant donations to restore our flood-decimated music library, donations to the orchestra's capital campaign, and raising funds for Red Cross for hurricane relief.

When management told us they were considering re-doing all of the musicians' portraits, I mentioned a similar MOTHS plan that was already in progress. After they confirmed that my portfolio of past work was the type of portraiture they had in mind, management and MOTHS decided to partner the program.

I plan to take at least a year to photograph the musicians, giving at least an hour for each individual portrait session. Since I have known most of the musicians for years, I hope that familiarity and trust will translate to portraits which may be more revealing of each musician's personality than if a portrait were done by a photographer the musicians may not know. Plus, I am committed to work until we achieve satisfying results, since I don't want any of my colleagues annoyed at me for a less than excellent portrait! The portrait sessions are already under way.

The portraits will be used in conjunction with musician bios on the web, on our large screens in the concert hall before the concerts and during intermission, as prints in the foyer, and on some new large flat panel TV screen in the lobby. Prints also will be made available for purchase for the musicians. We may also present musician' portraits as thank-yous to each musician's sponsor.

At the **Metropolitan Opera**, a special 100-minute English-language adaptation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* inaugurated a first-ever series of family holiday matinees. Directed by Julie Taymor (award-winning director and costume designer of *The Lion King*), it features a new translation by poet J.D. McClatchy. With its trademark stage magic and puppetry, the spectacle that has charmed sold-out houses since the staging's 2004 premiere included in its cast many of the stars of the acclaimed full production, including Nathan Gunn as Papageno and Matthew Polenzani as Tamino. Music Director James Levine conducted the first four of six performances, December 29 through January 4, including New Year's Day.

According to a press release issued by the **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra**, Music Director Andreas Delfs will leave his post at the end of the 2008–09 season. By accepting a one-year extension of his contract, he will remain as music director for the MSO's 50th anniversary celebration in 2008–09.

Delfs will conduct eight subscription programs next season and seven in his final year, along with several weeks of regional and state-wide concerts. Delfs will further serve as Music Director Laureate for three years, with at least one subscription program weekend in Milwaukee each season.

In late-breaking news, the **Honolulu Symphony** announced that Delfs will serve as its principal conductor commencing with the 2007–08 season.

Nine emerging composers from across the country participated in the **Minnesota Orchestra** Composer Institute, which ran from November 26 through December 2, 2006. The composers, ranging in age from 24 to 39, were selected through a competitive submission and judging process of 143 qualifying scores from 37 states. Aaron Jay Kernis, the orchestra's new-music advisor, headed the panel of judges and co-directed the Institute along with Beth Cowart, the orchestra's artistic planning associate. The nine composers who participated were Garrett Byrnes, Anna Clyne, Kurt Erickson, Stephen Gorbos, Missy Mazzoli, Ashley Nail, Alejandro Ruty, Dan Visconti, and Gregg Wramage.

The Minnesota Orchestra and the American Composers Forum present the Composer Institute every season in cooperation with the American Music Center and University of Minnesota School of Music. This is the sixth season of the full Composer Institute and the twelfth of the new music mentoring program. This year for the first time the Institute culminated in a performance conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä.

The Institute, which is unique in the nation, nurtures the participants' musical acumen and broadens their career management skills, assisting in their growth as artists and community leaders. Past participants have said that the Composer Institute was the single most important experience of their musical educations. Many have gone on to secure important awards, positions, commissions, and performances.

The intensive week includes instrumental workshops with orchestra musicians for the invited composers and local auditors, and numerous seminars with leading music industry professionals on topics ranging from copyright law and commissioning to grant-writing and publishing. Featured seminar speakers this year included Henry Fogel (ASOL), Ralph Jackson (BMI), copyist Bill Holab, and music attorney James Kendrick, among others.

Thanks goes to Minnesota Orchestra delegate and librarian Paul Gunther for reporting those details. Paul, who is also an ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large, also took special note of the Colorado Symphony's inclusion of a fellow librarian in its bargaining unit, a move he says "speaks volumes to this orchestra's acuity and perception of its position as a twenty-first century orchestra."

