

# Senza Sordino

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## 2007 ICSOM Conference

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

The Millennium Hotel Minneapolis was the site of the recent ICSOM Conference. No one lacked for hospitality, with Twin Cities Local 30-73, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra all serving as hosts.

Activities before the opening session of the Conference included a successful negotiating orchestras session on Tuesday evening. Though mainly for orchestras in or preparing for negotiations, it was open to all delegates. The decision to hold this session prior to the Conference appears to have been a good one, as there was a very good turnout by negotiating orchestras, and more time was available than when these sessions had been held during the Conference proper. The Governing Board also hosted a new-delegate breakfast before the first session. The new-delegate breakfast has now been in place for about four years and seems to be viewed as an important initiation for our first-time delegates that gives them insights and information about what they will be confronted with during the next four days.

The Conference officially started Wednesday morning, August 15. Chair Bruce Ridge began by introducing ICSOM's officers. Due to a recent resignation by Member at Large Steve Lester (Chicago Symphony) and the imminent birth of the second child of Member at Large James Nickel (Dallas), the Governing board was without two members. After the roll call and introductions of guests and local officers, Conference Coordinator Lynn Erickson (Saint Paul) gave welcoming remarks and then introduced Twin Cities Musicians Union President Brad Eggen, who, after his own welcoming remarks, handed out gifts of T-shirts and Ping-Pong balls.

Sadly, the Conference began with a vote by the delegates to remove the Florida Philharmonic from active status. Although the Florida Philharmonic filed for bankruptcy in May 2003, the Florida

Philharmonic musicians had retained active membership in ICSOM since then. Conference delegates agreed to the Membership Committee's recommendation that should some future incarnation of the Florida Philharmonic ever re-apply for ICSOM membership, it should be granted regardless of whether at that time they would fully qualify for membership according to ICSOM bylaws.

Chair Ridge's annual address to the delegates began with a reference to the success of our recent *Call to Action* campaign. He also spoke about countering negative rhetoric with positive messages about our industry and reminisced about his first year as ICSOM chairperson, his visits to member orchestras, and his admiration and pleasure working with the Governing Board.

Both Bruce Ridge and President Brian Rood acknowledged the contributions of the numerous former ICSOM officers who serve as delegates of their orchestras and/or local officers and who continue to be great advisors to the current Governing Board. Following additional officer reports, nominations, and a brief AFM Convention report by Paul Gunther, lunch came an unprecedented half-hour early!

AFM President Tom Lee was unable to attend the Conference for the first time since before his presidency started, so Bruce Ridge read a letter from President Lee to the delegates. The afternoon session then began with a panel of marketing and public relations representatives consisting of Julia Kirchausen from the League of American Orchestras (formerly known as ASOL), Gwen Pappas, Cindy Grzanowski, and David B. Sailer from the Minnesota Orchestra, and Jon Limbacher and Jessica Etten from the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Bruce Ridge moderated the discussion that covered various aspects of message development and how to influence target audiences effectively. The discussion also included changes from the employment of permanent music critics to a series of less consistent "stringers," as well as a perceived move away from arts coverage in general. The panelists addressed negative national publicity but believed what most influences audiences is the local message, which can be quite different. Topics from questions included music critic influence on readers when they like or dislike a particular conductor, marketing costs, public relations during negotiations, and the focus of season brochures. Delegates had been requested to bring examples of their season brochures to the Conference, so attendees saw first-hand the different marketing approaches taken by our orchestras.

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## Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



I've been thinking of this adage I once read in a book of quotations attributed to Buddha:

*Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.*

My travels this summer to the AFM Convention and the conferences of ROPA, OCSM, and ICSOM have served to remind me of my earliest teachers and my union mentors. Though some are now absent, they all still hang around my consciousness. These were great people who lit thousands of candles, and in doing so became brilliant figures in my life.

My life would most certainly have been different without them. They opened my mind, not only to all kinds of music, but also to all kinds of people and ideas. They told me of the union, and they made it seem like an inviting and accepting place; a place where a move against one of us was a move against all of us. I wonder if my first encounters with the union had been negative, would I feel as strongly as I do about our network of friends and our brotherhood of musicians?

Among our students, what do we want their introduction to ICSOM and to the union to be? Twenty-five years from now, the person who leads the union and the symphonic field might be one of your current students. Are they getting all of the messages they will need? Are they hearing a positive view of what solidarity can mean, or are they getting a different message?

We must give them a positive introduction. Teach them to respect their colleagues. Teach them not to criticize each other. It is a lesson that will serve us all to remember. As musicians, it is in our nature to be highly critical, even to ourselves. We are trained to analyze, criticize, and agonize over every note. We know instinctively that our reputations are only as good as the last note we have played.

Still, we can be more supportive of our colleagues. We can commend them for great performances, and we can support them in hardships. In a time of trouble (be it institutional or personal), our united network of friends can rise to their need.

So, you might ask, what is this really about? Am I actually spending a column of ink advocating that we be nice to each other?

While there are worse things to advocate, that's not at all why I'm writing this. I've told you all that just so I could tell you this: At one moment during my travels this summer, I heard a presentation about the union that was loud, ugly, threatening, and uninviting. At that moment, I thought that if this had been my introduction to the union, I never would have joined.

