

Senza Sordino

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A Casals Legacy

by Emma Matos

The Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra (PRSO) is ICSOM's newest member, and that is something that takes both the PRSO and ICSOM to another level. The former because we have become part of the great family of symphonic musicians working towards shared goals; and the latter to have as a member an orchestra so representative of the diversity that exists in the symphonic orchestra world. The musicians of the PRSO are very pleased and proud to be part of this ICSOM—very happy as well because we have had the opportunity to make contact with friends we haven't seen for some time and to establish new friendships that will surely last a long time. One reason we wanted to join ICSOM was that we needed better ways to demonstrate our value and strength as artists who are part of the legacy of one of the legendary performers and humanists of the 20th century, the Catalan cellist Pablo (Pau) Casals.

Our orchestra's history goes back to 1956, when Maestro Casals visited Puerto Rico for the first time. He had come to spend time in the land of his mother, Doña Pilar Defilló. On that visit, Maestro Casals, accompanied by pianist Narciso Figueroa, played facing one of the downtown Mayaguez streets from the balcony of what used to be his mother's house. Pictures exist of that historic moment, showing people surrounding the maestro from inside the house and gathering to watch from the street. From that moment, Maestro Casals dreamed of founding a symphony orchestra in Puerto Rico. His first step was establishing a music festival.

The first Festival Casals was held in April 1957. For the next 18 years until death his in 1973, Maestro Casals was the central figure not only for the Festival, but for the PRSO and the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music as well. Because of his aura, love, and commitment for music, many renowned artists came to play with Maestro Casals, both in chamber music and as part of the Festival orchestra. Rudolph Serkin and Alexander Schneider were close collaborators during the early years. Renowned Puertorrican musicians (like pianist Jesus María Sanromá, who played the world premiere of

Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*) joined international artists not only to be part of the Festival Casals but also to become the first core musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony and faculty of the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music. Notable musicians from that period include violinist Henry Hutchinson (father of our concertmaster, Henry Hutchinson, Jr.), the Figueroa family (who met Casals in Paris while they were students of pianist Alfred Cortot, violinist Jacques Thibaut, and cellist Diran Alexanian at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris), trumpeter Henry Novak, flutist Peter Kern, Spanish bass player Manuel Verdeguer, the Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet, and French hornist John Barrows.

The miracle of the PRSO came to life in 1958 with Pau Casals as the father and the Puerto Rico legislature as the mother. In that year the legislature signed a joint resolution creating the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra (la Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico). The inaugural concert was held April 6, 1958, in the city of Mayaguez, the birthplace of Casals' beloved mother.

Since the beginning, symphonic musicians in Puerto Rico (as in all orchestras) have been struggling not only to receive the respect and treatment they deserve, but also to create the highest level of artistic quality for their orchestra. Pau Casals himself was a great advocate of musicians' rights throughout his lifetime. Unfortunately, no one since has provided the same degree of leadership to our struggles. Nonetheless, thanks to the devotion and dedication of many of our valiant and heroic musicians, the PRSO 48 years later is the institution that gives our public artistic excellence—whether it may be in standard symphonic fare, opera, ballet, or pops.

Throughout its history, the PRSO has always been managed by governmental entities. Since 1985 we have been under the Corporación de las Artes Musicales (CAM, the Corporation for the Musical Arts). It was created to develop and coordinate programs related to the musical arts in Puerto Rico. In short, the PRSO is a public entity whose funding is provided entirely by budgets assigned by the legislature and the executive branch of government. Another important detail to understand is that CAM not only oversees the PRSO, but also the Festival Casals and the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music.

For 42 years the musicians of the PRSO have negotiated collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) to establish terms of employment in our orchestra. More than 25 CBAs have granted our musicians hard-fought benefits, basic working conditions, and

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Chairperson's Report by Jan Gippo



Just a few weeks ago, I came back from my second trip to Puerto Rico. There I helped members of the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra (PRSO), including orchestra committee chair and Local 555 president José Martin, negotiate with the management of the PRSO and the Corporación de las Artes Musicales (CAM), the governmental agency that oversees the PRSO and other musical arts in Puerto Rico. It is a very complicated situation, including a lawsuit brought by CAM asking the court to declare that the orchestra is a governmental entity not entitled to workers' rights never before disputed. Such a declaration could deprive the musicians of privileges fundamental to labor, including the ability to negotiate collectively and to strike.

I was successful to a point. I got all parties to start talking—about suspending the lawsuit, starting bargaining for a new CBA, and forming a long-range planning committee. It's hoped that the long-range planning committee, composed of musicians, management, and governmental officials, will be able to facilitate a smooth transition from a wholly government-supported orchestra to a free-standing institution with an endowment, an autonomous board, and self governance. Len Leibowitz was unable to attend these discussions but participated by phone. He crafted a joint statement, agreed to by all parties, that was read at a press conference held at the Puerto Rico Federation of Labor office in San Juan. Len will also be involved with the on-going negotiations for a new CBA.

The reason I had the success I did was that the orchestra members were 100% in solidarity. When José and I spoke to the management, they knew that we were speaking for all the members of Local 555. It felt powerful. In the end, it proved to be the most important catalyst for moving discussions in a new direction.

That brings me to a concern I have on a subject that has been mentioned to me by at least thirteen delegates, committee chairs, and rank-and-file musicians. The concern is the lack of collegiality within our various orchestras. There seems to be far too much backbiting, open antagonism, and just plain bad manners toward older players from newer players.

This attitude is very harmful to any team-oriented operation, and surely to an arts organization like a symphony orchestra. It shakes the foundation of our commitment to ensemble, the shared experience, and the very nature of what we are trying to accomplish at our performances. Moreover, this attitude promotes a mean spirit that, once started, will permeate the entire organization.

A symphony orchestra has a unique structure. There are three distinct groups. There are the over-50, seasoned veterans. This group is the custodian of the institution's history, the masters of the folklore, and the curators of artifacts (e.g., pictures, instruments, and
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President's Report by Bruce Ridge



When I was a student, which seems an alarmingly long time ago, I remember reading a satirical piece called “An Efficiency Expert Looks at a Symphony Orchestra.” I thought I had saved a copy in my files, but a lengthy search the other afternoon proved fruitless. So, I “googled” it, and sure enough, I found a portion of it on some obscure website. The two excerpts I remembered most clearly were

For considerable periods, the four oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced, and their work spread over the whole orchestra.

and

Forty violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication, and this section should be drastically cut. If a larger volume of sound is required, this could be achieved through an electronic amplifier.

Somehow the joke isn't as funny these days, and when we hear the rhetoric coming from some of our boards and managements, we have to wonder if they know that it is a joke at all. There is irrefutable evidence that our orchestras are shrinking, and even further evidence that some of our boards want them to shrink even more.

I've always thought that the arts take a strange business model when dealing with tough financial times. The first instinct is always to cut the product, typically by reducing the size of the orchestra. In ballet companies, we see the orchestra eliminated entirely, and the audience must watch dancers perform to taped music, all the while suffering the indignity of being told that they are still paying for a full ballet performance.

Few businesses have ever succeeded in weathering tough financial times by offering an inferior product to their public. Yet, that is just what some of our boards seek to do when they advocate cutting the size of the orchestra. Even in situations where smaller deficits exist, managements will sometimes reduce the “extras” budget, thereby offering a smaller orchestra to the audience, hoping that they won't notice even as they are called on for contributions.

Ever more frequently though, we see a business model that is even harder to justify—that of the threat of bankruptcy. We have seen orchestras told by their boards and managements that if they do not agree to cuts in the size of the ensemble, then the organization must turn to bankruptcy to solve its financial woes.

This “to cure you we must kill you” approach most certainly makes it difficult for a community to invest in its orchestra. People like to invest in things that are helping to make their communities thrive.

The successful marketing approach should be one of contributing to your community, and I think it is legitimate to question the effectiveness of the fundraising pitch that begins with “We are doomed.”

For too many years the messages in our glossy brochures have conflicted with the messages in our inky newspapers. Our seasons have slogans like “Experience the Excitement!” But some of our managements put out a message of “Invest in Our Demise.”

This isn't true everywhere, of course. There are many communities where orchestras are thriving and growing, and there are some managers who advocate for the growth in the size of their orchestras. Those are the managers who are succeeding, because they understand the importance of artistic quality and a positive message in the role of fund raising. But these successes can also be traced to a connection with the audience, an ambitious management, and musician involvement in the community. Where there is success there is also investment and a sense of community involvement. An orchestra can help a city thrive in so many ways—artistically, educationally, and financially. The way to encourage financial support of your orchestra is to demonstrate the value of the orchestra in its community, not by announcing publicly that the community cannot support a great orchestra.

Orchestras can only measure up to the task of serving their communities when they also aspire to achieve the highest possible artistic level. Aristotle wrote that “The true nature of anything is what it becomes at its highest.” Audiences, contributors, politicians, and school children can and will be inspired by the drive for excellence, and they cannot and will not be inspired by negative messages and a business plan that offers them an inferior product.

Boards who would advocate for a reduction in the quality of their orchestra are not just letting down their musicians and their audiences. They are missing an opportunity to elevate their community, and the lives of everyone who lives there, learns there, and does business there. But even more so, they are engaging in a poor business practice, undermining their own fund raising by asking people to contribute to something that is under the threat of not even existing past a few weeks or months. It simply does not make any sense.

The time is now to change this rhetoric. As musicians, let us resolve to work with those managements who offer a positive message to the community. Let us do all we can to help them inspire those we serve with our whole organization's commitment to excellence and to community service. But where a management is engaged in promoting a negative public message about its orchestra or about the orchestra field in general, then let all of us, including ICSOM, the AFM, and all our musicians, equally resolve to rise up to challenge that rhetoric and replace it with a positive and inspiring message.

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PRSO

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improved salaries. For example, the PRSO has progressed from a two-week season in 1958 to a 52-week season in 2001. Still, until 2003, musicians had to file for government unemployment benefits when the season ended because this, for many musicians, was their only income.

Some of the gains, though, have come through legal battles. Thanks to our legal counsel, Licenciado (Spanish for “attorney at law”) Miguel González Vargas, we were victorious in a court case brought against CAM for denying our musicians a Christmas bonus that, by law, the government gives to all its employees. For decades, management denied us this bonus, alleging that payment would be illegal. Even though there are some distinctions to be made between PRSO musicians and government employees, the court found that we were eligible for the bonus and ordered management to pay penalties plus retroactive payments going back 10 years.

This was not the last court case we would witness. In July 2005 CAM filed a lawsuit against AFM Local 555. The lawsuit requests the court “to declare that CAM has no capacity in law (ACT No. 130 May 8, 1945, Puerto Rico) under the Constitution of Puerto Rico and is not an employer in such a manner that it may collectively negotiate with the employees of this corporate entity.”

The lawsuit was filed a few weeks before our contract expired in July and about a month before a planned 21-day tour to La Coruña, Spain. After CAM filed the lawsuit, management wanted to wait until returning from the tour to discuss the lawsuit and contract negotiations. The contract had expired, but they wanted us to make the tour without one. The musicians committee jumped in, went into overdrive, and told management that, without a contract, the orchestra would not go on the tour.

There were musicians who wanted to go on tour even under this unprecedented attack; this is something we have to work with. Solidarity and education is something that needs to be developed. As Licenciado Leibowitz said in last issue of *Senza Sordino*, “there is one more B after Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms that stands for Bread.” After a frantic weekend of meetings, both parties agreed to a one-year extension of the expired contract—just 12 hours before musicians were scheduled to leave on the tour. No executive of CAM accompanied the orchestra to Spain.

This lawsuit is a direct attack on our basic right to bargain collectively. Its effect could be to decertify and kill Local 555 because, if the lawsuit is successful, there will be no collective bargaining and there will be no reason for the local to exist (since all of its members are PRSO musicians). Even our membership in ICSOM is at risk.

When management was asked about the lawsuit, their first answer was that we shouldn’t consider it a lawsuit—they were just asking for “an opinion” from the court. We think that this “innocent consultation” is very damaging for labor relations and is an attempt to put a sword over the musicians’ heads. Quoting our lawyer’s an-

swer to the lawsuit, “These proceedings would contravene the constitutional principle of justice, contained in the rule that it is not the function of the courts, nor can they, act as advisors or consultants, to thus avoid that decisions be produced in a vacuum, in the abstract, or under a hypothesis of a speculative nature.”

A further issue has arisen relating to the lack of support shown by CAM for the PRSO. This year, which is the 50th anniversary of Festival Casals, CAM expanded the budget for the Festival while at the same time slashing ours. It found all the funding necessary to import two internationally renowned orchestras and to expand the normally three-week Festival into a five-week event; but the same organization claims that there are no sources of funding for our orchestra.

It is always very uplifting to listen to the complimentary comments made by visiting artists—to mention just a few, Jean Pierre Rampal stressing how well the PRSO plays Mozart, pianist Horacio Gutierrez praising how beautifully the orchestra performed, and Cuban sax player Paquito D’Rivera telling the orchestra how impressed he was about the way we were able to change our “mind frame” to play jazz with him. Evidently, though, the same respect for our musicians does not seem to be shared within our own organization.