**North Carolina Symphony** Music Director Grant Llewellyn has signed a contract extension that will lengthen his tenure with the orchestra through 2012. Since Llewellyn's hiring in 2004, which followed a three-year search process led by current ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge, attendance for the orchestra has increased by nearly one-fourth. Delegate Elizabeth Lunsford says that during that time, the orchestra has also grown with the addition of three full-time members and that three more new positions will be added next season.

The **Pittsburgh Symphony** recently announced a transformational \$29.5 million gift from Dick Simmons and the R.P. Simmons Family. According to an article in the November 18<sup>th</sup> issue of *Business Wire*, the gift is designed as a catalyst for a major endowment campaign, to ensure the financial stability of the orchestra, to encourage support from the community, and to foster financial discipline by the entire Pittsburgh Symphony family.

Artistic Advisor Sir Andrew Davis commented, "This gift is testimony to the Pittsburgh Symphony as a world-class orchestra. Any city would envy a similar investment in its orchestra. This is undeniable evidence that the first-rate leadership in Pittsburgh knows what it takes and is willing to pay the price for artistic excellence."

PSO Concertmaster Andrés Cárdenas said, "In times of organization-wide sacrifice, this generous gift from Dick and his family could not be more welcome. I think I can speak for all my colleagues in the Orchestra when I say we are humbled, inspired, and relieved to know that our work is valued so greatly."

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## Newslets

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According to the American Symphony Orchestra League, this gift ranks fifth among very few private-sector investments of this magnitude in the orchestral world, many of which were made for capital projects or in much larger cities. With the forthcoming campaign based around this gift, the PSO has developed a bold and aggressive plan to eliminate an operational deficit, increase the size of the endowment while reducing the draw, continue its world-class artistic excellence, and make needed improvements to Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts. Concurrently, the PSO has just announced an \$80 million fundraising campaign, the largest effort in the Orchestra's history, a third larger than the \$60 million raised in 1993, the most recent previous effort.

On November 7th, 2006, the musicians of the **San Antonio Symphony** learned that Music Director Larry Rachleff's contract had not been renewed by the executive committee of its board. In keeping with the board's bylaws, the executive committee acted on behalf of the full board but without their knowledge. The reason proffered by the executive committee for the decision is that they believe that the role of the SASO's music director has changed since Rachleff was hired and that, among other non-artistic duties, it now requires residency in San Antonio. The orchestra committee and the orchestra's three elected musician board representatives worked for several weeks to reverse the decision. The most public action taken was the orchestration of a standing ovation for Rachleff onstage at the start of our November 9th concert, which was mirrored by the audience.

Despite many strong arguments against this decision, the protest of the musicians, massive public outcry, and calls for mediation from both musicians and board members, the decision will not be reversed. Delegate Emily Watkins reports that the full board is moving forward with the formation of a music director search committee. The musicians have been promised up to 50% representation on this committee (more than the one-third representation specified by our CBA). ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge made a well-timed visit to the San Antonio Symphony on November 29 and 30, 2006, meeting with the orchestra, CEO David Green, and the orchestra committee. Many orchestra members were energized by the visit and expressed their appreciation.

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

## Fourth Wall

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How is such a thing accomplished? Sometimes the smallest gestures are the most appreciated and have the longest impact. On your players' association letterhead, you should send notes of thanks to reporters when they have written positive stories, to business leaders when they have made positive contributions, and to audiences members who have made special gestures of support. Send signed cards from the orchestra to your friends and supporters to mark those major life events that affect us all, whether happy, sad, or worrisome. While the signing of a card will take each of us mere seconds, some of these cards will hang on the walls of your biggest donors for years and live in their memories for decades.