*(continued on page 7—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)*

## International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

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

[www.icsom.org](http://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  
Florida Orchestra  
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra  
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra  
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra  
Houston Symphony Orchestra  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra  
Kansas City Symphony  
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Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Louisville Orchestra  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Nashville Symphony Orchestra  
National Symphony Orchestra  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
New York City Ballet Orchestra  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
New York Philharmonic  
North Carolina Symphony  
Oregon Symphony Orchestra  
Philadelphia Orchestra  
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra  
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra  
Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra  
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra  
Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra  
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra  
San Antonio Symphony  
San Diego Symphony Orchestra  
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra  
San Francisco Opera Orchestra  
San Francisco Symphony Orchestra  
Syracuse Symphony Orchestra  
Utah Symphony Orchestra  
Virginia Symphony

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## Orchestra Newslets

The musicians of the **Utah Symphony** performed a free concert on September 24 at Emery High School in Castledale, Utah, to honor the memory of the miners and rescuers who perished in the collapse of the Crandall Mine. The program was conducted by Music Director Keith Lockhart and featured a moving performance by Gospel singer Renese King, who graciously traveled from Boston for the concert. Repertoire also included Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, and the Brahms *First Symphony*. The concert drew 1,300 people, and the response was warm and enthusiastic. Keith Lockhart mentioned that he was touched to hear calls of "more" and "thank you" from the audience during the ovation.

According to the orchestra committee, everyone involved donated their time for the project, which later in the process included many members of the Utah Symphony management. The intent, from the beginning, was to present the community with a concert at the highest level, and to offer a peaceful time with beautiful music. The concert was a success on many levels. One woman felt a Utah Symphony concert would help people return to normalcy. Another said that the effort was a reminder that there was such widespread support. While the musicians were driven to present this concert by the outpouring of support they felt towards their community, the concert was also a helpful reminder of the important role they play in their community.

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On August 25, the musicians of the **San Antonio Symphony** volunteered their time and talents for a concert to benefit the San Antonio Food Bank—the first of what is hoped will become an annual event. Music Director Larry Rachleff conducted the orchestra, which included guests from the Dallas Symphony and Baylor University as well as local freelancers. The program of Mozart and Dvorak raised \$4,100 in donations, which the Food Bank will leverage into over \$50,000 worth of food for San Antonio's neediest residents. The concert was presented with the assistance of several local unions and the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County.

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The **Minnesota Orchestra** has appointed Michael Henson to serve as its president and CEO. Considered one of the U.K.'s top symphonic leaders, Henson has served as the Managing Director and CEO of Britain's Bournemouth Symphony for the past eight years. Prior to that, he ran the Ulster Orchestra from 1992 to 1999.

At Bournemouth, Henson led a large-scale reorganization that turned an annual deficit of \$1.8 million into an annual surplus of \$800,000. During his tenure there, the orchestra produced 45 recordings, won six Grammy nominations, and made international tours to Hong Kong, Germany, Austria, Spain, and the Czech Republic. Henson negotiated two long-term orchestra agreements, including a three-year contract in 2000 and a four-year contract in 2004, at a time when the norm had been yearly negotiations.

Henson's appointment concludes a six-month search that began in February. The search committee included representatives from the Minnesota Orchestra's board and staff, as well as two musicians, cellist Marcia Peck and flutist Wendy Williams. Williams, the musicians' committee chair, said, "The Search Committee was impressed by Michael's ideas on how to achieve the important balance between artistic programming and marketing, as well as his deep understanding of the important role orchestras can play in their communities." Henson is due to start in his new position by February 2008.

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The **Nashville Symphony Orchestra** is engaged in an inter-institutional musician exchange program with the Orquesta Sinfónica UNCuyo of Mendoza, Argentina. Four South American musicians and one administrator traveled to Nashville to participate in rehearsals, concerts, meetings, tours and social activities May 7–14. Violinist Jeremy Williams, violist Michelle Lackey-Collins, bassist Liz Stewart, flutist Ann Richards, Vice President and General Manager Mark Blakeman, and his assistant, Kim Bogle, all of the NSO, recently returned from their reciprocal experience in Mendoza September 17–25.

The exchange program was designed to foster a relationship with a professional orchestra in a different country, to allow details of each institution to be communicated to the other for the purposes of enlightenment, study, and self-analysis, and to build camaraderie. Former delegate Lee Levine reports that this unique cultural exchange program was made possible through the diligence of Mark Blakeman, who petitioned the State Department for the visas that allowed the visiting musicians to rehearse and perform with the orchestra, and through the generosity of American Airlines, which assisted with transportation.

At a pre-season celebration on September 5, Giancarlo Guerrero was announced as the eighth music director of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. The announcement was met with prolonged applause, cheers, and a champagne toast for Guerrero, who always ranked at the top of the candidate list during the two-year search. Giancarlo Guerrero first conducted the orchestra during the week following the death of Music Director Kenneth Schermerhorn. Guerrero instantly established a rapport with the musicians and continued to build upon it during his next three visits.

The NSO opened its regular season one week after premiering the Martin Foundation Organ under the baton of Maestro Guerrero, who will return in May 2008. Leonard Slatkin will remain as the music advisor through the 2008–2009 season, with Maestro Guerrero becoming music director in the 2009–2010 season.

*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.*

## Adopted Resolutions of the 2007 ICSOM Conference

### Resolution #1—Employer Pension Trustees

WHEREAS, Employer Pension Trusteeships are commonly awarded to those representing organizations or fields which make the largest contributions; and

WHEREAS, Symphony, Opera and Ballet Orchestra Employers currently contribute over one-third of total contributions to the AFM-EPF; and

WHEREAS, Notwithstanding that level of contribution, there is no Symphony, Opera or Ballet Employer Trustee representation on the AFM-EPF; and

WHEREAS, Such representation is essential for input from the classical music field; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference urge the ICSOM Governing Board to send a letter to all orchestra executive directors for whose musicians the AFM-EPF is the primary pension, urging them to collectively and actively pursue the appointment of an AFM-EPF Trustee from the Symphony, Opera and Ballet Orchestra employers.

*Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric) and Robert Levine (Milwaukee)*

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### Resolution #2—Union Pension Trustees

WHEREAS, Five of the employer trustees of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund (AFM-EPF) have served more than fifteen years as trustees of the Fund; and

WHEREAS, The longest serving union trustee has served for eight years and the average tenure of union trustees is less than four years; and

WHEREAS, Pension funds are complex institutions and the value to the participants of experienced and well-informed trustees is extremely high; and

WHEREAS, Frequent turnover of trustees on the union side would seem to make for a serious imbalance of experience and knowledge as compared to the employer trustees; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference, through the Governing Board, convey this concern to the union trustees of the AFM-EPF and ask that they consider this issue and that they inform us of their opinion.

*Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric) and Robert Levine (Milwaukee)*

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### Resolution #3—Union Pension Trustees

WHEREAS, It is of vital importance to the participants and beneficiaries of the AFM-EPF that they have ready access to the operations, decisions and governance of The Fund; and

WHEREAS, Such respected institutions as the Stanford Institutional Investors Forum and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have long published and promoted guidelines for

governance; and

WHEREAS, The Pension Protection Act of 2006 provides certain such guidelines and regulations designed to increase the transparency of Pension Funds; and

WHEREAS, the June 4, 2007 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* detailed the kinds of problems caused by the lack of sufficient transparency; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference urge the Trustees of the AFM-EPF to examine and adopt those guidelines which will provide the necessary transparency of the C to avoid and prevent such problems.

*Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric) and Robert Levine (Milwaukee)*

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### Resolution #4—Transactional Pension Website

WHEREAS, In these times of electronic communication, one of the best modes of communication of information is through the use of a transactional website; and

WHEREAS, The participants and beneficiaries of the AFM-EPF need and deserve the ability to get answers to their questions quickly and electronically; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference urge the AFM-EPF to provide access to a transactional website with all due deliberate speed.

*Matthew Comerford (Chicago Lyric) and Robert Levine (Milwaukee)*  
*As amended*

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### Resolution #5—Call for Unity

WHEREAS, The essence of good trade unionism is the solidarity of all sectors, all officers, and all the members; and

WHEREAS, No union can truly thrive and properly represent the membership when differences of thought, approach or philosophy become so vast and divisive; and

WHEREAS, The AFM has grown and become a major force in the arts and entertainment fields; and

WHEREAS, The current disputes between the AFM administration and the Recording Musicians Association threatens to tear apart this great union; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates and Governing Board of the 2007 ICSOM Conference implore the Recording Musicians Association and the current administration of the AF of M to meet together in a spirit of unity, put aside their differences, and achieve the higher goal of reunification and solidarity for the greater good of all of the members of the AFM and their families.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

**Resolution #6—Pasadena Pops**

WHEREAS, The Boards and Managements of the Pasadena Symphony and the Pasadena Pops have announced their intention to “merge” the two orchestras; and

WHEREAS, That “merger” actually means that the musicians of the Pasadena Pops will be thrown out of their jobs; and

WHEREAS, One of the most important responsibilities of any union is to preserve jobs for its members; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference deplore the merger agreement insofar as it will result in the loss of precious jobs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference urge the AFM and Local 47 take all appropriate legal and trade union steps to assure that the Pasadena Pops management engage in collective bargaining with the union regarding the decision to merge, and, if necessary, the effects on the musicians of the merger.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

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**Resolution #7—Substitute and Extra Musicians**

WHEREAS, Substitute and extra musicians are essential to the ongoing operation of any symphony, opera and ballet orchestra; and

WHEREAS, There exists no good reason for providing those musicians with any different wage than at least the scale wage on a *pro rata* basis; and

WHEREAS, Some managements of symphony, opera and ballet orchestras have periodically attempted to pay these substitute and extra musicians less than equal pay for equal work; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference express their unlimited support for all musicians who try to make their living by performing the invaluable task of filling temporary vacancies and/or adding their talent to certain performances that require a larger ensemble; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference join with their brothers and sisters in deploring the practice of exploiting these musicians with lower pay, little or no benefits and no job security; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all AFM locals and orchestra negotiating committees be urged to refrain from agreeing to such exploitation of substitute and extra musicians.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

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**Resolution #8—ICSOM Chairperson’s Honorarium**

WHEREAS, The ICSOM Chair’s position is the most prominent and visible position as the chief representative for the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians; and

WHEREAS, The position requires countless hours both at home and on the road, visiting member orchestras, meeting with AFM representatives and/or orchestra managers and representing ICSOM at various conferences each

year; and

WHEREAS, The ICSOM Chair is called upon from time to time to be released from his/her orchestra job to speak and educate others on behalf of ICSOM; and

WHEREAS, To acknowledge the extreme responsibilities of the position as well as the huge commitment of time, energy and resources on the ICSOM Chairperson, an increase of \$1,000 to the Chairperson’s honorarium would be a small token of this recognition; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That Article VIII, Section 7 of ICSOM Bylaws be amended as follows:

Section 7. The Chairperson shall receive a yearly honorarium of \$3,000. The President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor of *Senza Sordino* shall each receive a yearly honorarium of \$2,000. The Secretary shall also receive an additional \$700 in recognition of his/her efforts in compiling, preparing, and distributing the minutes of the Annual Conference. The Editor of *Senza Sordino* shall also receive an additional honorarium of \$150 per edition of *Senza Sordino* in recognition of his/her efforts in the preparation and distribution of said publication.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

*This resolution will require the approval of member orchestras*

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**Resolution #9—Bruce Christensen**

WHEREAS, Bruce Christensen was contracted to redesign the ICSOM website, which went live in late December of 2006; and

WHEREAS, The newly updated website is “user friendly” and contains numerous features, including most sections of the ICSOM Delegate Handbook; and

WHEREAS, Bruce continues to update the website with additional information and links; and