Recently the principal newspaper on the island quoted the artistic directors of the Festival Casals (probably one of the few music festivals in the world with *two* artistic directors) as saying that PRSO musicians have myopic intellect—this for denouncing the disparity between the budget size for the Festival’s five weeks and for the PRSO’s 52-week season. They even went as far as questioning the musical ability of our musicians, suggesting that they should be more humble. Such words, coming from fellow countrymen and colleagues, are not only humiliating to our musicians but are an attempt to paint us as opposed to having other orchestras come to Puerto Rico.

They claim that we don’t appreciate the great artistic value of our colleagues and that we would deny the people of Puerto Rico the opportunity to see and hear the best performers music has to offer. They do so to drive a wedge between the musicians of the PRSO and the citizens whose taxes sustain both the Festival and the PRSO. We hope they will not be successful in this.

This is a labor issue, not an artistic issue. Many musicians who hold important positions in orchestras throughout the U.S. have at some point played with the PRSO or have studied with members of our orchestra. These include Guillermo Figueroa, Jr., former concertmaster of the New York City Ballet, Rafael Figueroa, principal cellist Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, his brother Narciso Figueroa, violinist of the same orchestra, Pedro Díaz, English horn at the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Ricardo Morales, principal clarinetist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, to name just a few. As Latinos we like very much to make our guests feel at home, and the PRSO musicians have told management several times that we want to interact more with guest orchestras to show them our hospitality. The real question is why

money cannot be found to sustain the year-round operation of the PRSO while even more is found for a short festival.

During this *annus horribilis*, ICSOM has responded to our call for help more than once. Chairman Gippo and President Ridge came to Puerto Rico last December to take a first-hand look at the situation. They were able to meet with our legal counsel, local officers, and especially with our musicians to let them know they are not alone and that ICSOM will help however it can. During that trip, Chairman Gippo also had a meeting with Dra. Evangelina Colón, the executive director of CAM.

Then in March 2006, Chairman Gippo came back to have a meeting with the president of the CAM board of directors, the executive director, their legal counsel, our legal counsel, and José Martín, the president of Local 555 and chair of our orchestra committee. Lenny Leibowitz participated from New York via conference call. Chairman Gippo started the meeting explaining that the lawsuit was not in the best interest of either side. He suggested that a better option would be to form a joint committee with the goal of transforming the orchestra into a self-sustaining, independent organization, and to suspend the lawsuit until a new contract is signed. Management saw the idea as a good one in principle, but the president said that he needed to bring that issue to all members of the board. (This issue was previously discussed in the first meeting between Dra. Colón and Chairman Gippo, at which time she said that she would bring the idea to the attention of the board. It seems that never happened.) At the end of the meeting, management agreed to a joint press release drafted by Lenny that announced the agreement between the parties to pursue the goal of transforming the orchestra into a better organization. A press conference was held the next day by the Local and ICSOM. No one from the board or management attended due to previous appointments. Another press release from the Philadelphia Orchestra musicians in support of the PRSO musicians was also disclosed at the press conference.

We are very grateful for the support Chairman Gippo and president Bruce Ridge have shown toward our situation. We thank our colleagues from the Philadelphia Orchestra for taking time from their busy schedule while they were here for Festival Casals in March to write a press release in our support and on how important collective bargaining is for all symphonic musicians. A special thanks belongs to our beloved Licenciado Leonard Leibowitz who, although not able to be here in person, was, as usual, very articulate in defending symphonic musicians, this time to our great benefit.

Emma Matos is a violinist with la Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico and is that orchestra's ICSOM delegate.

Chairperson's Report

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awards) collected throughout the orchestra's history. All this, plus they have the experience of years of musical performance, contract negotiations, and, in general, the life of the orchestra. These people are tangible assets for every musician. There should be a great deal of respect for those who have stayed the course and have made the job and the music making available to the younger generation.

The next is the 30- to 50-year-old group. These are the career-track musicians with the will and dedication to continue the legacy, who strive for the highest possible musical performance achievable. This is the largest group in the orchestra, and it is the group that has the energy and the will to demand of management and musicians alike to reach for the highest possible goals. This is the group that teaches the new players the stage etiquette, the procedures of governance, and respect for the entire institution. It is the group that motivates, and it should be the group that sets the tone for respect, good manners, and solidarity for all musicians.

The last group is the 20- to 30-year-olds just out of school or moving up from another orchestra. In my experience these players are the best ever in the forty years of my career. They can flat-out play! They are, however, woefully uneducated about labor relations, contract negotiations and their history, the function and success of ICSOM, personal contracts, pensions, life after retirement, and all the other aspects of symphony life. They are looking for guidance, and the way each of us approaches the new musicians will mold and shape the attitudes of this next generation of players.

A revolutionary once said, "We must hang together, or we will surely hang separately." This is true of symphony orchestras as well. Not only in contract negotiations must we show solidarity, but also during every aspect of performance, we must believe in and demonstrate collegiality. It is the only way to achieve excellence.

The newer players are sometimes much better players than the old guard. This is the way of life. When we teach, we want our students to experience such success. Sometimes it takes a "village" of all an organization's members to help set things right. We must always believe in respect, good manners, and a professional courtesy to all our members. Compassion is our greatest gift to a colleague.

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.

Reflections

by Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel



Today's "Peculiar Institution"

The symphony orchestra is surely the only institution which, in times of fiscal distress, blames the crisis on its product and then declares that the solution lies in downgrading the quality thereof! This phenomenon was never more glaring than in the recent contretemps in Louisville, an orchestra which, after a glorious period of making some of the finest recordings in the industry, has suffered years of financial struggle, including salary cuts, reductions of season length, etc.

Despite these rigors, the quality of the orchestra has not only held together, but actually improved. This state of affairs was, nevertheless, unacceptable to the new board chair and others in the community who bemoaned the need to continue to fund this remarkable community asset. Thus, as the inevitable deficits grew, it apparently occurred to those folks that the reason the fiscal challenges continued to mount might be that, despite all their previous efforts, they had somehow failed to downgrade the quality of the product! Finding new revenue sources, competent management, or imaginative marketing, was obviously not the solution, and, besides, it was too much trouble.

It was far more expeditious to find a way to ensure that this ensemble was brought down to a level they could fund without too much effort. Simply cut the size of the orchestra. Or at least cut the pay of musicians whose instruments were used less often than others. Yes, there was an idea! They would determine that 71 full-time musicians were unnecessary. Only 50 or so really played most of the time. The balance need not be paid a full-time salary for basically part-time work. And, of course, there is no reason to believe that a fifty percent reduction in income would result in those musicians looking for work somewhere other than Louisville. Moreover, even if that did occur, finding top quality musicians to replace them for a salary of \$15,000 per year shouldn't be a problem.

One might be tempted to think that maybe these folks really did understand the impact on the quality of the product but saw no other way to effectuate the savings in expense necessary to maintain any orchestra at all. But one would be wrong to come to that conclusion. When the musicians counter-proposed an offer that would have maintained all 71 full-time musicians *and* save the organization even *more* money than the reduction of size proposed by the board, the offer was rejected because it did not contain their two-tier idea. Clearly, to them, the only viable way to save the institution was to downgrade the quality of the very service it was in business to supply. Amazing!

This story now has an ending. The good news is that the board ultimately accepted a proposal from the union negotiating team that did *not* include a reduction in the size of the orchestra, nor a two-tiered, "A-B" type arrangement. The bad news, as has already been

reported, was that the musicians figuratively swallowed hard, held their noses, and ratified a contract that contains severe reductions in income, loss of sick and personal days, and the loss of important working condition protections. Once again, musicians were forced to pay dearly for simply wanting to maintain the artistic integrity of the ensemble, aka the product.

On Early Negotiations

Below is Lenny's response when someone asked his thoughts about a management request to begin negotiations earlier than normal.

Hi John,

Early negotiations don't always result in an early settlement, which is what your board chair really wants. Early settlements require a good deal of *trust* on both sides.

If an early settlement is to be achieved the union side must believe (*trust*) that an offer designated as "final" really is such, or very close to it. That is the only way they will be willing to take it to the orchestra and recommend ratification some months before the expiration of the previous contract—because they *trust* that it is as good as it's going to get even if they wait til the deadline. The orchestra has to *trust* that the committee is right about that and that there are good reasons not to drag it out til the end..

And, of course, the management has to *trust* that the committee will accept that an offer made some months before the deadline will, in fact, be as good as it's going to get, and that there is more to be gained in the relationship than is being given up by not waiting til the very end.

It's all a tall order I know, but there are some very good results to be gained from such a negotiation, if successful. The improvement in the relationship is immeasurable, the heightened morale in the orchestra and on the board, and even on a community which has grown tired of the "tri-annual fang-bearing." If you can make all parties understand the risks and the potential rewards, it's worth a shot.

Len

President's Report

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We live in a time that is hungry for leadership. To lead, you must inspire. That is what orchestras are designed to do. While our orchestras are inspiring our cities, they should be touted as models of excellence in a world that is all too often content with mediocrity. Where there is a negative image, we must change the message, repeat a positive message, and stay on our message: Orchestras are invaluable to our communities.

Serge Koussevitzky said "A city without a symphony is a city without a soul." A city should not tolerate a management or a board that would threaten to sell its soul into bankruptcy. Instead, the community should demand what it deserves: creative, positive stewardship of one of its most precious commodities—its own symphony orchestra.

Nominating Committee Announcement

In accordance with ICSOM bylaws, elections are to be held at the 2006 ICSOM Conference for the positions of Chair, Treasurer, Editor of *Senza Sordino*, and two Members at Large (all two-year terms), as well as for the third delegate to the 2007 AFM Convention. The duties of all ICSOM officers are spelled out in the ICSOM bylaws, which are available on the ICSOM website (www.icsom.org) and in the ICSOM delegate manual.

Consistent with the bylaws, the Governing board appointed a Nominating Committee in early March. The Nominating Committee may, at its discretion, nominate candidates for these positions. The Nominating Committee will consider all worthy candidates, including those incumbents intending to seek re-election. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Conference.

The Nominating Committee is now able to report on the plans of most of the incumbents. Chairperson Jan Gippo will not seek re-election. Treasurer Michael Moore and *Senza Sordino* Editor Richard Levine will stand for re-election to their respective positions. Member at Large Nancy Stutsman will not seek re-election. Member at Large Meredith Snow has not yet made a final decision as to whether she will run again.

Among the criteria applied by the Nominating Committee are candidates' personal abilities, experience, activity in ICSOM, compatibility with ICSOM policies and personnel, and willingness to serve. Balance of orchestra size and diversity on the Governing Board is also a consideration.

As part of its procedure, the Nominating Committee solicits from delegates and members of ICSOM orchestras any comments and criticisms, favorable or otherwise, regarding the incumbent officers and the dispatch of their duties. The committee also welcomes suggestions for other candidates for nomination for these positions. Any member of the committee may be contacted. All input to the nominating committee will be held in the strictest confidence. Committee members may be contacted by telephone or e-mail. The deadline for input is June 15.

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2006 ICSOM Conference August 16–19 in Nashville

The musicians of the Nashville Symphony and Local 257 will host the 2006 ICSOM Conference at the Hilton Nashville Downtown Hotel, in Nashville, Tennessee. The Conference will start the morning of Wednesday, August 16, and will conclude on Saturday, August 19. The draft agenda and information packet for the Conference have already been sent to delegates. Delegates and others planning to attend should make their hotel reservations by July 10. All attendees must register with Secretary Laura Ross. This year's Conference will be dedicated to Bill Roehl. Look for further information about the Conference in the next issue of *Senza Sordino*.

New Webmaster Appointed

After many years of dedicated service, Robert Levine has stepped down from his post as ICSOM webmaster. The ICSOM Governing Board wishes to express its great appreciation to Robert for the outstanding job he did for so long in that role and for his pioneering that established ICSOM's presence on the Internet. We all owe Robert a debt of gratitude for leading the way in this technology. In 1995, when our website was created, few nonprofit organizations had a Web presence; it was Robert who gave us ours.

The Governing Board is pleased to announce that Bruce Christensen of the Nashville Symphony has agreed to assume the duties of webmaster for ICSOM. His experience in this area will be a tremendous asset as we further enhance the ICSOM website in order to make it an even more vital resource for our member orchestras.

ICSOM's website is located at www.icsom.org. It is a valuable source of information for both delegates and other musicians. Among other resources to be found there are Web links to relevant organizations, Governing Board minutes, ICSOM bylaws and settlement bulletins, past issues of *Senza Sordino*, and instructions for subscribing to Orchestra-L, ICSOM's Internet mailing list.

The ICSOM web committee, chaired by ICSOM President Bruce Ridge, is exploring ways to expand and improve the ICSOM website and our presence on the Web. The web committee would like to hear from everyone who has suggestions and ideas that might prove helpful in this regard. Please send your suggestions to the web committee, in care of Bruce Ridge, at bruceridge@earthlink.net.

