Happy Summer, everyone!

For our final issue, it was suggested that delegates submit a few lines about notable events their orchestra experienced this season. What follows are stories ranging from routine negotiations to groundbreaking performances to how the arts can respond to horrible circumstances (see: Las Vegas). Thank you all for your help. See you in Portland! — Sharon

The Binghamton Philharmonic has been in contract negotiations for over a year. Our potential season is a radical departure from our history both in terms of content (nearly exclusively pops) and work schedule (greatly reduced rehearsal schedule, etc). That said, we have been met with some success in terms of ticket sales for some of the pops this last season. The Philharmonic collaborated with Cirque Musica for “Cirque Musica Holiday Presents: Believe” at the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena on December 7, 2017. This exciting show also sold well and included various circus performers including acrobats and aerialists. – Sarah Chandler, ROPA delegate

The 2017-18 season saw the beginning of a partnership between the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, featuring the newly constructed Ent Center for the Performing Arts. The Ent Center held performances of Bernstein’s Serenade on Plato’s “Symposium”, Beethoven’s Symphony # 5, and Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 27. Our partnership continues next season with the reformed “Signature Series” concerts. – Jason Thompson, ROPA delegate

Near the beginning of October 2017, our players’ committee of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra received a loss-of-funding notification from management. The notification included a request to reopen negotiations on our recently-ratified new contract. The committee decided against this. However, a week later management claimed they’d found more funding and believed they could meet the recent contract’s requirements if allowed (via a contractual side letter) to extend the following season six days to schedule a video-game music concert thought to be profitable.

The committee passed along the new side letter proposal from management, and musicians voted to ratify it after guarantees that the proposed extension would last for only one season. Management officially withdrew their request to reopen negotiations. We’re relieved to have avoided this funding crisis. – Nick Naegele, ROPA Delegate

The Delaware Symphony’s long-awaited CD of music by Leo Brouwer and Paulo Bellinati was released last April on the Naxos label (https://naxos.lnk.to/BookofSigns). The DSO held auditions in November and hired eight new violinists, including two titled chairs in the 2nd violin section. DSO also added a run-out concert in September that attracted a large and enthusiastic audience, and two more concerts are planned for the upcoming season. The symphony continues to explore performance opportunities outside of their home base in Wilmington. – Julie Bougher, ROPA delegate

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra came close to bankruptcy last March, but was saved after an appeal to the community. Due to donations being much less than anticipated and lack of an endowment since the 2008 financial crisis, the ESO was in danger of not finishing the 2017-18 season. However, the day the ESO issued a press release about their financial situation, Maestro Andrew Grams told the audience during the intermission of each concert that weekend that to finish the season, the ESO needed to raise $140,000. Within six weeks, $700,000 had been raised through small and large donations. Management hopes to raise a $4 million endowment, as well as $1.5 million to fund each season. – Sharon Jones, ROPA delegate, Editor, The Leading Tone

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The Leading Tone
Volume 33, Issue 4

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INFORMATION CENTER
- This newsletter will be posted online at: http://www.ropaweb.org
- To subscribe to the ROPA Internet Mailing List, visit http://groups.google.com/group/ropadiscussion.
- The list is open to musicians in ROPA member orchestras and to AFM local officers for those orchestras.

(Previous Page Continued)

The Erie Philharmonic joined the Integrated Media Agreement this spring and made a short video recording for which we were paid. We have had five sold-out concerts and a great response to Bugs Bunny at the Symphony this past season. We have just completed negotiations, resulting in a five-year contract. The winter weather may be cold on the shores of Lake Erie, but there is warmth in the enthusiasm of our audience. – Karen Barker Ferren, ROPA delegate