WHEREAS, His work for ICSOM, musicians everywhere, and the general public has been invaluable; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference express their gratitude and admiration for Bruce Christensen’s work on ICSOM’s behalf.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

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**Resolution #10—Julie Ayer**

WHEREAS, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History* by Julie Ayer is a wonderful history detailing the struggles of many of ICSOM’s orchestras including her own orchestra, the Minneapolis Symphony (which is currently known as the Minnesota Orchestra); and

WHEREAS, Julie Ayer’s work has also put a spotlight on many orchestra musicians who paved the way for the improvements we now enjoy; and

WHEREAS, Julie has generously donated a copy of her book to each ICSOM orchestra, so that many of our colleagues may understand orchestra labor history for themselves; therefore, be it

*(continued on page 9—see CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS)*

## Recent Settlement Stories

*[Editor's Note: Watch for ICSOM settlement bulletins to learn the details of these settlements. Those bulletins are sent to each delegate and can also be found on the ICSOM website at [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org).]*

In the spring of 2007, members of the **Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra** voted in a contract renewal team (Brad Buckley, Erik Harris, Susan Slaughter, Bjorn Ranheim, and David DeRiso) in preparation for the September 2008 end of its current contract. The orchestra then split up for a six-week opera season and afterward dispersed completely for 13 weeks of summer.

Imagine the orchestra's surprise, then, when it showed up in the third week of September for the season opener to find a memorandum of agreement for a new two-year contract ready to go. With a unanimous recommendation by the contract renewal team and the union, and after two days of meetings (sandwiched between Stravinsky and Rouse), the agreement was ratified.

There were strong arguments offered for the agreement. Several weeks previously, SLSO Chairman of the Board Cindy Brinkley had contacted the team with a proposal for a two-year contract to be in place by the end of the season's first week—almost a year before the end of the current contract. Her first reason for making this significant proposal was stability. With three major staff positions open (executive director, development director, and director of communications), the chairman felt the chances of attracting good candidates would be greatly enhanced with a stable environment in place. Her second reason was fund raising. With donor hostility left over from the recent work stoppage, having a new contract in place a year early would send a message to the Saint Louis community that all constituencies of the SLSO were working together, thus enhancing fund raising efforts.

The SLSO management has been following a spectacular if unbalanced business plan over the last several years. The goal of the organization has been to raise enough endowment to ensure the orchestra's financial future into the next major ice age. To these efforts it has raised over \$150 million. However, there has been little attention paid to virtually anything else, so earned income and annual giving have both fallen significantly. As a result, the orchestra's annual shortfall (over \$3,000,000) has increased to the point that the SLSO could be bankrupt in four years. When this was explained to the orchestra, along with the possibility of losing the \$150 million endowment to the Art Museum should the orchestra go belly up, heart rates went up dramatically. This may have been a factor in the easy passage of an agreement that will guarantee a 25% drop in inflation-adjusted income over the 12-year period since 1998.

*Chris Woehr, Delegate, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra*

The musicians of the **North Carolina Symphony** ratified a new four-year contract on September 1. The settlement represented gains in many aspects of the contract, including wages, benefits, working

conditions, and compensation for extras and substitutes. Season length will increase to 44 weeks over the term of the contract. The size of the orchestra continues to grow, with the addition of three new string positions this season. Plans are in progress for several recording projects under the direction of Music Director Grant Llewellyn.

*Beth Lunsford, Delegate, North Carolina Symphony*

The **Utah Symphony** recently completed negotiations for a three-year contract that maintains the season at 52 weeks. For the last three years, base pay had been frozen at \$1,110 per week. Starting September 1, that amount will increase to \$1,143, with an additional bump to \$1,166 on March 1, 2008 (a 5% increase). The second and third years of the contract will both include 2% increases, bringing the weekly salary for 2008–2009 up to \$1,189 and for 2009–2010 up to \$1,213. Contract negotiations can be re-opened at the end of the first or second years, but for the salary issue *only*.

One of the most important issues resolved was that of health care. Fortunately, it will remain the same, with fully paid coverage for orchestra members and dependents. (That is the main reason why re-opening contract talks were limited to salary.)

There was also a bump in the orchestra's pension plan contributions. Previously, contributions were at 8%. Currently, for those musicians with 15 or more years of service, that amount will go up to 8.5% next season, and then 9% for 2009–2010. There were also modest increases in seniority pay and per diem.

The size of the orchestra compliment was another contentious issue. Management wanted to reduce the complement from 85 to 82 musicians by not filling three section string positions that have been open for several years. It was agreed that those positions will be filled in three years, after a new music director is in place. Until that time, the positions may be filled only with long-term substitutes.

Even though base pay will not rise to the level that was hoped for, overall, the Utah musicians' negotiating team feels very good about what they were able to accomplish—especially since they were facing a leadership vacuum created by the absence of a full-time CEO. It is hoped that the modest gains that were won can be increased in the second and third years of the new contract once a new CEO is in place.

*George Brown, Delegate, Utah Symphony*

On Labor Day, **San Antonio Symphony** musicians overwhelmingly ratified a four-year contract that will provide steady growth in season length each year, beginning with 27 weeks in 2007–2008 and reaching 30 weeks in 2010–2011. Previously, working weeks had been frozen at 26 per year. In order to achieve the twin gains of economic relief for the musicians and more performances for the

community, expanding the season length was one of the union's primary goals for the new agreement.

The agreement also includes annual increases in weekly salaries and in health coverage benefits. It is estimated that the new compensation package provides an average of 4.6% increase per year to the musicians. While this does not represent full recovery to pre-bankruptcy levels, it is a strong step in the right direction.

Significantly, the agreement rejects the concept of a two-tiered, A/B orchestra (where certain members of the orchestra would have been employed only during classical subscription performance weeks rather than full time). The Society had made such proposals last spring, but the union consistently and successfully rebuffed them at the bargaining table.