International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

Senza Sordino

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William E. Roehl and the Roehl Report

by Bradford D. Buckley

In 1990, I wrote the following letter to then-president of the AFM, J. Martin Emerson:

Dear Marty,

I am pleased to report that the officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA have accepted the amended version of the Roehl report as adopted by the International Executive Board on March 31, 1990. You and the IEB are to be commended for the continuation of the AFM's policy of openness and availability to its membership.

We look forward to implementing the report as soon as reasonably possible.

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

Bradford D. Buckley, Chairman ICSOM, on behalf of the Player Conferences' Council

The Roehl report mentioned in that letter is one of the most significant documents in the history of ICSOM, and indeed of the AFM. It called for the old AFM Symphony and Recording Departments to be replaced with much larger and better-funded entities, called the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) and the Electronic Media Services Division. Each division was to be administered by its own director, who would be an assistant to the AFM president, and advised by a steering committee consisting of rank-and-file player representatives. The first director of the SSD, appointed at the urging of the symphonic player conferences, was Lew Waldeck.

In addition, the Roehl report created the Player Conference Council (which consisted of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA), and directed the International Executive Board (IEB) to meet with the Council. This was very important since it created direct institutional access to the leadership of the AFM for rank-and-file symphonic and recording musicians

The Roehl report had two dramatic effects on how symphony musicians were represented by the AFM. It greatly increased the clout that symphonic issues had within the bureaucracy of the Federation, and most importantly it increased the ability of rank and file symphonic and recording musicians to advise and influence the leadership of our union on issues that are important to us.

The influence of this report on the AFM is still being seen today 16 years after the report was adopted by the IEB. Through their player conferences, symphonic musicians now have the ability to propose changes to AFM bylaws and to speak on the floor of the AFM Convention. The concept of the Player Conference Council worked so well that the AFM created a similar group for local union conferences as well. We now take for granted that the leadership of the AFM will seek the advice of the player conferences on all issues that affect the musicians who are members of those conferences. Before the Roehl report the union did not always work that way.

Given the importance of the Roehl report, who was Bill Roehl and how did he come to be associated with us? Carolyn Parks, a long-time ICSOM delegate for the Kennedy Center Orchestra and an ICSOM officer, found him through her AFL-CIO contacts while she was a member of the ICSOM Trade Division Committee. At the time Bill was working as a consultant to various unions. Carolyn called me and said, "You have to talk to this guy; he is terrific." When I talked to him on the phone, I quickly understood that he had insights and experience that we needed. The results of Carolyn's discovery speak for themselves in what was and continues to be accomplished as a result of the Roehl report.

For me and many others, Bill was both an inspiration and a mentor. He was a real union guy who never failed to stick up for working men and women and whose sense of humor never failed him no matter what the situation. I particularly remember the AFM convention when we were working to pass many of the AFM bylaws that symphonic musicians now take for granted. We were meeting stiff opposition. I and other ICSOM officers were frantically working the floor of the convention garnering votes. Bill got my attention, and when I came over to him he said, "Relax; your union delegates have the worst looking rugs of any union I've ever worked with." I roared with laughter, especially since a certain union president from New Jersey (now departed), who indeed had a truly bad toupee, was speaking to the convention at the time. I relaxed, and the rest was history. Bill's importance to ICSOM cannot be overstated. The Roehl report is arguably the single most important document in the history of ICSOM.

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Chairperson's Report

by Jan Gippo



Back in October 2005 I wrote the following: "We still have enemies....If you have had a sense that there has been progress, I believe you are right. There are some enlightened managers in the field, but very few. We are still beset by managers that have very little financial knowledge and some education in the arts, but few have the imagination or artistic understanding

to make the correct decisions for the future of our profession." I went on to talk about the language barrier between the financial/managerial/business side of symphony institutions and the artistic/preparation/performing side. When we talk to each other, each side has different assumptions of what is being said. When musicians say, "We want to be the best of the best," we mean that we want the orchestra to have the finest performers available. To us this means paying whatever it takes to obtain new players and to keep the players we already have. I believe that managers instead ask how to achieve the most excellence for the least amount. Neither position is incorrect at face value. Getting to an agreement that fully services both sides, however, seems to re-create the war between the Hatfields and the McCoys.

How can we break this continual logjam? I believe the only way is through communication. (Where have we heard that before?) Over and over again, everyone, including wives and little children, ask, "Can't you just get along, be nice, be reasonable, and come to an understanding?" How many times have negotiating committees been asked this question? It never seems to work. Why?

Primarily it may be because both parties don't come to the table ready to listen without an agenda. In some of the seminars that have been offered, the technique is called "active listening." During heated negotiations, some ideas are rejected even before the other side has completed their explanation. That is a different kind of active. It is not listening. Of course, if both sides don't listen, then everything is a battle. But for argument's sake, let's assume that each side does actively listen. What's the next step? Here is where, I believe, the vortex of *Sturm und Drang* lives and devours everyone not willing to learn and to endure the tedium that is sometimes a product of active listening.

When we speak, every image created in our story is replayed in the mind of the listener in the listeners' own language. These images and intellectual understanding reflect the assumptions we carry with us everyday. For an illustration, think about a Christian, a Jew, and a Muslim talking about religion, faith, prayer, food, and ultimate sacrifice. Each hears the other in the tongue of his own father. Nothing is ever settled. How to break this circle is the trial we all have to face. We must check out what is being said at every important juncture and discuss the implications of the proposal so that everyone understands exactly what is meant, what is implied, and what outcome is expected. During the entire time of this process, each side must actively listen and trust that the other side is trying to understand and truly wants to "get to yes."

(continued on page 5—see CHAIRPERSON)

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

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
Florida Philharmonic Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
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
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President's Report by Bruce Ridge



Is Anybody Reading This?

If you are a musician reading this issue of *Senza Sordino*, I hope you are doing so for reasons that extend beyond those 68 measures of rests you are counting. Sometimes I have a gnawing feeling that our managers are perusing these missives just as often as our musicians—which is great, and I welcome them to this latest edition. I just can't help but wish that I had a stronger sense that our musicians were reading them in greater numbers.

Writing these articles can be a little intimidating, knowing that copies will be sent to every colleague in ICSOM. As I write I can't help but think of the time when, as a rejected and forlorn teenager, I returned a "Dear John" note to the girl who had written it, with my marks for grammatical errors and a big red grade of C-. (Hard to imagine why she might have been breaking up with me, isn't it?) Fearing that what goes around just might someday actually come around, I am oddly comforted by the suspicion that these articles are not being read. But it is not at all comforting, and in fact rather disturbing, that ICSOM could possibly inspire apathy when it once inspired activism.

Maybe the battles were more romantic back then. Maybe the enemies were not so elusive that they were even difficult to identify. Probably there were those who worried about apathy then as well. I suppose that every generation produces indifference as well as revolution. Perhaps we have talked about the scourge of apathy so much that no one really cares about it anymore.

But at some point in every generation there comes a time to band together and to offer challenges of inspiration for a singular moment of opportunity. For orchestral musicians, and indeed artists as a whole, that moment of opportunity is before us. With the ubiquity of the Internet, our performances can travel farther than ever before. But to utilize this tool to its greatest extent, we must bond with our communities and "brand ourselves," if you will, as indispensable assets.

Recent weeks have seen positive news about our industry. Leaping out in bold and colorful print from the front page of the *New York Times* "Arts and Leisure" section were headlines proclaiming "Rumors of Classical Music's Demise Are Dead Wrong," and "Classical Music: This is the Golden Age." The *Philadelphia Business Journal* reported that the Kimmel Center, new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, generated three dollars for every dollar spent, creating a positive economic impact of \$321 million for the community over a three-year period. When the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* interviewed corporate business leaders, they understood that one of the ways to lure businesses to a community is to demonstrate "the quality-of-life improvement that the arts bring." One business leader went further: "Big companies have recognized the value of the arts. It's not necessarily philanthropic in the purest sense, it's (continued on page 10—see ARE YOU READING THIS?)

Secretary's Report by Laura Ross



Y'All Come to Nashville

There are a few times each year when I find myself trying to keep my head above water—obviously, the annual ICSOM conference is one of those times. Another one is during the preparation for the Conference, which began in May. The packets are prepared and mailed out. Then I wait. And wait.

While I wait, I begin updating the delegate manual (which every delegate *will* bring to the conference for updates and reference). I contact those who contribute reports to the manual and begin lighting fires under the ICSOM officers to submit their written reports.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank my dear friend Tom Hall, who retires from the Chicago Symphony this month, for his wonderful training. I don't know that I'll ever be as organized as Tom, but I will continue to give it a shot. Overseeing the delegate manual was once largely his "baby"—though with ICSOM secretary assistance—and complete responsibility for the manual was passed on to me about a year after I took office.

Regarding the officer reports, the Governing Board decided it made much more sense if we didn't inundate the delegates with reports at the conference. Since our reports were about our activities on ICSOM's behalf for the entire year, and because we didn't want to have to go into mind-numbing details at the conference, we decided two years ago that we would send the officer reports to the delegates before the conference so they could be read and digested before the conference. Additional reports, if ready, are also distributed. This way, if there are any questions or comments, delegates can be prepared to discuss the various reports.

Okay, so I'm still waiting, but now I'm calling the Conference hotel pretty frequently, talking to the Conference coordinator, contacting Members At Large (MALs), and getting nervous (along with the ICSOM treasurer) because delegates haven't sent me their registration forms or made their reservations, which could affect our quotas and cost. I am also revising agendas and attendance lists.

Plus, this year, the Conference is of special importance to me—my orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, is hosting the Conference. We are very proud that the ICSOM Conference mixer will be the first event held in our new Schermerhorn Symphony Center, which opens to the public three weeks later on September 9. The mixer will be held on stage in Laura Turner Hall. I have been visiting the hall since the site was originally a fire station and it's everything they promised. In addition, the Conference is filled with wonderful presentations—Trish Polach, an attorney from AFM Counsel Bredhoff & Kaiser, will give us a nuts-and-bolts explanation of bankruptcy. Trish will join Len Leibowitz to discuss musician board membership as it relates to the new federal Sarbanes-Oxley legislation. Len will join his lovely wife Peggy for an entire afternoon presentation and workshop. (continued on page 5—see SECRETARY)

Treasurer's Report by Michael Moore



ICSOM's Financial Outlook Healthy

As the current fiscal year comes to an end, I've had the opportunity to give ICSOM a financial checkup. I'm happy to say ICSOM passed the physical!

The past year has seen some good developments. We now have a high-yield money market account where we can park money temporarily in the same bank as ICSOM's active accounts. Transfers can be made immediately, while maximizing our interest.

We have also collected all outstanding Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) loan funds, so the ERF has grown to an historic high of \$268,000. An orchestra can now borrow up to \$40,000 if needed (up from \$34,000 just a year and a half ago). This has been made possible by the two dollars per individual that is being devoted to the ERF each year, combined with the higher interest rates.

Investment appreciation and interest during last year totaled \$12,074 (over 5% of our total income). While our money market account will be decimated by the 2006 Conference and other expenses we will incur before dues start coming in, ICSOM is in excellent financial shape. The one dollar per year automatic dues increase has proved adequate to counter the effects of rising costs.

Thank you for writing that check each year, enabling ICSOM able to continue serving you and our art form/industry while remaining in the black!

A detailed annual financial report will be given to each orchestra's delegate at the 2006 ICSOM Conference.

Spending Highlights

Legal fees, including contributions from musicians through ICSOM to the Leibowitz Fund	\$38,200
Travel for the Chair, President and other Governing Board members	\$23,258
2005 Conference expenses	\$20,283
Printing and mailing <i>Senza Sordinos</i> & bulletins	\$13,532
The ICSOM Directory	\$12,205
Honoraria to officers and others	\$12,150
Transfer to the ERF	\$8,292
Minority scholarships through Sphinx program	\$4,500
Internet and Orchestra-L	\$2,876
Teleconferencing and telephone	\$2,706

Snapshot of Assets

Emergency Relief Fund balance (5/31/06)	\$268,225
New high-yield money market account	\$111,623
Corpus of AGE Mendelson Fund (interest subsidizes minority scholarships)	\$31,907
Remaining reserves in AGE general account	\$12,687
Checking account balances (6/23/06)	\$10,243

2006 ICSOM Conference August 16–19 in Nashville

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Secretary

(continued from page 3)

Public relations consultant Barbara Haig and AFM SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn are also guest speakers, along with some of our member orchestras that have faced tough times this year. Some of their issues will be directly related to resolutions under consideration on the final day of the Conference. Last year's MAL/delegate luncheon was so successful that we will repeat it on Saturday. We continue to try to identify ways to improve the Conference, and this summer we will have breakout sessions to deal with individual topics in smaller groups. The Conference will be dedicated to Bill Roehl, the man responsible for devising the structure within the AFM that officially established the Symphonic Services Division and Electronic Media Division and their relationships with the representative Player Committees. And finally, we will say thanks to ICSOM Chair Jan Gippo as he steps down after four years of service.