The Glimmerglass Festival Orchestra has just begun a new four-year agreement that is quite progressive (starting with 3% raises each year). The Festival is expanding to include some extra work opportunities for orchestra musicians: a concert by the award-winning Klezmer group Big Galut[e], founded by some of our members; and a performance of Stravinsky’s Soldier’s Tale produced by our own musicians. Next year will see a new commission from Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson, in addition to our now normal classic Broadway show and a more “warhorse” opera. This year, we are doing West Side Story, Cunning Little Vixen and Kevin Puts’ Silent Night as our non-warhorse operas (the warhorse is Barber of Seville). Many performances of West Side Story are already sold out before opening night! For the past several years they have been looking ahead at developing future audiences by mounting Youth Operas for kids, and also starring local kids ages 6-18, with the aid of a couple of Young Artists from our renowned singer apprentice program.

The Festival has a new initiative called Breaking Glass, a series of national forums and a set of five podcasts which will be launched this summer in partnership with WFMT radio network, dealing with the intersection of opera, race and social justice. They were developed with an Innovation Grant from Opera America. I saw the second forum, and it was absolutely fantastic and so timely! – Katrina Smith, ROPA delegate

The Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet both completed full seasons after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Wortham Theater. The support for both organizations has been substantial. We are looking forward to returning to our home in September.—Amanda Swain, ROPA Delegate and Member-at-Large

The Hudson Valley Philharmonic was the first regional orchestra to perform with Roger Dal-trey of The Who on his tour performing a newly orchestrated version of The Who’s Tommy. It was performed at the wonderful Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on a beautiful June night. Roger and his band were friendly, everything was handled very professionally and the music was comfortable to play. We all had a great time! We are better paid for jobs where we are hired by Bethel Woods, and that adds to the enjoyment! – Francie Mann, ROPA delegate

Last May the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra presented their inaugural Classical Evolve, a competition to determine their next Composer-in-Residence for the 2018-19 season. Three finalists were chosen, with their works performed before a live audience. Audience members, a panel of judges and orchestra members all got to vote. The winner was Benjamin Ash for his piece “Hruan”. In addition, Mr. Ash won $3,000 and will compose three works for the IPO classical season, as well as two chamber music pieces for their summer series. – Lisa Bresler, ROPA delegate

The Kalamazoo Symphony has been in the midst of a conductor search this past year. Though no clear winner has been chosen, musicians enjoyed the “new faces” and are awaiting management’s decision. As many orchestras are doing, KSO presented The Jungle Book as our movie offering with two more movies set for next year. Varese Sarabande released the new CD “Play It Again, Marvini!” featuring the KSO and soloists, which is now available commercially. Finally, negotiations for a new musician contract will be starting soon. – Nora Tiffin, ROPA delegate

In response to the massacre at Mandalay Bay last October, the Las Vegas Philharmonic offered free tickets for a night for first responders. The program included Barber’s Adagio for Strings in honor of those killed. Approximately 500 firefighters, policemen and other aid workers were in attendance. We had a full house of 2,050, and it was a highly cathartic night for many. – Cory Tiffin, ROPA delegate
The Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra and AFM Local 554-635 negotiation committee will take a potential contract to the musicians for a vote of approval after only a few weekends of meeting with management and board representatives. This could be a significant step for the organization after the last negotiation lasted almost a year and left us musicians on the verge of a strike. – Joseph Van Fleet, ROPA delegate

The orchestra membership of the Long Beach Symphony was frozen for several years due to a prolonged Music Director search. Now that Eckart Preu has finished his first season as MD, we’re finally having auditions to fill 17 orchestra vacancies! Three recent days of auditions led to two Principal Trumpet finalists who will both play next season, and the Principal, Associate Principal and Section Violas positions are no longer vacant. Multiple violin positions should be filled after September auditions. After several years of “Seasons of Subs”, I believe the orchestra will benefit from fresh talent and the enthusiasm that comes with a healthy cycle of orchestral life. – Leslie Lashinsky, ROPA delegate