*Emily Watkins Freudigman, Delegate, San Antonio Symphony*

On September 25, the musicians of the **New York Philharmonic** ratified a new four-year contract, with the possibility of a fifth year pending further discussions regarding the pension plan. It was mostly a congenial negotiation, with the vast majority of time spent on pension issues.

Management wanted to freeze the defined benefit plan and to roll the musicians into the AFM-EPF. The musicians wanted to achieve a \$75,000 pension during the life of the four-year contract that was being discussed.

Although the fourth year wound up at \$70,000, it was agreed that there would be an actuarial study of alternatives to the current Philharmonic pension plan, with a view to increasing the pension benefit level to \$75,000 at no significant addition cost to management in a potential fifth year of the contract. Any musician retiring at any point during the life of the contract will receive the pension increases that occur during the contract, up to the maximum pension benefit at the end of this agreement. Base weekly salaries in the first through fourth years are: \$2,280, \$2,380, \$2,495, and \$2,595. If a fifth year is agreed to, the base salary will be \$2,700 per week, plus the usual \$20 overscale.

Both sides feel confident that they will be able to reach agreement on the pension issue, and that there will be a fifth year of the contract. There were no other major changes to the contract, with health benefits remaining intact.

*Kenneth Mirkin, Delegate, New York Philharmonic*

## **Chairperson's Report**

*(continued from page 1)*

Instead, though, great mentors told me of ICSOM and the AFM. They regaled me with the legendary stories that we all share throughout the field. They spoke of solidarity, and were encouraging and supporting at every difficult moment I faced.

And that's why I'm writing all of this. What kind of mentoring will the next generation of orchestral musicians receive?

The 2007 ICSOM Conference in Minneapolis was an inspiring gathering for me and for your Governing Board. There was an exchange of ideas and enthusiasm among our delegates, all in an atmosphere of inclusion and solidarity.

After my return home, I was pleased to read a report on the Conference by Barbara Owens, President of Local 9-535 in Boston, who wrote that the "friendly tone of the conference was in sharp contrast to the tension of the recent AFM Convention" and that she was "grateful to be part of a process that was respectful and productive."

That "respectful and productive" tone and the enthusiasm of your delegates have invigorated us all for the tasks ahead. And there can be no doubt these tasks are many. This season, many of our colleagues will face negotiations, and we all will face the continuing negative rhetoric that inhibits the growth of our great institutions. But we left Minneapolis prepared to spread a positive message, prepared to stand united with every orchestra through whatever difficulty they may face, and prepared to work for unity throughout our union.

There is no denying that there has been tension within the AFM emanating from the disagreements between the AFM administration and the Recording Musicians Association (RMA). There are fears throughout the AFM that if this dispute continues to expand, great harm can be done to the Federation. One of the most uplifting moments of the ICSOM Conference was when the delegates unanimously passed the Governing Board's call for unity in a resolution that states:

[T]he delegates and Governing Board of the 2007 ICSOM Conference implore the Recording Musicians Association and the current administration of the AF of M to meet together in a spirit of unity, put aside their differences, and achieve the higher goal of reunification and solidarity for the greater good of all of the members of the AFM and their families.

We are at an important time in the history of ICSOM, and indeed the history of the AFM. While other segments of the union might be at odds, there is a great coming together within ICSOM, and we implore everyone to hear our calls for unity.

The work ahead is daunting, but we will succeed by reaching out to our colleagues, both within our own orchestras and throughout our community of friends across North America. We will communicate in richer ways, spreading stories of our successes and cautionary tales of our disappointments. There shall be many more of the former than

*(continued on page 12—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)*

*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.

## 2007 ICSOM Conference

(continued from page 1)

The afternoon ended with reports from three orchestras facing particularly difficult negotiations: the Detroit Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, and the San Antonio Symphony. (San Antonio has since reached a four-year contract, and Detroit has concluded a three-year agreement.) There was also a presentation by members of the Phoenix Symphony and Phoenix local who have been working with Drew McManus this past season on internal organizing.

Delegates were pleased to welcome retired Minnesota Orchestra member and former member at large Jim Clute, who also attended the mixer that evening in the lobby of Minnesota Orchestra's Symphony Hall. Another former delegate from the Houston Symphony, Bernice Beckerman, also dropped by. The mixer received glowing reviews and was sponsored by the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, with Twin Cities Local 30-73 providing the band.

Thursday began with welcoming remarks from Bob McGrew, newly elected member of the AFM International Executive Board and current Secretary-Treasurer of Local 65-699 (Houston). Later in the week, Bob assisted Nancy Stutsman (Kennedy Center) in raising more than \$1,800 for TEMPO when he auctioned off a pound of coffee and a box of chocolate covered macadamia nuts.

Symphonic Services Division (SSD) staff joined Director Laura Brownell for a presentation followed by a question and answer session. Laura spoke about a local's duty to represent all local members during negotiations and of her work with Bruce Ridge and ROPA President Tom Fetherston this past season. Negotiator Chris Durham emphasized negotiation tactics, while Negotiator Nathan Kahn discussed internal organizing. Director of Electronic Media Debbie Newmark spoke about current electronic media issues.

Leonard Leibowitz, Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel as well as counsel to SSD, gave a brief history of labor in the United States and then answered delegate questions. An outline of that history can be found on the ICSOM website with other Conference materials.



Photo by Laura Ross

(Left to right) Emma Philips, Steve Dinion, Leonard Leibowitz, and Michael Largarticha in a presentation from Honolulu Symphony musicians to Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel.

Bruce Ridge publicly thanked Minnesota Orchestra violinist Julie Ayer for her generous donation of a copy of her book, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History*, to each member orchestra of ICSOM. Unfortunately, Julie was unable to attend the Conference.