But again, I'm still waiting, getting nervous, and now hearing that orchestras are thinking about not attending. So far this year I am aware of two orchestras that will be on tour and not attending the Conference—they have a legitimate excuse. Some delegates can't attend but have alternates who will attend in their place—this is how it should be handled. However, I'm also hearing from delegates who, for whatever reason, cannot attend the Conference and no one from their orchestra seems remotely interested in attending the Conference. This saddens me greatly. I remember my very first conference (granted it was a ROPA Conference, not an ICSOM Conference) but I cannot begin to express the impact it had on me.

My orchestra was in the sixth month of a major shutdown and bankruptcy. The delegates I met and the stories I heard and shared were just the inspiration I needed to become more involved in my own orchestra's internal workings as well as finding a calling to serve on a larger scale. We needed support and we found it. Every year I met more people, heard more stories, shared in the shenanigans of our managers, commiserated with my colleagues, and learned as much as I could about labor law, organizing, negotiating and all the other topics on the conference agenda. I've been attending ROPA and ICSOM Conferences for 18 years and continue to learn.

Every time I meet new delegates, I think how lucky they are to be able to attend something as important as an ICSOM Conference for the very first time. I truly hope that those orchestras who are having problems finding a delegate or an alternate delegate to attend the Conference will redouble their efforts to find someone. What a shame it would be that something this important would be missed because ICSOM has become little more to your orchestra than something that provides a roster of members, a newsletter every once in a while and requires the payment of dues. ICSOM is so much more than that and every orchestra has a responsibility to assure that this generation and the next generation of musicians, the caretakers of your orchestra when you are gone, are educated. ICSOM is not just for the delegates; it's for all our members. This is why we now travel from city to city sharing our message with all our colleagues.

The 2007 Conference will be co-hosted by the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. I hope there are other orchestras who will consider bidding for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 conferences this summer. And to all of you, I hope if you're in the vicinity of Nashville from August 16–19, you'll drop by the ICSOM Conference at the Hilton Downtown Hotel, next door to the new home of the Nashville Symphony.

Chairperson

(continued from page 2)

If just these two techniques, and a great serving of trust, were agreed to at the beginning of talks, I believe that the process would be a little easier.

But what of the way we treat our fellow colleagues? We see management personnel sometimes doing a very poor job, but never do we see the conductor or CEO come to us and complain about the performance of that staff member. Yet after individuals have complained to a music director or management about their colleagues (and in some cases asked that they be dismissed), we believe we can still go into collective bargaining and demand bigger checks and better conditions for everyone. If collective bargaining means anything it means solidarity! We have worked hard, each of us, to win an audition and have a career. We have won because we were a stone wall against the oppressions of egomaniacal conductors who wanted to fire musicians on the spot, without cause or due process. What is different if a musician asks management to go after a musician? We become the egomaniac, the artistic police; and someday each of us will be facing a younger player.

Musicians also need to find a way to talk among ourselves that is not adversarial, but rather instructive and helpful. There is no need to be judgmental, just fair and honest. We need to be able to hear about ourselves fairly and honestly. We cannot stand alone, and 100 musicians can't have sweetheart deals with management. We work as an ensemble, and we must live as an ensemble. Great ensembles are bonded together, understanding that everyone is in the collective and everyone is in each part; each individual is the most important part.

The Roehl Report As Adopted by the International Executive Committee

1. The title of the Symphony Department shall be changed to the Symphonic Services Division.
2. The Administrator of the Symphony Department and operating head of the Orchestra Services Program shall serve as Director of the Symphonic Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President, and to be designated by the President as Assistant to the President.
3. A Symphonic Steering Committee, consisting of the principle officers of ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA, shall be established. This committee shall serve as the advisory committee to the Symphonic Services Division.
4. The title of the Recording Department shall be renamed the Electronic Media Services Division. The administrator of the Recording Department shall serve as Director of the Electronic Media Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President, and to be designated by the President as Assistant to the President.
5. An Electronic Media steering Committee shall be established, consisting of three RMA representatives to be determined in consultation with that conference, plus one electronic media representative from the Symphonic conferences. This committee shall serve as the advisory committee to the Electronic Media Services Division.
6. The name of the Summit Committee shall be changed to the Player Conference Council, maintaining the present composition of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA.
7. The Player Conference Council shall meet with the International Executive Board at a time and place mutually agreed upon. The purpose of the meetings shall be to exchange information and ideas on appropriate subjects regarding the good and welfare of the American Federation of Musicians.
8. The existing AFM structure Committee shall continue its research into structural and operational improvements within the AFM, possibly including the submission of a detailed plan for a Trade Division.
9. The AFM President shall serve as an ex officio member of all the committees referenced above, and any meetings of the committees involving expenditure of Federation Funds shall take place only with the prior approval of the office of the AFM President.

William E. Roehl July 11, 1924–November 29, 2005

After service in the Army Air Corp in World War II, Bill attended the University of Tennessee on the GI Bill and continued his involvement in the labor movement. He subsequently became a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union, the Newspaper Guild, and AFL-CIO Local 3017. He served at numerous levels of union functions, as a Local union steward, council delegate, pension trustee, and local union president. For five years prior to the merger of the AFL-CIO he was a member of the CIO Southern Organizing Committee, working among other capacities as an organizer of non-union trucking companies (dangerous work in the South in the 1950s, especially since he often worked with African American trade unionists). After the merger of the AFL and the CIO he became a regional representative of the AFL-CIO, rising to become the Assistant National Director of the AFL-CIO Department of Organization and Field services. He left the AFL-CIO in 1985 and founded Union Consultant Service.

A supporter of the performing arts, while living in Knoxville Bill supported the Knoxville Symphony and the Knoxville Arts Center, among other activities. While living in the Washington, DC area, he financed the orchestra pit at the Olney Theatre Center and produced several plays. He was executive producer for the Center's Potomac Theater Festival in 2002, and he established the tradition of having individuals sponsor productions. He also supported the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Arena Stage, and the Shakespeare Theatre.

Jim Petosa, artistic director of the Olney Theater, said that Bill had a profound belief in the need for a vibrant artistic culture. "He also believed that artists should have a reasonable quality of life," Petosa said. "During the many years of the development of Olney Theatre Center, Bill was a trusted and generous counselor and a man who could always be trusted to provide clear insight and perspective on the most confounding challenges."

Bill is survived by his wife, Lillian Roehl, of Silver Spring, Maryland.



William E. Roehl, author of the Roehl report.

The Roehl Report Timeline

Events Leading up to the Roehl Report

1987

The ICSOM Conference adopts a resolution calling for the appointment of a structure committee to consider options for possible restructuring of the player conferences in relation to the International AFM and local unions.

ICSOM legal counsel Leonard Leibowitz prepares the Structure Committee report in July 1988. The members of the Structure Committee are:

Irving Segall, Chair (Philadelphia Orchestra)
 Larry Bocaner (National Symphony)
 James Clute (Minnesota Orchestra)
 John DeJarnatt (Seattle Symphony)
 Tom Hemphill (San Francisco Symphony)
 Carolyn Parks (Kennedy Center Orchestra)
 Katherine White (Denver Symphony)
 Melanie Burrell (*ex officio*, as ICSOM chairperson)

1988

The ICSOM Conference passes a motion establishing the Trade Division Committee composed of representatives of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, RMA and the AFM President.

The Trade Division Committee is officially appointed in September 1988. The Trade Division Committee's charge is to consider ways in which trade division structures in other unions might be applicable to the AFM, or if not found to be applicable, to recommend changes that would strengthen the player conferences status within the AFM.

The members of the Trade Division Committee are:

Dennis Dreith, RMA President
 Chris Durham, ROPA Governing Board Member at Large
 Rosemary Estes, ROPA President
 Tom Hall, ICSOM
 Carolyn Parks, ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large
 Evelyne Robitaille, OCSM First Vice-Chairman
 Steve Sprague, Executive Assistant to the AFM President
 Richard Q. Totusek, AFM International Executive Board
 John Trembath, OCSM Chairman

1989

Bill Roehl is retained to advise the Trade Division Committee in February 1989. He is given materials addressing a full range of issues pertaining to the player conferences and reflecting a series of universal concerns, including:

- A more effective and cost-effective relationship between the player conferences and the AFM, and between orchestra and recording musicians and their local unions
- A more institutionalized access to the AFM and the International Executive Board
- More status within the AFM
- More input, up to and possibly including supervisory power over a fully staffed Symphony and Recording Department

Tom Hall and Carolyn Parks report on the activities of the Trade Division Committee at the annual ICSOM Conference.

1990

The Roehl report is adopted by the International Executive Board on March 31, 1990.

The 2006 ICSOM Conference is dedicated to William E. Roehl.

This issue's cover story as well as the accompanying articles about Bill Roehl and the Roehl report were submitted by Brad Buckley, ICSOM Chairman Emeritus.

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.

Orchestra Newslets

Minnesota Orchestra's ICSOM delegate, librarian Paul Gunther, was recently named the administrator of ICSOM's mailing lists. Paul reports that the Minnesota Orchestra will tour European summer festivals at the end of August. Because of the tour, this may be the first ICSOM Conference that will see no delegate from the Minnesota Orchestra in attendance. Another consequence of the August tour will be five consecutive vacation weeks during June and July for the Minnesota musicians. (That is five weeks to agonize over balancing practice with time off and family travel.) Returning in September, the usual post-tour letdown will be interrupted by an immediate subscription season opening. Simultaneously, the Minnesota musicians must gear up for contract negotiations. One subject into which they have been delving rather thoroughly is the area of long-term disability (LTD) insurance. An *ad hoc* musicians' committee, which has been researching the topic, has initiated formal talks with management about ways to improve coverage and benefits. They hope to have a report on LTD for ICSOM before too long.

Longtime delegate for the Saint. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Leslie Shank, will be stepping down from that post this year. Many thanks to Leslie for her dedication to ICSOM. She will chair the newly elected orchestra committee, which begins contract negotiations this fall. ICSOM welcomes Saint Paul's new delegate, Earl Yowell.

Another loss to our ranks is Helen Reich from the Milwaukee Symphony. Thanks to Helen for her many years of service to ICSOM as her orchestra's delegate. Now who will schedule those viola dinners at ICSOM Conferences? Alternate and ever-present delegate Robert Levine reports that the Milwaukee Symphony season began with concessionary bargaining that resulted in a cut from 43 to 39 weeks. Fortunately, things began to improve after that. Management appears to have made significant progress over the season in meeting the income goals set in their three-year recapitalization plan, especially in the area of ticket sales. Armed with a new marketing director (Stephen Duncan, who came from St. Louis), the orchestra saw an improvement in single-ticket sales, noticeable even from the stage, and more sold-out concerts than they'd had for many years. In October the MSO became the first American orchestra to make previously unreleased recordings available for sale on iTunes. So far it has not proven to be a financial windfall either for the MSO or the musicians, but it did garner some very good local and national press. They are continuing to make new material available online and are working on their own online store as well.

Alternate delegate Cathy Payne from the San Francisco Symphony writes that the SFS is launching its new multi-media project, "Keeping Score," with three one-hour documentaries that will be broadcast on PBS this November. The first broadcast examines Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, and the second and third explore Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. Additionally, two live concert programs of the featured works will be broadcast on high definition channels. The goal of this project is to make classical music less intimidating for younger as well as more mature audiences. There is a companion radio series for the project

that will be broadcast on public radio (eight one-hour shows entitled "The MTT Files"). An interactive website where users can explore the content of the TV and radio shows more deeply will enhance the audience experience for the series. DVDs of the documentaries and the concert live capture will be released internationally following the broadcasts. Perhaps most importantly, the SFS Administration has created an ambitious educational program involving teachers and students across the country. The plan is to involve 500 teachers and 75,000 students by using music to teach the core curriculum. This is a five-year, \$23 million dollar project. The SFS Local Oversight Committee and the SFS Local Internet Oversight Committee both thank AFM SSD Symphonic Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark for her tireless devotion in helping these projects come to fruition.

This September the SFS will play three concerts at the Lucerne Festival, marking the first year of a three-year residency. The final concert of this year's festival will be Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, which is the latest live recording in the Mahler series they have recorded under the Limited Pressing Agreement. The Mahler recordings will be available for download this fall. Additionally, a Lemony Snicket recording of "The Composer is Dead" (an SFS commission by living composer Nathaniel Stookey) will be recorded this summer under the Sound Recording Labor Agreement and will be released with an illustrated book by Harper Collins.

The Utah Symphony issued a new recording entitled *Symphonic Dances*, featuring composers Leonard Bernstein, Sergei Rachmaninov, and Gabriela Lena, according to delegate Lynn Rosen. The recording was intended to promote the symphony's European tour in April of 2005, but production was halted when Dorian records filed for bankruptcy. Local 104 President Erich Graf suggested that management purchase the original recordings so they would not be lost. Eventually Reference Recordings released the limited pressing CD early in 2006.

Members of Utah's orchestra and artistic advisory committees (spurred on by ICSOM alternate delegate Claudia Norton) initiated a music director review questionnaire to be presented to management. This was largely in response to the music director's last renewal, for which neither musicians nor board members were consulted.