Soon the New Haven Symphony Orchestra will name their next music director. There are three finalists: Alisdair Neale, Rebecca Miller and David Amado. The decision will be announced this summer. Also, this was the first year of the orchestra’s Fellowship Program, offering two rising young professionals the opportunity to play with the orchestra for the season and participate in our educational outreach programs. And, the 2018-19 season marks the orchestra’s 125th anniversary. – Judi McDermott-Eggert, ROPA delegate

The Madison Symphony Orchestra continues to thrive, following successful negotiations last summer. An exciting highlight from this season was the opportunity to work for the first time with Gil Shaham — what a delightful, amazing, collaborative artist! Our “Beyond the Score” event this year explored Edward Elgar’s beautiful Enigma Variations, and included performances by world-class actors from the American Players Theatre. We just accompanied a screening of the second of the Harry Potter movies, a very popular event. The orchestra works hard to engage as much of the community as possible, and the response has been warm. – Marika Fischer Hoyt, ROPA delegate and Member-at-Large

This past season, Opera San Jose was invited by the Packard Humanities Institute to collaborate on a production of “Cinderella.” The opera was written by 12-year-old child-prodigy composer, pianist and violinist Alma Deutscher and performed under the baton of Jane Glover. The television program “60 Minutes” aired an interview with the composer, and as a result our run was sold-out and extended. The filmed production was subsequently posted on MediciTV and featured at San Jose’s Cinequest Film Festival, under the sponsorship of the Packard Humanities Institute. – Lucinda Breed Leniecheck, ROPA delegate

Great Performances and the Pacific Symphony also paid tribute to America’s history with a performance of composer Peter Boyer’s Ellis Island: The Dream of America, a Grammy-nominated contemporary classical work celebrating the historic American immigrant experience. “Great Performances-Ellis Island: The Dream of America with Pacific Symphony” premiered nationwide on June 29th on PBS in honor of Immigrant Heritage Month. It will be available to stream the following day via pbs.org/gper.

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Casey Bozell, ROPA delegate

The Portland Opera Orchestra is now in their third year of their summer festival format. Most of the shows have been critically well-received, but the schedule change is still causing low attendance issues. Next season will add back a show in the fall to try and excite the audiences about the larger summer season. – Casey Bozell, ROPA delegate

Michigan Opera Theater’s 2017-18 season concluded with The Summer King, an opera about Negro League baseball player Josh Gibson. The opera is the culmination of MOT’s year-long “Take Me Out to the Opera” initiative that explores how arts and sport enhance social equity and inclusion. Other public events included arts and sports youth clinics and a free block party that MOT hosted. Opening night featured a panel discussion with notable African American figures such as former Detroit Tiger Willie Horton and singer George Shirley, the first black tenor to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. MOT worked with community partners such as the Detroit Tigers, the Detroit Historical Society and the Charles J. Wright Museum of African American History.

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34th ROPA Conference
University Place Hotel & Conference Center
Portland, Oregon
July 28 – August 2, 2018
Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Saturday, July 28
4pm: Executive Board Meeting

Sunday, July 29
9:30am – 5pm: Executive Board Meeting

Monday, July 30
10am – 5pm: Negotiating Orchestras Workshop
1pm – 5pm: Legislative Committee Meeting
TBD: Meet & Greet

Tuesday, July 31
8:30am – 9:45am: New Delegate Breakfast
10am – 11am: General Session Begins:
- Welcome and Introduction of ROPA Executive Board
- Roll Call of Orchestras
- Welcoming Remarks:
  * Bruce Fife, President, Local 99; International Vice President, AFM
  * Tom Chamberlin, President, Oregon AFL – CIO
  * Casey Bozell, Host, Portland Opera Orchestra