Thursday afternoon's session was dominated by a presentation on the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF). Pension Benefits Director Vinni LoPresti and Director of Finance Will Luebking discussed the health and oversight of the AFM-EPF, how pension benefits work, office accessibility after 9/11, a requirement that participant-information requests be in given in writing, reasons behind the reduction in the multiplier used to calculate benefits, and plans to make the new AFM-EPF website transactional within two years. Numerous delegates and local officers asked questions. Following a short break, attending AFM-EPF union trustees Bill Foster (rank-and-file trustee from National Symphony), Hal Espinosa (Local 47, Los Angeles), Gary Matts (Local 10-208, Chicago), and Lovie Smith-Schenk (Local 65-699, Houston) joined Vinni, Will, and moderator and former union trustee Bill Moriarity to address questions. Bill Foster answered the questions that were directed to the trustees. Topics addressed by the panel included statement problems, incorrectly reported information, fund manager evaluation, staff salaries, why investment policy statements have not been provided, whether to encourage employer trustees to appoint a symphony manager as an employer trustee, whether pension contributions can be part of severance settlements, the sale of the AFM-EPF building, and education of trustees. Bill Foster and other union trustees encouraged musicians to call them with any questions or concerns, stressing that they are there to serve the participants.

Following the pension discussion, ROPA Treasurer Dennis Danders, OCSM Vice President Dan Blackman, and RMA Vice President Bruce Bouton addressed the delegates. The afternoon session ended with various reports. That evening, breakout sessions included discussions about education, the role of the orchestra committee, the role of the ICSOM delegate, and internal organizing, all of which were moderated by ICSOM officers and members of SSD staff.

Friday morning was the annual town meeting, which is closed to everyone except ICSOM delegates and the Governing Board. The town meeting has been an important outlet for delegates and Governing Board members to speak about issues of mutual concern. A motion to continue Town Meetings in the future was adopted on Saturday. Laura Brownell and her staff met with local officers in attendance at the Conference during the town meeting.

Friday afternoon's session began with Electronic Media Chair Bill Foster's committee report. He thanked Steve Lester for his wisdom and service as both a committee member and member of the National Oversight Committee (NOC) and announced that Cathy Payne (San Francisco Symphony) was named as his replacement on the NOC. Bill then explained the status of the various Federation agreements and encouraged orchestras negotiating or discussing possible media activities to contact him and Debbie Newmark.

Mark Schubin gave an informative presentation about electronic media technology, focusing on hall access, recommendations about whether to install or rent equipment, use of cameras, and his



experiences with the new Metropolitan Opera broadcasts in movie theaters. He answered a few questions about copy protection and archiving.

A panel discussion followed addressing negotiating media language and how it applied to two orchestras within the same local but with very different needs. Participants included Norbert Nielubowski from the Minnesota Orchestra, Leslie Shank from the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Debbie Newmark, Bill Foster and Local 30-73 Secretary-Treasurer Tom Baskerville. Saint Paul musicians and the local worked closely with the AFM to assure that their new media activity worked within existing Federation agreements, though some of their upcoming activity will chart new territory. The Minnesota Orchestra, on the other hand, has had a long history of free local broadcasts on Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), with payment coming from the syndication of those concerts. This arrangement has just come to an end. There was brief discussion regarding MPR's attitudes about paying for product and considering themselves as employers. There has been some concern over these issues since MPR recently acquired *Performance Today* and *SymphonyCast* from National Public Radio. Tom Baskerville reinforced that orchestras and locals should be in contact with each other and with the AFM regarding media work.

Bill Foster noted a growing trend among managers who desire the ability to pay a single fee for unlimited use of recorded product. While the AFM and ICSOM are willing to look at new innovative ideas that are not covered by current agreements, some existing agreements have provisions, such as oversight committees, that could already accommodate some projects.

Friday ended with two presentations on insurance topics. Minnesota Orchestra committee chair Wendy Williams and attorney (and former violinist with the Minnesota Orchestra) Sally Mermelstein gave an informative presentation about the features and pitfalls of long-term-disability plans, including problems musicians can face when they file for permanent disability. (A handout is available on the ICSOM website.) Florence Nelson, who has been engaged by ICSOM to assist in assembling an ICSOM healthcare database, presented some of her initial observations from the data collected so far.

Saturday included brief reports on Polyphonic.org, by Robert Levine (Milwaukee), and on the activities of the AFM Diversity Committee, by Lovie Schenk-Smith. When it came time for elections, Brian Rood and Laura Ross, running unopposed, were re-elected to their respective positions of president and secretary. There were brief campaign speeches for the two open member at large positions by candidates Paul Frankenfeld (Cincinnati) and Cathy Payne, as well as a statement from James Nickel that was read to the delegates. Cathy Payne and James Nickel were elected to the member at large posts.

Honolulu Symphony musicians Steve Dinion and Emma Philips, and Local 677 President Michael Largarticha presented a signed picture of the Honolulu Symphony to ICSOM Counsel Len Leibowitz, thanking him on behalf of their colleagues for all his assistance and friendship over the years. Later in the day, delegate Rachel Goldstein (Chicago), who is married to Steve Lester, accepted a plaque from ICSOM thanking Steve for his years of service to the field.