The musicians of the Honolulu Symphony have just completed their second season of a 20% pay cut. According to Honolulu delegate Steve Flanter, the reduced wages have led to an increase in resignations and extended leaves of absence among musicians. Despite the shrinking of the budget allowed by the pay cut, the Symphony is expecting to post a season shortfall of at least \$1.5 million due to precipitous declines in ticket sales and fundraising, lack of full-time executive leadership, and a weak board of directors. However, a new leadership team, including incoming Executive Director Tom Gulick (replacing Steve Bloom, who left in the spring of 2005) and a new board chair, has initiated a fundraising campaign both to meet short-term essential cash needs and to match a \$4 million endowment allocation from the Hawai'i State Legislature. While financial terms for the 2006-07 season are yet to be negotiated (the are part of a

contract reopener), the Honolulu musicians expect compensation to be restored to the pre-cut level (adjusted for cost of living).

In September 2005 the Los Angeles Philharmonic ratified a three-year contract with significant pay increases and launched a \$100 million endowment campaign. After several initial negotiations directly with iTunes, Deutsche Grammophon, who owns Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen's recording contract, scooped them. The LA Phil has produced four live recordings now available for download on iTunes through DG: two Beethoven concerts (including the Lutoslawski *Fourth Symphony* and a newly commissioned work by Andras Hillborg), and two concerts from their Minimalist Jukebox Series. They also recorded *Rite of Spring* and *Miraculous Mandarin* for a CD release under the new, almost ratified, Live Recording Agreement. Governing Board member and ICSOM delegate Meredith Snow sends her orchestra's many thanks and best wishes to retirees Mitch Peters (timpani), Ralph Sauer (principal trombone), and Jeff Reynolds (bass trombone). All three have had long and distinguished careers with the LA Phil. Their absence will be sorely felt.

These stories were submitted by ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large and Los Angeles Philharmonic violist Meredith Snow. Newslets were prepared with the help of each orchestra's ICSOM delegate.

The Not-So-OK-Corral Mends Its Fences

by Christian Woehr, St. Louis Symphony

Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra Picks Itself Up Out of the Dust

Surrounded, bleeding heavily from multiple wounds, taking shots from management, media, local union, labor board, and even each other, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra had a rough few months last season. This short progress report on the SLSO's recovery is as much a testament to the seemingly boundless optimism and good will of the musicians of this orchestra as it is to the first aid efforts of its medic/musicians council. And the report is: the wounds are healing, but the remaining bullets are being counted.

Part of this season's healing was in the form of two so-called "administrative services". These were mandatory, scheduled, on-stage events, without instruments, where the orchestra and administrative staff and even Board members sat in groups at round, pencil-and-paper covered tables filling the stage, while facilitator Paul Boulian walked us through communication exercises designed to "move us forward." Although that may sound hideous to someone on the outside (as well as a number of us on the inside), these collectively run Administrative Services were actually rather interesting and strangely helpful events. The biggest plus was probably in the mixing of orchestra, staff and board members (although curmudgeons like myself did tend to clump together). The services were made possible by the existence of nearly three dozen services in the SLSO schedule that were unused due to cutbacks of concerts and staff. (As the orchestra shrinks in its day-to-day musical operations, it leaves more time for meetings). These administrative services will continue in the coming season, even as our unused service count diminishes under the onslaught of a new, high-energy music director.

The Musicians Council (the SLSO's large orchestra committee/artistic committee/SWAT team) spent much of its efforts this year on the relationship with St. Louis Local 2-197, which is undoubtedly at an all-time low. After our application to the AFM Orchestra Services Program, ICSOM and the AFM leapt into the saddle and rode into town. With the ICSOM marshals posse keeping the peace, the judges of the International Executive Board (IEB), under the direction of Head Judge Tom Lee, passed a compromise sentence (thanks in no small part to Brad Buckley, Council chair) of bringing in Bill Moriarity (past president of Local 802) to act as "Symphonic Representative" in our dealings with the officers and board of Local 2-197. Bill's wonderful experience, wisdom, and level headedness have already proven themselves invaluable. His relocation to St. Louis (his old hometown) couldn't have come at a better time for us all. Head Judge Tom Lee, and IEB Judge Joe Parente even rode into town armed with pizza, to talk to the orchestra, along with Local 2-197 President Vicki Smolik, Bill Moriarity, and the Orchestra Council, all present for a nice group hug.

As far as the future is concerned, the SLSO is in pretty good shape financially, with a large endowment and a management which always has its eye on the bottom line. (We are, surprisingly, finally replacing our 35-year old chairs, which were beginning to collapse under our large Missouri bottoms). The latest dismal CBA expires in September 2008. The nine-year wage freeze/cut is wearing thin on this ordinarily friendly group of folks. Retirees are showing more of a tendency to slink quietly away into the brush without plaques and parties. Young eager fighters are joining the Musicians Council. There may be other ricochets from the last gun battle that we haven't heard zing by our ears. Stay tuned for future episodes.

This is an update to the cover story, "High Noon at the Not-So-OK Corral," from the June 2005 issue of Senza Sordino. Chris Woehr is the ICSOM delegate of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Are You Reading This?

(continued from page 3)

'how does it work for both of us.' " The *New-Statesman* in England reported that "live music and major events are flourishing more than ever." We have read of successes in Colorado, balanced budgets in Dallas, and the impending opening of a beautiful new hall in Nashville.

Yet somehow, in spite of all of this, we continue to hear negative messages about symphony orchestras, messages that question their relevancy, sustainability, and inherent value to a city. These negative messages have been blindly promulgated for years, and yet classical music continues to exist, thrive, and inspire. In 1970, United Press International published an article that proclaimed "25 Symphonies Doomed to Die." One the orchestras alleged to be on its death bed at the time was the very same Dallas Symphony that just announced its third consecutive year of balanced budgets.

The arts and symphonic music are flourishing in so many communities across our nation, educating our children and improving the quality of life in our cities—even for those who don't attend orchestral concerts. In communities where the arts aren't thriving, they should be. Those communities are missing their chance to elevate the name of their beautiful city, to promote business, and to engage in the most noble and romantic of ideas—the elevation of the human spirit. Let us all work together to spread this message far and

wide. Through a stronger ICSOM, one that promotes our shared view of the arts and our communities, we can improve the communication that has linked our orchestras with their successes for many years.

And I suppose that brings me around to the point: ICSOM and all of its members need you to participate in this process. We need every musician, in every orchestra, reading and discussing the ideas that are before us. We need every ICSOM orchestra represented at the annual ICSOM Conference, and we need every delegate to inform and to help lead their orchestras. We need these things not only to fight for our mere existence, but also to fight for what we can become. Despite all of our achievements, there is so much more we can do and to which we can aspire. Opportunity awaits, but not where any orchestra, musician, or community can journey alone.

So, if you've actually made it to the end of this article, let me know. Or, better yet, let one of your colleagues in your orchestra know. And if by chance you didn't make it all the way through, I understand. I don't take it personally. I probably owe many of you a return phone call or an email anyway. But if you are enjoying reading this edition of *Senza Sordino*, I encourage you also to read Julie Ayer's great book, *More Than Meets the Ear*, on the 40-year history of ICSOM. As we stand at this moment of opportunity for the arts, and as we once again band together, let us wonder what they will write of us in 40 years. We hope that they will be proclaiming that symphonic music still thrives, due in no small part to the actions we will take over these next few years.

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ICSOM, Live from Music City USA

by Laura Ross, ICSOM Secretary

This year's ICSOM Conference was held at the Downtown Nashville Hilton in Music City USA (Nashville, Tennessee) from August 16 through 19, just one block away from both the Schermerhorn Symphony Center and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. The Conference was dedicated to Bill Roehl, the visionary trade unionist who formulated the current structure of the AFM, including the Player Conferences and the establishment of the Symphonic Services Division and the Electronic Media Division.

Numerous Nashville Symphony musicians assisted during the Conference and attended many of the sessions. ICSOM delegates and officers joined twenty NSO musicians, officers and staff of the AFM and its locals, Nashville Symphony staff, and guests at the Wednesday evening mixer held at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. The Nashville Association of Musicians, Local 257 and the Nashville Symphony hosted a sit-down dinner for 120, while the Nashville Symphony Players' Assembly provided the jazz trio that performed during the dinner, which was the first one served in the new facility. The evening began with guided tours of the facility and the auditorium, Laura Turner Hall. Particularly impressive was the demonstration of the floor conversion from raked seating to a flat floor suitable for cabaret seating. [The floor conversion mechanism also worked well during Nashville Symphony's opening weekend. See the report of the opening on page 5. —Ed.]

Conference presentations included a primer on bankruptcy law by Patricia Polach of Bredhoff and Kaiser (AFM General Counsel). AFM SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn spoke about assessing and applying power during negotiations. Ms. Polach and ICSOM Counsel Len Leibowitz discussed the potential application of the Sarbanes-Oxley federal legislation on orchestra boards. Barbara Haig, who was recently retained by the AFM to assist locals and orchestras, gave an informative talk about public relations. ICSOM Electronic Media Committee Chair Bill Foster spoke about the recently ratified Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Live Recording Agreement. There were addresses by AFM and Player Conference officers and staff. Brad

Buckley, Saint Louis Symphony contrabassoonist and ICSOM chairperson *emeritus*, joined AFM Symphonic Representative Bill Moriarity to discuss the Saint Louis Symphony musicians' relationship with their Local 2-197. Daryl Johnson spoke about the Louisville Symphony's bankruptcy threats and their recent settlement, and Steve Flanter and Ken Hafner spoke about the Honolulu Symphony's most recent problems.

This year's Conference attempted to facilitate more dialogue among delegates. Delegates participated in breakout sessions on negotiations and talked more informally during what is becoming a traditional luncheon with their assigned Governing Board members at large. Len and Peggy Leibowitz's workshop on arbitrator's rules of contract interpretation also allowed for additional discussion in smaller groups, as delegates, guests, and local officers played the roles of musician and manager groups for closing arguments in a mock arbitration.

A resolution honoring recently departed labor activist Richard Totusek was presented to his wife, Joan, who was in attendance. Additional resolutions offered support to the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra musicians and the *Orquesta Filarmonica* and *Teatro Municipal* employees in Santiago, Chile, and for the battle Local 802 and its president David Lennon are waging to ban the use of the Virtual Orchestra Machine to replace live music. There was also a resolution recommending AFM bylaw changes. Commendations were presented to outgoing ICSOM Chairman Jan Gippo and Member at Large Nancy Stutsman for their service on the ICSOM Governing Board. ICSOM delegates Michael Moore (Atlanta Symphony) and David Angus (Rochester Philharmonic) were also recognized for their long years of ICSOM service.

There was a changing of the guard as Jan Gippo stepped down as ICSOM chairperson after four years in that post. ICSOM president and North Carolina Symphony bassist Bruce Ridge was elected by acclamation as ICSOM's tenth chairperson. After a year-long absence from the Governing Board, Brian Rood, trumpeter with the Kansas City Symphony, was elected president, the same post he previously held. Re-elected to their current positions were Treasurer Michael Moore (Atlanta Symphony), *Senza Sordino* Editor Richard Levine (San Diego Symphony), and Member at Large Meredith Snow (Los Angeles Philharmonic), who was also elected to the position of AFM convention delegate. Minnesota Orchestra librarian Paul Gunther was elected as a new member at large, replacing Nancy Stutsman of the Kennedy Center Orchestra.

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Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



Lessons from Nashville

In the few moments during the ICSOM Conference that did not find me in meetings, I was able to sneak away from the hotel and venture into the streets of Nashville. This was my first visit to this city, and I was eager to hear as much music as I could in the clubs that line Nashville's Broadway. I had learned and played a lot of this music when I was growing up, especially in Southside Virginia. I knew that Bob Dylan had come here to record three classic albums and to work with Johnny Cash. I knew that I was walking past bars where Willie Nelson had bought drinks for Patsy Cline. These streets veritably drip with music, with a band in every bar. Those who weren't booked were playing on the street. There were well-groomed boys in suits and toothless blues guitar players who seemed as though they could have been sent by central casting. And all of these people could play! It was exhilarating to see and hear a city so alive with music.

As I made my way back to the downtown Hilton where the Conference was being held, I was stunned for a moment when I looked through an alley-way to see the magnificent Schermerhorn Symphony Center—a gleaming building against the night sky, just weeks from opening. The delegates to the Conference had already received a tour, and many of us were convinced that it is one of the most impressive halls we have ever visited. Beautifully appointed in every way, it has delicate features and just about every amenity imaginable to enhance the performance environment for the musicians.

As I stood there looking through that alley at the grand building, at first it seemed to clash with the music from the bars of Broadway. But then, I realized that the "City of Music" was only further investing in its heritage. These blocks of downtown Nashville have been revitalized with music. Reveling in the history of the Ryman Auditorium (the original Grand Ole Opry) and the street of dreams for songwriters of all styles, it makes perfect sense that Music City USA would build such a beautiful monument to its symphony orchestra. This downtown revitalization is fantastic. The arena where the Nashville Predators play is right next to the Country Music Hall of Fame, which is across from the beautiful downtown Hilton, and now the block is completed by the \$120 million home for the Nashville Symphony.