Before the concert, walk through the lobby and shake a few hands. That's how you start to build relationships—simply by meeting people. In the sports world, it is said that the incredible (and to me, mystifying) rise of NASCAR is largely due to the accessibility of the participants to their fans. While it might be hard for us to imagine, an audience member's experience is greatly enhanced by a few words with the performers. That person will tell their friends, all of whom will remember the positive experience of their encounter with a member of the orchestra. In all walks of life, the more friends you have, the more support you have when it is needed.

How does all of this serve to insure the survival of our institutions and the elevation of the livelihood of the orchestral performer?

The more our boards know about us, the more they will understand our lives and the inherent difficulties and challenges involved in making a living by performing in a symphony orchestra.

The more contact we have with our local press, the more trust we build. Through that connection, the positive message of our players' associations can be spread throughout the community.

The more access we create to our local political and business leaders, the greater our chance to communicate the financial role that our orchestras play in the healthy life of any city.

And while these are indeed contacts that might be needed in times of crisis, they are also contacts that can be built to avoid crises.

Some might correctly ask, "Isn't it our management's job to promote a healthy image of the orchestra?" And the answer would most certainly be "Yes, it is." Where managements are advocating for their orchestras with a positive message, then players' association and ICSOM should be there to assist them. But in this era of negative rhetoric about the arts, there are many situations in which we must become our own advocates. We can no longer concede the pronouncement of a negative future for the arts in America.

I have heard of stories where some managers try to create the illusion of breaking the fourth wall by instructing their musicians to

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## New Orleans

(continued from page 1)

On the surface, a shutdown could happen to any orchestra. This one added a terrible twist—the dislocation of an entire population. I was pleased to hear that many LPO supporters, recently returned to New Orleans, were clamoring for their orchestra even before the LPO members were back and had a chance to put together a brief season from February to May. I'm thrilled to hear they have such support. The evening of the concert, the audience was extremely appreciative.

LPO piccolo player and newly elected president of the orchestra Patti Adams stood before a sizable audience at that concert last October 28 and spoke about angels. She described how small the musical world is and the remarkable support their orchestra received over the last year from musicians around the world, from tiny youth groups to the very largest professional symphony orchestras. Patti went on to speak of two special angels, the Nashville Symphony and the New York Philharmonic, who twice in October 2005 allowed the musicians of the LPO to come together from all over the country and perform when it was not possible in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Patti introduced me to the audience as a representative of the Nashville Symphony. She also introduced New York Philharmonic violinist Kenneth Gordon as well as the evening's soloist, New York Philharmonic Principal Clarinet Stanley Drucker. Stanley performed a piece written for him thirty years earlier, John Corigliano's *Clarinet Concerto*. Patti explained that October 28<sup>th</sup> was a special date for the LPO, because it had been exactly one year ago that LPO musicians had traveled to New York City to perform an incredibly successful concert/fundraiser with the New York Philharmonic and a slew of big name artists.

Kenneth, Stanley, and I all received generous expressions of gratitude from orchestra members, staff, and audience members during our few days in New Orleans. I also found a remnant of the Nashville LPO concert is still present—the full orchestra photo in this season's LPO brochure was taken on the stage of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC).

I was thankful to be given the opportunity to renew acquaintances and friendships that had begun last October in Nashville. I was also able to spend time getting to know my New York Philharmonic colleagues Kenneth and Stanley, and Stanley's lovely wife Naomi. I was able to meet new faces in the LPO and to catch up with those musicians who had so kindly contributed their thoughts about the Nashville LPO concert last year for ICSOM's *Senza Sordino* and *Local 257's Nashville Musician*. Scott Slapin and his wife Tonya Solomon, and Burt Callahan lost all their belongings and have relocated to another area of town. Elizabeth Overweg, Patti Adams, and Annie Cohen appear to have landed on their feet. Treesa and Matt Gold lost all their possessions (they drove me by the site of their former home in Lakeview). Matt had just been offered a one-year position as librarian with the Richmond Symphony, so they were preparing to move. Treesa's health was somewhat better, but the

cancer treatment she had begun just prior to her visit to Nashville last year didn't appear to be working, so treatments have stopped.