*(continued on page 12—see ICSOM CONFERENCE)*

## Conference Resolutions

*(continued from page 5)*

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference thank Julie Ayer, not only for her generosity to her ICSOM colleagues, but also for her hard work and dedication in writing this important book.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

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### Resolution #11—Stephen Lester

WHEREAS, Stephen Lester has served in multiple leadership roles as chair of both the negotiation and membership committees of the Chicago Symphony for many years; and

WHEREAS, Steve also served as Alternate ICSOM Delegate for a number of years; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, he stepped into an important leadership role in ICSOM, that of Member-at-Large; and

WHEREAS, Steve has also served ICSOM in a valued role on the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee and as a member of the National Oversight Committee; and

WHEREAS, His insights, ideas and participation on the Electronic Media Committee and the Governing Board have been invaluable these past years; and

WHEREAS, Steve has chosen to step down from his leadership roles in ICSOM for personal reasons; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference express their respect, admiration and gratitude to Stephen Lester for his remarkable body of work on behalf of the members of his own orchestra as well as the members of ICSOM; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the delegates make him promise to stay in touch should he desire to become re-involved in a leadership role in ICSOM in the future.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

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### Resolution #12—Public Awareness and Interest in Classical Music

WHEREAS, The image of live classical music in our country is an essential component to the public's awareness and interest in the quest to increase revenue by way of ticket sales and contributions; and

WHEREAS, One way of creating such awareness and interest is to have a national "corporate image" type of television campaign similar to those of the dairy industry, i.e., "Got Milk?", and the meat industries, "Pork, the other white meat", and

WHEREAS, Such a campaign can be funded through the joint efforts of the AFM, the League of American Orchestras, ICSOM, and ROPA; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the delegates to the 2007 ICSOM Conference urge the leadership of the AFM, the League of American Orchestras, ICSOM and ROPA to meet to discuss the feasibility of creating a national television campaign, the purpose of which is to increase the public awareness and interest in classical music.

*ICSOM Governing Board*

## Musicians' Perspectives The 2007 ICSOM Conference

Hi folks. Richard Waugh here; violist with The Cleveland Orchestra. During my 13 seasons in Cleveland, the ICSOM delegate position has never seemed very important. Historically, the sitting delegate has been re-elected if he chose to serve, since no one ran against him. There has always been a joke about where the ICSOM Conference would be held; the humor being that if it were held in some exotic location, more people might run for the delegate position. I was begged to attend this year at the last moment, as no one actually ran during this year's election.

During my flight to Minneapolis, I was wondering if ICSOM had some sort of Mellon association. That might sound incredible, but it just goes to show how little ICSOM has been discussed around Severance Hall during my time in Cleveland. The Conference was an education for me to say the least. I am somewhat proud to have learned that ICSOM, to a large degree was begun with the vision of a couple of distinguished retired members of my own orchestra. Further, I learned to my relief from President Rood that ICSOM in fact has no ties to the Mellon Foundation. He explained that ICSOM was formed as something of a checks and balances organization for the AFM.

Several presentations were made at this year's conference. I am only writing today about those subjects that made the biggest impression on me. As my own orchestra recently negotiated its way into the AFM pension fund, I was relieved to learn why the retirement benefit multiplier had recently been lowered. Without going into great detail, it seems the reduction resulted from the Fund's decision not to pursue relief from complicated IRS funding rules because of the onerous conditions attached to that relief, not from continued poor investment returns. In fact, the Fund has exceeded its estimated annual investment return of 7-1/2% in recent years and is projected to stay financially healthy through 2041, which is the farthest out that the actuaries have projected.

A very fine presentation was made concerning disability insurance. I learned that a lot of orchestras have quite different coverage. The importance of the types of coverage was made especially clear as the presenter, at one time a musician with the Minnesota Orchestra, was once in a battle for benefits herself and is now a legal expert on the subject. My advice as a result of this presentation would be for orchestra/negotiating committees to do a thorough review of your orchestra's disability coverage. Consult with an expert to be sure it is adequate for your colleagues.

I have to say that I was somewhat in awe at the Conference by the number of sharp minds in the room. Further, ICSOM is in the hands of respected and highly competent leaders. One of the most important uses I see of ICSOM for any orchestra is the vast amount of available trade agreement information that ICSOM gathers. Just as one example, our last negotiating committee spent hours and hours digging through the contracts of other

orchestras to learn more about their health coverage. That very information is now easily accessible on the ICSOM website. While not the policy of the Cleveland Orchestra, many orchestras include the ICSOM delegate on the negotiating committee. Because of the information available through ICSOM, I see this as an important and necessary change to consider in Cleveland.

ICSOM is doing important work. While initially feeling suckered into going to the Conference, due to everything I learned in a few short days about the people and the mission, I am most pleased that I did agree to attend. I look forward to continuing to work with the fine delegates and board of ICSOM and am certainly planning to run for ICSOM delegate this season, whether or not the location for the next Conference happens to be exotic.

*Richard Waugh, Delegate, The Cleveland Orchestra*

Stepping into my first ICSOM Conference this year was much like walking into a high-level chess match in progress. There is an underlying tension within the AFM in the wake of the Federation's 2007 Convention that is undeniable. As a newcomer, I enjoyed a unique view from the sidelines as I tried to discern the position and predict the next move.

What I saw was an institution (ICSOM) on the rise, governed by highly capable and dynamic leaders, flush with pride on the heels of the very successful campaign to protect the interest of its members (and underscore its importance) in Las Vegas. I cannot stress enough how impressed I was with two things: how much can be accomplished by the concerted efforts of insightful leaders, and how much work it takes to achieve such goals. I flew back to Chautauqua (my summer gig) overwhelmingly daunted and inspired, in equal measure.



Photo by Laura Ross

President Brian Rood (*standing*) addresses first-time delegates in the roof-top Dome Room of the Millenium Hotel Minneapolis.

While I will issue reports to my colleagues in Virginia on all the particulars concerning pension, strike fund, health care, etc., I feel it is most important to convey the overall atmosphere of the Conference. Not being privy to the political particulars, I can only take back a general impression, and I feel very secure letting our Governing Board take care of the details. This is the message I will pass on: Stay alert, stay informed, and play an active role—change is coming, and we are the custodians of that change.