We must remember the history of this organization. Just 18 years ago the Nashville Symphony was in bankruptcy, facing dissolution. Then the citizens of Nashville came to the assistance of this city's own orchestra. There are too many heroes in this story to mention them all, but among them were the symphony's great benefactor, Martha Ingram, Local 257's legendary President Harold Bradley (the newest member of the Country Music Hall of Fame) and other country legends, and, most importantly, the musicians of the Nashville Symphony themselves. These musicians believed in their orchestra and in their community. They worked to bring together a management

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International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

A Player Conference of the American Federation of Musicians
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Orchestras

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
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The Cleveland Orchestra
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National Symphony Orchestra
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
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Secretary's Report by Laura Ross



So, ICSOM, what have you done for me lately?

As painful as it is for me to say, I began to despair about the relevancy of ICSOM these past few years based on the actions of some of our own orchestras. I have despaired about the changing attitudes of our society, when the question "What can I do for you to make your life better?" is rarely asked anymore. Instead, it's always about "ME" and the question has changed to "What do I need to do to make things better for me?" Of course this question totally disregards any impact individual or collective actions might have upon others.

I'm happy to report that I have been re-energized following the recent ICSOM Conference. We have new Governing Board members, and new leadership that cares deeply about countering the negative message that is being touted in newspapers around the globe. The Governing Board is an extremely diverse group of individuals, and the orchestras they represent are also diverse. We have it all—top ten orchestras, top twenty orchestras, and mid-level orchestras—North Carolina, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Nashville, Atlanta, San Diego, Dallas, and Minnesota. We are all concerned about serving the needs of all our member orchestras.

ICSOM was formed because orchestras knew that they would be stronger if they stood together. Look at what we accomplished!

We became acknowledged leaders in the orchestral industry thanks to the information we collected and disseminated over more than 40 years. At the ICSOM Conference recently convened in Nashville, in response to a question by Houston delegate Eric Arbiter, Brad Buckley listed many accomplishments that are directly due to ICSOM. Some of these accomplishments were made on our own, others through petitions to the AFM. Eric has listed them in his article elsewhere in this issue, so I won't repeat them here. *[The list starts on page 11. —Ed.]* I would, however, add to that list:

- Additional information exchange that has been established thanks to Orchestra-L and Delegate-L
- Access to legal advice—Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel, Len Leibowitz, need I say more?
- Opportunities for negotiating orchestras to conference with each other and share ideas, strategies, and information during the critical period during negotiations

And lest I forget the most important ICSOM event for your orchestra, there is the annual ICSOM Conference, when industry leaders instruct and advise delegates on the current issues our field faces, including negotiations, contract administration, labor history, public relations, and legislation, just a few of the topics covered each year. The Conference is probably the single most important chance

orchestras have to get together and share ideas and information to allow us to move forward together.

Your delegates have indicated that ICSOM needs to combat the negative rhetoric about our industry. We plan to work hard to use positive messages about our industry to counter the false images being painted in the media by our institutional spokespersons with the hope that the public will realize that, more than 100 years later, we're *still* thriving and the audiences are *still* coming.

But we can't do this without you. We must all stop allowing managers to undercut our national agreements. We must be more proactive in assuring that the actions of our orchestras do not have a negative impact on our colleagues. You'd think it was a "no brainer" but it appears we must educate our constituents on the ideals and merits of solidarity. We must learn from our mistakes and move forward, stronger in the knowledge of what we must not do in the future.

It's not all bad news. Positive things are happening all across this country and there is no good reason for orchestras to "cave" under pressure from management when their arguments cannot be justified.



Photo by Michael Morre

Chicago Symphony delegate Rachel Goldstein argues her case before the mock arbitration panel of judges at the ICSOM Conference.

Conference

(continued from page 1)

In his speech to the delegates, Ridge called on orchestra institutions to change their negative rhetoric and to "mold it into a positive message that we can spread to our constituencies and their communities." He called upon the American Symphony Orchestra League to be a "true advocate for our orchestras." In the opinion of many, there are ample examples of orchestras that are thriving, and Nashville's Conference highlighted and reinforced that sentiment.

Next summer's Conference will be co-hosted by the Minnesota Orchestra and The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and will be held at the Millennium Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Orchestra Newslets

Compiled by James Nickel, Member at Large

On September 19, the **Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra** signed their new music director, David Robertson, to a contract extension going through 2010. As part of the artistic growth required in Robertson's agreement, the SLSO management has made a commitment to a continuing series of small ensemble concerts featuring new music or crossover venues, to continued annual returns to Carnegie Hall, and to an expanded educational presence both locally and nationally

The **Atlanta Symphony** made news recently with the announcement that their classical ticket sales grew 6% during the 2005-06 season. Even more impressively, single ticket sales for classical programs jumped 25%. Delegate Michael Moore reports that the ASO began early contract negotiations in October, since CEO Vulgamore is going on Sabbatical in January. The ASO has just recorded two CDs with Music Director Robert Spano that includes music of Vaughan Williams and Jennifer Higdon. The orchestra is also planning a two-week tour of Florida in late February 2007.

The **Minnesota Orchestra's** latest Beethoven symphony-cycle recording on the BIS label has just been released. For this recording of the *Ninth Symphony*, the orchestra and Music Director Osmo Vänskä were joined by soloists Helena Juntunen, Katarina Karnéus, Daniel Norman, Neal Davies, and the Minnesota Chorale. Reviews of all three releases continue to be excellent.

The musicians of the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** ratified a new two-year agreement the day before the old contract expired. Delegate Mary Plaine reports that they are starting the 2006-07 season with Music Director Designate Marin Alsop, a new board chairman, and a new executive director. The BSO still has staff and orchestra vacancies they are hoping to fill soon. The musicians are currently examining different health insurance options to replace their existing plan, which will expire at the end of the year. Although they still have financial challenges to overcome, the atmosphere in the orchestra is very positive. Mary finishes by saying, "This past year has been just an amazing ride!"

Fidelity Investments and the **Houston Symphony** launched *Inspire the Future*, a new program designed to increase youth involvement in music education programs. The two organizations launched the program with a donation of nearly \$60,000 in musical instruments to three local Houston-area schools. In the coming months, *Inspire the Future* will also honor individuals who have selflessly and passionately dedicated themselves to promoting music studies. Matthew VanBesien, Houston Symphony's executive director/CEO, welcomed the program as an extension of the Symphony's community outreach endeavors aimed at inspiring young people to maximize their future potential.

The **Colorado Symphony** just ratified a three-year contract with raises in base salary of 6%, 3%, and 3%. Delegate Martin Sher reports that the new contract contains significant gains in working conditions, especially with respect to scheduling, but that it also comes with a

controversial change in health care. Musicians with more than one dependent on the health plan will not realize any significant salary increase during the three year period. This was a divisive issue, but the negotiating team felt this was the best way to get the orchestra's health care coverage on the right track.

Good news from San Francisco, where both the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Opera received large donations. The **San Francisco Opera** received a \$35 million gift from longtime patron Jeannik Méquet Littlefield. Of that, \$10 million will go for annual operating expenses, with the rest going to the Opera's \$90 million endowment. Also new at the SFO is podcasting. The SFO podcasts will include informative lectures, previews, and insights all available online.

San Francisco philanthropist Richard Goldman gave the **San Francisco Symphony** a \$10 million challenge grant aimed at increasing the company's current \$180 million endowment. The Goldman Foundation, of which Richard Goldman is president, will add \$500,000 to every million dollar contribution, allowing donors of that sizable amount to name a chair in the orchestra's string section. The SFSO also just released a recording of Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* through iTunes.

The **Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra** welcomes its composer-in-residence Kevin Puts with a performance of his *Symphony No. 3, "Vespertine,"* written in the eclectic style of Icelandic pop vocalist Björk. The FWSO has commissioned a new violin concerto from Puts, which will be premiered with on April 20. The FWSO also just released a recording of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. It is bilingual—with Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya narrating the Spanish version and Michael York doing the English.

The **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra** is planning an endowment campaign to increase the size of their \$68.5 million endowment. The orchestra is also raising money to remodel Music Hall. The CSO has just released a recording of music by Britten and Elgar. This is the tenth recording of Paavo Jarvi and the CSO since 2001. The orchestra is also planning a tour of California in April 2007, performing five concerts, including a concert at the new hall at the Orange County Performing Arts Center.

The **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** has commissioned two new works through the Edward F. Schmidt Family Commissioning Fund. One of the works is a trombone concerto by Swedish trombonist, conductor, and composer Christian Lindberg. Titled *Chick'a'Bone Checkout*, it received its world premiere during CSO performances in September 2006 under the direction of Miguel Harth-Bedoya. Written especially for CSO trombonist Charles Vernon, the piece features its soloist playing alto, tenor, and bass trombones. The other new work will be *From All Sides* by CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Mark-Anthony Turnage. It will be premiered in January 2007 with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting.

The musicians of the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** have just signed a three-year contract which raises their base salary 13.6%. The Boston Symphony Orchestra is trying to reach younger audiences through a few new programs. One program is the Online Conservatory where visitors can explore online the pieces the BSO are performing. The BSO is also trying to make it easier for college student to attend their performances by introducing the BSO College Card.

The **New York City Ballet** has appointed a new music director, Fayçal Karoui. Mr. Karoui will join NYCB on December 1, 2006, succeeding Andrea Quinn who, after five years with NYCB, returned to her native England at the conclusion of the 2006 spring season. The NYCB returns to Chicago for seven performances from October 17-21, 2006 at the Harris Theater.

The **Phoenix Symphony** announced a balanced budget for the year and set a new sales record of more than \$55,000 on their first day of single ticket sales. These indicators, along with excellent artistic offerings, are setting the stage for a great season, said Maryellen Gleason, president and CEO of the Symphony.

The **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** has announced that it will continue its partnership with XM satellite radio. Additionally, a separate series of DSO concerts will be broadcast on traditional radio stations nationwide. Twenty-six weeks of DSO concert programs will begin airing in October. The DSO has also announced the launch of their new MySpace Web page (www.myspace.com/detroitssymphonyorchestra). The Web page offers a younger generation the chance to learn more about the DSO through a medium they are especially familiar with, the Internet. The page is also geared to youths who participate in DSO educational programs.

The **North Carolina Symphony** opened its 75th anniversary season by receiving the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's "Lifetime Achievement Award for the Performing Arts." The orchestra shared the honor and the stage with Chapel Hill native James Taylor at a ceremony held in the beautifully renovated Memorial Hall on the UNC campus.

Delegate Jeff Solomon reports that the **Alabama Symphony** have enjoyed a very successful first three weeks with their new music director, Justin Brown. The ASO is due to have contract negotiations this year, but they have not yet begun.

The **Dallas Symphony** is currently in its first year without a music director. However, the orchestra has seen a number of promising guest conductors though and is now narrowing the search. The DSO has seen a third year in the black and has just released two new recordings: Brahms second piano concerto, and a complete set of Ives' four symphonies, both with their former music director, Andrew Litton. The orchestra saw a 23% increase in health care premiums over last year's numbers, but due to the design changes

made to last year's plan, the increase did not force the orchestra to make further changes or to pay anything out of pocket.

The **Nashville Symphony** opened the Schermerhorn Symphony Center during the weekend of September 9 and 10. Thirty-five NSO supporters contributed a million dollars or more to help fund its construction. That weekend there were both a gala performance (dinner, dancing, and floor conversion included), and the hall's first pops concert, with Christian artist and longtime Nashville Symphony advocate Amy Grant. The hall's performance platform is to be named the *Amy Grant Performance Platform* in recognition of the enormous support she has provided to the NSO—going back to 1993, when a pair of benefit concerts raised enough money to wipe out the debt left over from the orchestra's 1988 bankruptcy. Those concerts were the beginning of a continuing relationship with Ms. Grant, Michael W. Smith (whose own contributions allowed for the purchase of the orchestra's Hamburg Steinway piano), and Vince Gill. Leonard Slatkin, recently appointed to a three-year term as NSO's music advisor, conducted the gala performance.

Why ICSOM?

by Meredith Snow, Member at Large

"What does ICSOM do for me? It's a question often heard around the time that dues are collected. Nevertheless, it is a valid question.

ICSOM was formed as an international "union" of orchestras that would force the AFM to address our specific needs, most particularly the right to negotiate our own contracts, a union of orchestras that would advocate for the needs of the musicians it represents. It is no different now than it was forty years ago. The issues are different; it's purpose is the same.

Like any democratic organization, ICSOM only functions up to the level that it's constituents participate. We work in different cities with different political and economic climates. Our markets are predominantly local. We advertise locally, raise money locally and perform locally. The temptation arises to think of ones orchestra as an independent ship afloat in it's own sea. But our strength at the bargaining table lies in our solidarity with one another. ICSOM is the embodiment of that solidarity. We will withstand the changes in the economic landscape better if we stand together.

ICSOM is the lifeline that connects our orchestras. It is our one formalized information exchange. It is our best way of networking and experiencing firsthand that we are one brotherhood. It is imperative that we retain that connection—not only to improve our own working conditions and livelihood, but to foster the growth of the music profession to which we have dedicated our lives.