11am – 11:15am: Break
11:15am – 12:30pm: Heather Malyuk, Sound-check Audiology
12:30pm – 2pm: Lunch Break with MAL Groups
2pm – 3pm: Liza Hirsch Medina – Janus Decision and Its Effect on Unions
3pm – 3:30pm: Lovie Smith-Wright, Alfonso Pollard, AFM Diversity Committee/AFM Political Action
3:30pm – 3:45pm: Break
3:45pm – 5:45pm: SSD Presentations:
- Rochelle Skolnick, SSD Director and Special Counsel
- Todd Jelen – AFM Negotiator, Organizer, Educator
- Debbie Newmark – IMA and Orchestra Committees
5:45pm: Dinner on your own
7:30pm: Portland Opera: Orfeo ed Euridice
9:30pm: Hospitality Suite
**Wednesday, August 1**

9am – 12pm: MAL Breakouts – Closed Sessions

12pm – 1:30pm: Lunch Break

1:30pm – 3pm: AFM President Ray Hair
AFM – EPF Presentation

3pm – 3:15pm: Break

3:15pm – 3:30pm: Rochelle Skolnick, SSD
News and Notes

3:30pm – 4:15pm: ICSOM/OCSM/TMA/RMA Addresses/ Reports

4:15pm – 4:45pm: ROPA Officer Reports/Standing Committee Reports

4:45pm – 5pm: Break

5pm – 6:15pm:
- Audit Report, Resolutions, Bylaws
- Nominations, Terms Expiring:
  * President
  * Vice President (one-year unexpired term)
  * Treasurer
  * Member-at-Large (four positions)

7pm: Dinner at Portland Opera

9:30pm: Hospitality Suite

**Thursday, August 2**

9am – 10:45am: John Beder: “Composed” film and discussion

10:45am – 11am: Break

11am – 11:45am: Speeches/ Elections

11:45am – 1:15pm: Lunch Break

1:15pm – 1:30pm: Election Results/Vote for 2019 Conference Site

1:30pm – 2:45pm: Weston Sprott, Shea Scruggs

2:45pm – 3pm: Exit Survey/ Oath of Office

3pm: Adjourn

6:30pm: ROPA Executive Board Meeting
RUN FOR OFFICE!

President
Vice President (one-year term)
Treasurer
Four (4) Member-at-Large positions

Please consider serving on the ROPA Board — we need your energy, skills, dedication and determination.

If you plan to run for office, the Executive Board will meet Thursday evening after the conference as this meeting will be especially important for new board members. However, the ability to stay Thursday night is not a requirement to run.

See you in Portland!

Please note: members of ROPA orchestras cannot serve as delegates, alternate delegates or executive board members if they hold managerial positions in their orchestras.

Regional Orchestra Players’ Association
The Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra just finished their first season without a music director, after 21 years with Larry Rachleff as MD. The job has been offered to one of eight maestros who guest conducted this past season, but negotiations have not yet been completed. – Eliot Porter, ROPA delegate

The Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera just completed its third season with Alice Sauro as Executive Director. Under her leadership, the orchestra is growing its audience, performs one run-out concert and a semi-staged opera each season and has just acquired a new acoustic shell. – Gail Edwards, ROPA delegate

The Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra 2017-2018 season ended June 17th with a haunting live orchestra performance to the film “The Red Violin”. This concert was originally scheduled for January, but canceled due to the horrific fires, floods and mudslides in the Montecito and Santa Barbara areas. At that time, the Symphony and musicians offered a quick fundraising concert for area victims and first responders. The community and SBSO patrons stepped up and finished the season with heart and hard cash! – Leslie Lashinsky, ROPA delegate

The Spokane Symphony just negotiated a three-year contract, and we will begin a new conductor search next season. We’re also featuring a new series called The M Show — live, hosted, partially-interactive multimedia performances that aim to present classical music in a more accessible manner. Think classical virtuoso meets late-night comedy. The show was conceived by concertmaster Mateusz Wolski. – Brian Bonnell, ROPA delegate

The Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra will be presenting “Concerts on the Square” again this year – an extremely popular six-week outside event set on the Capitol grounds in Madison, WI. The musicians lobbied management to start a chamber music series this year. Musicians handled all the “managerial” work, chose repertoire and scheduled rehearsals while management booked the venue. Musicians found this to be a wonderful outlet for playing larger chamber repertoire with their own artistic input. Negotiations for a new musician contract will be starting soon. – Nora Frisk, ROPA delegate

HOST THE NEXT CONFERENCE!