*Amanda Armstrong, Delegate, Virginia Symphony*

One of the great things about being the ICSOM delegate is picking up all the different perceptions orchestra members from all over the country have about what we do at these conferences. This last summer, a delegate told me that some in her orchestra thought we conducted our business while wearing funny party hats. For those who have served as delegates or attended as observers, participants, or board members, it is pretty intense but fulfilling knowing that the information that you are collecting will serve your orchestra back home. Conferences are a lot of work in a short period of time, however there is a lot of levity brought about by a sense of purpose and camaraderie from all those who attend.

This was my second ICSOM Conference, and going to Minneapolis this summer was like going to a summer music festival—I felt as though I was with musicians outside my own orchestra that shared a common purpose. One of the things I noticed about the other delegates and the board is how passionately they care for ICSOM and their orchestras. Another observation is that they care a lot about each other and the health of not just their own orchestras but each other's. Before leaving the Conference, a lot of us were hoping we'd see each other next summer when the Conference will be held in San Francisco.

Even though I felt comfortable with my colleagues from around the country, it was reassuring to have Brian Rood, the ICSOM President and fellow Kansas City Symphony member, attend the Conference. When questions arose that I couldn't answer about my own orchestra (quite frequently really), Brian was there to save me from drowning (quite often). I write this because it serves you and your orchestra well to have a colleague come as an observer and/or a participant to ICSOM. Schedules are tight and people never have enough time for everything, but going to these Conferences really give you the tools during negotiations and other dilemmas that every orchestra faces. I urge you all to come and be a part of the ICSOM experience.

Just don't forget your funny hat.

*Ho Anthony Ahn, Delegate, Kansas City Symphony*

I've been serving on orchestra committees for over 25 years. I certainly knew what ICSOM was and eagerly read each edition of *Senza Sordino* (usually during tacet movements in rehearsal). In all that time, though, I had never attended an ICSOM Conference. It wasn't for lack of interest, but more out of circumstance. I've been in orchestras with strong ICSOM delegates who reported back with the latest information from the orchestral world. Now, even though I wasn't the Minnesota Orchestra's delegate (a position held by my colleague Paul Gunther who is also a member of the Governing Board) I wanted to see what an ICSOM Conference was all about.

It was a particularly appropriate time—we were in the middle of our triennial exercise in justifying our existence, otherwise known as contract negotiations. I was interested in hearing what other orchestras were going through and in finding the similarities and the differences in our situations. I had also been getting questions from my colleagues about the AFM-EPF. We went into the fund in 1997. At the time it looked like one of the best moves we ever made. It freed us from the pressure of dealing with what was one of the “Big Three” of negotiations—salary, health insurance, and pension. While musicians who had retired under our combined plans over the last ten years seemed to be quite pleased, the two recent reductions in the benefit multiplier had given us cause for concern. I was very interested to see an afternoon devoted to discussion of the AFM-EPF with representatives of the fund in attendance.

In the first evening's discussion among negotiating orchestras, it was heartening to hear the stories of recent successes but also sobering to note others' difficulties. It was particularly troubling to hear of so many orchestras having to fight management proposals to reduce the pay for subs and extras while at the same time taking longer to fill vacancies through auditions.

Through each session—orchestra marketing, health care, pension, media, Len Leibowitz's Thumbnail Labor History—I was struck by the amount of collective knowledge in the room. I also realized that the best ideas in the orchestra world seem to be generated by musicians. We can wait for our managements to come up with solutions, and yes, it is their job, but ultimately it is *our* livelihood that is at stake. I found the energy of being around people who care passionately about what they do to be very inspiring. I was also impressed with the dedication and sheer hours put in by the officers and members of the Governing Board; I'm not sure that any of them got any sleep.

I believe that all orchestra members should serve on an orchestra committee once in their careers. After this experience, I believe that all committee members should attend an ICSOM Conference once in their careers.

*Norbert Nielubowski, Minnesota Orchestra*

## 2007 ICSOM Conference

(continued from page 9)

Delegates met for lunch with members at large who were there, with President Rood standing in for James Nickel. This was an opportunity for delegates not only to meet with their members at large, but also to discuss issues of concern and to get to know their fellow delegates a little better.

Delegates adopted twelve resolutions, which can be found starting on page 4 of this issue. One of these will require ratification by member orchestras by November 16. Next year, San Francisco | Local 6, the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra the San Francisco Symphony will host the ICSOM Conference in San Francisco, August 20–23. The 2008 Conference will be held at the Hotel Kabuki.

The Minnesota Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Local 30-73, Lynn Erickson, and all who attended this Conference deserve credit for a job well done. Thanks also go to Chair Bruce Ridge for his leadership this past season and for a successful Conference.

A website honoring Irving J. Segall (1921–2004) is now online at [www.irvingsegall.com](http://www.irvingsegall.com). Irving, a 31-season violist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, was the chairman of ICSOM from 1974 through 1980.

## Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 7)

the latter if we all truly work together. Invest in your orchestra, invest in your community, invest in ICSOM, and invest in the future by introducing your students to our positive message.

As our music reaches thousands in our community, our musicians reach an even greater number. We teach young people about music, and we lighten the burden of life for so many through the elevation of the human spirit.

The message our students and our audiences receive is up to us. It is up to each one of us to become a little more brilliant and light a few candles. We will only grow stronger through sharing that light.

The full text of Chairperson Bruce Ridge's opening address, an outline of Leonard Leibowitz's *Thumbnail Labor History*, Sally Mermelstein's disability insurance handout, and other Conference-related material can be found in the "Governance" section of ICSOM's website, at [www.icsom.org](http://www.icsom.org).

Officer reports from the Conference can be found in the "Manual" section of the website.

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