Adopted Resolutions of the 2006 ICSOM Conference

Resolution #1—Conference Dedication

Whereas, Some of the most important contributions to the International Conference Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM), the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), and the quality of the working lives of musicians in general, have been made by men and women who could not play a note of music; and

Whereas, Many of these men and women have, nevertheless, marched to the beat of the same drummer in other respects; and

Whereas, One of those “legends” of the labor movement was Bill Roehl, a gifted and dedicated trade unionist who understood that musicians were workers as well as artists, and in recognition thereof gave of himself to further the goals and aspirations of ICSOM and its constituent orchestras in ways he knew best, that is - the traditions and practices of true and honest trade unionism; and

Whereas, The current structure of the Player’s Conferences and their relationship with the American Federation of Musicians was formulated from the vision and creativity of Bill Roehl; and

Whereas, This past year saw the untimely passing of this mentor and friend; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference hereby express their esteem and gratitude for all he gave us, and do herewith dedicate this 2006 Conference to the memory of Bill Roehl, may he rest in the peace and tranquility he so richly deserves.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #2—Richard Totusek

Whereas, In the numerous and important positions he held throughout the years, Richard Totusek was first and foremost a valued friend of symphony musicians, as well as musicians in all fields of endeavor; and

Whereas, His services as President of Local 105, Vice-President of Local 47, Honorary Parliamentarian of Local 369, and parliamentarian extraordinaire at many ICSOM and ROPA Conferences were sensitive, insightful, and truly valuable; and

Whereas, His good humor, intelligence, and devotion to the causes of musicians everywhere will be sorely missed; and

Whereas, The many ICSOM delegates and officers who knew Richard Totusek mourn his passing; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference express their condolences to his wife and family, and posthumously name him Parliamentarian Emeritus of ICSOM, and, be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be framed and presented to Ms. Joan Totusek as a token of their respect and admiration for her husband and devoted friend of musicians of the USA and Canada.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #3—ICSOM Counsel Retainer

Whereas, Distinguished ICSOM Legal Counsel (“DILC”) Leonard Leibowitz has served ICSOM and its member orchestras for nearly 35 years; and

Whereas, The access member orchestras have to Counsel is exceptional; and

Whereas, A new three year agreement between the Governing Board and the DILC has been negotiated and now requires approval at the Conference; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Leonard Leibowitz, a/k/a DILC, be retained for a term of three (3) years upon the following financial terms:

2006–07—\$3750 per month (\$45,000 annually)

2007–08—\$4000 per month (\$48,000 annually)

2008–09—\$4166.66 per month (\$50,000 annually)

In all cases, reasonable expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with governing board policies.

Submitted by the ICSOM Governing Board, as amended

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Resolution #4—Amendment of AFM Bylaw Regarding OSP

Whereas, It is AFM policy to provide the best possible representational services to its members; and

Whereas, One of the programs used to implement that policy for symphonic members is the Orchestra Service Program (OSP); and

Whereas, The current Orchestra Service Program by-law provides only one method of insuring that Symphonic members receive the best possible representational services; and

Whereas, It would be beneficial to members, locals and the AFM that there be other suitable programs; and

Whereas, A pilot program in St. Louis has proven useful in providing such representational services; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 2006 ICSOM Conference recommends Article 5, Section 38(b) of the by-laws of the American Federation of Musicians be amended as follows:

ARTICLE 5, SECTION 38(b)

In the event that a Local does not or cannot provide the services set forth above in a satisfactory manner, or upon the request of the Local or the members of an orchestra for reasonable cause, the International President (after consultation with the Local and the members involved) shall have the authority to take any of the following actions:

1. Appoint a representative who shall work to resolve any issues that may exist between the Local and the Orchestra members; such representative shall act at the direction of the President, who shall consult with the International Executive Board (IEB) and the appropriate Player Conference on these matters;

2. Implement Article 5, Section 30, of the American Federation of Musicians by-laws;

SECTION 30. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws and upon good cause shown, the IEB shall have the authority to assign collective bargaining rights from one Local to another. Such assignment shall be done in accordance with applicable labor law and with a procedure established by the IEB. Such procedure shall include:

- (1) Consultation with the current signatory Local;*
- (2) Approval of the Local to which the collective bargaining responsibilities are being assigned;*
- (3) Approval of the affected bargaining unit by secret ballot majority vote;*
- (4) Agreement of the signatory employer if required by law or contract.*

3. Place place the orchestra in an Orchestra Service Program (OSP) established and maintained under IEB supervision. The OSP shall provide those services and such other assistance as the IEB may deem necessary in the situation at a cost to the Local of 2% of the scale wages received by the orchestra members under the CBA. If the Local Work Dues payable by the members of an orchestra placed in OSP are less than 2%, the Local Work Dues rate payable by the members working under that orchestra's CBA shall be automatically increased to 2%.

Submitted by Bradford D. Buckley (St. Louis) and the Governing Board

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Resolution #5—Atlanta Ballet Orchestra

Whereas, The members of the orchestra of the Atlanta Ballet are once again facing the elimination of their jobs; and

Whereas, Once again they need and deserve the support of their colleagues in ICSOM and the AFM; and

Whereas, The elimination of a live orchestra for ballet represents a diminishment of the quality of the dance experience; and

Whereas, The Governing Board and delegates to the ICSOM Conference wish to do everything in their power to support their struggle to maintain their jobs, as well as maintaining the artistic standards of the Atlanta Ballet; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference hereby express their full support and empathy for the members of the Atlanta Ballet orchestra, and urge the leadership of the AF of M to once again act as strongly as possible to prevent the lowering of the artistic quality of a nationally-recognized ballet company, and to save the jobs of one of the great ballet orchestras in the nation.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #6—Regarding Contractors on Union Boards

Whereas, It is a long-standing ICSOM policy that the AFM bylaws should prohibit union officers from serving as contractors or in any other supervisory capacity over other AFM members; and

Whereas, ICSOM submitted a resolution on the subject to the AFM 2005 Convention, which received a negative recommendation from the Law Committee on grossly inadequate grounds and without any effort to

work with the proponents to resolve the legal issues given by the Law Committee for their negative recommendation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the ICSOM Governing Board be directed to re-submit the resolution to the 2007 AFM Convention; and, be it further

Resolved, That the ICSOM Governing Board actively seek the support of AFM Locals and the other Player Conferences for such legislation.

Whereas, There are many Locals in which the Officers also work as Contractors, Personnel Managers, or Booking Agents, creating a clear, inherent conflict of interest that has a chilling effect on a member's ability to receive fair and impartial representation; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Article 5, Section 7(d) of the Bylaws be amended, as follows:

No Local Officer shall (1) serve in the position of a Personnel Manager or a Contractor for an employer of musicians in the Local's jurisdiction[. Beginning with a Local's next election on or after August 1, 2001, no Local Officer, except in Canada, shall serve in the position of a contractor of musicians in the musical theater field.]; (2) work in any position where s/he receives any remuneration from contracting or booking musical units (other than a regularly organized one of which s/he is a leader or member) in the Local's jurisdiction, except in his/her capacity as a Local officer administering an employment referral or booking program on behalf of the Local.

Submitted by Robert Levine (Milwaukee)

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Resolution #7—Orquesta Filarmónica in Santiago, Chile

Whereas, The administration of the *Teatro Municipal* in Santiago, Chile has suspended the entire 2006 season in an effort to break the collective agreements with the *Orquesta Filarmónica*, professional choir, and maintenance departments; and

Whereas, The administration of the *Teatro Municipal* has fired 44 workers working under collective agreements, thereby crippling the orchestra, choir and maintenance staff; and

Whereas, The administration of the *Teatro Municipal* has engaged in blatant age discrimination, as demonstrated by the fact that all the terminated members of the orchestra were over the age of 50; and

Whereas, Maximiano Valdes, the internationally renowned Chilean conductor, has resigned as music director on the grounds that he cannot do his job with so few musicians; and

(continued on page 8—see ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS)

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.

Adopted Resolutions

(continued from page 7)

Whereas, The administration of the *Teatro Municipal* has imported orchestras from England and Poland to replace the musicians of the *Orquesta Filarmónica*; and

Whereas, The *Teatro Municipal de Chile* has taken action against the *Orquesta Filarmónica*, as well as many other non-orchestra member-employees; and

Whereas, These actions have resulted in the loss of work for these employees, as well as the loss of their ability to join and form unions, and to bargain collectively for the terms and conditions of their employees; and

Whereas, The rights of workers of all kinds to join together and act in concert for their mutual aid and protection should be considered inalienable; and

Whereas, The administration of the *Teatro Municipal* has engaged in a concerted campaign in the press to defame and denigrate its own musicians and employees; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference express their support for their colleagues in the *Orquesta Filarmónica*, and the members of the chorus and the maintenance staff; and, be it further

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference urge President Michelle Bachelet to intervene to preserve the artistic and organizational integrity of the *Orquesta Filarmónica*; and, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference deplore these actions of the *Teatro Municipal* as a blatant attempt to destroy the rights of the musicians of the *Orquesta Filarmónica* and their colleagues.

Submitted by Robert Levine (Milwaukee), as amended

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Resolution #8—Virtual Orchestra Machine

Whereas, The virtual orchestra machine represents a very real threat to live music; and

Whereas, Local 802, under the leadership of President David Lennon, has fought against the use of this machine for the past two (2) years; and

Whereas, As a result of this campaign, there are now virtual orchestra machine bans in cities across the nation, as well as legal rulings upholding the legality of these bans; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the ICSOM Governing Board and the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference express their admiration and gratitude to Local 802 and David Lennon for their ongoing and courageous campaign to ban or at least restrict, to the greatest extent possible, the use and/or the proliferation of the virtual orchestra machine in any form or incarnation, and for their devotion to the cause of live music.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #9—Jan Gippo

Whereas, Jan Gippo has served his orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, in a number of capacities, including Chair of the Musician's Council, member and Chair of the Negotiating Committee and ICSOM delegate; and

Whereas, In 2002 he was elected Chairman of ICSOM; and

Whereas, His election to the chairmanship of ICSOM came at a crucial and difficult moment in the history of the organization; and

Whereas, During his stewardship, Jan worked with a restructured Governing Board, initiated personal visits to many constituent orchestras, represented ICSOM with distinction at numerous conferences and seminars including the annual ASOL Conference, and initiated Delegate-L as an innovative method of private communication among ICSOM delegates; and

Whereas, By these and other activities he has advanced the causes of ICSOM, and those of the entire symphonic workplace; and

Whereas, He has chosen to step down as chair of ICSOM in order to devote most of his time to his new wife and family, as well as internal matters of his orchestra; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians Conference express their respect, admiration and gratitude to Jan Gippo for his remarkable body of work on behalf of the members of his own orchestra as well as the members of all ICSOM, ROPA and OCSM Orchestras in North America; and be it further

Resolved, That Jan Gippo be granted the title of Chair *Emeritus* as a gesture of respect and admiration; and be it further

Resolved, That this Resolution be framed and presented to Jan Gippo as a memento of the fondness and respect in which he is, and shall always be held.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #10—Michael Moore

Whereas, Michael Moore has served as the ICSOM delegate from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for a quarter of a century without a break in service; and

Whereas, This distinguished service also included 12 years of service as Member at Large and since 2002 service in the incredibly difficult and virtually thankless office of "IHAT" (ICSOM Hard-Ass Treasurer); and

Whereas, His contributions to ICSOM, the AFM, his local union, and especially to his colleagues in the ASO as well as those of virtually every other musician in the nation have been immeasurable; and

Whereas, He is eminently deserving of the accolades and gratitude of all of us; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference hereby congratulate Michael Moore for his many contributions over these past

twenty-five years, and express their appreciation for service well-done, and their wishes for as many more years as he is willing to continue to devote to the improvement of the quality of life of symphony, opera and ballet musicians everywhere.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #11—David Angus

Whereas, for the past thirty years the AFM, and most of all, the members of all symphony, opera and ballet orchestras throughout the United States and Canada have been quietly, but admirably and effectively served by David Angus; and

Whereas, This service has included representing his own orchestra as ICSOM delegate for 25 of those years, as well as Chair of his Orchestra Committee, President of his Local Union, Trustee of the AFM Strike Fund, Chair of the ICSOM Nominating Committee, Regional Vice-Chair of the Eastern Orchestras of ICSOM, and most notably, the President of ICSOM; and

Whereas, His name must be added to the list of ICSOM luminaries who, over the years, have given so much of themselves to the betterment of the working lives of symphonic musicians, and to musicians everywhere; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference hereby express their respect, gratitude, admiration and genuine fondness of David Angus, and that they will continue to hold him in that same high regard and esteem in which he is held by all who have had the pleasure of working with him in any of his many roles.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

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Resolution #12—Nancy Stutsman

Whereas, Nancy Stutsman has served the Kennedy Center Orchestra and ICSOM as a delegate for many years; and

Whereas, She has also served on the ICSOM Governing Board as a valued member during the 2005-06 season; and

Whereas, For personal reasons, her tenure on the Governing Board has been all too short; and

Whereas, She is deserving of high praise and gratitude for these years of service to her Colleagues; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Governing Board and the delegates to the 2006 ICSOM Conference hereby express their thanks and good wishes to Nancy (“Queen”) Stutsman for her service to ICSOM and the orchestra field at large, as well as their regrets that she will no longer serve as a member at large of this Governing Board.