We are looking for orchestras and Locals interested in hosting the next ROPA Conference! The invitation to host should come from the ROPA orchestra’s orchestra committee and the Local. More details are explained in the Delegate Handbook, which can be found on page 15 of the Delegate Handbook:


We have been in the Midwest and West for the last several years; it would be great to go East!

Contact the ROPA President at ropapresident@gmail.com for more information, or if you are interested. Orchestras interested in hosting will be given time for a short presentation at the Conference.
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**ROPAA Member Orchestras**

**Full Members**
- Akron Symphony Orchestra  
- Albany Symphony  
- Allentown Symphony  
- Annapolis Symphony  
- Ann Arbor Symphony  
- Arizona Opera Orchestra  
- Atlantic Ballet Orchestra  
- Atlanta Opera Orchestra  
- Austin Symphony Orchestra  
- Binghamton Philharmonic  
- Boston Ballet Orchestra  
- Boulder Philharmonic  
- California Symphony Orchestra  
- Canton Symphony Orchestra  
- Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Orchestra  
- Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra  
- Dallas Opera Orchestra  
- Dayton Philharmonic  
- Delaware Symphony Orchestra  
- Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra  
- East Texas Symphony Orchestra  
- Elgin Symphony Orchestra  
- Erie Philharmonic Orchestra  
- Eugene Symphony  
- Fort Wayne Philharmonic  
- Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra  
- Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra  
- Hartford Symphony Orchestra  
- Houston Ballet Orchestra  
- Houston Grand Opera Orchestra  
- Huntsville Symphony Orchestra  
- Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra  
- Kalmarazoo Symphony Orchestra  
- Knoxville Symphony Orchestra  
- Lansing Symphony Orchestra  
- Las Vegas Philharmonic  
- Lexington Philharmonic  
- Long Beach Symphony Orchestra  
- Los Angeles Opera Orchestra  
- Madison Symphony Orchestra  
- Marin Symphony  
- Memphis Symphony Orchestra  
- Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra  
- Minnesota Opera Orchestra  
- Mississippi Symphony Orchestra  
- Monterey Symphony  
- New Haven Symphony Orchestra  
- New Mexico Philharmonic  
- New West Symphony Orchestra  
- Oakland Symphony  
- Omaha Symphony Orchestra  
- Orchestra Iowa  
- Pacific Symphony  
- Palm Beach Opera Orchestra  
- Pasadena Symphony Orchestra  
- Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra  
- Portland Opera Orchestra  
- Portland Symphony Orchestra  
- Reading Symphony Orchestra  
- Rhode Island Philharmonic  
- Richmond Symphony  
- Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera  
- Santa Barbara Symphony  
- Santa Rosa Symphony  
- Sarasota Orchestra  
- South Bend Symphony  
- Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra  
- Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra  

**Associate Members**
- California Philharmonic  
- Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra  
- El Paso Symphony  
- Flint Symphony Orchestra  
- Glimmerglass Opera Orchestra  
- Hudson Valley Philharmonic  
- Lincoln Symphony Orchestra  
- Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra  
- Opera San Jose  
- Pittsburgh Ballet Orchestra  
- Tri-Cities Opera Orchestra  
- Tulsa Opera Orchestra  
- Spokane Symphony Orchestra  
- Symphony Silicon Valley  
- Tacoma Symphony Orchestra  
- Toledo Symphony Orchestra  
- Tucson Symphony Orchestra  
- West Virginia Symphony  
- Wichita Symphony Orchestra  
- Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra  

**Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPAA)**

A conference of the American Federation of Musicians, AFL-CIO  

The Leading Tone  
901 C Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502