I still have concerns about these new friends of mine. The population of New Orleans has dropped precipitously since Katrina struck, from about 500,000 to 150,000. Much of the orchestra's salary this year comes from grants and contributions due to the hurricane. Orchestra members cannot survive on their salary alone; they must have second jobs, and only some have successfully rebuilt their teaching studios. For many, a second income is required, and the infrastructure is not back in place yet. At least seven musicians have taken a leave of absence this year, reducing the orchestra even further to about sixty members. I still worry, but I am also awed by the strength and courage of the musicians of the Louisiana Philharmonic and the people of New Orleans. I will continue to hope they will not only survive but will thrive.

Now, one year later, I still believe Annie Cohen expressed it most accurately:

Our job as musicians is to keep playing and reminding our respective communities how very important music is, how it helps us all to be more complete human beings, and how necessary it is to both maintain and grow our culture. We have seen in New Orleans how thin the veneer of civilization can be, and how quickly cities can fall in the apocalyptic events of early September. I am struck again at what we can bring to our cities, to each other, and how we can work together to be sure that live music remains in the city that defined and brought American music to this country.

Her final sentence can now be stated emphatically: "And classical music ~~will return~~ *has returned* to New Orleans!"

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Left to right: Stanley Drucker, Laura Ross, Kenneth Gordon.

## Fourth Wall

*(continued from page 6)*

“smile more.” The very idea of that directive assumes that the appearance of a happy workplace is more important than actually having a happy workplace! If you want the musicians to appear to be happy, isn’t it apparent that creating a positive atmosphere would prove more effective than issuing a memo?

The turnover in managerial positions will almost always be greater than the turnover in your board and players’ association. The musicians and the board can create an atmosphere that can sustain our organizations through the debates of our differences and lead us to the path of our shared visions for all that our orchestras can achieve.

All of our players’ associations have any number of committees: orchestra committees, negotiating committees, media committees, etc. It might be time for us all to invent another committee from within our ranks. This committee could be charged with fostering the environment of “family” that we all should hope will surround our orchestras. They could send cards to our members when they need the support of their colleagues. They could seek out opportunities to make gestures of friendship that would not only serve to unify us within our own orchestras, but also to build positive relationships with those who surround and support our musicians in their city. So the next time you have an opportunity to elect your travel committee or artistic committee, I hope that we all will also consider electing a “community committee” that will serve to strengthen the orchestra within the bargaining unit and elevate the profile of the players’ association in the minds of those we seek to serve.

At your next concert, imagine the fourth wall. Do you feel separated from your audiences? Sometime I sit back and wonder, “Why have these people left the safety of their homes to come and watch me

work?” That’s always an issue for musicians, isn’t it? Is anybody really listening? Do our audiences fully understand what we are trying to do? Really, why are they there?

I suppose they’ve arrived in our concert halls for many reasons. Certainly, some have come merely to be seen, and some have been dragged by their dates. But those are the few. The vast and not so silent majority have come to listen, learn, remember, dream, and imagine. They have come to experience a convocation in their city. I see no “graying audience.” I see a gathering of young and old who have come to see where we can take them.

In a time where every person’s day is filled with its unique difficulties, and in a world that slumps with its heavy burdens, they have come to allow their orchestra to provide them a moment for the suspension of their disbelief, a respite from the weight of their own day. That moment will serve as a reminder that the aspiration of the arts is the elevation of the human spirit.

For so long, the public has read of a decline in the relevance of the arts. But those questions of sustainability have been answered time and time again through the community service of the musicians in our orchestras and of those who support us. A recent report from the National Endowment for the Arts concluded that 51% of people who regularly attend arts events were also volunteers that served their communities, while only 19% of non-attendees were so inclined. I’m afraid that some of the negative rhetoric about the future of the arts in America has left some members of the public with the view that artists feel a sense of entitlement, as if society owes us something. But the truth is, society doesn’t owe it to us to support the arts; society owes it to itself.

Let us now resolve to reach out to our public and our communities anew, by breaking the fourth wall.