Submitted by the Governing Board and adopted by unanimous consent

Lessons

(continued from page 2)

that could share in the dreams of Nashville, and they have all delivered.

It is perfectly clear, however, that they have not built a museum. They have erected a building in which symphonic music will live, flourish, and be celebrated—just as so many other styles of music are celebrated a block or two away. Imagine what this will mean for their city. The area of downtown that the city leaders had so desired to revitalize is now thriving with restaurants and hotels, all of which will benefit from those attending concerts at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. The businesses that surround the Center will profit as a result of the popularity of the orchestra, and the city will benefit from tax revenues of those spending their time, and money, downtown.

Those patrons will not just be spending money; they will be making an investment with the expectation of dividends. And they will be richly rewarded. They will prosper as their city prospers, their spirits will be uplifted by the great music so beautifully performed by the Nashville Symphony, and they will take pride that the name of their great community has been spread worldwide through countless articles about how this great city of music has made such a bold statement. Their statement is clear, that symphonic music can and must succeed alongside every kind of music, every kind of business, and every kind of cultural hyacinth for the soul.

All of this grew from the dark time of bankruptcy, not that long ago. This story should serve as an inspiration to other cities and to musicians in orchestras that might be facing difficulties.

It seemed so appropriate that this ICSOM Conference, a meeting that would be marked by a new enthusiasm for the organization and a new optimism for orchestral music and the arts in America, would be held in this city where its orchestra has experienced such a magnificent rebirth. There is compelling evidence that orchestras are thriving, and there are beautiful new concert halls opening from Los Angeles to Raleigh and everywhere between.

But, there is always concern where orchestras are struggling, and where communities have failed to recognize the cultural, educational, and financial value of their orchestras. We would ask the citizens of such places why they have they missed this opportunity. We would suggest that their mayors go to Nashville to see for themselves this opportunity to bring their cities, their constituents, and the business leaders of their state an unprecedented success. Let them see first-hand what such an investment from the business community of their cities can do for their citizens whom they have pledged to serve.

This Governing Board of ICSOM is inspired by the enthusiasm we observed in Nashville. We are energized by the collective wisdom of the delegates from your orchestras, and we are certain of our mission. ICSOM must re-engage our membership so that we

(continued on page 12—see LESSONS)

Impressions of a First-Time Delegate (Well, Nearly) by Eric Arbiter

I'm a veteran of 33 years in the Houston Symphony. I served as an ICSOM alternate delegate and attended my first ICSOM Conference shortly after my second season with the HSO. That would have been in 1977. The HSO had just come back to work from being locked-out for around six months. As you can probably imagine, just starting out as a professional musician found me with little reserve for a major work stoppage, emergency meetings, poster making, and the myriad labor activities involved. Attending my first ICSOM Conference on top of all that was overwhelming. I couldn't follow the discussions about seniority, wage, and scale rates, pensions, work rules, strategies for negotiations—I was quite simply in major overload. To top it off, as I attended the meetings in Cleveland, a major hurricane was about to hit Houston! I was probably less than useless to my orchestra as their delegate that year. Gratefully I relinquished the post back to our long-time representative Kyla Bynum.

During the following years, I didn't think too much about ICSOM. I would attend orchestra meetings and listen to the reports, but really didn't take in much except for looking through the yearly Wage Charts, to see where we stood. Pension and seniority issues were things far in the future for me.

In the intervening years I mostly stayed under the radar, but I did serve on several orchestra committees and on two negotiating committees, both which proved to be very difficult. The last negotiating committee I served on was in 2002. As some of you may recall, that was also when Local 802 struck the theater district in New York City. I'll come back to that later, because it left a very big impression on me. In retrospect, though, this is something I realized only as a result of this year's Conference. It wasn't until this summer that I learned of the far-reaching ramifications of the issues involved. During our strike, I (and I suspect many of my colleagues in the HSO) was preoccupied with our own crisis here in Houston. We did note that Mayor Bloomberg stepped in to aid in the resolution of Local 802's problems. Similarly, Houston's Mayor Lee Brown put together a team of mediators, Alvin Zimmerman and Ed Wulfe, to get both sides back to the table after three weeks of a strike.

So, after almost 33 years of playing professionally and serving on orchestra and negotiating committees several times, I was elected this past season to represent the orchestra at the ICSOM Conference in Nashville—for what in effect was my first time.

I was not prepared for what I experienced during the four days of the Conference. The first thing that I noticed was dedication of the delegates, the AFM, the Symphonic Services Division staff, and the legal professionals. The words that kept coming to my mind were "*brain trust.*" ICSOM represented, to this first-timer, an astonishing collective of experts in every area in which we musicians operate. My summary of topics below will be incomplete and is of a general nature. (Laura Ross's detailed report has everything covered.) I hope I can convey just how blown away I was (*impressed* doesn't even come close) by what ICSOM does (and has done since 1962)

for each of us every day. I left the Conference totally energized and inspired!

For example, there was an afternoon session structured like a mock arbitration in which the delegates had to play the roles of management and players in a case modeled after a real-life arbitration case. First of all, we had the feedback and help of both Peg and Lenny Liebowitz. Interestingly, it was educational to have to approach the case from the management's side—both strategically and in taking on the other side of the issue and arguing *for* management's position. For me, it was invaluable, since we have a significant arbitration concerning health-care pending presently, as I'm currently on the orchestra committee.

Another area which I found incredibly useful was the talk by Barbara Haig on public relations and negotiations. It served as a reference and checklist to compare retrospectively the actions Houston's negotiating committee actually did during the 2002 strike. Incidentally, we received invaluable information about how to deal with a strike directly as a checklist from Nathan Kahn and the Symphonic Services Division.

There was an informative presentation on the whole area of bankruptcy presented by Trish Polach. Here again is an invaluable resource available through ICSOM. Trish's expertise in bankruptcy law means that the musicians of any orchestra whose board or management threatens bankruptcy will have experienced guidance at their disposal. The complexities of the various types of bankruptcy are too confusing to try and untangle unaided.

There are experts in the AFM, SSD, and ICSOM (including delegates and others) about electronic media and the Internet. This becomes incredibly relevant today as the whole world moves more and more deeply into electronic and digital media. When I began my career, CDs were still a few years into the future and recordings were only produced by large labels by a few orchestras. That has all changed radically, and with that change we have to quickly adapt. The collective knowledge and resources in ICSOM are already helping us negotiate through this major transition.

This brings me back to the musician's strike in New York in 2002. Both David Lennon, the president of Local 802, and Lenny Liebowitz, legal counsel for the union, gave talks on the ramifications of that landmark case. For those of you who may not be familiar with the situation (as I wasn't), I'll summarize briefly. A company produced a new machine that uses digital samples of all the orchestral instruments. Using that virtual orchestra machine, it is now possible, using computer programming, to replicate any piece of orchestral music so that the score can be performed in real time by a single machine operator, including tempo variations to match what happens on stage. My understanding is that what was being proposed in a veiled way in the theater district was not to *completely* replace the pit orchestras, but to substantially reduce the number of

instrumental musicians. From there it's a short step to complete replacement, especially in the opera, ballet, and musical theater pits. Local 802 took this battle to court and through appeal and won against the "virtual orchestra machine" twice. I believe this victory has a huge impact of what the face of live music might look like today, and the immediate future, had this new technology slipped by us all unnoticed.

We face similar challenges but also opportunities with the new ease of using digital technology to self-produce recordings of exceptional quality. ICSOM is, again, staying attuned and proactive on our behalf here; witness the new live-recording agreement we recently voted into effect, as proposed by the AFM.

Having served as a delegate for the year before the Conference in Nashville, I got to see the scope and range of help and experience that ICSOM provides through its mailing lists (Orchestra-L and especially Delegate-L). Delegates and orchestra committee chairs (and by extension, all musicians in ICSOM orchestras) can ask for the help and experience of the collective so as not to have to re-invent the wheel on common issues or to avoid mistakes already experienced by others.

During lunch on the final day, the members at large met with their assigned delegates to discuss major issues of concern. The topic my group chose was health-care. I imagine from the responses of all the members of our group that this is a big issue for all of us in the industry—not to mention the entire country. It was invaluable hearing other that orchestras grapple with the same issues as does Houston, and to hear about some of the creative solutions and approaches other orchestras are trying. This is a large issue, as evidenced by the fact that we were still heavily into the discussion when lunch ended. At that point we had barely scratched the surface. Because of such general and wide-spread interest, I would propose having a whole afternoon devoted to health care at next year's Conference.

One of the great benefits created by Delegate-L, Orchestra-L and the atmosphere of the Conference is the feeling of connection between the musicians—the feeling that we are not alone. This comes both in times of need through the support of the strike fund, but also by staying in touch around the country and tracking trends in the currents of the state of the industry as a whole. We are no longer so isolated.

From my perspective, the industry is facing many unique challenges due to new forms of entertainment (Internet, inexpensive rental movies, downloadable music) as well as all the other things competing for consumers' entertainment dollars and time which we have traditionally faced. Collectively we can be more responsive to these changes as we communicate with one another in finding things which help us redefine ourselves as these changes occur. ICSOM is an outstanding resource for that.

These impressions leave out so much of what went on during this year's Conference. I apologize for not being more comprehensive and complete. I hope to trade detail for an overall impression: by the end of it I was so enthusiastic that I wanted to find some way to communicate to my orchestra some measure of that respect and admiration I felt for the participants and the process: people giving of themselves for years and years (two of whom were honored for upwards of 25 years of continuous service to ICSOM) for the benefit of all of us.

At one point I asked the assembly if anyone there could give me some highlights of ICSOM's impact on the industry. I was referred to a document of considerable length which gives a comprehensive history. (This document is readily available to all of us online on the ICSOM website). I pressed on, saying that probably most of my colleagues wouldn't wade through it. (I certainly hadn't up to this point.) A few minutes later ICSOM Chairperson *Emeritus* Brad Buckley (incidentally one of my bassoon mentors) wrote and read a short list of ICSOM's impressive achievements which I reproduce below with a few of my reflections and comments:

Brad Buckley's List:

- **Conductor Evaluations:** The bank has over 600 conductors whose evaluations are available to ICSOM, ROPA and OCSM orchestras. Michael Moore spoke about how few orchestras are actively using these now—but he urged us to reconsider filling them out even if only the last questions if for no other reason that these evaluations may prove to be quite interesting historically many years from now. They are unique in music history: orchestras' opinions of conductors.
- **The ICSOM Comparative Chart:** Later taken over by the AFM and renamed as the Wage Chart, it now lists wages, benefits, working conditions and other information for over 140 orchestras in ICSOM, ROPA and OCSM.
- **Establishment of the AFM Strike Fund:** Any orchestra which has been aided by this will tell you how important it is.
- **Enabling Orchestras to Negotiate and Ratify Their Own Contracts:** Probably the driving force behind the establishment of ICSOM.
- **Professional Negotiators:** Orchestras now use professional negotiators either from SSD or elsewhere.
- **Establishment of the AFM Symphonic Services Division (SSD):** Possibly the only specialized "union within a union" devoted to *our* specialized needs.
- **Information Exchange:** through ICSOM Settlement Bulletins, *Senza Sordino*, the ICSOM *Directory*, and the annual ICSOM

(continued on page 12—see *FIRST-TIME DELEGATE*)

First-Time Delegate

(continued from page 11)

Conferences that provide training, information and a forum for industry discussion between orchestras.

- **ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund:** Available to ICSOM orchestra when needed.
- **Minority Programs:** \$1 of per capita ICSOM dues goes to scholarships for the senior division Sphinx Competition winners.

I hope that these reflections will capture some of the gratitude I now feel toward ICSOM and give you some small idea of the scope and importance of its work. It works so efficiently that I have taken it for granted all these years! We are all its beneficiaries.

Eric Arbiter has been Associate Principal Bassoonist in the Houston Symphony since 1974. He is currently serving his fifth year as Acting Principal. After 33 years, he still loves going to work!

<p style="text-align: center;">Reminder</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">ICSOM dues are due December 31.</p>
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Lessons

(continued from page 9)

can become the most visible and vocal advocate for symphony orchestras throughout America, and beyond.

As I assume my new position as chair of this historic organization, I am moved by the trust that has been placed in me, and I am acutely aware of what we all can learn from the lessons of the past. I am even more mindful of what the musicians of the future can learn from the message that we will now work to communicate in the most politically astute way possible. The arts and symphonic music in America must continue to grow and thrive. In cities where there are successes, that growth must be sustained. For cities that have failed to recognize this opportunity, we must demonstrate the value of a re-investment in their orchestra.

In my address to the delegates in Nashville, I borrowed a sentence that President Kennedy once used to inspire this nation. He said, "While we cannot guarantee that we shall one day be first, we can guarantee that any failure to make this effort will make us last."

This Governing Board looks to you all for guidance, assistance, and support as we seek to spread the lessons we learned in Nashville.
